

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR  
RECRUITMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF  
POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AND HR PRACTITIONERS**

**BY**

**SUMAN DAYANAND**

**214533958**

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Commerce**

**School of Management, IT and Governance**

**College of Law and Management Studies**

**Supervisor: Dr Ashika Maharaj**

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## DECLARATION

### **I, Suman Dayanand declare that**

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Signed: *S. Dayanand*

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- My family for their endless love, support and encouragement. Thank you for believing in me.
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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my late grandparents Mr Brij Sewparsad and Mrs Joyce Sewparsad. Their words of wisdom, teachings and encouragement will always remain close to my heart. I know that they are guiding me from above, and I hope always to make them proud.

## ABSTRACT

Previously social media was the territory for teenagers and young students. Nowadays, millions of people have registered on social networking sites. Several companies worldwide have acknowledged its value. Melanthiou, Pavlou and Constantinou (2015) found that social media is being used as part of E-recruitment strategies in companies and is rated as being more cost-effective and efficient than LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook are predominantly used for recruitment (Vyas, Mirji, & Hanji, 2015).

Since there is minimal research on the topic in South Africa (Koch, Gerber & de Klerk, 2018; Cilliers, Chinyamurindi & Viljoen, 2017), the researcher's aim is to contribute to the body of knowledge. The main objective is to explore the role of social media as a recruitment tool from the perspective of Postgraduate students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and Human Resource (HR) practitioners from various industry sectors.

A mixed methodology approach was used in this study. The research instruments were questionnaires and interviews. A total of 175 questionnaires were distributed to postgraduate students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and interviews were conducted with six Human Resource practitioners from different organisations in South Africa. Reliability and validity of the study were conducted. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis, including thematic content analysis.

The quantitative findings showed that 95% of Honours students have a professional account on social media; more than 60% of them spent at least three hours on social media daily. Over 70% of the respondents indicated that they used social media for job seeking and the two most favoured sites were LinkedIn (67.1%) and Facebook (47.9%).

The qualitative findings indicated that LinkedIn is favourable with regards to filling senior management positions; while Twitter attracts graduates for more entry level employment opportunities. Although the use of Facebook and Instagram surfaced in the feedback, it was not prominent nor extensively used for effective recruitment across industries in South Africa.

Part of the recommendations that arose from the study was the training of Human Resource practitioners to use social media technologies optimally in the recruitment process. There is scope for further research on the topic regarding the privacy of social media as a tool for recruitment in South Africa.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

South Africa	SA
University of KwaZulu-Natal	UKZN
Human Resources	HR
Society for Human Resource Management	SHRM
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin	KMO
Measure of Sampling Adequacy	MSA

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

The main aim of this study is to explore the role of social media as a recruitment tool from the perspective of Postgraduate students and HR Practitioners. Social media sites consist of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, to name a few. The impact of social media is vibrant and perpetual in society, and its growth is incredibly exponential (Krishna, Mohan & Maithreyi, 2016).

“Social media very generally consists of web-based Internet networks where users can share information and communicate with others in a collective manner” (Vroman, Stulz, Hart & Stulz, 2016, p.2). Social media began as an Internet-based service which enabled people to create their profiles and connect with others (Sharma & Nagendra, 2017).

The rapid development of the Internet is changing the world in diverse ways (Balasubramanian, Vishnu & Sidharth, 2016; Sharma & Nagendra, 2017). Within the business context, the role of the Internet and changes in technology have resulted in new ways for organisations to communicate and network (Masa'd, 2015). The Internet has compelled organisations to review and change recruitment strategies for the acquisition of talent (Sharma & Nagendra, 2017).

Equally important is the advent of social media, which has gained considerable attention in the world of work; particularly in the field of recruitment (Bohmova & Pavlicek, 2015; Masa'd, 2015). Recruitment is integral to human resource management and the war for talent continues to be a topical concern for organisations. Organisations have to attract and retain the best and brightest employees to be successful and stay competitive (Masa'd, 2015).

Previously job seekers would have to be recommended for job opportunities, however currently the roles are reversed. Nowadays, companies approach job seekers via social media (Krishna et al., 2016). Social networking sites acknowledge both the needs of employers and job applicants by using various platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn (Vyas et al., 2015).

## **1.2 Background of the study**

Recruitment is a fundamental part of human resource management, as it is used to acquire the human capital of an organisation (Narmadha & Nagi, 2017). The key objective of the human resource (HR) professionals is to ensure that they attract the best candidates with the right skills for the job. This is of utmost importance, as a talented workforce can be an organisation's competitive advantage (Sharma & Nagendra, 2017).

Recruitment is the association between job seekers and employers. It involves searching the job market for potential candidates and motivating them to apply for vacancies in organisations (Hada & Gairola, 2015; Kapse, Patil & Patil, 2012). According to Gusdorf (2008, p.1), recruitment can be defined as "the process of attracting individuals on a timely basis, in sufficient numbers and with appropriate qualifications, to apply for jobs with an organisation".

Research indicates that traditional recruitment is when an organisation announces a vacancy to the job market through a newspaper advertisement, executive recruiter, job fair or other media. Any interested candidate who sees the advisement is able to apply for the position. Before an employer chooses a recruitment method, consideration is given to a number of factors such as the cost of reaching/targeting candidates, the time frame to recruit and the organisational culture (Othman & Musa, 2007).

The traditional ways of advertising a vacancy and waiting for candidates to apply is a thing of the past for most industries; nowadays organisations are focusing more on social media as a tool for recruitment instead of newspaper advertisements, word of mouth or recruitment agencies (Deshati, 2017).

Recently social networking sites have become a crucial business tool, especially for recruitment purposes. Social networking sites function as a marketing tool for both job seekers and employers. Employees can use the information available on social networking sites to screen applicants for available vacancies. The information available to employers is cost-effective, and a broad image of the applicant can be easily obtained as compared to traditional recruitment methods (Hada & Gairola, 2015).

This research study seeks to explore the role of social media as a recruitment tool from the perspective of Postgraduate students and HR Practitioners. Within the global business context, social media has required recruiters to be more proactive by engaging with talent across a

number of social networking channels. The introduction and uptake of social media have led organisations to consider its value as a recruitment tool (Deshati, 2017).

### **1.3 Research Problem**

Scholarly interest has created a vast body of research on traditional recruitment methods (Cooley & Yancy, 2016). There has been a shift in human resources management, where social media is now seen as the front runner in organisations. Nowadays, numerous companies use the Internet for recruitment (Rana & Singh, 2016). According to Cooley and Yancy (2016), employers are increasingly turning to non-traditional methods, such as social media to screen applicants.

Due to the rise of social media, organisations are compelled to change the way they operate (Sharma & Nagendra, 2017). Traditional and slower recruitment processes have been revolutionized into new processes known as E-recruitment. E-recruitment involves the use of technology and web-based tools to aid the recruitment process. Social media is a part of E-recruitment (Masa'd, 2015; Lewis, Thomas & James, 2015), and a game changer for organisations (Balasubramanian et al., 2016). It creates a platform for businesses to choose the top talent from the marketplace (Balasubramanian et al., 2016).

However, the current economic situation has forced businesses to reduce their operating costs. This has created tremendous pressure on the human resource departments to cut back on their recruitment costs, yet HR is still required to attract the best talent (Lewis et al., 2015). Due to this cost-conscious approach, HR has introduced social networking into their recruitment strategies (Lewis et al., 2015).

Although there has been an increase in the number of social networking sites over the years, the research on social media and recruitment is limited (Masa'd, 2015; Sivertzen, Nilsen & Olafsen, 2013). Currently, only a handful of studies have been done regarding social media as a recruitment tool, as this is still a very new area of research, both nationally and internationally (Masa'd, 2015).

### **1.4 Research objectives**

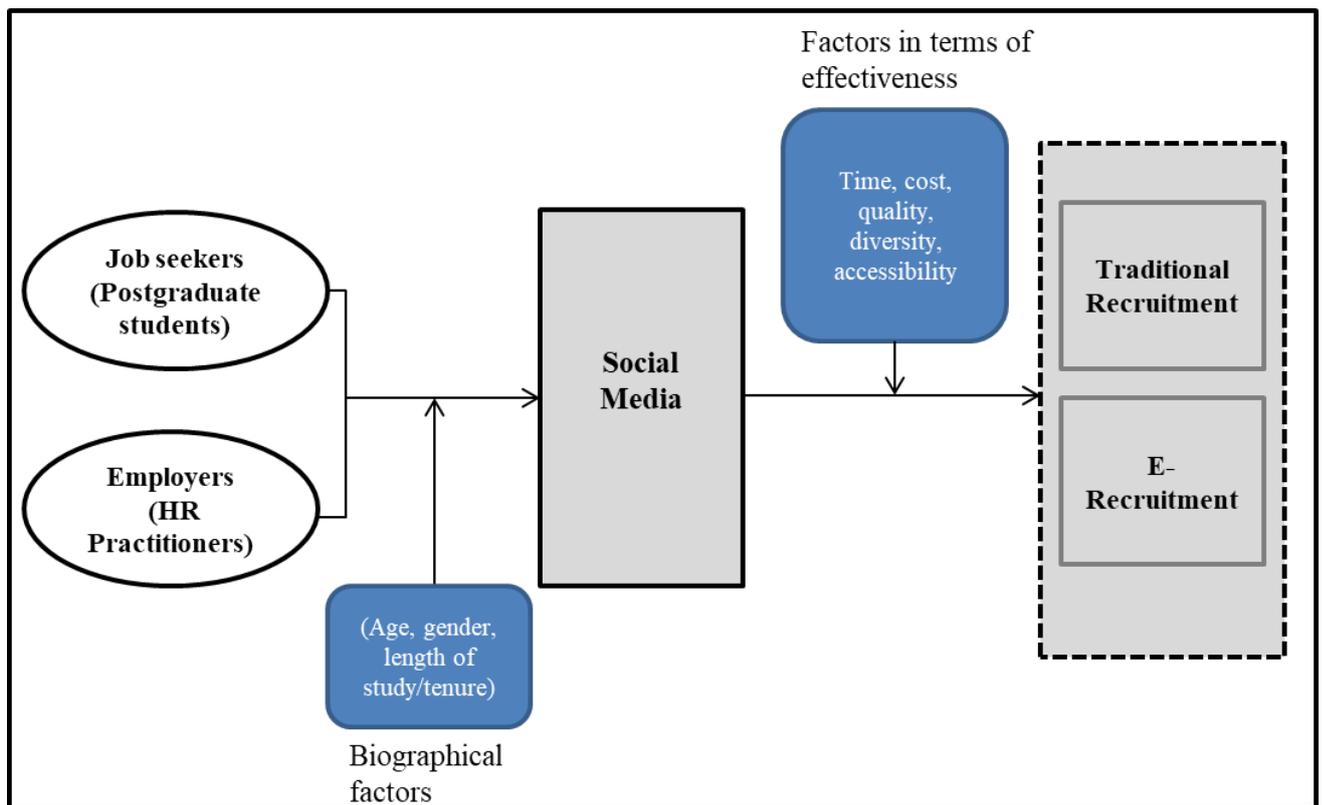
- To examine the use of social media for job seeking amongst UKZN postgraduate students.

- To explore the perceptions of Cosmetic, Law and Retail HR practitioners towards social media as a recruitment tool.
- To investigate the impact of social media on traditional recruitment from UKZN postgraduate students and HR practitioner's perspective.
- To explore the extent to which social networking sites lead to effective recruitment from UKZN postgraduate student and HR practitioner's perspective.
- To identify the benefits and challenges of social media as a tool in recruitment from a UKZN postgraduate student and HR practitioner's perspective.

### **1.5 Research questions**

- What are the perceptions of UKZN postgraduate students in terms of their use of social media for job seeking?
- What are the perceptions of Cosmetic, Law and Retail HR practitioners towards social media as a recruitment tool?
- How has social media played a role in traditional recruitment from an HR practitioner's perspective?
- Do social networking sites lead to effective recruitment from an HR practitioner's perspective?
- What are the benefits and challenges of using social media as a tool in recruitment from UKZN postgraduate students and HR practitioner's perspective?

## 1.6 Conceptual framework



*Figure 1-1 Conceptual framework of this study*

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), as cited in Grant and Osanloo (2014), a conceptual framework is categorized as a system of concepts, assumptions, and beliefs that support and guide the research plan.

The conceptual framework of this study can be explained as follows. The topic of primary interest to this research study is recruitment. Recruitment will be described within the context of traditional recruitment and E-recruitment.

Over the years, traditional forms of recruitment such as newspaper advertisements, job boards, job fairs, recruitment agencies, employee referrals and campus recruitment were commonly used in organisations (Sharma & Nagendra, 2017; Rahman, Arora, & Kularatne, 2014). However, the Internet and the digital world have spurred changes to the traditional recruitment approach.

Recruitment is influenced by social media. Social media includes social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram. These social networking sites will be used to explain how the recruitment process has changed.

With a large number of Internet users, there has been a phenomenal uptake in the use of social networking sites (Lewis et al., 2015) and this has become a part of daily life, especially among university students (Bicky & Kwok, 2011). Most individuals have an account or two on social networking sites these days; that they use to find employment (Rana & Singh, 2016).

Biographical factors influence the use of social media by job seekers and HR practitioners. The biographical factors in this study are age, gender and length of study/tenure. Whereas the factors of effectiveness (time, cost, quality, diversity, and accessibility) influence the recruitment method (traditional or E-recruitment).

Masa'd (2015) found that the characteristics of effective recruitment include time, costs, quality of applicants/applications, target group orientation and the diversity of applicants. In the study conducted by Masa'd (2015), it was established that there is a strong relationship between social networking sites and the five dimensions of effective recruitment.

### **1.7 Rationale of the study**

The role of social media as a tool for recruitment is a contemporary and highly relevant topic in Human Resources Management today. As there is limited research in South Africa, this intrigued the researcher to explore this area. This research will add to the existing body of knowledge in this dynamic area from a South African perspective as well as from the perspective of postgraduate students and HR practitioners.

### **1.8 Significance of the study**

This study is significant as it contributed to the limited literature on the role of social media as a recruitment tool from the perspective of Postgraduate students and HR Practitioners in the South African context. The outcome of this research will provide businesses with more insight into their decision-making process. The results gained from the study would clarify the benefits, pitfalls, and the role of social media as a tool for recruitment.

In addition, the investigation is beneficial to postgraduate students, especially Honours students, as it explores the impact of social media on students as job seekers. This study will also broaden the scope and understanding of social media as a tool for recruitment in Human Resources Management within a South African context. The research can also offer unique information to complement existing literature, and it could serve as a guideline in future studies.

## 1.9 Limitations of the study

A limitation of the study is that for the quantitative research, the sample population will consist of Honours students from the different clusters within the School of Management, IT and Governance at UKZN. It will not include Honours students from other colleges within UKZN. Therefore the results may not be generalised to the total population of post-graduate students at UKZN. Another limitation is that convenience sampling will be used for qualitative research, which has low generalisability. Additionally, the research focuses on a few industry sectors; thus, not covering all the industry sectors in the economy. Furthermore, given that only a few HR specialists will be interviewed, the perspective on the research topic would have a narrow focus. Lastly, due to accessibility, time and financial constraints, the geographical location of companies is limited to Johannesburg and Durban.

## 1.10 Overview of thesis structure

CHAPTER	OVERVIEW
Chapter 1	<b>Introduction to the study</b>  This chapter provides an overview of the aim and objectives of the study. The chapter also provides insight into the research problem and indicates the significance of the research study.
Chapter 2	<b>Non-traditional methods of recruitment and social media in recruitment</b>  Literature from various articles is reviewed in relation to recruitment and social media in recruitment. The chapter focuses on traditional methods of recruitment, E-recruitment, social media, benefits and pitfalls of social media and the role of social media as a tool for recruitment in organisations.
Chapter 3	<b>Research design and methodology</b>  This chapter outlines the research method that was implemented in the study in relation to the research objectives. The target population and sample size are also discussed. The chapter further explores the data collection methods and data analysis techniques that were used.

CHAPTER	OVERVIEW
	The chapter concludes by mentioning the ethical considerations and the delimitations of the study.
Chapter 4	<p><b>Phase 1: Quantitative research</b></p> <p>This chapter presents the results of the quantitative phase of the study, which covered research objectives 1,3,4 and 5 of the study. The results are from a self-designed questionnaire that was administered to post-graduate students at UKZN.</p>
Chapter 5	<p><b>Phase 2: Qualitative research</b></p> <p>This chapter presents the results of the qualitative phase of the study, which covered research objectives 2,3,4 and 5 of the study. The findings are from interviews that were conducted with HR practitioners in various industry sectors.</p>
Chapter 6	<p><b>Discussion of results</b></p> <p>This chapter provides a discussion of the results of both phases of the study by incorporating a mixed methods design to integrate the results and to provide a holistic overview of the topic.</p>
Chapter 7	<p><b>Conclusions and recommendations</b></p> <p>This chapter provides a conclusion to the thesis by summarising the key findings. It also provides the recommendations, limitations of the study and a direction for future research.</p>

## 1.11 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the study, which comprised the background of recruitment and social media, the research objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, conceptual framework and the limitations that the researcher encountered in the study. The next chapter will discuss literature on non-traditional methods of recruitment and social media in recruitment.

## CHAPTER 2

### NON-TRADITIONAL METHODS OF RECRUITMENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN RECRUITMENT

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on non-traditional methods of recruitment and the use of social media in recruitment. The chapter is presented in two parts. The first part of the chapter focuses on the evolution of recruitment from traditional to non-traditional methods.

The second part of the chapter discusses the concept of social media, theories underpinning the research, and the impact of social media in recruitment. However, first and foremost, the researcher contextualises the role of recruitment with reference to the war for talent in the workplace.

#### 2.2 Recruitment and the war for talent

Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Inc., stated, “the secret of my success is that we have gone to exceptional lengths to hire the best people in the world” (Hada & Gairola, 2015, p.1). With rapid economic changes, an effective and talented workforce has become an organisation’s competitive advantage (Singh, 2017; Sharma & Nagendra, 2017). Attracting, selecting and retaining talent is becoming increasingly challenging in organisations. Part of the problem is that existing recruitment strategies and high volumes of applications contribute to the difficulty in finding the right person for the right role (Krishna et al., 2016).

Studies have shown that recruitment has become a critical component in human resource management (Narmadha & Nagi, 2017; Zin, Jaafar, Mat, Alias & Ashari, 2016); and finding top talent is central to the recruitment process (Devi & Banu, 2014). Koch et al. (2018) noted a fundamental shift in how recruitment is viewed; once considered as an administrative, outsourced back office function is now valued as a strategic function in attracting, identifying and recruiting talent in organisations. Thus, leveraged as a competitive advantage in the war for talent.

Appointing the wrong candidate is costly and causes financial loss. A failed hire could translate to double the cost for an employee’s yearly salary at junior levels, and six times the amount at senior levels (Koch et al., 2018). In addition, there are several instances where the candidate is excellent, but may not fit the job requirements and is deemed unsuitable (Devi & Banu, 2014;

Singh, 2017). Muscalu (2015) remarked that the quality of the candidate hired by the organisation has a critical influence on the success and sustainability of the business. Factors such as cost and scarce skills are also known as key business challenges. For these reasons, organisations are focusing more so on attracting and inviting the best candidates by conducting an efficient recruitment process.

Sharma and Nagendra (2017) argued that organisational growth is primarily dependent on a talented workforce. An effective recruitment process and better recruitment outcomes are linked to better financial performance in organisations (Koch et al., 2018).

Based on the arguments above regarding the war for talent, costs of failed hires and existing recruitment strategies, it is paramount that HR professionals adopt the best recruitment methods to attract and source the right candidates (Singh, 2017; Devi & Banu, 2014).

### **2.3 Different types of candidates**

Different reasons motivate the different categories of job seekers for potential changes in their careers. Job seekers are individuals who are looking for employment (Lad & Das, 2017; Dixit, 2016; Dhamija, 2012) and can be categorised as active, semi-passive and passive candidates (Koch et al., 2018).

Active candidates refer to those candidates who are actively searching for job opportunities (Villeda & McCamey, 2019); and are generally 10% or less of the people in organisations at any given point in time (Koch et al., 2018). Their reasons for active searches include better career prospects, career growth and personal reasons. Generally, they tend to browse the Internet regularly, especially online job boards or portals, and submit their curriculum vitae (CVs) electronically (Lad & Das, 2017; Dixit, 2016; Dhamija, 2012).

Semi-passive candidates are not actively seeking jobs but are interested in a new career opportunity. However, passive candidates are not considering jobs; neither are they in the job market (Koch et al., 2018). Passive candidates are employed and are content with their present position (Villeda & McCamey, 2019). Semi-active and passive candidates require proactive engagement. The first step of the recruitment process is to create awareness with potential candidates of the job opportunities. Since these candidates are not actively pursuing the job market, organisations require specialised capabilities in attracting suitably qualified candidates in these categories. Once the candidate is actively engaged in the process, and the opportunity is appealing, the candidate may opt to apply for the available position (Koch et al., 2018).

Organisations should always strive to identify and attract the best talent from the market, especially during tough economic times instead of only seeking active candidates. The war for talent requires a proactive approach for organisations to succeed. A compelling job offer could attract and entice passive and semi-passive candidates (Koch et al., 2018).

The next section discusses the traditional methods of recruitment and how this has impacted organisations.

## **2.4 Traditional recruitment**

Prior to exploring non-traditional methods of recruitment, the researcher discusses traditional recruitment in organisations, which provides a foundational understanding of the topic of interest.

Traditional recruitment occurs when an organisation advertises a vacancy in the job market by means of a newspaper advertisement, executive recruiter, job fair or other type of media. The interested candidate that views the advertisement can apply for the job. Before an organisation selects a recruitment method, attention is provided to numerous factors such as cost of reaching or targeting candidates, the time frame to recruit and the organisational culture (Othman & Musa, 2007).

Traditional recruitment sources can be divided into internal or external (Muscalu, 2015; Kapse et al., 2012), but most companies use both sources which increases the possibilities of inviting different types of candidates to apply for vacancies (Muscalu, 2015). According to Yadav and Kumar (2014), current employees are considered for internal recruitment. Internal recruitment refers to the transfer of employees within the organisation, promotions, demotions, retired employees and retrenched employees (Kapse et al., 2012).

On the other hand, external recruitment sources include university recruitment, recruitment agencies, newspaper advertisements and unsolicited applicants (Khillare & Shirsale, 2017; Narmadha & Nagi, 2017; Kapse et al., 2012).

The oldest method of external recruitment is job advertisements, which are placed in newspapers and professional journals to attract candidates (Rahman et al., 2014). Advertisements are well-known for its broad reach to attract potential candidates (Yadav & Kumar; 2014). A study conducted by Egbert et al. (2009) in Tanzania as cited in Mwashu (2013) confirmed that advertisements in newspapers and the Internet were typically used to

recruit for specialist roles or highly qualified candidates. The findings showed that online recruitment was estimated to be at 4% compared to advertisements in newspapers and magazines, which was at 84.6%.

On the contrary, Lakshmi (2014) reported that newspaper advertisements and college recruiting programmes were the least effective methods to source candidates. In addition, Rahman et al. (2014) stated that a small percentage of companies used newspaper advertisements and journals for recruitment. Notably, in recent times, there has been a radical shift to online recruiting.

While campus recruitment at universities is also a costly process, it is nonetheless an attractive option to find talent, especially for global organisations, to leverage their competitive advantage. In a study done by Yadav and Kumar (2014) in India, campus recruitment has become increasingly popular amongst organisations in the last few years. The job fair is another external source of recruitment, and it is used by large organisations to attract international candidates, specifically when there are skill shortages, for example, in the mining industry (Villeda & McCamey, 2019). This traditional approach is not very popular as it is very costly (Rahman et al., 2014).

Other external channels include recruitment agencies, head-hunters and consultants. These channels conduct the job search for suitable candidates on behalf of the employer and are costly options. It is predominately utilised for managerial and executive positions due to the accessibility to a wider professional network and steadfastness. One of the techniques used by external channels is poaching talent from competitor organisations (Yadav & Kumar, 2014).

The following section discusses the non-traditional methods of recruitment and how organisations have slowly moved away from traditional recruitment methods.

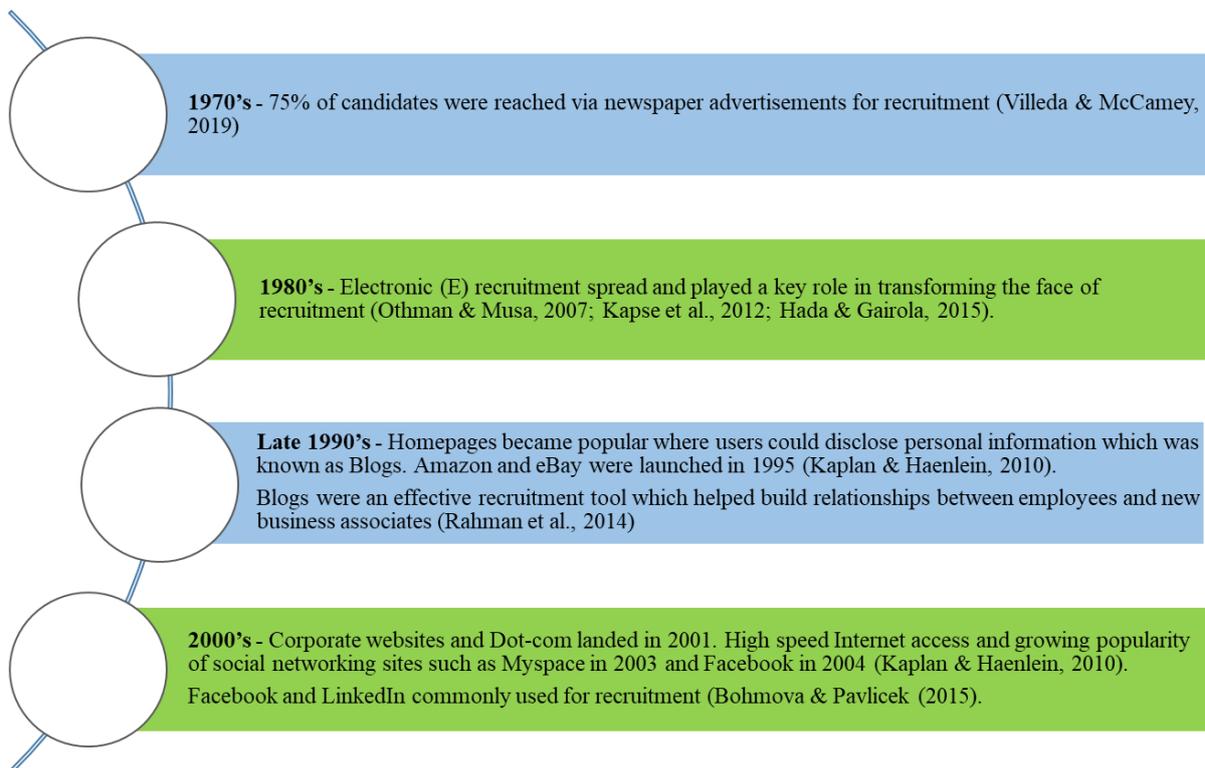
## **2.5 Non-traditional recruitment**

The Internet has revolutionised traditional recruitment methods in organisations (Okolie & Irabor, 2017; Hada & Gairola, 2015; Shahila & Vijayalakshmi, 2013). Prior to the Internet, all recruitment related activities were conducted on site by means of interviews. However, with the presence of social media, social networking sites, recruitment software and electronic communication nowadays, traditional recruitment is mostly performed online which is known as the E-recruitment approach (Melanthiou, Pavlou & Constantinou, 2015).

Over the past decade, social media has developed and grown due to the widespread access to computers and mobile devices (Vroman et al., 2016). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) noted the trend towards the use of social media as an electronic platform that led to the evolution of the World Wide Web to facilitate the exchange of information between users.

An increasing number of organisations started developing their own webpages and accounts such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter with a common aim to increase brand awareness and to reach as many people as possible. Consequently, an integral component of an effective recruitment strategy for organisations was to be known to the market. Thus, recognition formed part of an effective recruitment strategy, as there was a tendency for candidates to initially apply to organisations that they recognised (Melanthiou et al., 2015).

The illustration below depicts the changes in recruitment as impacted by the Internet and social media over the decades.



***Figure 2-1 Changes in recruitment impacted by the Internet and Social Media (Source: Author)***

### **2.5.1 The Definition of E-recruitment**

Various names are given to E-recruitment, such as are cyber recruiting, electronic or online recruitment or Internet recruiting (Mindia & Hoque, 2018; Lad & Das, 2017; Singh, 2017). Okolie and Irabor (2017) describe E-recruitment as a method that makes use of the Internet to promote or post job opportunities, as well as supplying information regarding the job and the business and allowing communication via E-mail to occur between the organisation and applicants. E-Recruitment can be carried out via business websites, social sites and online job portals.

The section below describes the E-recruitment process within organisations.

### **2.5.2 The E-recruitment process**

The E-recruitment process initially started with limited electronic tools. Line managers used to capture their hiring needs on an MS Word document, after which they emailed it to recruiters. Recruiters manually rated and ranked the applications. In some instances, software programmes were used for filtering and rank ordering applicants. E-recruitment involved a candidate search from a candidate repository, followed by organising and handling the interview process. Technology, resources and time were essential requirements for the process. A general E-recruitment process includes identifying the current need of employment in the organisation; advertising the vacancy online; shortlisting; conducting online interviews via online chats or video conferencing; and deciding on the process forward (Narmadha & Nagi, 2017).

Okolie and Irabor (2017, p.116) found that “passive and active job seekers also tend to prefer online applications to traditional application methods because it saves time and money and makes it possible to browse through a wider range of job offers”. It provides applicants with the opportunity to navigate across the business website to first gather an impression and view of the company. Wright (2011) claims that the passive approaches to recruitment, such as advertising on company websites are rapidly declining, and in 2009, it was reported that the recruitment website Monster.com saw a 31% drop in revenue, this figure was greater than the overall decline in the global recruitment industry (Lewis et al., 2015).

The next section discusses the different E-recruitment methods.

### **2.5.3 E-Recruitment Methods**

There are several E-recruitment methods, namely company websites, commercial job sites, professional websites and job bulletin boards to advertise vacancies (Singh, 2017; Dixit, 2016; Kapse et al., 2012). The recruitment method that an organisation implements depend on the number of vacancies and budgetary requirements (Dixit, 2016). The different types of E-recruitment methods are discussed below.

- **Company websites**

Company websites refer to the companies' internal website or a site (Yadav, 2017) and stipulate the details of the active vacancies (Mindia & Hoque, 2018; Okolie & Irabor, 2017; Hada & Gairola, 2015). Directemployers.com is an example of the first joint, employer owned E-recruiting group developed by the Direct Employers Association (Kaur, 2015; Karim, Miah & Khatun, 2015).

Kaur (2015) found that online recruitment methods are more popular than traditional recruitment methods as 66% of HR professionals said that the job section of their own company's website was used as a recruitment tool for most jobs. Sharma and Nagendra (2017) found that the company's website can perk the curiosity and interest of a candidate which may increase their chance of accepting a job offer.

Vacancies are advertised, and potential candidates are given the opportunity to register on the company website. Once registered, potential candidates receive notifications regarding job openings (Yadav, 2017; Karim et al., 2015). It is usually used for advertising a job via a link whereby the job seeker can search for vacancies, view the job description and other important details (Singh, 2017). Mwashu (2013) stated that potential candidates could upload their CVs onto business websites so that recruiters can determine the job vacancy corresponding to their respective qualifications.

It has become common practice to add recruitment pages to the organisation's website (Kumudha & Priyadarshini, 2014). The key benefit is the reduced cost associated with creating a webpage on a business website. Research shows that from a job seeker perspective, it is strange for medium to large size organisations not to have recruitment websites (Dixit, 2016; Dhamija, 2012).

- **Commercial job boards**

Commercial job sites for recruitment are used when the organisation advertises the vacancies on another website that focuses solely on recruitment (Singh, 2017; Dixit, 2016; Kapse et al., 2012). Job boards are used by employers to advertise jobs with the goal of finding a potential employee (Singh, 2017; Yadav, 2017; Kaur, 2015). A big disadvantage is that there is a surplus of unqualified applicants that applies for positions by which they do not meet the minimum requirements and a lot of time is spent sorting out these applications hence the quality of the applications is comprised (Yadav, 2017; Karim et al., 2015; Kaur, 2015).

Job boards are like classified advertisements in the newspaper. However, job boards are international and are able to generate a large candidate pool. Studies show that five million CVs are uploaded, and each is unique (Dhamija, 2012). Additionally, this method is inexpensive as it allows recruiters to work 24 hours a day and analyse a global network of candidates. This method is beneficial to organisations as job boards provide a search function that recruiters can use to search for candidates with the pertinent skills and experience. In addition, it also allows for the job seeker to contact the organisation directly through means of a company link should they require additional information on the job and the organisation (Dhamija, 2012). It is easier from a job seeker perspective to use job boards for a job search as opposed to viewing individual company websites which is very time consuming (Singh, 2017).

Hivarkar's (2018) study revealed that 63% of the respondents indicated that social media could not replace job boards. However, social media has assisted by improving the parameters such as quality and quantity of the candidate, hiring time and employee referrals.

- **Professional websites**

These are used to post job advertisements for specific professions and skills. For example, HR jobs can be found on human management sites like Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) on [www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org) (Yadav, 2017; Karim et al., 2015; Kaur, 2015; Tyagi, 2012).

## **2.6 Traditional methods and Non-traditional methods (E-Recruitment)**

Online recruitment is seen as a contemporary method to obtain highly suitable and efficient employees (Mwasha, 2013), due to its cost effectiveness, efficiency (Singh, 2017; Hada & Gairola, 2015), accessibility to potential candidates globally (Melanthiou et al., 2015) and

improved employer branding (Sharma, 2014). The figure below illustrates a comparison between traditional recruitment methods and E-recruitment.

**Table 2-1 Comparison of Traditional Methods and E-Recruitment**

<b>Traditional Recruitment Methods</b>	<b>Non-Traditional Methods (E-Recruitment)</b>
• Lengthy process	• Faster, efficient
• Costly	• Cost effective
• Physical storage of CVs	• Online storage and tracking of data
• Reactive	• Proactive and direct communication to candidates
• Restrictive job advertisements	• Not restrictive
• Limited reach of candidates	• Wide reach of candidates

**(Source: Author)**

A study by Workforce (2000) cited in Kroeze (2015) indicated that online recruiting was shown to be up to 30% faster than other traditional methods of recruitment. From a recruiter perspective, E-recruitment enabled the filtering of unqualified and unsuitable candidates which yielded a 60% saving of recruiting time.

While it holds true that online recruitment was more efficient than traditional methods, Othman and Musa (2007) found that HR departments utilised both traditional means of recruitment and E-recruitment in the hiring process. Over 75% of HR specialists included job boards to their conventional recruiting methods, it highlighted that online recruitment would not replace traditional methods of recruitment, but a well-executed E-recruitment strategy would assist the recruitment process to be more effective.

Subsequently, Kaur (2015), Kumudha and Priyadarshini (2014) and Zin et al., (2016) found that E-recruitment was on average 70% faster than traditional hiring methods. The recruitment life cycle was streamlined at every stage of the process from advertising, to the receipt of CVs, to shortlisting and managing the workflow. Narmadha and Nagi (2017) asserted that the hiring process is quick and easy because jobs are advertised online, application forms are completed electronically, and CVs are emailed to recruiters.

Traditionally, newspaper advertisements appeared for only one day; the application process was lengthy and costly for both the job seeker and providers. However, E-Recruitment permitted instant real-time interaction and 24 hours a day, seven days a week hiring/job search activity. Employers could advertise a vacancy in as little as twenty minutes on a career site

with no restrictions to the advertisement size, and several candidates could apply within minutes (Khillare & Shirsale, 2017; Narmadha & Nagi, 2017; Yadav, 2017).

Moreover, CVs occupy a lot of storage space in the office but with E-recruitment CVs can be retrieved online at any, time thus eliminating the need for physical storage space. As a result, the total decision-making procedure regarding appointees appeared to be accurate as there was good tracking of information online. (Narmadha & Nagi, 2017; Karim et al., 2015).

E-recruitment also provided clarity to the recruitment process. Newspaper and magazine advertisements have a word limit which may lead to the misinterpretation of the job advertisement. Whereas, online advertisements have no word limit. Everything regarding the job profile can be fully outlined (Karim et al., 2015).

E-recruitment enables the employer to be proactive in the recruitment process. The employer directly communicates with the job applicant. Companies try to prevent candidates from calling the organisation to query about a job posting, as it is strictly web-based procedure. Nevertheless, candidates want to stay informed about the status of their application even if it is through email. If the candidate is unsuccessful, this permits the job seeker to apply for jobs elsewhere (Kaur, 2015).

However, Lakshmi (2014) claimed that in 2013, traditional methods such as employee referral programmes were highly effective in sourcing quality candidates followed by social professional networks and company career websites. In large companies, many potential candidates can be obtained at a reduced cost through employee referrals (Rahman et al., 2014; Yadav & Kumar, 2014). Sharma and Nagendra (2017) found that employees that were recruited through referrals have an extended tenure compared to those employees recruited through formal methods.

While traditional methods as noted are valuable, there appears to be dissent amongst authors. Aguenza, Al- Kasseem and Som (2012) stated that the use of online recruitment reduced the hiring cost by 87%, in comparison to the traditional methods of recruitment. Sharma (2014) further affirmed that online recruitment methods were often less expensive in comparison to traditional recruitment methods. Cost effectiveness is the main factor for executing the E-recruitment approach.

Kumudha and Priyadarshini (2014) supported previous studies by claiming that online recruitment could save 90% of hiring costs in comparison to traditional recruitment. Moreover,

Yadav and Kumar (2014) found that high costs and privacy issues were concerning. Line managers try to steer away from this traditional recruiting method (Rahman et al., 2014).

Furthermore, E-recruitment provided job applicants with accessibility to a wider job market and more options for potential employers (Yadav & Kumar, 2014). Additionally, E-recruitment allows for a broad reach of candidates. Traditional methods of recruitment are normally limited by a number of factors such as career level or geographical location whereas E-recruitment can reach a wider number of individuals in all lines of business and different geographical areas (Khillare & Shirsale, 2017; Kaur, 2015; Kumudha & Priyadarshini, 2014). Online recruitment portals generally contain an up-to-date talent data bank with every career level, job industry and area (Narmadha & Nagi, 2017).

Many researchers have agreed that traditional recruitment is restrictive, thus limiting the number of suitable candidates for vacant positions (Khillare & Shirsale, 2017; Narmadha & Nagi, 2017; Devi & Banu, 2014).

Rahman et al. (2014) conducted a study and found that traditional recruitment methods, for example, job boards and recruitment agencies are still being used despite the increased usage of social media in recruitment.

The next part of this chapter discusses the concept of social media, social networking sites, principal theories underlying social media, benefits, pitfalls and social media as a tool for recruitment in organisations.

## **2.7 Concept of social media**

“Social media as a whole is becoming a medium for work as well as play” (Krishna et al., 2016, p.9762). The popularity of social media is framed in literature and used for various reasons. Firstly, it is a dynamic and well-established platform to exchange information because it allows individuals to generate, distribute and recommend information. Secondly, social media is a virtual channel to cultivate relationships (Din, Anuar, Omar, Omar & Dahlan, 2015). Old friends can reunite, and new friendships can be created through social media platforms (Din et al., 2015; Ijeoma & Burke, 2013).

Thirdly, social media has also entered classrooms and academic institutions for the purpose of sharing information and online discussions to share learning material and encourage learning. Finally, social media is an integral part of marketing a communications strategy as it enables

customer interactions and discussions. The impact of social media has far reaching consequences as companies without social media could become less relevant and less competitive in the market (Din et al., 2015).

A formal definition of social media as explained by Koch et al. (2018, p.4) is “applications that make possible the creation and transmission of content in the format of words, pictures, videos and audios”. Simply put, it is an internet founded channel between groups of individuals that connect online to exchange material and views.

Bicky and Kwok (2011) remarked that social media is an open sharing platform that permits groups of people to become connected and form solid relationships. Social media can be defined as technological communication that emerges in digital communities. It serves as a platform for individuals to exchange ideas and information about themselves. In essence, social media comprises internet-based networks for users to interact with one another in a collective manner (Vroman et al., 2016).

Social media was initially used as a form of personal communication and connection. Information about individuals that was once considered as private and difficult to access can now be easily retrieved from individual profiles on a variety of social media platforms (Vroman et al., 2016).

Throughout the years, social media has become a worldwide platform for various organisations. In addition to promoting the company brand and image, social media platforms are being used for attracting and hiring candidates. Due to the ease of execution, there is a growing number of job seekers and human resource departments utilising social media to interact for job opportunities. With the aid of social media, the recruitment process in companies have improved (Rahman et al., 2014).

The section below discusses how social networking sites have evolved over the years and the different types of social networking sites.

## **2.8 Social networking sites**

Since the early 1980s, the Internet was used to connect people; however, the use of social networking sites has boomed and become common practice in the last decade. Social networking can be described as interacting and finding others of similar interests with online sites and applications (Hada & Gairola, 2015).

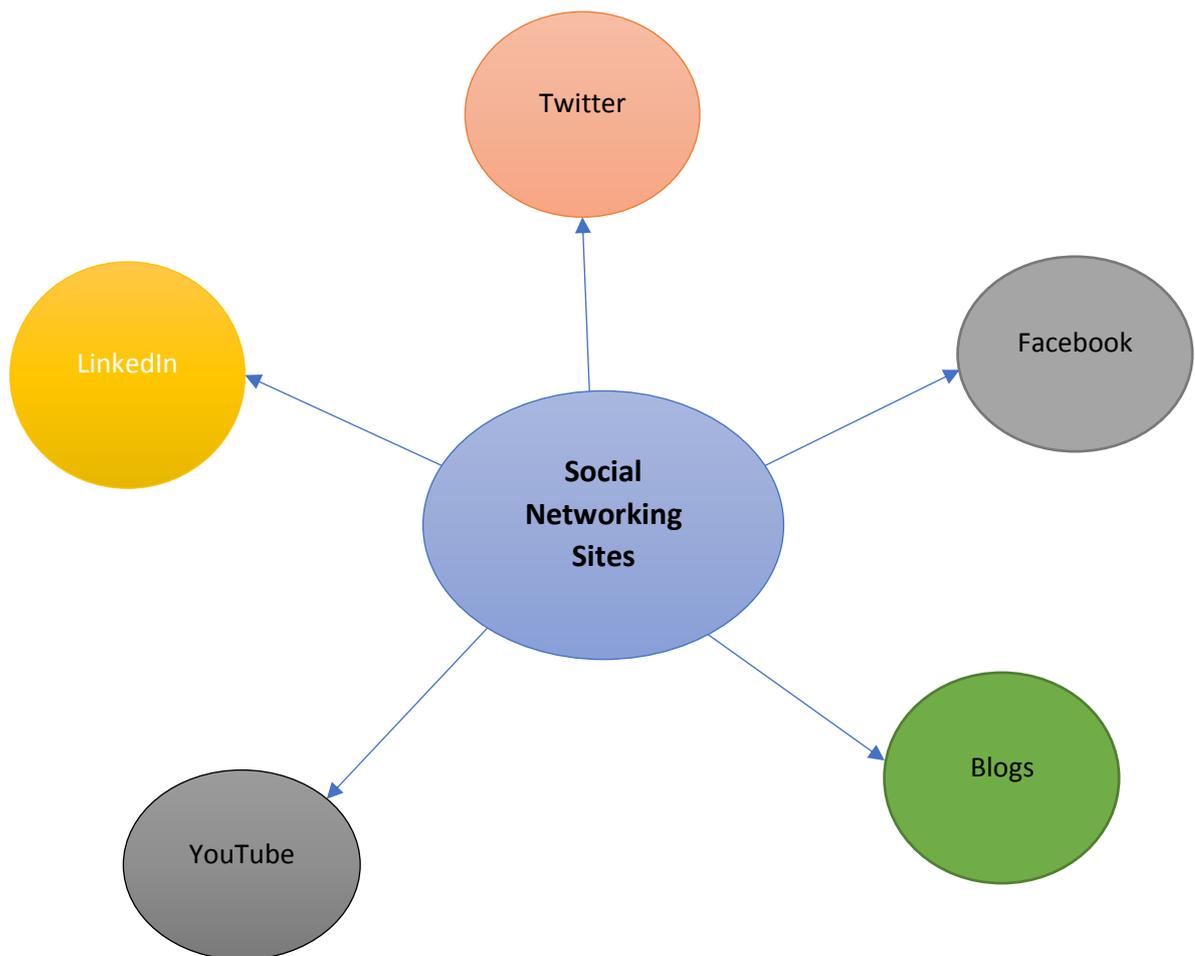
Hasan, Salehin and Islam (2018) reported that in 2016, 40% of the world's population was connected to the Internet. In 2017, this increased by 10% and therefore 50% of the world's population is connected to the Internet. Furthermore, the number of online social media users has increased by 21%, which is 2.8 billion throughout the world, among which 91% are accessing social media on their cell phones.

Social networking sites can be used to depict online discussion forums, chat rooms, community-based websites, and business-oriented sites such as LinkedIn (Vyas et al., 2015). Vroman et al. (2016) explained that social networking sites could be categorised into personal sharing sites and business-oriented sites. Personal sharing sites include Facebook, Instagram and Google Plus. However, Blogs and Twitter are slightly different as they co-exist between personal and business use. LinkedIn is mainly utilised for professional reasons as a profile holds information regarding an individual's professional life.

The number of users on social media accounts drastically increased, with 901 million Facebook users, over 500 million Twitter users and over 161 million LinkedIn users, hence social media is pervasive. Given the exponential number of users, organisations began using social media to identify, attract and reach potential candidates for employment (Archana, Nivya & Thankam, 2012).

LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook were some of the most dominant social media tools that were used for recruitment. Facebook was increasingly popular with more than 500 million users and constantly exceeded Google in site visits on a regular basis. LinkedIn had more than double registered users from approximately 40 million in 2009 to over 100 million in 2011 (Vyas et al., 2015).

In the United Kingdom, over 90% of adults between the ages of 18 and 25 years confirmed that they had an active profile on a social networking site (Subramani, 2015). Cilliers et al. (2017) reported that in South Africa, approximately 30 million people access social networking sites through their mobile devices.



*Figure 2-2 Types of social networking sites (Source: Author)*

### **2.8.1 Facebook**

Facebook was established in 2004 and is the most popular social networking site (Villeda & McCamey, 2019; Vroman et al., 2016; Yeshambel, Belete & Mulualem, 2016). It is an instant messaging platform for users to create a personal profile; connect and exchange messages with friends and others (Balasubramanian et al., 2016; Archana et al., 2012).

The United States is the largest user of Facebook with millions of users, followed by India (Hada & Gairola, 2015). In South Africa, Facebook is most popular social networking site with about 12 million users as in BusinessTech, (2015) cited in Cilliers et al. (2017); whereas Hasan et al. (2018) confirmed that there were 22 million active users in Bangladesh in 2016. Rana and Singh (2016) found that 90% of internet users have a Facebook account.

Carter (2012) cited in Rahman et al. (2014, p.9) explained that “Facebook is six times larger than LinkedIn in terms of usage”. A study done by Kumar and Kumar (2013) as cited in

Subramani (2015) highlighted that Facebook was the most popular social networking site amongst postgraduate's students in a university in Tamil Nadu, India.

Singh and Kumar (2013) as cited in Subramani (2015) conducted a study in a Punjab University, India, which showed that the majority of students use Facebook. In addition, in a study by Vyas et al. (2015), the majority of the students (47.2%) were on Facebook whereas 20% were on LinkedIn. Furthermore, in a study by Lewis et al. (2015), it was found that 75% of respondents ranked Facebook as a site they use the most.

Vicknair, Elkersh, Yancey and Budden (2010) argued that students possess a calm and laid-back stance regarding individual confidentiality. For example, a student was banned from his school's honours club as he made a Facebook page that rebuked his school. Furthermore, candidates may not be real and authentic (Hada & Gairola, 2015).

Companies used Facebook to advertise and share job vacancies with others (Rahman et al., 2014). "Facebook is commonly referred to as grassroots technology, which means that the employees were using the technology before the organisations implemented social media strategy" (Cilliers et al., 2017, p.2). Haddud, Dugger and Gill (2016) discovered that 77% of employees who have Facebook spend at least an hour on it.

There are multiple views on the use of Facebook for recruitment. Kroeze (2015) cited a survey done by Provost (2009) that argued that Facebook was not an ideal recruitment platform for companies. The potential job seeker had to initially be a fan of the company's webpage and visit the page to track and trace new job opportunities, and thereafter, apply through the company website.

On the contrary, Archana et al. (2012) pointed out that organisations needed to use Facebook advertisements for recruitment, in order to be at the forefront of the battle for top talent. The Facebook Fan Page functioned as a recruiting and sourcing tool; 70% of the job seekers on Facebook were male, 63% were below the age of 40, and 36% of them were college graduates. In addition, the average Facebook user spent 15 hours and 33 per month on Facebook. In support, Rahman et al. (2014) indicated that Facebook was mostly used for recruitment and networking, followed by LinkedIn and Twitter.

Hada and Gairola (2015) supported the earlier findings of Provost by emphasising that Facebook was originally designed for social communications with friends and family rather than companies, as such candidates could feel uncomfortable to connect with prospective

employers through Facebook. Moreover, it would be difficult to search for a skilled niche of applicants on Facebook. Privacy settings on social networking sites made communication problematic.

Notwithstanding, Villeda and McCamey (2019) found that Facebook is a popular platform for job seekers as it has 67% of usage in comparison to Twitter with 35%, thus having 83% of active candidate users.

### **2.8.2 Blogs**

A Blog is a discussion forum where information is published on the Internet and entries are displayed in chronological date order (Balasubramanian et al., 2016). Until 2009, Blogs were published by single users, sometimes a relatively small group where a single topic was discussed. More recently, Blogs contain multiple authors, with entries from multiple users which are professionally edited (Archana et al., 2012).

A survey by Backbone Media (2005) as cited in Wright and Hinson (2008) revealed the key reasons employees invented blogs were to publicize content and ideas (52%), engage with groups (47%), stimulate leadership (44%), deliver information to customers (36%) and receive feedback from customers (23%).

Wright and Hinson (2008) stated that many organisations such as Dell, Hewlett-Packard and Microsoft were promoting blogging. Similarly, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) found that numerous organisations used Blogs to keep their employees, clients, and stakeholders updated on important developments. The chief executives of Sun Microsystems and General Motors used private Blogs to increase the transparency of their organisations. However, the key risks associated with the use of Blogs is that unhappy or dissatisfied customers complained and protested online; resulting in destructive information in a virtual space. In addition to this, once organisations allowed their employees to be active on company Blogs, they would need to deal with the repercussions of negative criticisms.

Rahman et al. (2014) added that Blogs were another effective recruitment tool which aided in establishing relationships among possible new employees and business associates.

### **2.8.3 LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is a business oriented social networking site for professional users which started in 2003 (Villeda & McCamey, 2019; Vroman et al., 2016; Yeshambel et al., 2016). It is used by

job seekers to find suitable job opportunities and recruiters to find the best candidate for an organisation. Furthermore, it allows employees and employers to create a professional relationship in an online network (Yeshambel et al., 2016; Hada & Gairola, 2015). LinkedIn is gaining popularity and becoming a dominant recruitment platform for finding talent (Vroman et al., 2016; Hada & Gairola, 2015; Rahman et al., 2014).

Archana et al. (2012) discovered that there were one million plus LinkedIn groups, 38% of job seekers used LinkedIn to search for employment, 19% of job seekers had a contact share a job on LinkedIn, 11% of job seekers searched for jobs on LinkedIn and 79% of LinkedIn users were 35 years or older. The average age of a LinkedIn user was 40.5 years old; 60% of job seekers who used LinkedIn were male, 62% were under the age of 40, and 50% were college graduates. Additionally, a study conducted by Lal and Aggarwal (2013), found that LinkedIn was the most popular social networking site for seeking employment because it had features such as specialised email alerts and job highlighter. It also had a vast user database.

Nikolaou's (2014) findings in Kroeze (2015) indicate that LinkedIn was more effective as a recruitment and screening platform than Facebook. In another study done by Vyas et al. (2015), which found that 76.9% of employers and recruitment agencies felt that LinkedIn would be the effective site for recruitment in the future as it would strengthen the corporate relationship between management and job seekers. Moreover, in a study conducted by Ahmad and Lodhi (2015), it was found that LinkedIn was the most used social networking site for the purpose of job seeking by final year students and organisations.

Kroeze (2015) established that males were more active than females on LinkedIn in terms of engagement, usage and perceptions of its effectiveness. On the other hand, females were more likely to spend more time using social networking sites, especially job boards. As noted, males and females were equally active on social media, but they just operated differently.

Hada and Gairola (2015) argued that LinkedIn was restrictive in terms of the number of emails that a user could send to other contacts, thus making communication challenging. It is a lengthy approach as it involves both the job seeker and recruiter to build contact first. Only once that is complete, messages can be sent to each other. Messages cannot be sent to users that do not appear in the contact list.

Furthermore, Rana and Singh (2016) revealed that almost 75% of professionals had a registered account on LinkedIn, which was actively used for job seeking, and organisations used LinkedIn

to search for better candidates. Additionally, Krishna et al. (2016) found that during 2012, LinkedIn users attained over 5.7 billion professionally oriented searches on the network. Vroman et al. (2016) highlighted that LinkedIn could be utilised to help improve and enhance business networks and build new ones.

Cilliers et al. (2017) claimed that LinkedIn had 467 million members in 2017, of which 5.5 million users were South African. Houran (2017) found that LinkedIn was primarily used to recruit candidates for key management positions at senior (87%) and middle management levels (80%) but was seldom used for entry level positions (8%). The staffing and recruitment industry were most connected on LinkedIn (Darrow, 2017).

Based on the findings of a LinkedIn survey, 59% of candidates used cell phones to search for vacancies, and 52% of them used cell phones to apply for vacancies (Yadav, 2017). As per LinkedIn's website, "two new members joined every two seconds throughout 200 countries" (Villeda & McCamey, 2019, p.69).

#### **2.8.4 Twitter**

Twitter is a widespread online microblogging service which enables users to send messages known as tweets to others (Balasubramanian et al., 2016; Vroman et al., 2016). Twitter began in 2006 (Yeshambel et al., 2016) where users could send and read 140-character messages (Villeda & McCamey, 2019; Vroman et al., 2016; Ijeoma & Burke, 2013).

Vroman et al. (2016) mentioned that Twitter is a cost-free social networking site. Twitter users are able to communicate and tweet with each other by making use of their Twitter handles. Twitter handles can be either public or private. Hada and Gairola (2015) added that Twitter allows recruiters and job seekers to connect and share job opportunities. However, due to the character limit restriction and the low shelf life of Twitter, it becomes a bit complicated to advertise vacant positions and the job specification. It is also used as a tool where people can express their opinions about the company and create a picture of the organisation's culture and environment.

Archana et al. (2012) claimed that 67% of job seekers on Twitter were male and were below the age of 40, and 44% of them were college students. Kumar and Kumar (2013) as cited in Subramani (2015) found that Twitter was the second favourable social networking site amongst postgraduate's students in Tamil Nadu, India.

Cilliers et al. (2017) remarked that Twitter had 317 million users in 2017, of which more than 7.7 million users were from South Africa. A study conducted on Fortune 500 companies, indicated that 60% of job applicants used Twitter; and more than 70% use it to search for vacancies, and more than 50% follow companies (Villeda & McCamey, 2019).

### **2.8.5 YouTube**

Youtube is a video-sharing website (Balasubramanian et al., 2016; Archana et al., 2012). In 2005, Youtube was invented by three previous PayPal workers and is owned by Google since late 2006 (Yeshambel et al., 2016).

Youtube can be used by professionals to upload their video CV and employers can upload information and videos about their organisations. It has become one of the most powerful tools for recruitment (Balasubramanian et al., 2016; Hada & Gairola, 2015; Archana et al., 2012).

Hada and Gairola (2015) proposed that sometimes there could be network problems as the video may not be audible. Additionally, the quality of the video could be comprised, which leads to an ineffective video. Some job seekers could be camera shy, not confident, and many may not want to post a video CV of themselves.

The next section discusses the usage and the amount of time individuals spend on social media.

## **2.9 The impact of technological advancements on the behaviour of millennials**

Hargittai (2008) discovered that most students in a university in Chicago were active users of social networking sites since they used social media seven times or more in a week, whereas semi-active users logged onto these sites less than seven times a week. Moreover, a study by Walsh, Fielder, Carey and Carey (2013) found that female first-year university students spent approximately 12 hours a day using social media.

Ipsos Open Thinking Exchange (2013) as cited in Subramani (2015) indicated that the American youth spent on average 3.8 hours a day on social networking whether it is on a computer, mobile phone or tablet. Manjunatha (2013) as cited in Subramani (2015), reported that 62.6% of Indian college students spent approximately 10 hours weekly on social networking sites, whereas 17.5% spent over 10 hours per week.

Vyas et al. (2015), found that 96.25% of final year students spent a considerable amount of time accessing the Internet daily in search of job opportunities, while others were dependent on campus recruitment. The findings also indicated that the majority of the students were

satisfied with applying for jobs on social networking sites as it was easy to access, and it had a high response rate.

Hussain, Loan and Yaseen (2017) conducted a study with postgraduate students in Kashmir, India; the findings revealed that 48.23% of the students spent one to two hours per day on social networking sites whereas 24.7% spent less than one hour and 15.29% spent two to three hours on social networking sites per day. Approximately 12% spent more than three hours on social networking sites in a day. However, students spent 1.43 hours as an average on social networking sites per day.

In the next section, the principal theories underpinning the research study are discussed.

## **2.10 Principal theories underpinning the research project**

The research is based on two very important theories; namely the Six Degrees of Separation and the Resource-Based View.

### **2.10.1 Six Degrees of Separation**

Stanley Milgram conceptualised and coined the theory of Six Degrees of Separation in 1963. He conducted a “small world experiment” in 1967, which determined the connections in the United States by tracking a mail order package between two randomly chosen people (DeGrella, 2011). The theory was first tested when 296 volunteers were asked to deliver a message by postcard, through friends and then to mutual friends, to a particular individual in a suburb in Boston (Petersen, 2012).

Hussain et al. (2017, p.73) state that “the journey of social networking started with SixDegrees.com in 1997, followed by others such as LiveJournal, Friendster, LinkedIn, Myspace, Flickr, YouTube, and Facebook”.

Melanthiou et al. (2015) argued that the modern form and progression of SixDegrees.com is Facebook or LinkedIn. These social networking sites have followers from the ages of 18 to 54 years, and most of the users are 25 to 35 years old. While organisations are following the latest trends and technological advancements; many individuals are joining the digital world by generating a page or account on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

A 'degree of separation' is a measure of social distance between people. McPherson (2011) defined the Six Degrees of Separation Theory as any two strangers that can be connected through an average of just six friendships. Whereas Petersen (2012) stated that the concept

behind six degrees of separation is a friend of a friend's associate makes everyone only six steps away of introduction from another individual.

Bohmova and Pavlicek (2015, p.23) expressed that “the idea that people are organised in social networks are much older than the internet”. A social network can be characterized as an online space intended mainly for interpersonal communications which are usually known as social networking sites. Social networking sites enable individuals to stay in contact with friends, making new contacts and increasing one's social capital.

It is proven that the Six degrees of separation theory is true as, in 2008 Microsoft conducted a study and found that the majority of individuals were connected by exactly 6.6 acquaintances (DeGrella, 2011). The upsurge of social media offers an incredible chance to test the “Six Degrees of Separation” hypothesis. Yahoo and Facebook joined hands on an online experiment that controlled Facebook's users in order to establish how they were linked (DeGrella, 2011; McPherson, 2011).

Social media has an intense impact on the workplace. Empirical studies indicate that social media takes less than 6 degrees of separation. With more than one billion users each month, Facebook is likely to be accessed by every organisation's employees at and outside of work. Stollak, Vandenberg, Felhofer and Sutherland (2014, p.2) remarked ‘Facebook is the modern-day smoke break’.

It is interesting to note that over the years, the degrees of separation between people is not 6 but has decreased in number. This could possibly indicate that the world is shrinking. Scientists from Facebook and individuals from the University of Milan stated that the average number of acquaintances separating any two people in the world was not six but 4.74. The findings of a study done on LinkedIn showed that there are three degrees of separation which are: 1) you already know them 2) you know someone who knows them 3) you know someone who knows someone that knows them. The importance is not only fewer degrees but additional opportunities to form relationships that increase exponentially (Petersen, 2012).

### **2.10.2 Resource-Based View (RBV)**

Significant research has been done on recruitment; however, there has been no consensus on a general recruitment theory. Nevertheless, there are many theories discussing various recruitment methods (Lukova, 2017). Resource-Based View (RBV) has become one of the

main theories in strategic HRM as it relates to how better human resources and HR practices intensify the company's performance.

The Resource-Based View can be described as a method or approach of utilising resources in an organisation to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. The focus is on the internal environment for sources of competitive advantage rather than the external environment (Jurevicius, 2013). Girard & Fallery (2013, p.41) argue that "companies should not be seen only in terms of their business portfolio but should be defined as a unique set of tangible and intangible resources, a portfolio of core competencies and distinct resources".

Additionally, employees effectively contribute to the success of the organisation. Similar to RBV, human capital grows to be an evident valuable resource of competitive advantage due to the employment of skills, knowledge, competencies and experience. On the other hand, technology plays a big part in businesses; therefore, recruiting the right individuals in the organisation becomes a strategic goal for companies (Lukova, 2017).

According to the Resource-Based view, organisations must continuously assess their employees to ensure that they have suitable individuals with the relevant skills in the correct positions to guarantee continuous competitive advantage. If this is not the situation, organisations must cover up for the shortage by utilising by the correct recruitment and selection standards. A big part of any organisations strength or weakness derives from the quality of people that are employed and the type of working relations. It is, therefore, believed that organisations that recruit and retain their staff have the expertise of producing increased human capital (Ekwoaba, Ikeije & Ufoma, 2015).

However, the behaviourist critique suggests that Resource-Based view argues that each industry sector is different and varies in their resources used. In order for organisations to have a possible sustained competitive advantage, their resources must be of high value, unique from competitors, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable. Ideally, the more mobile a resource is, the least chance there is for a sustained advantage from that resource. In this era, if organisations can change easily and are more vigilant of changes in the market, then the organisation is more inclined to achieve a sustainable advantage (Bromiley & Fleming, 2002).

Furthermore, there are still concerns regarding the definitions of Resource-Based view and the problem of generalizability. The Resource-based View is continuously been criticized for being largely untestable. The main challenge is to measuring resources as some of them are

intangible. For optimal use of the resource, it is key that all factors are identified that form a part of this key resource.

## **2.11 Social media as a tool for recruitment**

Social media is a global phenomenon and is being used as a tool for recruitment (Rahman et al., 2014). The introduction and uptake of social media have led organisations to consider its value as a recruitment tool. Across the globe, social media has required recruiters to be more proactive by engaging with talent across several social networking channels (Deshati, 2017).

Bohmova and Pavlicek (2015) highlighted that social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn have recently entered the labour market, which is more commonly used in the sphere of recruitment. Social networking sites function as a marketing tool for both job seekers and employers.

### **2.11.1 Employers**

Social media presented significant and extensive changes to communication amongst businesses, communities, and people (Vyas et al., 2015). Vroman et al. (2016) assert that organisations are utilising social media for internal communication and social interaction, with the aim to improve employee communication and collaboration. Social networking sites permitted clients to express their excitement regarding future products or promotion campaigns. Equally, it allows the same clients to provide feedback if they are dissatisfied with products or services that do not meet their expectations. This real-time exchange of information has revolutionised the way businesses work.

Social media is topical amongst business executives, as it represents a revolution for companies, regardless of whether the companies are online or not. Internet users can retrieve information on any leading brand such as company websites and corresponding information from the online encyclopaedia, Wikipedia. Historically, organisations were able to control company information through strategic initiatives such as press conferences and positive public relations. In recent times, companies do not have the same level of control. Sometimes they are not aware, nor do they have the right or opportunity to change or edit public commentary about them (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Eisele (2006) in Aguenza et al. (2012) who examined the use of the Internet as a tool for recruitment with 1000 of the largest companies in Germany, revealed that 67% of employers

indicated an improvement in the recruitment process and 49% of organisations experienced a reduction in recruitment costs.

Similarly, Starbucks experimented with social media for the purposes of recruitment. Apart from engaging candidates through media channels such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, Starbucks planned to include an area on these sites for employees to advertise stories, tweets and videos. Although, overall there were some challenges with the implementation of the new recruitment platform, the outcome was positive (Bicky & Kwok, 2011).

Pearce and Tuten (2001) and Hogler (1998) cited in Othman and Musa (2007), an organisation that had a credible brand name and strong physical presence found that their company websites attracted more candidates for jobs. Similarly, Doherty (2010) purported the importance of promoting the organisation's image through E-recruitment as it demonstrated a unique and flexible strategy, which would entice fresh talent and passive employees with the necessary competencies to take the organisation to the next level.

Wislow (2017) stipulated that it is important to note the interwoven nature of online recruitment and employer brand. A positive employer brand attracts potential candidates for job opportunities; employer brand and image are vital elements in the recruitment process. Online recruitment contributes to the organisations' image of innovation and flexibility.

Additionally, Wislow (2017) mentioned that current employees also have a role to play. Since the majority of employees use social media, companies can request them to post about their amazing work experiences and pictures of their team activities on social networking sites. Positive reviews shared by employees increase the value proposition of the organisation's employee brand. As a result, companies are seen in a favourable light when potential candidates research the company's brand and view employee recommendations. While employees are advocates of the company image and brand; they could also assist in the recruitment process by posting vacancies on social media which may attract potential candidates.

Additionally, the findings from Rahman et al. (2014) showed that 76.2% of organisations used social media for advertising their brand. This indicates that many organisations are enthusiastic about promoting their brand image. Organisations became popular on different social networking sites by creating a page on Facebook or generating a profile on LinkedIn and Twitter. They used these sites to make their proprietary content public; as well as allowing

organisations to connect with their clients on a personal and confidential level to generate intimate customer experiences (Vroman et al., 2016).

CareerBuilder.com showed that 45% of companies used social media to source potential candidates, which doubled from the previous year (Aguenza et al., 2012). A survey conducted by JobVite confirmed that the use of social networking as a recruitment tool is on the rise. It was reported that in 2012, 54% of employers used Twitter, 66% used Facebook, and 97% used LinkedIn to source potential candidates. These figures indicate that LinkedIn was by far the most popular social networking site for recruiters (Lewis et al., 2015).

Culnan, McHugh and Zubillaga (2010) found that the largest companies in America such as Walmart, Coca Cola and Hewlett Packard used social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and online client forums and Blogs to engage with customers in Fortune companies. They are leveraging social media to collaborate with customers. Facebook is dominant and widely used in the retail sector, whereas Twitter is frequently used in all industry sectors. The IT sectors are early adopters of Blogs and frontrunners in client hosted forums, whereas the financial sector and other miscellaneous sectors are equally using Facebook and Twitter.

Likewise, Rahman et al. (2014) found that 76% of the companies in Auckland, New Zealand used social media to recruit employees, of which 60% of the companies belonged to the private sector. The study also showed that most non-profit organisations surveyed used social media for recruitment. An interesting finding was that companies were not dependent on a single social media site. Majority of the organisations preferred Facebook as a tool for recruitment followed by LinkedIn and Twitter. Facebook and LinkedIn were the two most popular social networking sites for recruitment.

Maurer (2016), revealed that 84% of companies used social media for recruitment in 2016 compared to 56% in 2011. In the UK, the company, Nestle, has a job site where Facebook and Twitter feeds were linked to the site, which allowed individuals to search and apply for jobs. The two categories on Nestles' job website advertise professional jobs and campus opportunities. The social networking tools used by Nestle include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube (Balasubramanian et al., 2016).

Villeda and McCamey (2019) affirm previous findings that social media is used as a business tool. An interview was conducted with a recruiter from the Dallas Texas Police Department, which revealed the importance of using social media to attract millennials as traditional

methods such as radio and television do not grasp the anticipated audience. The findings indicate that they use social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter for recruitment as they can reach many candidates and target millennials. Further to this, Villeda and McCamey (2019) emphasised that 90% of employers use social networking sites for screening purposes, and 97% of recruiters use LinkedIn for hiring purposes.

### **2.11.2 HR Practitioners and Recruiters**

A study conducted by the Society of Human Resources in 2005, as cited in Deshati (2017) found that LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter were the most popular social networking sites for recruiters. The runner ups included Google Plus, YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest. However, there are still reliable niche recruiting channels. Due to the popularity of social media in organisations, HR practitioners began engaging in social media to facilitate the recruitment process between themselves and job seekers (Bicky & Kwok, 2011). Both recruitment agencies and companies used social media to source prospective candidates for executive roles (Rahman et al., 2014).

Jobvite (2014) as cited in Hada and Gairola (2015) found that 94% recruiters used LinkedIn, whereas 66% used Facebook to find the best possible candidate for the organisation. This was followed by Twitter with a usage of 52% by recruiters, Google Plus by 21% and YouTube by 15%. Users were more likely to share videos than to share texts, should companies encourage the sharing of their videos they could reach more potential hires. The survey also indicated that 79% of recruiters employed candidates from LinkedIn, where 26% were hired through Facebook, 14% from Twitter and 7% from candidate Blogs. Social networking sites were becoming more popular amongst recruiters, as it gave them more opportunities to find the best candidates. In addition, it was found that employers planned on to invest more in social networks, approximately 73%, and to capitalise approximately 60% in their corporate websites.

The study of Masa'd (2015) on HR departments of companies in the Middle East indicated that social networking sites were trending as a tool for recruitment. Majority of the organisations surveyed used LinkedIn for recruiting, whereas only 17% of companies used social community sites such as Facebook.

Similarly, Krishna et al. (2016) indicated that 60% of HR practitioners believed that LinkedIn was the easiest way to stay connected with job seekers, whereas 20% preferred Facebook, 10%

of the respondents stated that Twitter was favourable for job opportunities whereas another 10% of the respondents supported blogs for recruitment.

Singh (2017) emphasised that with the use of networking sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook recruiters were accessible, connected and socially active to find the best talent in the market. Findings from a study by Hivarkar (2018) revealed that 87.5% of HR practitioners in Pune city, India used social media for recruitment, and 93.5% of them agreed that social media was a beneficial tool for recruitment. In addition, 80% of respondents stated that the combined use of social media and job portals yield favourable results; and 63% of respondents indicated that social media reduced the application process.

### **2.11.3 Job seekers**

Singh (2017) claimed that 6% of job seekers used the Internet for job searches in 2002, which grew to 46% in 2003. Nowadays, more than 97% of job seekers use the Internet to search for career opportunities. In addition, job seekers find social media convenient to search for jobs and gain a holistic understanding of the organisation without physically visiting the company (Singh, 2017).

In support of Singh (2017), Nigel Wright Recruitment (2011), as cited in Hasan et al. (2018) explained that 50% of the job seekers in the UK use social media to search for job opportunities. In another survey conducted by Absolute IT Recruitment Specialists, it was revealed that 77% of job seekers in New Zealand use social media to evaluate potential employers (Rahman et al., 2014).

Hasan et al. (2018) pointed out three reasons when job seekers to use social media, these are 1) after graduating, 2) during a job for reemployment purpose, or 3) after losing a job. While job seeking may not be the most common activity on social media; it is still very relevant.

- **Generation X and Y Millennials**

Formerly, social networking was regarded as the territory for teenagers and young students. Kroeze (2015) discovered that different age groups use different social media platforms. Older job seekers are found to be more on LinkedIn in comparison to younger job seekers who mostly use Facebook and job boards. Furthermore, younger job seekers tend to spend more time on social media sites, visiting them frequently.

Hada and Gairola (2015) found that 75% of the people that are under the age of 35 years are using the internet. They are most active for forming networks and for searching for an improved career opportunity. Companies that use LinkedIn and Facebook tend to have the highest chances of reaching young professionals.

According to a study conducted by Martin and Van Beval (2013) as cited in Vroman et al. (2016), there is a difference between generations in terms of their use of social media. Older generations tend to use the Internet independent of social networking sites and social networking sites in equal amounts; whereas digital natives (are individuals who have been raised using the internet) seldom use the internet outside of social networking sites.

Not everyone in the workplace is comfortable with the pervasive nature of social media; however, research has shown that Gen X and Gen Y business professionals are confident that social networking tools will be paving the way for team communication in future (Vroman et al., 2016). Generation Y individuals born between 1980 and 1995 are viewed as the fastest growing workforce. Generation Y individuals grew up with easy access to and the frequent use of technology.

Huizing (2012) as cited in Lewis et al. (2015) suggests that Generation Y is the most educated generation to join the workforce, and this emphasises the importance for organisations to recruit and retain them. Social media is seen as the second option for Generation Y when searching for a job as their first option is online recruitment sites. This implies that organisations who use these sites to attract and recruit employees will engage with the Generation Y talent pool. Literature has shown that when an organisation creates a recruitment strategy, it is important that it attracts Generation Y.

Krishna et al. (2016) found that millennials are changing the recruitment landscape, they are essential players in the job market; hence there is key focus nowadays to interact and attract these candidates through social media. In support, statistics indicate that 73% of millennials found their last job through a social media platform (Villeda & McCamey, 2019). Similarly, the results from an Aberdeen study showed that 73% of 18-34-year olds got their last job using a social network.

In addition, a study conducted by The University of North Carolina's MBA program revealed that 64% of millennials inquired about the organisation's social media policy during a job

interview (Stollak et al.,2014). Bicky and Kwok (2011) assert that currently, Facebook and LinkedIn are the most well-known social networking sites amongst young professionals.

- **Students and Graduates**

A survey was conducted by Potentialpark with 30,000 graduates revealed that 48% of graduates choose to find their potential job through social media; therefore, online sites are popular among the job seekers of Generation Y as it offers increased opportunities to become connected with a broad range of professionals, graduates, skilled individuals (Hasan et al., 2018).

It is simpler for businesses to find potential applicants by utilising advertisements on the internet and social media. Companies would be interested in identifying methods of attracting the most skilled and talented candidates from the job market, and therefore, it is paramount that businesses use social media as a tool for the recruitment process (Deshati, 2017).

## **2.12 Benefits and pitfalls of social media in recruitment**

Literature suggests that there are several advantages to using social media for recruitment. A detailed discussion of the benefits and pitfalls of social media during the recruitment process is explained below.

### **2.12.1 Benefits of Social Media in recruitment**

There is some consensus amongst authors regarding the benefits of social media as a tool for recruitment. The table below indicates the benefits of social media for employers and job seekers.

**Table 2-2 Benefits of social media for employers and job seekers**

<b>Benefits for employers</b>	<b>Benefits for job seekers</b>
• Spreading/sharing of jobs	• Sharing of jobs/ideas
• Marketing tool / Company Image	• Many options to choose from
• Wide reach of applicants	• Effective way to approach employers
• Time saving	• Time saving
• Better match (candidate screening, quality, diverse, passive candidates)	• More chances to find best opportunity
• Cost effective	

Adapted from Hada & Gairola (2015, p.93)

### **2.12.1.1 Company Image**

Social media assist in increasing the visibility of the company as an employer; therefore, the company image as an employer is enhanced (Balasubramanian et al., 2016; Hada & Gairola, 2015; Vyas et al., 2015). It also showcases to the virtual community that the organisation is following the trends of social networking (Archana et al., 2012). A study by Gibbs, MacDonald and MacKay (2015) found that slightly more than 50% of hotels in America and Canada use social media for their Human Resource activities. Additionally, the study also discovered that many HR managers use social media like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter exclusively for building awareness of their hotels and attracting individuals to apply to their organisation.

### **2.12.1.2 Wide reach of applicants**

Given that social media has such a vast audience, the chances of attracting the right people for the organisation and employment opportunities are far superior. Due to the extensive contact network that is built by social media, referrals and recommendations increase the reach to more potential candidates. The company may not reach the right person directly; however, social media allows for reaching candidates through friends and colleagues within their networks (Archana et al., 2012).

### **2.12.1.3 Time Saving**

The speed of online communication is remarkable (Archana et al., 2012). The reduced time to hire due to the accessibility of social media; results in higher turnaround time from job seekers (Hada & Gairola, 2015; Rahman et al., 2014; Archana et al., 2012;).

Gibbs et al. (2015) revealed that HR managers in the hospitality industry perceived social media to be very useful for communicating directly with potential candidates, and for sourcing and identifying candidates. Similarly, a report by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) indicated that more than 50% of the organisations that participated in the study confirmed that social networking sites are an efficient method to hire candidates (Heathfield, 2018). Findings from a study by Hivarkar (2018) indicated that 63% of the participants stated that social media shortens the application process.

In addition, a lot of time is saved because advertisements do not have to be physically printed and distributed. Numerous job portals provide eye-catching deals and discounts for advertising

jobs on their websites and offer many facilities to applicants as well (Khillare & Shirsale, 2017; Narmadha & Nagi, 2017; Yadav, 2017).

#### **2.12.1.4 Better person-job match**

Melanthiou et al. (2015) reported that better quality candidates who are computer literate and familiar with such technology are found through social media. Balasubramanian et al. (2016) added that frequent users or early adopters of social media are perceived as innovative and technologically savvy; such skills are in high demand in the job market; resulting in better quality hires.

Krishna et al. (2016) found that 49% of candidate quality was improved when the organisations utilised social media in the recruitment process compared to candidates that are sourced only through traditional recruiting channels.

Companies considered social networking sites to be trustworthy for criminal checks as it provided a brief overview of the applicant. A survey conducted by CareerBuilder in 2009, showed that 45% of hiring managers checked the background information of candidates through social media (Archana et al., 2012). Emanuela (2018) supported this finding by reporting that the majority of organisations are using social media websites to screen candidates.

#### **2.12.1.5 Cost effectiveness**

It has been acknowledged that social media sites for recruitment reduces hiring costs and improves employee productivity (Aguenza et al., 2012). Rahman et al. (2014) found that cost saving and time saving were the highest ranked benefits of using social networking sites by employers.

Vyas et al. (2015) argued that in terms of a cost-conscious approach, only 15% of organisations devote above 5% of their HR budget on social media and some spend nothing at all, whereas 29% of companies have staff that are enthusiastic to recruit staff via social media. Melanthiou et al. (2015) added that with the emergence of social networking sites in business, companies have chosen to include social media as a tool for recruitment since it is more cost effective and more efficient.

#### **2.12.1.6 Sharing of Information**

Archana et al. (2012) stated that job profiles could be easily shared on the company websites, and employees can distribute the link to various social networking sites. Potential candidates and recruiters can engage with each other in an efficient, easier and informal manner. Both job seekers and recruiters need to act quickly as both parties may have numerous options.

**2.12.1.7 Effective way to approach employers**

Lewis et al. (2015) found that 59% of participants affirmed that connecting and networking with other professionals is an advantage, 51% respondents chose able to follow and friend businesses as an advantage, and 47% chose convenience as an advantage.

Furthermore 43% of respondents associated reaching an extensive network as an advantage, 39% of respondents thought that it enables them to market themselves effectively by keeping their profile up to date.

**2.12.2 Pitfalls of Social Media in Recruitment**

Stylianou (2017) claimed that the key dangers of social media in business include breach in confidentiality, negative company image, reduction in employee productivity, a decrease in employee relations and the increased risk of malicious software such as Malware, which is designed to damage a computer without the user’s consent.

According to literature, there is also consensus on the disadvantages of using social media in recruitment for employers and job seekers; which is illustrated in Table 2.3

**Table 2-3 Pitfalls of social media in recruitment for employers and job seekers**

<b>Pitfalls for employers</b>	<b>Pitfalls for job seekers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative company image</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative candidate image</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privacy issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privacy issues</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of productivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impersonal in nature</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal risk</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High volume of responses</li> </ul>	

(Source: Author)

**2.12.2.1 Negative image**

Based on the findings of Vicknair et al. (2010), job offers have been cancelled, and internships have ended due to negative messages and images posted on Facebook. Additionally, Kluemper, Rosen and Mossholder (2012) revealed that companies rejected applicants based on the

information about the applicant on social media. Information such as inappropriate photos, use of drugs or alcohol, denigrating previous employers, poor communication skills, dishonesty, discriminatory remarks were reasons for rejecting potential job seekers. Furthermore, Stylianou (2017) noted that cyberbullying, which is an exchange of negative messages amongst employees, result in tension and unhealthy work relationships. Stollak et al. (2014) argued that there are risks that are associated with social media. Domino's pizza faced disrepute when employees posted a negative Youtube video in 2009.

Bohmova and Pavlicek (2015) contended that 45% and more employers confirmed that due to checking the online profile of an applicant, they made the decision not to appoint them. Vicknair et al. (2010) support the assertion that the use of social networking sites as a tool for recruitment would not provide a true reflection of the job seeker's life or how they will execute the job. Further to this, specific information that is displayed on social networking profiles of university students may have an adverse effect; considering that they are entering the job market.

Sometimes talented job seekers may be annoyed because they were ignored for job opportunities. As such, they could post harmful information on social media, which may lead to damage to the company's reputation (Balasubramanian et al., 2016).

#### **2.12.2.2 Privacy issues**

The issue of privacy is a major concern in social networking sites. Hada and Gairola (2015) found that some individuals did not reveal their true identity as their personal information can be viewed publicly. Krishna et al. (2016) highlighted that 10% of the respondents confirmed that they received a high number of fake resumes through social media.

Lewis et al. (2015) conducted a study about respondents' attitudes and perceptions associated with using social networking to search for job vacancies. It is evident from the data that 83.2% respondents associate privacy concerns as a disadvantage, whereas 46.5% respondents chose that searching for a job vacancy on a social networking site could potentially damage their current employment status.

Moreover, Stylianou (2017) reported that with Malware implanted into a computer, fraud could be committed, or spam could be launched by hackers via a few social media sites. This may be extremely harmful for businesses and could ruin the businesses networks or computers with security breaches or the corruption of important files. Employees with access to social media

in the workplace may also be susceptible to breach of confidential company information through disclosure on social networking sites.

### **2.12.2.3 Impersonal in nature**

Hada and Gairola (2015) stated that social networking sites are very impersonal where users keep in touch in a virtual environment and do not meet each other physically, which makes it less effective than personal meetings. Lewis et al. (2015) found that 39.6% respondents indicated that the disadvantage of searching for a job vacancy on a social networking site is that it is not as personal as speaking to an interviewer face to face.

### **2.12.2.4 Loss of productivity**

Sometimes recruiters can get distracted with personal activities when using social media to search for suitable candidates for job opportunities. This leads to unproductive use of time (Hada & Gairola, 2015). Aguenza et al. (2012) found that at least once a week, 55% of employees access a social media site.

An independent study conducted in 2009 by Nuclear research revealed that if an organisation gives its employees access to use Facebook in the work environment, their productivity decreases by 1.5%. Employees can easily get side-tracked and constantly log onto Facebook or Twitter for updates instead of carrying out their work-related duties (Stylianou, 2017).

### **2.12.2.5 Legal risk**

Screening potential candidates using social networking sites could expose a company to potential legal risk if the information posted about a candidate's religion, social activities and sexual preferences are used against them. This risk can be mitigated by ensuring that the hiring decision is based on job relevance using assessments and is not discriminatory in any way. There is no legal guidance and legislation for the use of social media as opposed to traditional recruitment. Therefore, companies must be careful about any discrimination that could arise (Rahman et al., 2014).

Like other recruitment sources, this method must be mindful of the terminologies that are used in advertisements, or it could lead to the charge of discrimination. Disney World, for example, was sued for screening the resumes favouring the key words used by whites (Yadav, 2017; Karim et al., 2015; Kaur, 2015).

#### **2.12.2.6 High Volume of Responses**

Businesses often receive a substantial number of responses in relation to a job advertisement. Sometimes the responses are unrelated or from unknown sources, and this occurs when the job advertisement is public as anyone may view it. A lot of time is taken to screen and review each application (Khillare & Shirsale, 2017). Therefore, it is essential that businesses provide as much detail as possible and stipulates all the necessary information that is needed to obtain the best suited candidate (Narmadha & Nagi, 2017; Kumudha & Priyadarshini, 2014).

#### **2.13 Conclusion**

“Social media is beyond Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Blogs” (Vyas et al., 2015, p.1140). Recruitment through social media is targeted as it allows for advertising employment opportunities to highly qualified potential candidates. Social recruitment provides candidates with the opportunity to get a quick feel and learn more about the organisation and whether they will be suited to the position or not (Archana et al., 2012).

Rana and Hossain (2016) found that different authors discovered different factors influenced the effectiveness of social media in recruitment. Wu et al. (2003) as cited in Rana and Hossain (2016, p.68) found that “Information content, cognitive outcomes, quality of applicants, privacy, user employment, technical support, visual appearance, organisation of information, navigation, credibility and impartiality are the factors affecting the social media recruitment.”

It can be argued from the pertinent literature that traditional methods of recruitment should not be superseded by E-recruitment; it should complement each other. The gaps in E-recruitment can be hidden by traditional methods of recruitment (Kaur, 2015; Kapse et al., 2012). In addition, social media is a vital tool for recruitment, as many authors have confirmed that it is being used by employers and job seekers for the sake of employment. While it is hugely beneficial to use social media as a tool for recruitment, the pitfalls should also be weighed when used for decision making in recruitment. The next chapter discusses the research methodology that was implemented in the study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter consisted of an in-depth discussion of literature with regards to the impact of social media as a tool for recruitment. This chapter focuses on the research methodology that the researcher adopted within the study. The discussion includes the aims and objectives of the study, research design, sampling method, and the research instruments that were used.

#### **3.2 Research objectives**

- To examine the use of social media for job seeking amongst UKZN postgraduate students.
- To explore the perceptions of Cosmetic, Legal and Retail HR practitioners towards social media as a recruitment tool.
- To investigate the impact of social media on traditional recruitment from UKZN postgraduate students and HR practitioners' perspective.
- To explore the extent to which social networking sites leads to effective recruitment from UKZN Postgraduate students and HR practitioners' perspective.
- To identify the benefits and challenges of social media as a tool in recruitment from UKZN Postgraduate students and HR practitioners' perspective.

#### **3.3 Research design**

According to Bryman (2012) and Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the research design is a blueprint for a study which offers an overall plan for data collection, analysis and measurement. It provides an operational framework which addresses the research questions through the execution of the research approach. Therefore, in this section, the execution of the research approach, which includes the research paradigm, study site, triangulation and target population of the study is discussed.

### **3.3.1 Research paradigm and philosophy**

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) claim that a paradigm frames the way in which social phenomena are examined, understood and explained. Antwi and Hamza (2015) explain that a research paradigm is a set of shared views and agreements that is conveyed amongst researchers about how matters should be handled and addressed. The research paradigms are characterised through the three main dimensions, which are the ontology, epistemology and methodology.

#### **3.3.1.1 Exploratory Studies**

This kind of study generally starts when a researcher develops an interest in a new theme or when there is a topic of study that is new to some extent. Robson (2002) as cited by Saunders et al. (2009, p.139) states that “an exploratory study is a valuable means of finding out what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light”.

Neuman (2014) explains that exploratory studies are centred on the discovery of ideas and is used to explain views and opinions regarding the research problem by means of exploring information from secondary data such as scholarly books, journal articles, research papers and other available information associated with the research study. It is conducted to collect contextual information around the nature of the research problem.

Since there is only a handful of research studies on this topic, particularly within a South African context, the research is exploratory in nature. Hence, the chosen research design helps to gain more insights and increase the body of knowledge from different industry sectors within a South African perspective. The researcher undertakes to explore an under-explored topic with a specific research strategy within the exploratory research design, namely semi-structured interviews.

### **3.3.2 Study site**

For the research study, the study site is the Westville Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). This site was chosen as it has an adequate diverse population size that is in close proximity to the researcher’s residential area with minimal travelling expenditure.

In addition, the other study sites include organisations from different industry sectors, namely the cosmetic, retail and law sector located in Durban and Johannesburg. These sites are chosen due to the organisation’s diverse employee base, the researcher’s accessibility and convenience

of the sample population. The researcher did not receive authorisation to disclose the names of the organisations with whom the interviews were conducted. As such, the names of companies are confidential and anonymous.

### **3.3.3 Target population**

Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2010) and Saunders et al. (2009) define the population as the larger pool from which a sample is taken to generalise the findings of the study. The target population should be described in terms of the elements, geographical borders, and time (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

A population of two hundred and four (204) UKZN postgraduate students, specifically Honours students from the School of Management, IT and Governance at UKZN and ten (10) HR Practitioners from different organisations across industry sectors were targeted.

## **3.4 Research approach**

There are three types of methodological approaches in research. The three approaches are quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods (Neuman, 2014).

A quantitative approach is a type of empirical research into a social phenomenon or human problem that tests a theory comprising of variables that are measured with numbers and analysed with statistics in order to establish if the theory explains or predicts the phenomena of interest (Yilmaz, 2013).

The qualitative approach allowed the researcher to investigate specific issues in-depth, transparently and in detail as the researcher identified and classified the categories of information that arose from the data (Blanche et al., 2010).

There are disadvantages associated with using quantitative or qualitative approaches. A quantitative approach does not allow respondents to express their state of mind, opinions, views or refer to their own experiences. Hence, quantitative studies lack a human touch. While the qualitative approach attempts to understand how social experience is formed and given meaning, it does not allow for statistical analysis (Yilmaz, 2013).

### **3.4.1 Mixed methods approach**

Bowen, Rose and Pilkington (2017) explain that the mixed methodology approach is also referred to as the third paradigm that consists of two or more, quantitative and qualitative

approaches that complement each other by combining their strengths. This approach provides more reliability and validity in the results and while counterbalancing potential limitations that may arise when using a single approach (Bowen et al., 2017).

As this study aims to explore the research phenomena thoroughly, it has adopted a mixed methods approach which Rahi (2017) describes as including both the interpretive paradigm within qualitative research and the positivist paradigm which is associated with quantitative research. In addition, there are limitations to using either the quantitative or qualitative method as a singular methodology; hence, the researcher chose a mixed methods approach

A mixed methods approach allows the researcher the freedom to thoroughly investigate and gain a deeper understanding of the topic through multiple perspectives. With the use of a research questionnaire, the researcher is able to collect information concerning the use and impact of social media as a tool for recruitment amongst UKZN Honours students for analysis and interpretation. Salaria (2012) explains that descriptive research includes analysis, comparing data, identifying trends and relationships and interpretation.

The use of a schedule of interview questions in the study allows for a deeper exploration of the topic. Hence the researcher is able to conduct face-to-face interviews with and observe the behaviour of HR practitioners from organisations in different industry sectors. The researcher is also able to establish close communication with the respondents when gathering the data as the data needs to be broad, thorough, rich and multifaceted. Yilmaz (2013) described this approach as holistic, flexible or emergent as it sees the greater picture of a situation, which permits individuals to express their opinions.

### **3.4.2 Triangulation**

Mixed methods as a research approach is based on pragmatism. The theory of pragmatism does not lend itself to a single philosophy but allows the researcher to choose either quantitative or qualitative techniques to gain deeper insights into the research topic at hand (Maharaj, 2014). Yeasmin and Rahman (2012) argued that the use of a single methodology is limiting and presents a gap in research methods. The use of multiple perspectives is required to overcome this deficiency of a singular approach.

Neuman (2014) supported the use of triangulation, as it is an approach whereby the researcher discovers more information by considering multiple sources rather than observing phenomena from only one perspective. Hence, the combination of multiple theories, data sources, methods

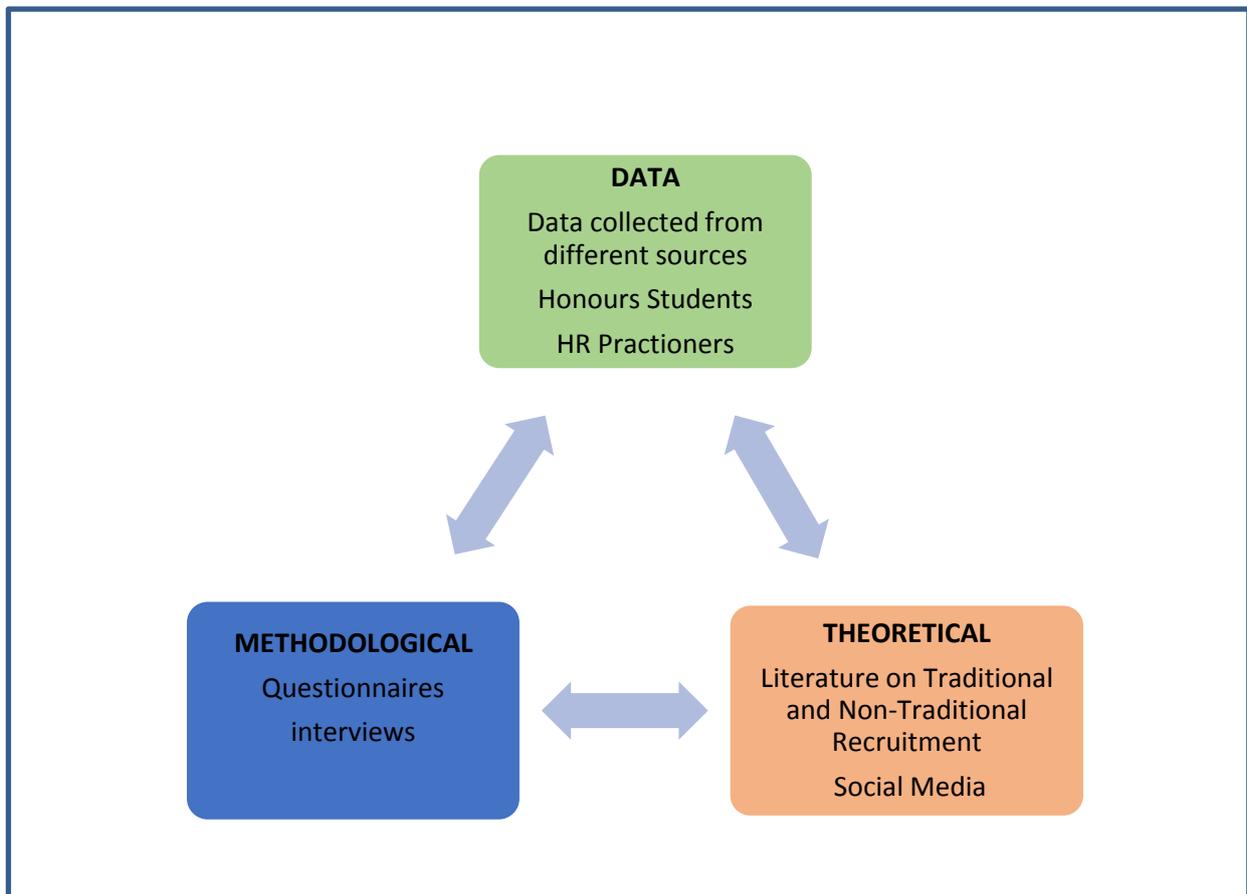
or investigations enriches the research (Yeasmin & Rahman, 2012). Sekaran and Bougie (2016) noted that there is more certainty with the research outcome due to a multiple pronged approach.

The researcher combined questionnaires and interviews in the study as it reduced the shortcomings of single method research. As pointed out by Yeasmin and Rahman (2012), the effect of bias was reduced when two research methods enhanced and validated each other. Thus, the richness and inclusivity of the data minimised the effect of bias in the research study.

Notwithstanding, the key disadvantage of triangulation is that it is time-consuming and costly. It requires the researcher to be well-versed in each research method used. When quantitative and qualitative methods were combined, the study became challenging as two different types of information were required to be analysed (Weyers, Strydom & Huisamen, 2008).

There are different types of triangulations adopted by researchers which include method triangulation, data triangulation, researcher triangulation and theory triangulation (Guion, Diehl & Macdonald, 2002). Figure 3.1 illustrates the interactions between types of triangulation used in this study:

- *Methodological triangulation:* The researcher used a mixed methods approach to collect information on social media as a tool for recruitment by using questionnaires (quantitative research) and interviews (qualitative research). Questionnaires were distributed to a sample population of postgraduate students, specifically Honours students at UKZN, and interviews were conducted with HR practitioners from different organisations across different industry sectors.
- *Data triangulation:* Information was collected from the Honours students at UKZN as well as the HR practitioners from the different organisations across the different sectors to ensure data triangulation.
- *Theoretical triangulation:* Literature was reviewed in different fields, namely social media and recruitment, which have been combined in a multidisciplinary study.



*Figure 3-1 Types of triangulation used in the research design of this study*

### **3.5 Phase 1: Quantitative approach**

The researcher discussed the details relating to the quantitative approach below.

#### **3.5.1 Sampling and sampling technique**

Sampling is the technique of selecting a subset from the whole population to describe characteristics of the entire population (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg & McKibbon, 2015). The researcher targeted postgraduate students, specifically Honours students because they were considered as new entrants in the job market, in search of career opportunities. Secondly, the researcher is interested in the perspective of postgraduate students regarding the use and effectiveness of social media as a tool for job seeking.

The population size of Honours students in UKZN from the School of Management, IT and Governance was 204. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016) with a population size of 200, the appropriate sample size is 132; however, if the population size is 210, the appropriate sample is 136. Consequently, the researcher used a sample size of 140 in this study. Due to the convenience and accessibility of the Honours students from UKZN, School of Management, IT and Governance, the researcher was able to gather information from the Honours students from the different disciplines and quantify the results for statistical purposes. The researcher

only conducted the study within the discipline clusters of Management, HR, Supply chain, ISTN, Marketing and Public Governance.

### 3.5.2 Cluster sampling

Cluster sampling is a probability sampling technique. “In cluster sampling, the target population is first divided into clusters. Then, a random sample of clusters is drawn, and for each selected cluster, either all the elements or a sample of elements are included in the cluster” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p.246). Cluster sampling is economical in decreasing costs because it only focuses on the selected clusters (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

Cluster sampling is chosen for the sample population because the Honours students at UKZN’s School of Management, IT and Governance were categorised according to the clusters in Table 3.1 below.

**Table 3-1 Population and Sample Size per Cluster**

<b>DISCIPLINE</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>SAMPLE</b>
Information Systems and Technology	19	12
Supply Chain	53	38
Public Governance	39	26
Human Resource Management	41	30
Management	35	23
Marketing	17	11
TOTAL	204	140

The researcher adopted cluster sampling because the UKZN School of Management, IT and Governance has a large population of postgraduate students, specifically Honours students. Therefore, the researcher chose to divide the population into smaller groups and then randomly selected participants from each group.

### 3.5.3 Data collection instrument

A self-designed questionnaire called the “Impact of Social Media as a tool for Recruitment” (Refer to Appendix A) was created to achieve the aim of the study. Utilisation of questionnaires is a very effective method for learning about the perceptions of Honours students about social media in recruitment. The questionnaire was designed based on the constructs that were obtained from the literature review.

The researcher adopted a two-pronged approach in terms of the questionnaire design. Firstly, the researcher adapted questions from two existing questionnaires designed by Bamokarh (2017) and Lewis et al. (2015). Secondly, questions were developed from the available literature on the topic.

The questionnaire titled “The Impact of Social Media as a tool for Recruitment” comprises twenty questions divided into two sections. Section A included the biographical information of the participant and Section B consisted of questions related to the research study. This part of the questionnaire is made up of four questions, which are categorised according to nominal scales. A nominal scale is classified by their category or name and does not include rank ordering (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Aspects such as age, gender, marital status, and employment status were incorporated.

Section B of the questionnaire was constructed on the research questions of the study and questions from the literature review. This section was divided into the Use of social media (five questions), Traditional methods versus Social media (six questions), Effectiveness of social media as a tool for recruitment (seven questions), and Benefits and pitfalls of social media as a tool for recruitment (two questions).

Section B of the questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1), (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree (5) to measure responses. Section B of the questionnaire also comprises of two open-ended questions.

A consent form was attached to the questionnaire which informed participants of the nature of the study and ensured confidentiality. There was no researcher interference.

#### **3.5.4 Pilot test**

A pilot test was conducted to help fine tune the questionnaire so that the respondents would face no difficulties in responding to the questions, and there would be no glitches in documenting the data. Additionally, the researcher would be able to gain some clarity on the valuation of the question’s legitimacy and consistency of the information that was being collected (Saunders et al., 2009).

The pilot study was conducted with twelve Biokinetics Honours students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal – Westville campus. The students matched the criteria of the population as they were all Honours students who are in search of a job. The pilot test was conducted to

examine the realism of the questionnaire and to discover any shortcomings such as the clarification of questions and to effect the required changes before conducting the actual study. No changes were made to the instrument after the pilot study.

### 3.5.5 Reliability and validity

#### 3.5.5.1 Reliability in quantitative research

Sekaran and Bougie (2016, p.223) states that “the reliability of a measure is an indication of the stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess the ‘goodness’ of a measure”. Reliability is achieved using Cronbach’s alpha, which is a reliability coefficient and indicates how well items are arranged as well as the positive correlation to one another (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). A reliability coefficient of 0.60 or higher is considered acceptable for a newly developed construct.

**Table 3-2 Reliability statistics**

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.745	11

In this research study, the test for reliability of the overall questionnaire was established by evaluating the inter-item consistency using Cronbach’s alpha test. As indicated in the table above, the reliability score for the overall study was 0.745, which indicates that it is higher than the reliability co-efficient of 0.60. This means that the results obtained from this study are deemed reliable.

#### 3.5.5.2 Validity in quantitative research

Saunders et al. (2009, p.158), state “validity is concerned with whether the findings are really what they appear to be about”. There are four types of validity, which are face validity, content validity, and criterion validity and construct validity.

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) reported that construct validity refers to how suitable the results gained from the measure is aligned to the theories relating to the test design. Construct validity seeks relationships between different theoretical constructs (Blanche et al., 2010).

As the questionnaire used was self-designed, it was imperative to the researcher to establish the construct validity of the instrument. The researcher reviewed literature and theories and

existing questionnaires relating to social media as a tool for recruitment. Thereafter, the researcher compiled a questionnaire that was fit for this purpose.

To ascertain the construct validity of the research instrument, a factor analysis test was conducted. Validity was achieved through factor analysis which points out which items are best suited for each dimension. The emergence of theorised dimensions is confirmed from the results of the factor analysis test (Refer to Table 4-4 and Table 4.5 for which items included for factor analysis).

The ‘Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy’ and ‘Bartlett’s Test of sphericity’ to determine whether the sample is adequate for factor analysis were used. The requirement is that Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy should be greater than 0.50 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity less than 0.05.

**Table 3-3 KMO & Barlett’s Test**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		<b>0,586</b>
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	<b>Approx. Chi-Square</b>	<b>88,612</b>
	<b>df</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>0,000</b>

All the conditions were satisfied for factor analysis. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy value is 0,586, which is greater than the requirement of 0.500 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity sig. value is 0,000, which is less than the requirement of 0.05. As indicated above, in both cases, the conditions were satisfied, which allowed for the factor analysis procedure.

A pilot test was conducted with a few UKZN Honours students to evaluate any errors such as unclear questions or vague statements in the questionnaire. Given that these participants were included in the pilot test, they were excluded from the population sample of the research study. In addition, the researcher obtained feedback from subject matter experts from the discipline of HRM to assess the wording, sentence construction and understanding of the questions in relation to the concepts to be investigated in this study. This was done to ensure the face validity of the research instrument. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) remarked that face validity is an aspect of content validity which indicates that the items measure what they intend to measure on face value.

### 3.6 Phase 2: Qualitative approach

The researcher also adopted a qualitative approach to gain deeper insights and a different perspective on the impact of social media as a tool for recruitment. This phase of the research study covers research objectives 2,3,4 and 5.

#### 3.6.1 Sampling and sampling technique

Probability sampling is where the elements in the population have a known chance of being chosen as sample subjects (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The sample is representative of the population. In non-probability sampling, the element in the population does not have a predetermined chance of being selected as sample subjects (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Non-probability sampling was chosen for this qualitative study by the researcher. Furthermore, a method of convenience sampling was used. Non-probability sampling technique is used to study current theoretical insights or emerging new ones. This type of sampling is deemed to be cost effective, less difficult and easy to conduct (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

The researcher chose to adopt convenience sampling as it is quick, effective and affordable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Convenience sampling enabled the researcher to access participants when they were readily available across geographies to achieve the research objectives. A disadvantage of this technique is that it does not represent the entire population (Neuman, 2014). The researcher approached eight organisations and only four organisations granted the researcher with access to conduct a research study. HR Specialists were chosen from three organisations across industry sectors and geographical locations. Within these four organisations, a total of six HR practitioners agreed to be interviewed and be apart of the research study. The HR practitioners that were targeted were those that dealt with graduate recruitment in their organisation.

This table below depicts the demographic information of the six participants who were interviewed in this study. The information was presented according to the gender, occupational level, industry sector and geography.

**Table 3-4 List of interviews conducted with Human Resource specialists**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Industry sector</b>	<b>Geography</b>
1	Male	Regional HR Manager	Retail	Durban

2	Female	Regional HR Manager	Retail	Durban
3	Female	HR Specialist	Retail	Johannesburg
4	Female	HR Specialist	Retail	Johannesburg
5	Female	HR Specialist	Cosmetics	Johannesburg
6	Female	HR Specialist	Legal	Johannesburg

### 3.6.2 Data collection method

This part of the research study involved many steps, specifically, arranging for data collection, gathering the actual data, examining the collected data and writing down the results.

Interviews can be executed face to face, telephonically or even done online (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016); and can be structured, unstructured or semi-structured (Walliman, 2011). A face to face interview is a conversation between two people to gain detailed information regarding a topic of interest (Alshenqeeti, 2014). Conducting interviews provide direct and deep research as information is shared about the past and future (Pandey & Pandey, 2015).

The data collection method adopted for the qualitative research included face to face interviews and telephonic interviews. Semi-structured interviews were the best option to collect qualitative data as the research objectives were to explore the impact of social media as a tool for recruitment. It allowed the researcher to gain insight on views, experiences and opinions of HR specialists from different organisations across industry sectors.

Semi-structured interviews take on a middle ground as the interviewer has an interview guide with a predetermined set of questions that is to be asked throughout the interview. However, there is more flexibility to change the order and phrasing of the questions, and time that is assigned to each question as this varies on the requirements of every separate interview. Generally, semi-structured interviews incorporate both structured and unstructured formats in one interview. In this research study, the researcher used a semi-structured interview with broad, open-ended questions as the researcher had some knowledge in the area of the subject matter. Furthermore, the open-ended questions allowed the researcher to follow up on questions and prompts based on the answers received by the participant (Dikko, 2016).

Face to face interviews allows the researcher to explain the questions, clear any doubts or misunderstandings and to guarantee that the responses are understood. Face to face interviews or direct interviews also allow the researcher to detect on any non-verbal cues, for example, any uneasiness, stress or problems that the respondent may experience. The interviewer can

pick this up by the respondent's expressions or any other kinds of body language (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The interviewer used open-ended questions as it allowed the respondents to answer in their own way, and it allowed unusual responses to be derived (Bryman, 2012). Additionally, telephonic interviews were also conducted with those participants who were not within the geographical reach of the researcher.

### **3.6.3 The interview process**

The researcher initially corresponded with the Human Resource Manager of the respective organisations and obtained the names and details of the HR practitioners. The researcher then emailed the HR practitioners and requested interviews centred around their availability and readiness to participate in the study. A date and time were agreed upon to interview the potential the probable respondents. The respondents gave their consent for the interviews prior to it being conducted. Before the interviews were conducted, the researcher emailed the interview guide (Refer to Appendix B) to the potential respondents. This provided the respondents with time to adequately prepare for the interview. The interviews were conducted either face-to-face or telephonically. A timetable was drawn, and interviews with six participants took place within a week.

Prior to an interview, the researcher had a brief discussion with the participant to set the tone, and to establish confidentiality and a comfort level to proceed. The participants were given a briefing document on the purpose of the research study regarding the impact of social media as a tool for recruitment and included the right to confidentiality and the use of information for research purposes. The participants were advised that the interviews would be audio-recorded and that their permission was required.

Interviews were approximately 20 minutes long and were scheduled according to the availability of the participants. The research created awareness on the recording of the interview and participants confirmed their willingness to proceed.

### **3.6.4 Data collection instrument**

The researcher used audio-recordings to record the interviews and took notes during the interview. The usage of the audio-recordings permitted the researcher to refer to the interview at any time rather than depending on memory. It also provides storage for a long duration, and it is easy to use (Pawar, 2013).

The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, and transcripts were used to analyse the data using thematic content analysis.

### **3.6.5 Data analysis**

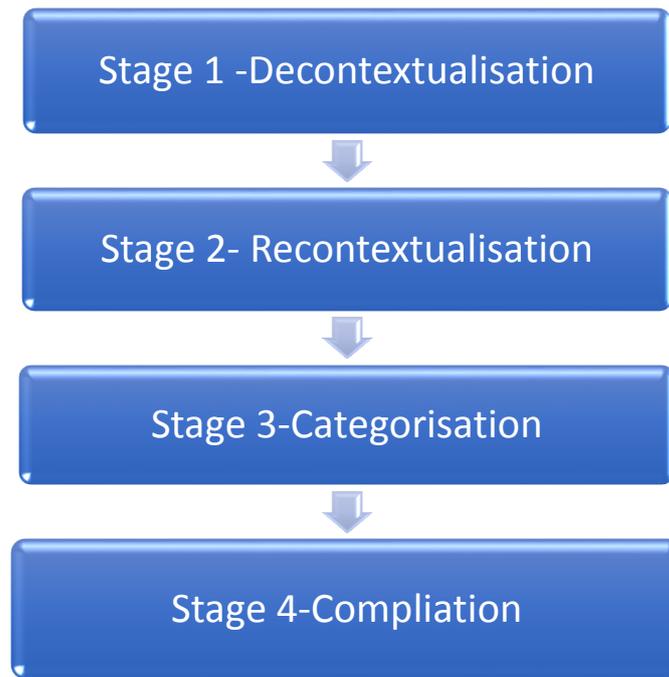
Qualitative data analysis is a process of creating order, structure and meaning to a mass of collected data. It pursues a relationship between groups and themes of data in the quest to increase the understanding of a phenomenon. This data analysis technique requires the researcher to be attentive, and flexible and ultimately interact with the data collected (Hilal & Alabri, 2013).

Consequently, this study implemented thematic content analysis to analyse data systematically and examine and decode real life situations in the method of text.

### **3.6.6 Thematic content analysis**

Content analysis is a systematic coding and classification approach that is applied for examining huge amounts of written information typically to discover trends and patterns of the terms used, rate of recurrence, their relations, and the structures and discourses of communication. The aim of content analysis is to explain the characteristics of the file's content by scrutinising what is said and the effect of it (Bengtsson, 2016). Whereas, thematic analysis is a "method for identifying, analysing, organising, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set" (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017, p.2).

Braun and Clarke (2006) explain that thematic content analysis is as a technique for recognising and examining patterns of connotation from a data set, in this instance, texts. Thematic analysis can also be described as "a translator for those speaking the languages of qualitative and quantitative analysis, enabling researchers who use different research methods to communicate with each other" (Nowell et al., 2017, p.2). The researcher, using the coded texts, writes down patterns and themes that arise, and this might form a codebook (Brough, 2019). The researcher aims to paint a sequence of pictures from the transcripts. Below the researcher explains how the data was analysed using content analysis.



***Figure 3-2 Four stages of analysing data through content analysis. Adapted from Bengtsson (2016)***

Firstly, the researcher read through the transcribed transcripts and got to know the data in order to obtain a comprehensive view of what the participants were saying. This was completed before the researcher could dissect the text into significant categories which fulfil the researcher's requirement to answer the research questions and accomplish the research objectives. As soon as meaningful information was identified, it was given a code which enabled the classification of themes and concepts about the phenomenon. This process is known as de-contextualisation.

Secondly, the researcher verified whether each part of the content was included and was relevant to the research questions and objectives. Important information was highlighted and noted. The other information that was not highlighted was also noted as it was part of the analysis process. This formed the recontextualisation stage.

Thirdly, the researcher had to divide up the text into meaning units and condense meaning units. The researcher ensured that the same meaning of the message was conveyed when condensing the text. The researcher then categorised the data in relation to the objectives of the study.

Fourthly, the researcher had to understand the categories and themes that were identified. The researcher interpreted the information and understood the meaning of the information before

reporting on the findings. Lastly, the researcher had to draw conclusions based on the findings from the data collection and the literature in relation to the research questions and objectives

### **3.7 Reliability and validity**

The instruments that are selected for data collection in every research design, are required to pass the tests of validity and reliability before it can be regarded as good measures (Dikko, 2016). Reliability refers to “the extent to which your data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings” (Saunders et al., 2009, p.156).

#### **3.7.1 Reliability in qualitative research**

The concerns regarding reliability when conducting semi-structured interviews in qualitative research is connected to bias (Saunders et al., 2009). Neuman (2014) states that there are six categories of interview bias which are mistakes by the respondents, involuntary mistakes or interview carelessness, planned disruption by the interviewer, impact due to the interviewer’s hopes and effect on the responses due to the interviewee’s appearance.

- *Interview bias*: This refers to the statements, pitch or non-verbal behaviour of the interviewer. This creates bias in the way the interviewee answers the questions (Saunders et al., 2009).
- *Interviewee/response bias*: This kind of bias occurs from the perceptions about the interviewer, or in relation to the observed interviewer bias (Saunders et al., 2009).

To establish the reliability of the interview, the researcher recorded the interviews by using a audio recorder and taking notes. Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher transcribed the recording verbatim for analysis. Prior to analysing the information, the researcher emailed the transcripts of the interviews to the interviewees to confirm that the information is consistent and accurate. The researcher also ensured that the location that was selected for the interview was safe and preserved the privacy of both the researcher and the participant. The data that was collected was reliable as the transcripts were carefully checked to certify that there were no errors.

#### **3.7.2 Validity of qualitative research**

Validity is about finding out what the results of the study are and what it appears to be (Saunders et al., 2009). In terms of the content validity of the interview guide; the researcher requested the subject matter expert from the discipline of Human Resources Management to

review and assess the interview questions on whether the questions tap the relevant concepts in the research study. The researcher recorded the interviews by using a audio recorder and taking notes to establish the validity of the interview. Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher transcribed the recording verbatim for analysis. Prior to analysing the information, the researcher emailed the transcripts of the interviews to the interviewees to confirm that the information is consistent and accurate. The participants were debriefed to improve the accuracy of the work. All the transcripts were presented in a transparent manner.

### **3.7.2.1 Trustworthiness**

Reliability and validity in qualitative research are associated with trustworthiness and creditability of the research study. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), as cited in Bertram and Christiansen (2014), four aspects enable trustworthiness in qualitative studies. These aspects are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

- *Credibility*

There are different ways in which credibility can be increased in the data collection and data analysis process. The researcher used an audio recorder to record the data verbatim to ensure accuracy of the information received. The researcher attained credibility by describing the interpretation process in detail and by using verbatim feedback from the respondents from the interview as supporting evidence within the process. The results were recognisable to the HR practitioners who shared their perceptions regarding the impact of social media as a tool for recruitment.

The transcript data was thoroughly reviewed internally to ensure that it was error free and that the meaning was not distorted during the transcription process. In addition, the researcher emailed copies of the transcripts to the participants to validate the data and confirm that the results were a true reflection of the interview discussion. This links up to Bertram and Christiansen's (2014) definition that credibility could also be gained when the data is unpacked and checked with the participants such as returning interview transcripts to the participants to verify the accuracy of the information.

Furthermore, the researcher maintained credibility by debriefing the participants to increase the accuracy of transcripts regarding the process and ensuring the transcripts were presented clearly and transparently.

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) and Blanche et al. (2010) found that credibility in a qualitative study is also ascertained when the researcher examines discrepancies in the study. This can be achieved through the use of triangulation. The researcher used triangulation which included both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to look for discrepancies within this study.

- *Transferability*

Transferability, as a criterion is used to assess external validity. The findings of the study can be applied in different contexts outside the study; hence, transferability was met. In order to evaluate transferability of the rich data obtained in this study, it would be value adding to apply it to other studies on social media and recruitment using similar methodologies in different contexts amongst different participants. According to Blanche et al. (2010) a study achieves transferability when the findings of a research study can be generalised to different environments with broader populations outside the study, whereby the researcher perceives the findings meaningful and applicable.

Moreover, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) stated that external validity could be achieved through thick description. Thick description refers to the depth or thickness of the research study; which means that the researcher provides a detailed description of the findings to allow one to assess the extent to which it can be applied to other populations, time frames and environments.

- *Dependability*

The aspect of dependability increases the reliability in research studies. The researcher described the data collection process in detail, how the data was coded to the different themes and sub-themes and decisions made throughout the data collection process. The researcher strived to increase dependability by assessing the accuracy of the interpretations and findings that supported by the data. According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014), dependability occurs when the researcher compares the study with other studies, draws comparisons and accounts for differences between studies. It is also achieved through detailed and thorough descriptions of the study, the data collection process, and how opinions and actions are formed (Blanche et al., 2010).

- *Confirmability*

This criterion assesses the transparency of the research process, with adequate detail for someone else to verify if the same or similar conclusion will be achieved. In essence, the data interpretation and analysis of one study can be confirmed by another researcher (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

The researcher ensured that the interview feedback from the participants was interpreted using the literature of the research study, thereafter, the data was analysed objectively rather than subjectively.

### **3.8 Delimitations of the study**

- All the participants in the study had a good understanding of social media and its use in recruitment and job seeking.
- UKZN is an English medium university.
- Previous studies were done on social media and recruitment in other countries but not in South Africa.
- The researcher adopted a mixed methodology approach in comparison to previous studies that only utilised a single methodology.
- The respondents in the quantitative phase of the study were Honours students in the School of Management, IT and Governance at UKZN and therefore, the results cannot be generalised to the other Honours students. The participants in the qualitative phase of the study were HR Practitioners from the Cosmetic, Law and Retail industry sector, and these results cannot be generalised to the other industry sectors.

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

The fundamental purpose of research ethics is to protect the dignity and welfare of the research participants (Blanche et al., 2010). Research ethics provide researchers with guidelines for behaviours deemed right and wrong when conducting the research study. The ethical code includes aspects of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of participants in research (Saunders et al., 2009). The following ethics principles were considered in this research study:

#### **3.9.1 Autonomy and respect of dignity**

Prior to conducting the research study, ethical clearance had to be approved by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Research Ethics Committee (Westville). The researcher obtained full ethical clearance with protocol reference number: HSS/1760/018M (Refer to Appendix C), which allowed the researcher to conduct the research study.

Autonomy and respect for dignity were established through informed consent (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011). Participants were protected with an informed consent form (Refer to Appendix D), which indicated that they could participate on their own free will and were not compelled to participate in the study. Furthermore, participants had the choice to withdraw from the study at any given point in time if required.

### **3.9.2 Nonmaleficence**

The principle of nonmaleficence refers to not causing harm, either emotional or physical, to participants (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

The researcher undertook this to protect the anonymity of the participants by assigning pseudonyms to participants so that their identities remained anonymous throughout the research process. The researcher also requested the participants' permission to proceed with the research once they were comfortable to do so. All audio recordings and transcripts were handled with the strictest of confidence, and confidence was maintained through restrictive access between the researcher and her supervisor.

### **3.9.3 Beneficence**

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) states that beneficence is when the research outcome is beneficial to the research community. The ethical principle is based on the positive contribution of a research study. The study achieved beneficence by providing more insight into the concept of social media as a tool for recruitment within the chosen site. The recommendations will benefit the organisation in terms of potential efficiencies and cost savings and provide Honours students with more insight when seeking job opportunities.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the research methodology of the study and stipulated how the research would be conducted. The researcher utilised a mixed methods approach and adopted an exploratory research design. The researcher handed out questionnaires to UKZN Honours students and conducted semi-structured interviews with HR practitioners. Thereafter the

researcher analysed the data using content and thematic theme analysis. It allowed the researcher to generate themes from the data and link it to the research objectives and to answer the research questions. Furthermore, the reliability and validity were ensured by conducting a pilot test of the questionnaire, and a pilot interview was conducted. In the next chapter, the results of the quantitative and qualitative study are presented and discussed.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE PHASE

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter concentrates on the first phase of the research study. The main goal of the first phase of the study was to explore the impact of social media as a tool for recruitment amongst UKZN Postgraduate students, especially Honours students. Research objectives 1, 3, 4 and 5 explored this by examining the use of social media for job seeking, the impact of social media on traditional recruitment, the effectiveness of social networking sites for recruitment, and the benefits and challenges of social media in recruitment amongst UKZN postgraduate students.

The research methodology and process that was used to create the self-designed questionnaire for data collection were discussed in Chapter 3. This chapter discusses the response rate of the sample population, the development and validation of the self-designed questionnaire, followed by the reliability and validity thereof.

Subsequently, the chapter presents the results of the study, which were analysed after collecting the questionnaires. The data was captured on a statistical software programme, SPSS version 25.0. This was used for analysing the descriptive and inferential statistics. The following section presents the response rate.

#### 4.2 Response rate

The sample frame that was used was the Division of Management Information (DMI) database. This database contains personal records of the students at UKZN.

The total population of the postgraduate students in the School of Management, IT and Governance at UKZN was 204 at the time when the study was conducted. The total population included Honours and Doctoral and Post-doctoral students; however, Doctoral and Post-doctoral students were not included in this study due to time constraints and accessibility.

The sample population for this study was 140 eligible respondents. The researcher adopted cluster sampling because the UKZN School of Management, IT and Governance has a large population of postgraduate, specifically Honours students. Therefore, the researcher chose to divide the population into smaller groups, the discipline clusters of Management, HR, Supply chain, ISTN, Marketing and Public Governance and then randomly selected participants from

each group. The researcher contacted the relevant lecturers by email and arranged to distribute the questionnaire before or after their lecture. Each respondent was given a hard copy of the questionnaire, which included an informed consent form (Refer to Appendix A). After 15 minutes, the questionnaires were collected from the participants. A total of 175 questionnaires were distributed to the sample population and a total of 140 completed questionnaires were returned to the researcher. The response rate was 80%.

The below formula by Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2007, p.74) indicates how the response rate was calculated.

$$\frac{\text{Number of respondents}}{\text{Total number of eligible participants}} = \text{Response Rate (\%)}$$

$$\frac{140}{175} = 80\%$$

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016) for a population size of 200 participants (N), the suitable sample size would be 132 (S); however, if the population size is 210, the appropriate sample would be 136. With reference to the population and sample size indicated by Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the researcher used a sample size of 140.

The response rate was calculated by the number of questionnaires returned divided by the number of questionnaires sent out multiplied by 100. Since there was an 80% response rate, the results of the study can be considered as acceptable. The next section explains the development and validation of the self-designed questionnaire.

### **4.3 The Research Instrument**

The first stage of phase 1 of the research study focused on how the self-designed questionnaire, named “The Impact of Social Media as a tool for Recruitment” was developed and validated, which measured social media as a tool for recruitment. The steps that were involved in the process are explained below:

#### **4.3.1 Item generation**

After an extensive review of literature on the constructs of social media as a tool for recruitment and adapting questions from existing questionnaires, items for the questionnaire were designed. The research instrument (Refer to Appendix A) consisted of:

Section A: Demographic data (four items)

## Section B: Social media and Recruitment (20 items)

This section deals with questions that were formed from the constructs of the literature review.

The constructs are outlined as follows:

- Having a professional account on social media: one item covered the number of respondents who had a professional account on social media
- Use of social media for job seeking: four items covered usage of social media for job seeking
- Traditional methods vs Social media: six items covered the various traditional methods and social networking sites

### **4.3.2 Pilot study**

The pilot study was conducted with twelve Biokineticist Honours students at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal – Westville campus. The participants made the following suggestions to improve the questionnaire in the study:

- The questionnaire should look neat and professional
- Instructions need to be clear from the onset
- The questionnaire should be anonymous and user-friendly

### **4.3.3 Expert content analysis**

The draft questionnaire was also reviewed by subject matter experts from the discipline of HRM to assess the wording, sentence construction and understanding of the questions in relation to the concepts to be investigated in this study.

Suggestions from subject matter experts were as follows:

- Align the questions to the appropriate scale
- Align the questions to the objectives of the study

The following section focuses on the results of the analysis of the psychometric properties, namely reliability and validity of the self-designed questionnaire.

### **4.3.4 Psychometric analysis**

The two most important aspects of precision are reliability and validity. Therefore, the psychometric analysis of the self-designed questionnaire was done with the use of Cronbach's alpha to improve internal consistency and Factor Analysis to improve the construct validity of the questionnaire.

#### 4.4 Reliability and Validity

After establishing the internal consistency and construct validity of the research instrument, a psychometric analysis of the questionnaire was done.

The instrument that tested for reliability in the quantitative phase of the study is the questionnaire. If the questionnaire is utilized at various times or administered to different subjects from the same population, the results remain the same. The statistical technique that was used was Cronbach's coefficient alpha. This was utilized to determine the inter-item reliability of the items on the self-designed questionnaire designed for this study. The purpose of this instrument is to provide an indication of how well the items in a set of questions are positively correlated to each other.

Reliability was computed by taking several measurements on the same subjects. As indicated in the table above, the reliability score for the overall study was 0.745, which is higher than the reliability co-efficient of 0.70, which is considered acceptable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This means that the results obtained from this study are deemed reliable. The overall reliability is shown below:

**Table 4-1 Reliability Statistics for the questionnaire**

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.745	11

The table below reflects the Cronbach's alpha score for all the individual items that constituted the questionnaire.

**Table 4-2 Cronbach's Alpha Score**

	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Traditional methods	2	0.735
Effectiveness of social media as a tool for recruitment	7	0.844

The reliability scores for all sections exceed the recommended Cronbach's alpha value. This indicates a degree of acceptable, consistent scoring for these sections of the research. Two items were omitted from the first section in the table as it lowered the reliability due to negative covariance. The researcher was concerned in classifying the questions (items) in the questionnaire that were responsible for reducing the reliability of the instrument.

Since two items lowered the reliability, it was not used to test for reliability of the study. The items below were used to test the reliability of the study.

- B9 - I prefer traditional recruiting channels for job seeking over social media.
- B10 - Traditional recruiting channels are more trustworthy than social media.
- B12- Social media tools (E.g.: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) are simple to use in job seeking.
- B13- Social media allows for more open and transparent communication.
- B14- It is very easy for me to find a job opportunity on social media sites.
- B15- Social media sites provide you the opportunity to access a large number of vacancies all over the world within a short time of period.
- B16- I am able to respond very quickly to any vacancy posted on social media sites.
- B17- Social media has made recruitment less costly all over the world.
- B18- Social media provides sufficient privacy protection.

Factor analysis was conducted to test for the validity of the self-designed questionnaire. All the conditions were satisfied for factor analysis. According to Hadia, Abdullah and Sentosa (2016), reliabilities between the value of 0.5 and 0.7 are average, those in the range between 0.7 and 0.8 are good and those over 0.8 are great. Hadia et al. (2016) stated the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) must be 0.5 or higher in order to be acceptable. Hadia et al. (2016) further state that the Bartlett test of Sphericity value must be less than 0.05 to be acceptable. Table 4.3 shows that the MSA values are 0,586 and 0.834 respectively, and therefore Bartlett's Test was significant, which indicated that the data set met the requirements of sampling adequacy and sphericity for Factor Analysis to be done. Factor analysis was only conducted for the Likert scale whereby certain components are reduced into fewer components. This is presented in the rotated component matrix below.

**Table 4-3 Traditional methods vs Social media using KMO and Bartlett's Test**

	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
		Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Traditional methods vs Social media	0.586	88.612	6	0.000
Effectiveness of social media as a tool for recruitment	0.834	379.011	21	0.000

The Principle Component Analysis extracted two (2) components (Factors), listed below, and a Varimax Rotation was conducted to make the components (Factors) interpretable. The results are shown in Table 4.4 below.

**Table 4-4 Rotated Component Matrix for Traditional methods vs Social media**

		Component 1	Component 2
B8	Social media allows for me to find and share information about job opportunities faster than traditional recruitment channels	-0,215	0,764
B9	I prefer traditional recruiting channels for job seeking over social media	0,852	-0,241
B10	Traditional recruiting channels are more trustworthy than social media	0,901	-0,026
B11	Companies should be more active in social media for recruitment	-0,025	0,841

Component 1 (B8, B11) can be labelled as Social Media for job seeking, it deals with finding and sharing job opportunities much quicker than traditional channels, and that companies should be actively using social media for recruitment.

Component 2 (B9, B10) can be labelled as Traditional Methods for job seeking, it deals with the preference for traditional methods and that is a more trustworthy channel.

The Principle Component Analysis extracted two (7) components (Factors), listed below, and a Varimax Rotation was conducted to make the components (Factors) interpretable. The results are shown in Table 4.5. below.

**Table 4-5 Rotated Component Matrix for Effectiveness of social media as a tool for recruitment**

		<b>Component 3</b>
B12	Social media tools (Eg: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) are simple to use in job seeking	0,765
B13	Social media allows for more open and transparent communication	0,677
B14	It is very easy for me to find a job opportunity on social media sites	0,787
B15	Social media sites provide you the opportunity to access a large number of vacancies all over the world within a short time of period	0,797
B16	I am able to respond very quickly to any vacancy posted on social media sites	0,781
B17	Social media has made recruitment less costly all over the world	0,749
B18	Social media provides sufficient privacy protection	0,515

Component 3 (B12 – B18) can be labelled as Social Media Effectiveness, it deals with factors that allow the effectiveness of social media as a tool for recruitment such as the simplicity of social networking sites for job seeking, open and transparent nature of communication, ease of use for job seeking, quick access to many vacancies worldwide, quicker response time, cost effectiveness and privacy protection.

The results of the validity and reliability of the research instrument were statistically sound. In the following section, the results of the descriptive statistics that were used for data analysis is presented.

#### **4.5 Descriptive statistics**

The sample characteristics were established by the use of frequencies and percentages. Following this, the mean and standard deviations were used to interpret the overall responses in relation to the dimensions and scales in of the study.

##### **4.5.1 Demographic profile of UKZN Postgraduate students**

In this section, the demographic profile of the sample group of UKZN postgraduate students, specifically Honours students is presented.

##### **4.5.1.1 Age of UZKN Postgraduate students**

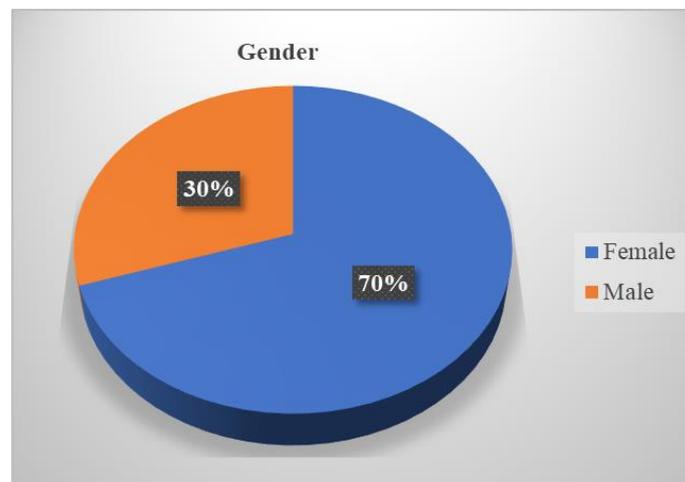
As shown in Table 4.6 below, the majority of the sample (68.6%) fell into the age category 20-24, followed by age category 25-29 (22.1%), and 35+ age group (6.4%). Only 2.9% (four) respondents were in 30-34 age group. Majority of respondents in the sample are between the ages of 20-24 years old.

**Table 4-6 Distribution of UKZN Postgraduate students according to age categories**

	Frequency	Percentage
20 - 24	96	68.6
25 - 29	31	22.1
30 - 34	4	2.9
≥ 35	9	6.4
Total	140	100.0

#### 4.5.1.2 Gender

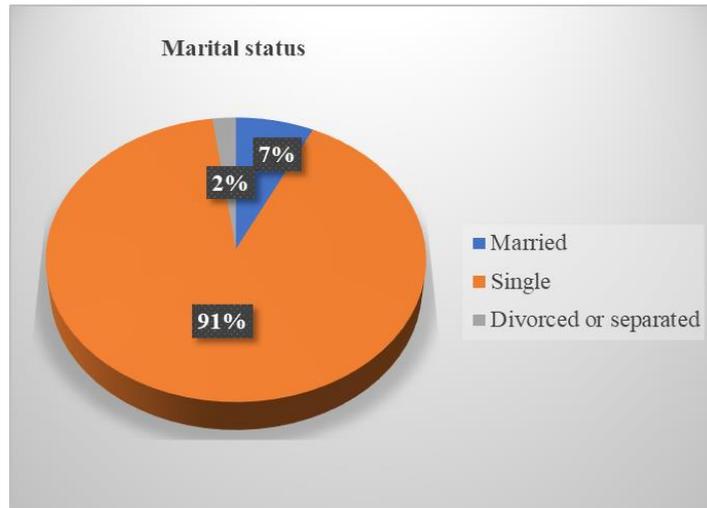
As shown in Figure 4.1 below, the majority of the sample (70%) was female while the sample comprised only of 42 males (30%). Given that majority of the sample is female, the results cannot be generalised to both sexes.



*Figure 4-1 Distribution of UZKN Postgraduate students in the sample according to gender*

#### 4.5.1.3 Marital status

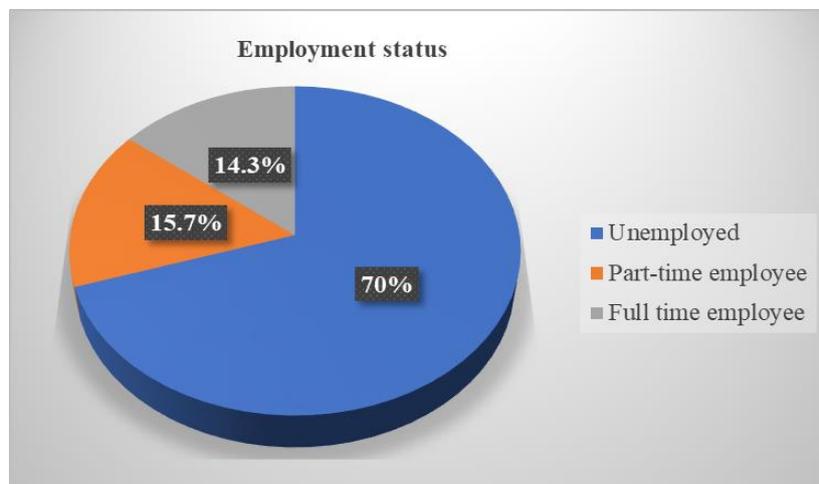
Figure 4.2 indicates the marital status of respondents. The majority of the sample (91%) is single, while 7% of respondents are married respondents. Only three (2%) of the respondents are either divorced or separated. Majority of the respondents are single. Given their life stage, the focus is on completing their education rather than getting married.



*Figure 4-2 Distribution of UKZN Postgraduate students according to marital status*

#### **4.5.1.4 Employment status**

Figure 4.3 indicates the employment status of respondents. The majority of the sample (70%) is unemployed, while 15.7% of respondents are part-time employees, followed by 14.3% of respondents working full time. Majority of the respondents are unemployed, as the focus is obtaining a postgraduate qualification rather than being employed.



*Figure 4-3 Distribution of UKZN Postgraduate students according to employment status*

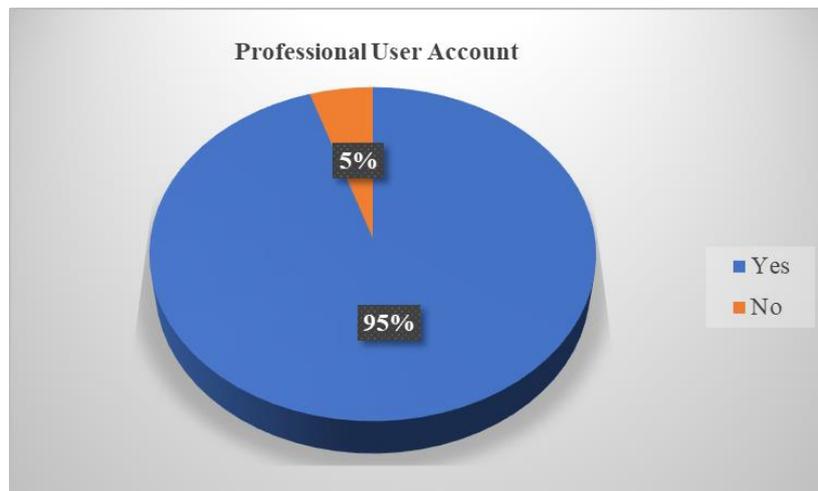
#### **4.6 Results of findings: Descriptive statistics**

Descriptive statistics, using frequencies and scoring patterns of respondents per variable, were used to gather the results of findings for the following research objectives:

#### 4.6.1 Objective 1: To examine the use of social media for job seeking amongst UKZN Postgraduate students

##### 4.6.1.1 Professional User Account

Figure 4.4 summarises the scoring patterns for responses of having a professional user account on social media such as LinkedIn.

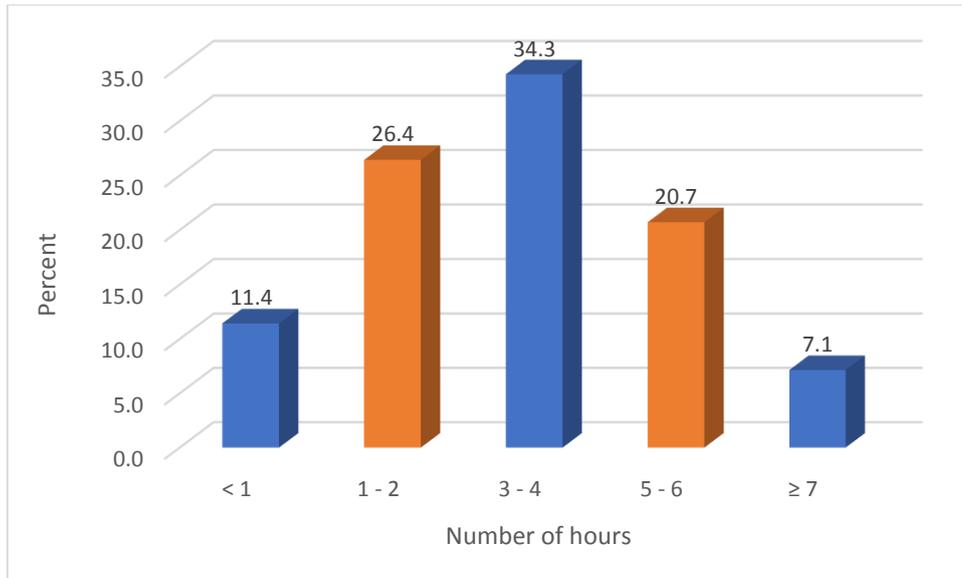


*Figure 4-4 Distribution of UKZN Postgraduate students according to Professional User Account*

It is important to note that significantly more respondents (95.0%) had a professional account on social media. Since majority of the respondents were millennials, they tend to be more active users of social media, hence the likelihood of having a professional user account on social media.

#### 4.6.2 Use of social media

Figure 4.5 below indicates the number of hours spent on using social media sites every day.

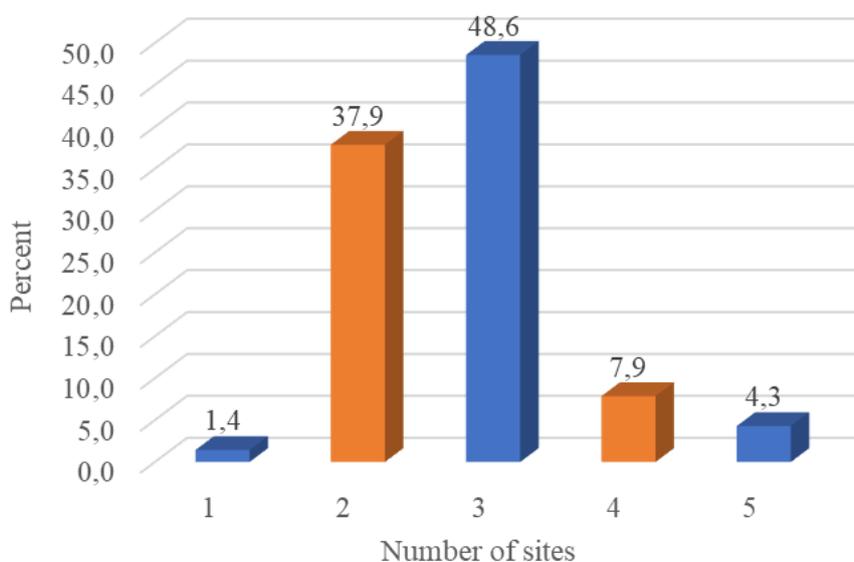


*Figure 4-5 Distribution of UKZN Postgraduate students according to the use of social media*

The results indicate that more than 60% of the respondents spent at least three hours on social media each day ( $p < 0.001$ ), whereas approximately 37% of the respondents spend anything from less than an hour to two hours on social media on a daily basis. With the rapid advancement of technology, more individuals, especially the millennial generation are spending time on the Internet.

#### **4.6.3 Social media site visits**

Figure 4.6 below indicates the daily visits to social media sites.



**Figure 4-6 Distribution of UKZN Postgraduate students according to daily visits to social media sites**

The results showed that more than 98% of the respondents visited at least two social media sites every day, and 60% visited at least three social media sites everyday ( $p < 0.001$ ).

#### 4.6.4 Preferred social media sites for job seeking

Table 4.7 presents the preferred social media sites amongst UKZN postgraduate students for job seeking.

**Table 4-7 Distribution of UKZN Postgraduate students according to their preferred social media sites for job seeking**

	Frequency	Percent
LinkedIn	94	67.1
Facebook	67	47.9
Twitter	16	11.4
None of the options	17	12.1

The results indicated that respondents favoured LinkedIn (67.1%) and Facebook (47.9%) as the most popular social media sites for job seeking.

#### 4.6.5 Use of social media sites as it offers more job opportunities

Table 4.8 presents the responses of UKZN Postgraduate students use of social media sites as it offers more job opportunities.

**Table 4-8 Distribution of UKZN Postgraduate students according to the use of social media sites due to more job opportunities**

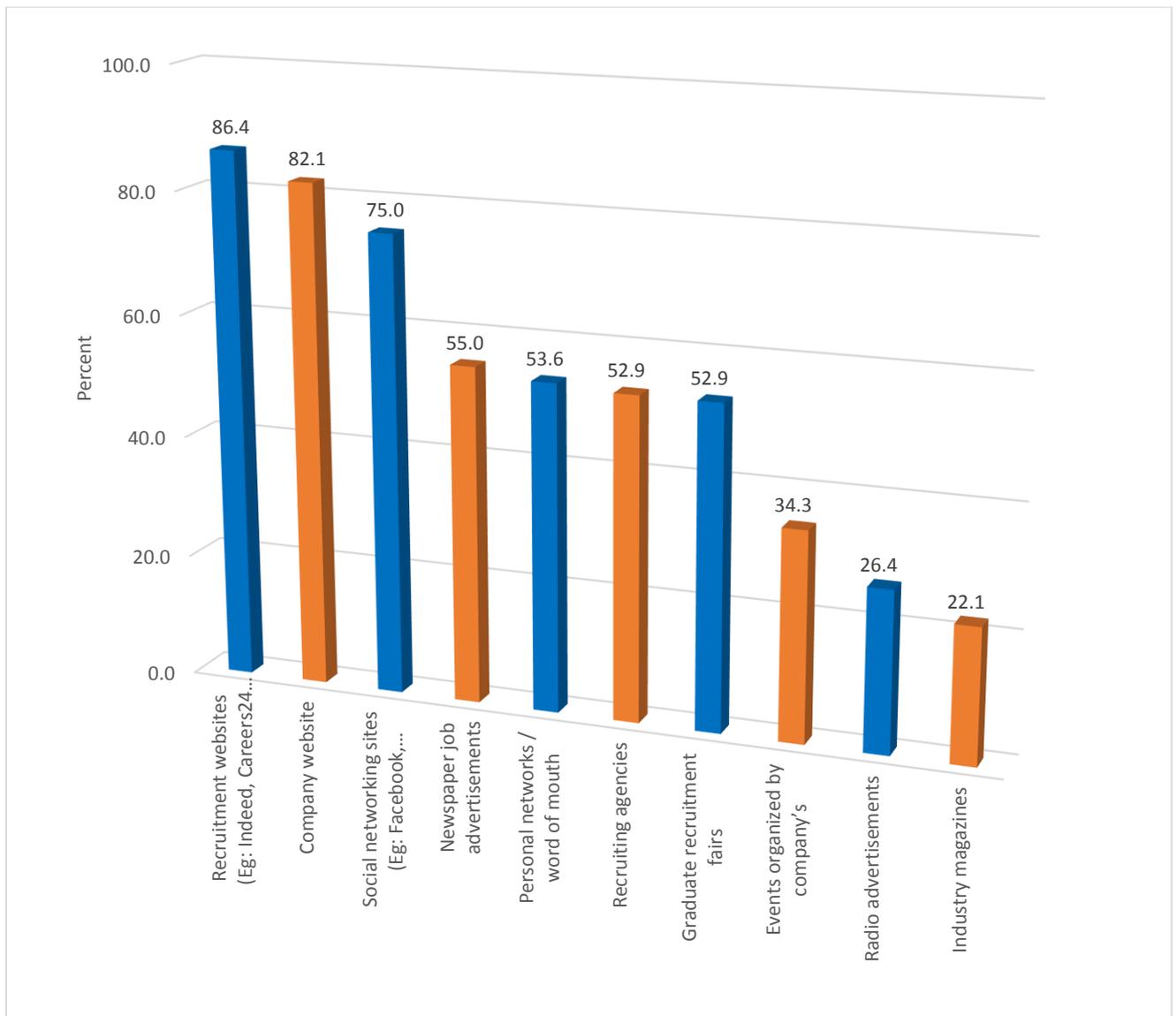
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	101	72.1
No	6	4.3
Maybe	33	23.6
Total	140	100.0

The majority of respondents (72.1%) agreed that they used social media sites to find a job because it offers more job opportunities ( $p < 0.001$ ).

#### 4.7 Objective 2: To investigate the impact of social media on traditional recruitment from UKZN Postgraduate students and HR Practitioners perspective.

##### 4.7.1 Preferences of recruitment channels for job seeking

Figure 4.7 presents the distribution of UKZN Postgraduate students rank order of recruitment channels used for job seeking



*Figure 4-7 Distribution of UKZN Postgraduate students rank order of recruitment channels used for job seeking*

The results are grouped into three categories which is discussed below.

- Category 1: E-recruitment (recruitment websites and corporate websites)

The findings indicate that 86.4% of the respondents ranked electronic recruitment websites such as Careers24, PNet and Indeed as the first choice for job seeking, whereas 82.1% of respondents ranked corporate websites as the second preferred choice for job seeking.

- Category 2: Social networking sites (facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter)

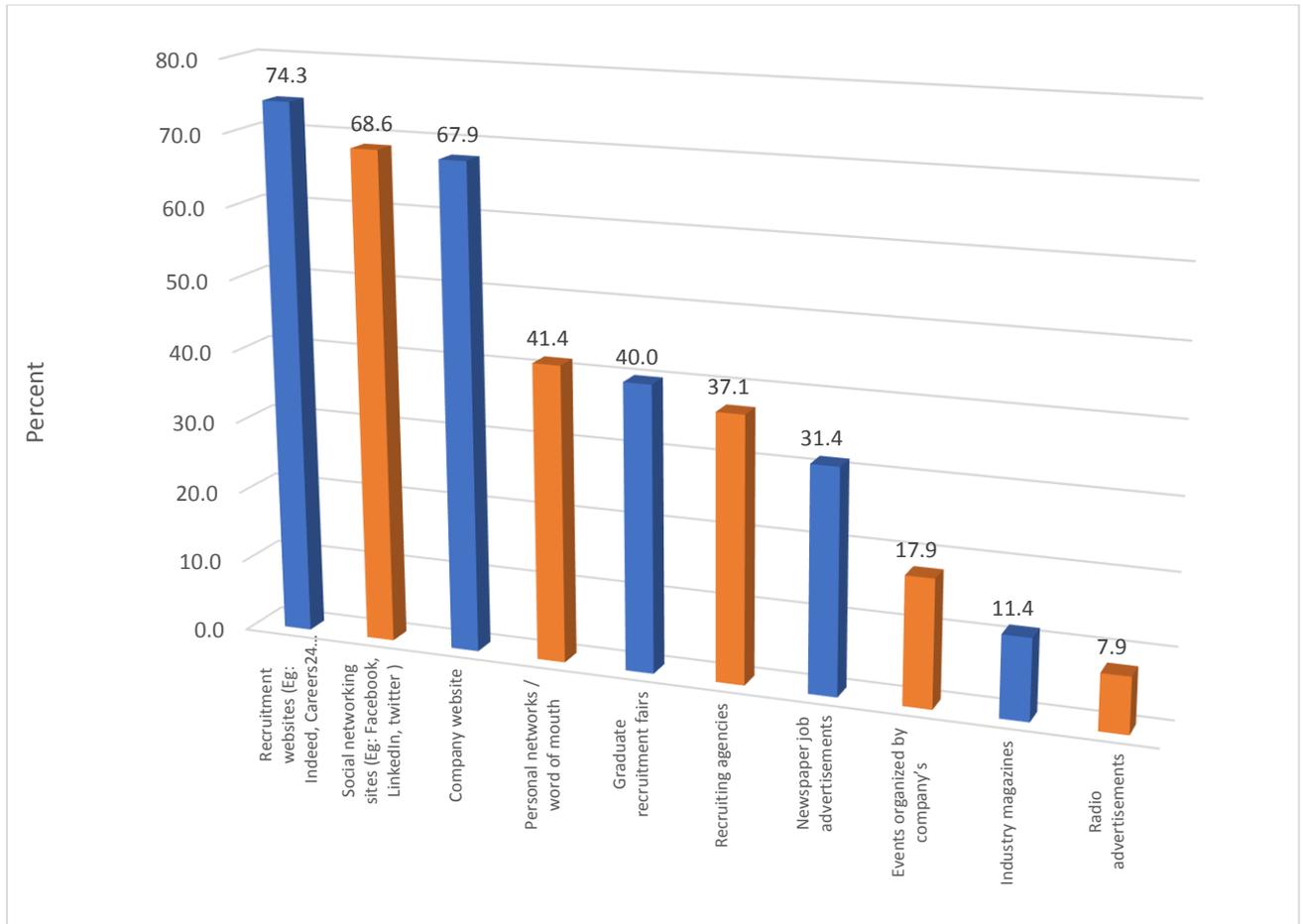
About 75% of respondents indicated that they would use social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter for job seeking.

- Category 3: Traditional recruitment (newspaper advertisements, personal networks, graduate recruitment, events organised by companies, radio advertisements and industry magazines)

The results show that the respondents ranked traditional recruitment such as newspaper advertisements fourth (55%), whereas graduate recruitment ranked seventh (52.9%), and industry magazines (22.1%) for job seeking was the lowest ranking recruitment channel option.

#### **4.7.2 The recruitment channel used in the past and to be most likely used in the future for job seeking**

As shown in Figure 4.8 the majority of respondents (ranging from approximately 68% to 75%) have used E-recruitment websites, social networking sites or company websites for job seeking and would most likely continue to use these channels in the future. Approximately 38% to 41% of the respondents have used their personal networks, word of mouth, graduate recruitment fairs and recruitment agencies and newspaper advertisements and would most likely continue to do so in the future. Only a minority of respondents (ranging from 7.9% to 17.9%) indicate that they used and would most likely use events organised by companies, industry magazines and radio advertisements for job seeking. The trajectory is towards electronic recruitment and social media for job seeking as opposed to traditional recruitment channels.



*Figure 4-8 Distribution of UKZN Postgraduate students recruitment channel trends for job seeking*

#### 4.8 Statistical analysis of the research questionnaire

Using descriptive statistics, the results of the statistical analysis of the questionnaire is presented for the various components of the research study. Although, the Measure of Central Tendency and Dispersion is not included in the research objectives, the researcher has included an overview of the Measure of Central Tendency and Dispersion for each of the research components for a comprehensive view of the research study.

##### 4.8.1 Component 1: Social media

The measure of central tendency and dispersion for Component 1 is discussed below.

**Table 4-9 Measure of Central Tendency for Social media**

		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
B8	Social media allows for me to find and share information about job opportunities faster than traditional recruitment channels	140	1.00	5.00	4.0786	0.84876
B11	Companies should be more active in social media for recruitment	140	1.00	5.00	4.2286	0.78971

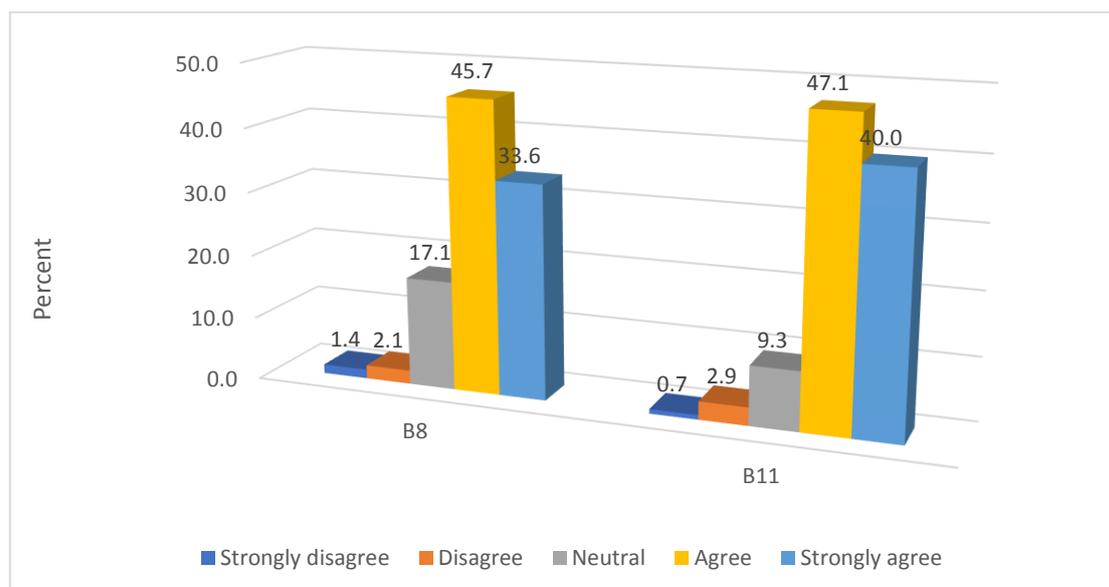
The mean values of the items involving this component are listed below:

- B8 -Social media allows for me to find and share information about job opportunities (mean = 4.07, sd. = 0.848)
- B11 - Companies should be more active in social media for recruitment (mean = 4.22, sd. = 0.789)

The mean score of B8 (mean= 4.07) shows that respondents highly agree that social media allows them to find and share information about job opportunities. The standard deviation (sd.= 0.84) shows a small variation from the mean. Some respondents indicated that they strongly disagreed (min=1.00), while others agreed (max=5). The five-point scale uses (1) strongly disagree and (5) strongly agree. This indicates that while the average response to the above statement is 4, there is a small variation from the mean as respondent's opinions are similar.

The mean score of B11 (m=4.22) shows that respondents highly agree that companies should be more active in social media for recruitment. The standard deviation (sd = 0.789) shows a small variation from the mean. The average response was 4; however, since there is a small standard deviation, this indicates that there is a small variation from the mean as respondent's opinions are similar.

The statistical analysis of the questions relating to social media is presented below.



**Figure 4-9 Frequency distribution of items for Social Media: Questions B8 & B11**

The highest mean score of 4.22 was obtained from B11 (Companies should be more active in social media for recruitment). 40% strongly agreed and 47.1% agreed which indicates that companies should play a more active role in social media for recruitment. The second mean score of 4.07 was obtained from B8 (Social media allows for me to find and share information about job opportunities faster than traditional recruitment channels). 45.7% agreed, 33.6% strongly agreed while 17.1% had a neutral response which indicates that majority of participants would use social media to search for job opportunities; however, there is a small percentage that is still hesitant.

#### 4.8.2 Component 2: Traditional methods

The measure of central tendency and dispersion for Component 2 is discussed below.

**Table 4-10 Measures of Central Tendency for Traditional methods**

		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
B9	I prefer traditional recruiting channels for job seeking over social media	140	1.00	5.00	3.1143	1.09994
B10	Traditional recruiting channels are more trustworthy than social media	140	1.00	5.00	3.5500	1.08173

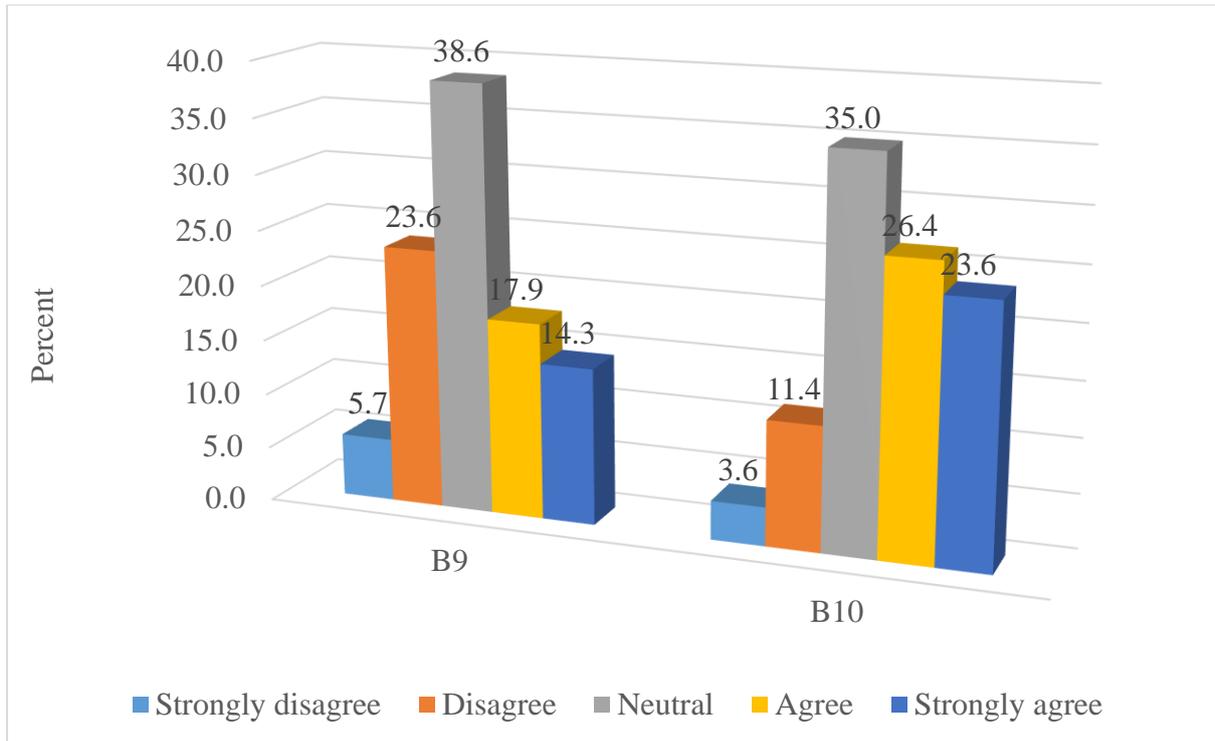
The mean values of the items involving this component are listed below:

- B9- I prefer traditional recruiting channels over social media (mean = 3.11, sd. = 1.09)
- B10 -Traditional recruiting channels are more trustworthy than social media (mean = 3.55, sd. = 1.08)

The mean score of B9 (mean = 3.11) indicates that respondents had a neutral response about the statement “I prefer traditional recruiting channels over social media”. The standard deviation (sd = 1.09) shows a wide variation from the mean. Some respondents have a low preference (m=1.00), while others had a high preference (max = 5). The average response to the above statement is 3 which indicates that respondents were neutral. However, since there is a wide standard deviation, this indicates that respondent’s opinions differ.

The mean score of B10 (mean=3.55) indicates that respondents had a neutral response towards the statement “Traditional recruiting channels are more trustworthy than social media”. The standard deviation (sd=1.081) shows a wide variation in the mean. The average response was 3, however since there is a wide variation from the mean, it indicates that respondents’ opinions differ.

The statistical analysis of the questions relating to traditional methods is presented below.



**Figure 4-10** Frequency distributions of items for Traditional methods: Questions B9 & B10

The highest mean score of 3.55 was obtained from B10 (Traditional recruiting channels are more trustworthy than social media). 23.6% strongly agreed and 26.4% agreed which indicates that participants agree that traditional recruitment methods are more trustworthy than social media. The second mean score of 3.11 was obtained from B9 (I prefer traditional recruiting channels for job seeking over social media). 17.9% agreed whereas 23.6% disagreed which indicates that more participants prefer social media for job seeking.

### 4.8.3 Component 3: Effectiveness of social media as a tool for recruitment

**Table 4 -11 Measures of Central Tendency for Effectiveness of social media as a tool for recruitment**

		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
B12	Social media tools (Eg: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) are simple to use in job seeking	140	1.00	5.00	3.9500	0.96950
B13	Social media allows for more open and transparent communication	140	1.00	5.00	3.7429	0.93970
B14	It is very easy for me to find a job opportunity on social media sites	140	1.00	5.00	3.6786	0.91563
B15	Social media sites provide you the opportunity to access a large number of vacancies all over the world within a short time of period	140	1.00	5.00	4.0357	0.79938
B16	I am able to respond very quickly to any vacancy posted on social media sites	140	1.00	5.00	3.9500	0.96950
B17	Social media has made recruitment less costly all over the world	140	1.00	5.00	3.9714	0.81305
B18	Social media provides sufficient privacy protection	140	1.00	5.00	2.9857	1.08612

The mean score of B12 ( $m=3.95$ ) shows that respondents had a neutral response that social media tools are simple to use in job seeking. The standard deviation ( $sd=0.969$ ) shows a small variation from the mean. The average response was 3, the answers of other respondents were similar.

The mean score of B13 ( $m=3.74$ ) shows that respondents had a neutral response that social media allows for open and transparent communication. The standard deviation ( $sd=0.939$ ) shows a small variation from the mean. The average response was 3, the answers of other respondents were similar.

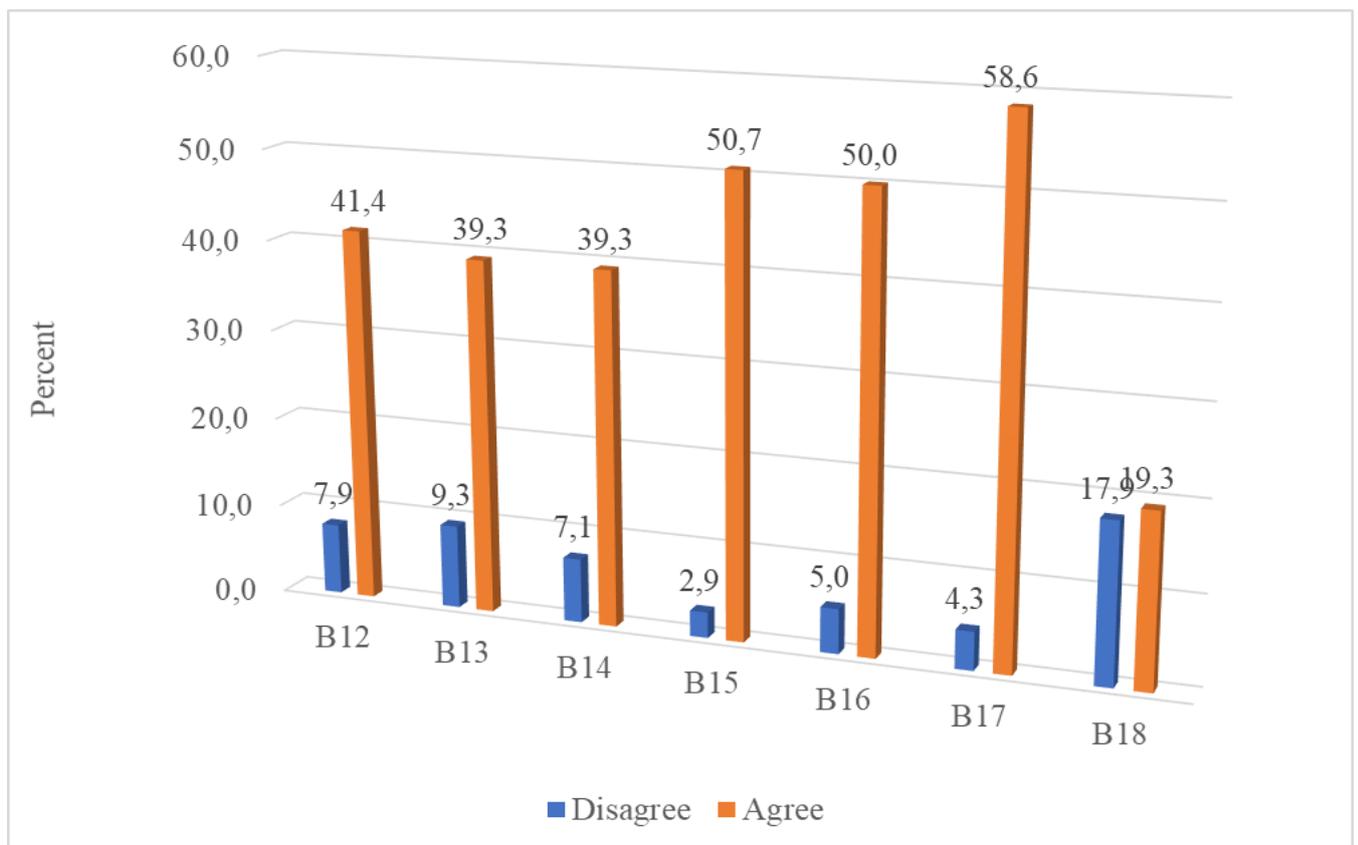
The mean score of B14 ( $m=3.67$ ) shows that respondents had a neutral response that it is easy to find a job opportunity on social media sites. The standard deviation ( $sd=0.915$ ) shows a small variation from the mean. The average response was 3, the answers of other respondents were similar.

The mean score of B15 ( $m=4.03$ ) shows that respondents highly agree that social media sites provides individuals the opportunity to access a large number of vacancies all over the world within a short period of time. The standard deviation ( $sd=0.799$ ) shows a small variation from the mean.

The mean score of B16 ( $m=3.95$ ) shows that respondents had a neutral response that they are able to respond very quickly to any vacancy posted on social media sites. The standard deviation ( $sd=0.969$ ) shows a small variation from the mean as the respondents' answers are close to the mean. This indicates that the average answer is 3 however the answers of other respondents were similar.

The mean score of B17 (m=3.97) shows that respondents had a neutral response that social media has made recruitment less costly all over the world. The standard deviation (sd =0.813) shows a small variation from the mean as the respondents' answers are close to the mean. This indicates that the average answer is 3, the answers of other respondents were similar.

The mean score of B18 (m=2.98) shows that respondents disagree that social media provides sufficient privacy protection. The standard deviation (sd =1.086) shows a wide variation to the mean as the respondents' answers were far to the mean.



**Figure 4-11 Effectiveness of social media as a tool for recruitment: Questions B12, B13, B14, B15, B16, B17 & B18**

The highest mean score of 4.03 was obtained from B15 (Social media sites provide you the opportunity to access a large number of vacancies all over the world within a short time of period). 50.7% agreed and 2.9 % disagreed which indicates that the majority of participants can instantly access vacancies worldwide; however, a small percentage had a more neutral view. The second highest mean score of 3.97 was obtained from B17 (Social media has made recruitment less costly all over the world). 58.6% agreed and 4.3% disagreed which indicates that participants felt that social media has reduced the recruitment cost worldwide. The third

highest mean score of 3.95 was obtained from B12 (Social media tools are simple to use in job seeking) and B16 (I am able to respond very quickly to any vacancy posted on social media sites). In relation to B12, 41.4% agreed and 7.9% disagreed which indicates that majority of participants found social media tools easy to use to find jobs. Moreover, in relation to B16, 50% agreed and 5% disagreed which indicates that majority of participant can quickly respond to a vacancy on a social media site. The fourth highest mean score of 3.74 was obtained from B13 (Social media allows for more open and transparent communication). 39.3% agreed and 9.3% disagreed which indicates that while some participants feel that social media allows for more open and transparent communication, other participants have a different view.

#### **4.9 Results of biographical findings using inferential statistics**

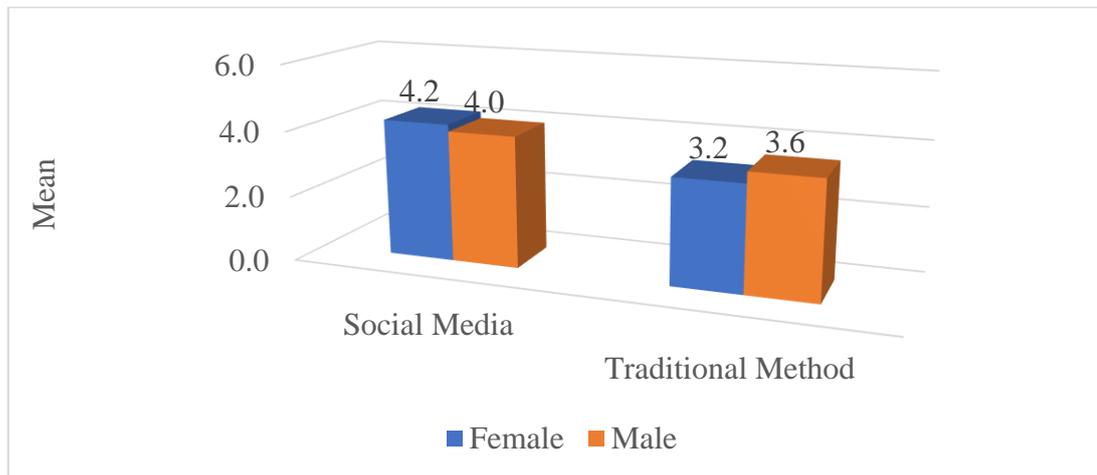
While the objectives of the study did not include investigating the demographic factors such as age, gender and employment status of postgraduate students in relation to job seeking using either social media or traditional methods; the researcher thought it was relevant to include this to gain a more holistic understanding of the study.

Inferential statistics were used to test if demographic factors such as age, gender and employment status of Postgraduate students in relation to job seeking using either social media or traditional methods within a South African context. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test were used to explore the following demographic factors of this study.

#### 4.9.1 To investigate whether gender influences postgraduate students in terms of job seeking using social media or traditional methods

The results of the statistical analysis using inferential statistics are presented below.

##### 4.9.1.1 Gender in relation to Social Media and Traditional Methods



*Figure 4-12 Gender in relation to Social Media and Traditional Methods*

The results indicate that that the highest mean score (4.2) in relation to social media was found in the female category, whereas the lowest mean score (4.0) was among males. With regards to traditional methods, the highest mean score (3.6) was found amongst males, whereas the lowest mean score (3.2) were females. It is evident that there is a preference amongst females to use social media for job seeking, whereas males tend to prefer traditional methods.

##### 4.9.1.2 Social media and Traditional methods between males and females

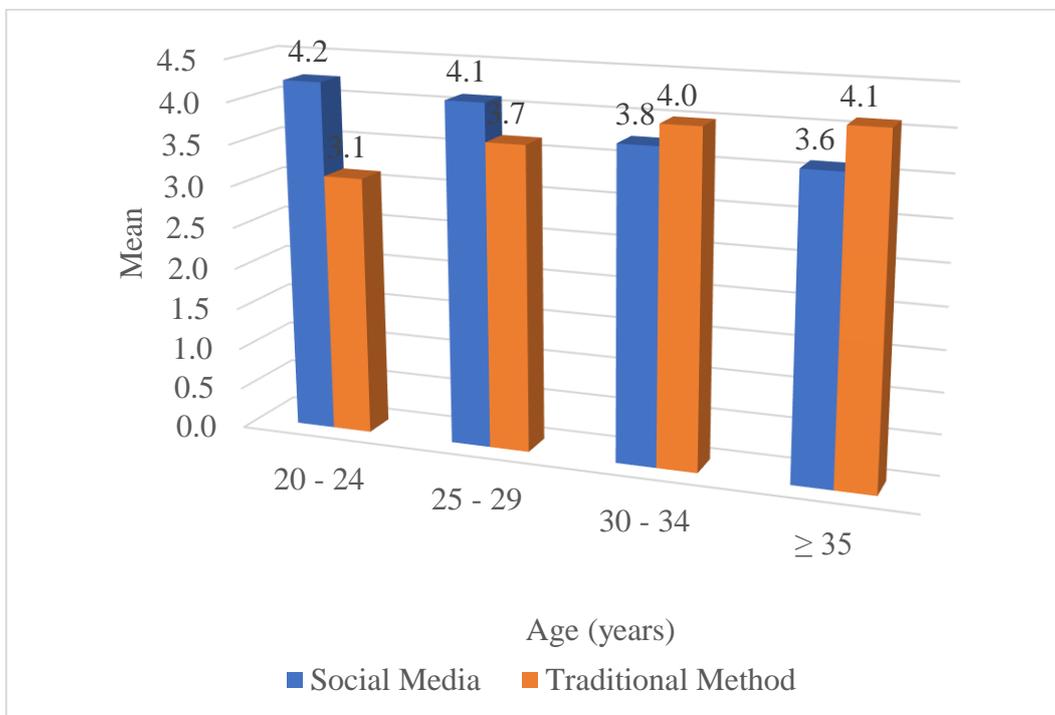
The results of the ANOVA test shows no statistical significant differences in the perceptions of job seekers using social media ( $F = 2.736$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ) and those using traditional methods ( $F = 3.722$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ) as well as between males and females as presented in Table 4.12 below. This suggests that gender does not influence the use of social media or traditional methods for job seeking.

**Table 4-12 ANOVA: Components of Social Media and Traditional Methods between Gender groups**

		F	Sig.
Social Media	Between Groups	2.736	0.100
Traditional Methods	Between Groups	3.722	0.056

**4.9.2 To investigate whether age influences post-graduate students in terms of job seeking using social media or traditional methods**

**4.9.2.1 Age in relation to Social Media and Traditional methods**



**Figure 4-13 Age in relation to Social Media and Traditional methods**

The results indicate that that the highest mean score (4.2) in relation to social media was found in the age category between 20-24-year-old post-graduate students, whereas the lowest mean score (3.6) was amongst the age category of 35 years and older. With regards to traditional methods, the highest mean score (4.1) was found amongst 35 years and older, whereas the lowest mean score (3.1) was in the age category between 20-24 years old. It is evident that there is a preference amongst younger postgraduate students to use social media for job seeking, whereas older postgraduate students tend to prefer traditional methods.

#### 4.9.2.2 Social Media and Traditional methods between Age groups

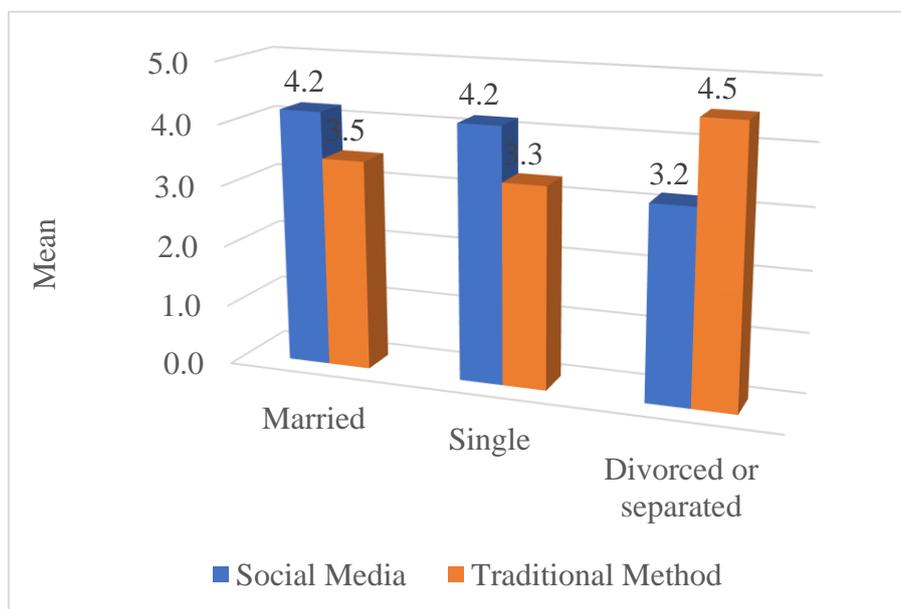
The results of the ANOVA analysis show statistically significant differences in the perceptions of job seekers using social media ( $F = 3.11$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and those using traditional methods ( $F = 5.75$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) between age groups as presented in Table 4.13 below. This suggests that the age categories of the respondents influence the use of social media or traditional methods for job seeking. It appears that older job seekers prefer using traditional methods whereas young job seekers prefer using social media.

**Table 4-13 ANOVA: Components of Social Media and Traditional Methods between Age groups**

		F	P
Social Media	Between Groups	3.111	0.029
Traditional Methods	Between Groups	5.75	0.001

#### 4.9.3 To investigate whether marital status influences postgraduate students in terms of job seeking using social media or traditional methods

##### 4.9.3.1 Marital status in relation to Social media and Traditional methods



**Figure 4-14 Marital status in relation to Social media and Traditional methods**

The results indicate that that the highest mean score (4.2) in relation to the use of social media for job seeking was found in two categories; that is married and single categories whereas the

lowest mean score (3.2) was in the divorced or separated category. With regards to traditional methods, the highest mean score (4.5) was found in divorced or separated category, whereas the lowest mean score (3.3) was in the single category. Both single and married postgraduate students have a higher preference to use social media for job seeking, whereas divorced or separated respondents tend to prefer traditional methods.

#### 4.9.3.2 Social media and Traditional methods between marital status categories

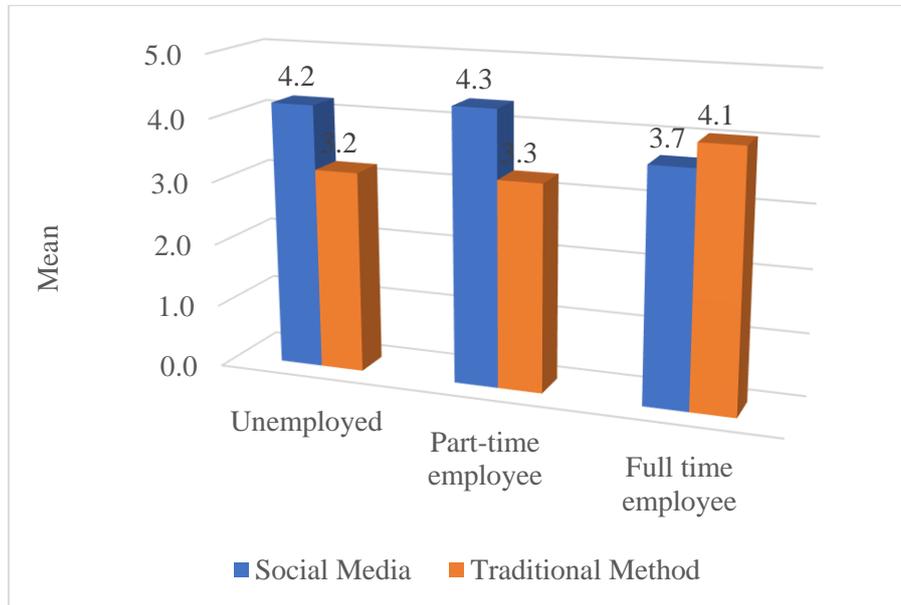
The results of the ANOVA test shows a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of job seekers using social media ( $F = 3.477$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and their marital status and no statistical difference with those job seekers using traditional methods ( $F = 2.386$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ) between marital status categories as presented in Table 4.14 below. This suggests that the marital status categories of respondents influence the use of social media for job seeking. However, the marital status categories of respondents do not influence the use of traditional methods for job seeking.

**Table 4-14 ANOVA: Components of Social Media and Traditional Methods between Marital Status categories**

		F	p
Social Media	Between Groups	3.477	0.034
Traditional Methods	Between Groups	2.386	0.096

#### 4.9.4 To investigate whether employment status influences postgraduate students in terms of job seeking using social media or traditional methods

##### 4.9.4.1 Employment status in relation to Social media and Traditional methods



*Figure 4-15 Employment status in relation to Social media and Traditional methods*

The results indicate that that the highest mean score (4.3) in relation to social media was found in the part time employee category, whereas the lowest mean score (3.7) was amongst full time employee category. With regards to traditional methods, the highest mean score (4.1) was found in the full-time employee category, whereas the lowest mean score (3.2) was in the unemployed category. It is evident that unemployed respondents have a higher tendency to use social media for job seeking, whereas full time respondents tend to prefer traditional methods.

##### 4.9.4.2 Social media and Traditional methods between employment status categories

The results of the ANOVA test show statistically significant differences in the perceptions of job seekers using social media ( $F = 6.882$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and traditional methods ( $F = 6.996$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) between employment status categories as presented in Table 4.15 below. This suggest that the employment status categories of respondents influence the use of social media or traditional methods for job seeking. It appears that unemployed job seekers prefer using social media whereas employed job seekers prefer using traditional methods.

**Table 4-15 ANOVA: Components of Social Media and Traditional Methods between Employment Status categories**

		F	p
Social Media	Between Groups	6.882	0.001
Traditional Methods	Between Groups	6.996	0.001

#### **4.10 Results of descriptive statistics in relation to research objectives**

The results of the descriptive statistics in relation to the research objectives are presented below. The results of findings using inferential statistics are also presented below.

##### **4.10.1 Objective 5: To identify the benefits and challenges of social media as a tool in recruitment from UKZN Postgraduate students and HR Practitioners perspective.**

In the section below the researcher utilised open-ended questions as it allowed the respondents to provide unique and original responses without being restricted to pre-selected answers. All the responses that was collected was analysed on a spreadsheet. As the researcher collected responses, trends emerged. The top five responses from each question is mentioned below.

###### **4.10.1.1 Benefits and Pitfalls of social media as a tool for recruitment**

This section of the questionnaire comprised of two open-ended questions which allowed the respondents to express their views on social media as a tool for recruitment.

- a) In your opinion, what are the advantages of using social media to search for a job vacancy?

In the questionnaire, respondents stated many advantages with using social media to search for a job vacancy; however, only the top five responses were mentioned below. The table below indicates these responses and the frequency of these response.

**Table 4-16 Advantages of using social media for job seeking**

<b>Advantages of using social media</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Easily accessible	64
Fast	40
Cost effective	16
Worldwide job opportunities	11
Vacancy easily found on social media compared to traditional methods	9

Table 4.16 above indicates the top five responses that the respondents shared regarding the advantages of using social media for job seeking.

Easily accessible was the topmost mentioned advantage with the highest frequency of 64 followed by Fast with a frequency of 40. A respondent said, *“The use of social media to find a job vacancy is much simpler and is an easily accessible platform to apply for jobs”*, another respondent stated that *“Social media provides efficiency in that it is faster to search for a specific job category”*.

Furthermore, 16 respondents found social media to be cost effective while 11 respondents indicated that social media allows for worldwide job opportunities. Lastly, nine respondents agreed that vacancies are easily found on social media in comparison to traditional methods. A respondent said, *“Social media allows you to apply for jobs around the world and does not limit you to just South Africa”*.

b) In your opinion, what are the disadvantages of using social media to search for a job vacancy?

The most common responses by the respondents are listed below:

In the questionnaire, respondents stated many disadvantages with using social media to search for a job vacancy; however, only the top five responses were mentioned. Table 4.17 below indicates the top five responses that the respondents shared regarding the disadvantages of using social media for job seeking and the frequency of these responses.

**Table 4-17 Disadvantages of using social media for job seeking**

<b>Disadvantages of using social media</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Scams	43
Lack of privacy/security of information	42
Untrustworthy	11
Data costs	8
Low response/feedback for applications done online	7

Scams was the topmost mentioned disadvantage with the highest frequency of 43 followed by Lack of privacy/security of information with a frequency of 42 and Untrustworthy with a frequency of 11. A respondent said, *“You really don’t know who you are giving your information to and if they are really trustworthy or just a scam”*, another respondent added that *“Privacy is a concern as personal information may be disclosed to the wrong people”*.

Furthermore, Data costs had a frequency of 8 and Low response/feedback for applications done online had a frequency of 7. A respondent said, *“Data is expensive to search for jobs online”*, another respondent said that *“Companies do not always provide feedback on your application as they may receive many applications for the position”*.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the quantitative part of the study. The results of the study were presented. Data was collected from postgraduate students at UKZN. The results were presented in the form of bar graphs, pie charts and tables. Chapter 5 will present the qualitative part of the study. In the qualitative phase, interviews were conducted with HR practitioners.

## CHAPTER 5

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS: QUALITATIVE PHASE

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter will concentrate on the presentation, analysis and discussion of the data collected from the six participants in the qualitative phase of the study. The participants were selected using convenience sampling as indicated in Chapter 3. Data will be analysed and discussed in accordance to the research objectives of the study. The research objectives 2, 3, 4 and 5 relate to the qualitative research. The discussion in this chapter will be supported by the literature review as presented in Chapter 2.

The researcher will present the most frequent themes which contributed to the study. The participants' responses will be presented verbatim to obtain insight into their views.

#### 5.2 Demographic representation of participants

This section presents demographic information of six participants of this study. The data was presented according to the industry sector, occupational levels, age, gender and race.

**Table 5-1 The demographic information of the participants of the study**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Industry Sector</b>	<b>Occupational levels</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race</b>
1	Retail	Middle management	35	Male	White
2	Retail	Middle management	35	Female	African
3	Retail	Senior management	38	Female	Indian
4	Legal	Senior management	43	Female	Indian
5	Retail	Middle management	34	Female	Coloured
6	Cosmetic	Middle management	50	Female	Coloured

Table 5.1 above indicates that four participants were from Middle management occupation levels whereas two participants were from Senior management occupation levels.

The sample size of six participants included all races due the diversity of the organisation. Most of the participants were Coloured and Indian females. The racial groups included two Coloured, one Indian, one African, and one White. The age group of the participants ranged from 35 years to 50 years.

Seeing that the researcher utilised convenience sampling, the researcher was unable to obtain equal numbers pertaining to the representation of each racial group and gender in relation to occupational levels.

The section below is presented in accordance to the research objectives of the study including the themes which emerged from the study for analysis and discussion purposes.

**5.3 Objective 2: To explore the perceptions of Cosmetic, Law and Retail HR Practitioners towards social media as a recruitment tool.**

The aim of Objective 2 is to get a broad understanding on the views and perceptions of HR practitioners regarding Social media as a tool for recruitment. The table below illustrates the themes that emerged in relation to Objective 2.

**Table 5-2 Themes emerging from HR Practitioners perception towards Social media as a tool for recruitment.**

Themes	Frequency of emerging themes	Percentage
Targeted Talent Sourcing	5	83.3%
Accelerated sourcing process	4	66.7%
Increased employer brand value	4	66.7%
Access to passive candidates	3	50%
Geographically diverse talent pool	3	50%

Table 5.2 depicts the emerging themes of social media as a tool for recruitment that were found in the study. Targeted Talent Sourcing was the topmost emerging theme with the highest frequency response of 5 (83.3%) followed by Accelerated sourcing process 4 (66.7%) and Increased employer brand value 4 (66.7%). Access to passive candidates and Geographically diverse talent pool had a frequency response of 3 each (50%).

The researcher discusses the findings by using thematic analysis as identified in Table 5.2 in accordance to Objective 2 of the study.

**5.3.1 Theme 1: Targeted Talent Sourcing**

The study showed that social media targets different types of candidates to apply for job opportunities. These include candidates from different generational groupings, which is Generation Y or Millennials, Graduates and Senior Management.

Participant two expressed, *“We use different platforms to target different levels so like a graduate would respond to an Instagram ad, a Twitter ad or a Facebook ad”*.

With regards to Generation Y which is also known as Millennials. A frequency response of 2 (33.3%) participants indicated that since Millennials are regular users of social media, they also seek job opportunities through social media.

The researcher found that participants from the Retail and Legal industry believe that millennials are best targeted for job vacancies through social media. Due to the upsurge of technology and the consumption of social media amongst millennials; participants tend to be discerning about the platforms that they choose to advertise vacancies in order to attract the targeted segment of potential candidates.

Participant five stated, *“Generation Y... Millennials are often more responsive to job advertisements on social media”*.

In addition, the participants perceive that individuals seeking Senior management positions tend to be more responsive to job advertisements on social media platforms. Interestingly, all the participants were from the Retail sector only. There was consensus in the Retail sector that Senior management job seekers tend to apply for positions through social media. It appears that senior managers have a professional account on social media and tend to use social networking sites such as LinkedIn to search for future employment opportunities.

Participant four remarked, *“In terms of social media, the ones that are more responsive are the ones that are more interested in the senior management vacancies, especially on LinkedIn”*.

### **5.3.2 Theme 2: Accelerated sourcing process**

In relation to the theme, most of the participants 4 (66.7%) perceive that social media brings efficiency in the sourcing process. Notably, the participants who concurred with this finding were from the Retail industry sector.

Participant four remarked, *“...I also feel that using social networking sites uhm cuts down the turnaround time in terms of sourcing CVs, it just makes, it speeds up the process I would say”*.

From this statement it is evident that participants feel that social media reduces the turnaround time of sourcing CVs and as a result this may help speed up the recruitment process.

### **5.3.3 Theme 3: Increased employer brand value**

The next emerging theme had a frequency response of 4 (66.7%). Participants from the Retail and Cosmetic sector share the opinion that recruiting candidates through social networking sites promotes employer brand.

Participant two expressed, “...and therein we’re able to increase our employer branding, we able to increase the number of applications that we receive, and we are able to increase... people deal with us as a company”. From this statement, it can be inferred that the impact of social media on the recruitment process and the employer brand is two-fold and dynamic in nature. Social media recruitment tends to pull more individuals towards the employer brand proposition. Likewise, company brand promotion tends to attract more customers and prospective candidates for future employment.

### **5.3.4 Theme 4: Access to passive candidates**

In relation to the theme, 50% of the participants concurred that access to passive candidates is possible using social media as a tool for recruitment. Passive candidates are not in the job market nor are they necessarily looking out for new job opportunities.

Participant two expressed, “...but also, just in terms of being able to get to candidates who wouldn’t ordinarily be applying to vacancies”. From this statement, participants tend to be encouraged to tap into talent that is undiscovered, nor are they seeking out for prospective employment opportunities. It can be inferred that those candidates who are not ordinarily looking for jobs could be well known in the respective industries for their trade who need to be engaged or enticed with a compelling job proposition.

### **5.3.5 Theme 5: Geographically diverse talent pool**

Attracting a boundary less talent pool emerged as another theme with a frequency response of 3 (50%). The theme refers to the ability of social media to attract a boundary less talent pool worldwide for the purposes of recruitment.

Participant two said, “So, I think social media holistically as a tool for recruitment increases our reach in terms of being able to get through to candidates probably in far-reaching areas”. and participant six mentioned, “In addition, social media enables the organisation to reach candidates internationally”.

From these statements, participants feel that social media recruitment allows for global talent attraction and recruitment. Social media is pervasive in nature, thus allowing for a diversity of potential candidates to apply for positions from where they are domiciled regardless of geographical boundaries.

#### **5.4. Objective 3: To investigate the impact of social media on traditional recruitment from Postgraduate students and HR Practitioners perspective**

With regards to Objective 3, the qualitative research focused on the investigating the impact of social media on traditional recruitment from the HR Practitioners perspective.

**Table 5-3 Themes in relation to the impact of social media on traditional recruitment from the HR Practitioner’s perspective**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency of emerging themes</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Recruitment agencies	6	100%
Employee referrals	3	50%
Campus recruitment	2	33.3%
Social media recruiting	6	100%

Table 5.3 above shows the themes in relation to the impact of social media on traditional recruitment from the HR practitioner’s perspective.

These themes will be discussed and analysed below in accordance with research Objective 3.

##### **5.4.1 Theme: Recruitment agencies**

A frequency response of 6 (100%) participants indicated that recruitment agencies are being utilised as a tool for recruitment. Participants from all industry sectors concurred.

Participant four expressed, *“So, the first resort would be posting on social media... as a last resort if it is really like a scare skill or struggling to find the correct fit uhm we would resort to uhm recruitment agencies”*. From this statement, it is evident that despite the use of social media as tool for recruitment, all the participants indicated that recruitment agencies are still being used in organisations. The use of recruitment agencies is a traditional recruitment method, however it is still prevalent in organisations to source candidates with niche or scarce skills sets. Furthermore, the recruiters from agencies tend to have a more intimate understanding of the company culture and the position itself; and are able to screen out undesirable candidates from the process. Therefore, the chances of finding the right person-job match is much higher than recruiting through social networking sites.

#### **5.4.2 Theme: Employee referrals**

In relation to this theme, 50% of the participants expressed the view that employee referrals are currently being used in the recruitment process.

Participant two said, *“I think employee referrals are very valuable because when you have someone who is working within the company they would understand your culture, how things work within the company, they understand what you actually looking for, and in so doing if could refer someone in their network, they would already understand what you’re looking for”*.

Based on the findings of the research study, it appears that while social media is used as a tool for recruitment, traditional methods of recruitment such as employee referrals is considered valuable, as internal employees are aware of the requirements of the role and are an integral part of the company culture; hence they become brand ambassadors for finding the right person for the job.

#### **5.4.3 Theme: Campus recruitment**

With reference to theme, Campus recruitment, 2 (33.3%) of the participants felt that campus recruitment is an effective method to attract and identify candidates for the organisation. The majority of the participants were from the Retail and Legal sectors.

Participant two said, *“I think Job Fairs and Campus Recruitment is almost kind of the same thing. We are still doing those things. And that really is, that would speak directly to social media because that is how younger generation responds to things, so we would predominately use social media to attract and kind of let graduates know what is happening on campus and then go into a Campus recruitment programme”*.

Seeing that the millennial generation are active users of social media, participants have indicated that companies are leveraging the use of social networking sites to attract them to campus recruitment, specifically graduates. While campus recruitment is a traditional recruitment method, companies have adopted a blended approach to attract and engage with graduates for prospective employment opportunities.

#### **5.4.4 Theme: Social Media Recruiting**

There was a frequency response of 6 (100%) for the theme, Social Media Recruiting. All the participants across the different industry sectors concurred that social networking sites are used as a tool for recruitment.

Participant six remarked, *“Yes, our organisation makes use of social media.... We also advertise these roles on Twitter and Instagram and a link is attached which directs you to the company website... Vacancies are taken directly from the website to LinkedIn.... We have a great response from LinkedIn”*.

From the statement, it is evident that social networking websites such as Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn are used as a tool for recruitment. It appears that the majority of potential candidates have a professional account on LinkedIn, which prompts job seekers to apply for positions. Interestingly, companies are tactfully linking their website to social media platforms which enables a broader reach of potential candidates for job opportunities.

#### **5.5 Objective 4: To explore the extent to which social networking sites leads to effective recruitment from Postgraduate Students and HR Practitioners perspective.**

With reference to Objective 4, the qualitative research focused on exploring the extent to which social networking sites lead to effective recruitment from the perspective of HR Practitioners.

##### **5.5.1 Theme: LinkedIn and Twitter for Effective Recruitment**

In relation to the theme the frequency response rate of 6 (100%) indicates that there is consensus amongst participants across all industry sectors that both social networking sites lead to effective recruitment.

Participant six mentioned, *“LinkedIn...we also advertise these roles on Twitter and Instagram and a link is attached which directs you to the website”*.

Seeing that all participants indicated that LinkedIn and Twitter are used, it can be deduced that it leads to effective recruitment by a large extent. The participants further indicated that success factors were efficiencies, cost effectiveness, attracting a broad reach of candidates and diverse candidates, increases accessibility to potential candidates and in doing so promotes the employer brand. While Facebook and Instagram were mentioned by some participants, it was perceived that these social networking websites are not extensively used for effective recruitment within the South African context.

#### **5.6 Objective 5: To identify the benefits and challenges of social media as a tool in recruitment from a Postgraduate student and HR Practitioners perspective.**

The last objective for the research study was to identify the benefits and challenges of social media as a tool for recruitment from a postgraduate student and HR practitioner perspective.

### 5.6.1 Benefits of social media as a tool in recruitment from an HR Practitioner’s perspective

**Table 5-4 Themes in relation to the Benefits of social media as a tool in recruitment from an HR Practitioner’s perspective.**

Themes	Frequency	Percentage
Cost effectiveness	5	83.3%
Finding niche or specific skills sets	4	66.7%

Table 5.4 above shows the emerging themes with regards to the Benefits of social media as a tool in recruitment from an HR practitioners’ perspective. Cost effectiveness was the highest emerging theme with the frequency response of 5 (83.3%) followed by Finding niche or specific skills sets with a frequency response of 4 (66.7%). These themes will be discussed and analysed below in accordance to research Objective 5.

#### 5.6.1.1 Theme: Cost effectiveness

In relation to the theme, there was a frequency response of 5 (85.3%). Participants across industry sectors concur that cost effectiveness is a benefit of using social media as a tool for recruitment.

Majority of the participants across industry sectors view cost effectiveness are a key benefit in terms of using social media for recruitment. There is a reduction in costs in comparison to traditional methods as supported above.

Participant six said, *“By using social media in your organisation, you save money as it is a cost-effective method to advertise for vacancies”*.

Based on this statement, social media recruitment allows for organisations to save money. Traditional methods of advertising such as newspaper advertisements, recruitment agencies and campus recruitment are expensive in nature and may not necessarily reach the target audience; whereas social media advertisements are cost effective with a broad reach of potential candidates across the globe.

#### 5.6.1.2 Theme: Finding niche or specific skills sets

With regards to the theme, there was a frequency response of 4 (66.7%). Participants across all industry sectors agreed that social media was beneficial as a recruitment tool as they could find niche or specific skills sets.

Participant five expressed, “Well if you go onto LinkedIn you are able to search across skill industries for a specific skill type. It is efficient to search for a host of candidates that are suitable. So, it makes it a lot easier”.

It appears that this finding was true across industry sectors, as the majority of participants felt that they could filter candidate searches on social networking sites to find niche or specific skill sets for specific jobs, which is highly effective. Social networking sites such as LinkedIn offers advanced technological functionalities whereby participants are able to search across different industry sectors for the skills and competencies that the organisation requires.

### **5.6.2 Challenges of social media as a tool for recruitment from an HR Practitioner’s perspective**

The themes in relation to the challenges of social media as a tool for recruitment will be analysed and discussed below.

**Table 5-5 Themes in relation to the Challenges of social media as a tool in recruitment from an HR Practitioner’s perspective.**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Negative company image and reputation	3	50%
High volume of applicants	3	50%
Poor quality of candidates	2	33.3%

Table 5.5 above presents the themes with regards to the Challenges of social media as a tool in recruitment from an HR practitioner’s perspective. Negative company image and reputation and high volume of applicants was the highest emerging theme with the frequency response of 3 (50%). This was followed by High volume of applicants and Poor quality of candidates with a frequency response of 2 (33.3%). These themes will be discussed and analysed below in accordance to research Objective 5.

#### **5.6.2.1 Theme: Negative company image and reputation**

In relation to the theme there was frequency response of 3 (50%). Participants across industry sectors concur that social media as a tool for recruitment may have a negative impact on the organisations image and reputation.

Participant two remarked, *“I think a lot of what we experience now is, we put our employer brand out and we advertise vacancies. There are times when you get disgruntled ex-employees who go onto different websites or webpages and comment on whatever experiences they’ve had and that can obviously have a negative impact on our reputation out there and the way potential candidates view the organisation”*.

From the statement above, it is evident that there is no control over the company image and brand. People have freedom of expression and can comment either favourably or unfavourably about their personal or professional experiences in a company. Negative publicity on social media, especially from disgruntled ex-employees has an adverse impact in attracting potential applicants for employment opportunities. It appears that participants feel that the company image and reputation influences the recruitment process and ability to attract future employees.

#### **5.6.2.2 Theme: High volume of applicants**

With regards to the theme, High volume of applicants there was a frequency response of 3 (50%) that indicated social media as a tool for recruitment could be time consuming. The participants who felt this way were from the Retail and Cosmetic industry.

Participant six expressed, *“Sometimes they can be many applications for a position, and it can be very time consuming to go through each application”*.

From the statement above, it is evident that participants receive a lot of applications for vacancies posted on social media; due to the overwhelming response, it takes time to review each application. It could be inferred that the recruitment process becomes lengthy, impacting on turnaround times to potential candidates and the selection and decision-making process to make an offer for employment.

#### **5.6.2.3 Theme: Poor quality of candidates**

In relation to the theme, there was a frequency response of 2 (33.3%), which appears to overlap with the theme of High Volume of applicants, which is viewed as a pitfall of social media as a tool for recruitment. The participants that shared this view is from the Retail industry.

Participant four mentioned, *“The disadvantages are not that many however you do find really over ambitious candidates who don’t match the criteria but because it’s there, its readily available to apply for it they will apply any way...So it’s just that you get your candidates who*

*aren't qualified but apply anyway. So, you get an overwhelming response on social media but not all are quality candidates”.*

From the statement above it is evident that participants receive an overwhelming response of applications. Given that social media is readily accessible, it can be inferred that individuals adopt a ‘spray and pray’ approach; whereby they apply for vacancies regardless of whether they meet the minimum requirements of the position or not; and hope for the best. As a result, participants are confronted with many applications, but candidates are not necessarily suitable for the advertised position. The limitation of using social media for recruitment is the number of applications superseding the quality of potential candidates for employment.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter presented and discussed the results from the study. The results were presented in relation to each objective of the study, by quoting words of the participants and tables demonstrating the emerging themes. The next chapter will focus on the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study.

# CHAPTER 6

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### 6.1 Introduction

This research study adopted a mixed methodology research design. This chapter aims to integrate the findings of the quantitative phase and qualitative phase of the study, and it allows the researcher to discuss the themes that have developed throughout the research study.

Phase 1 of the research study comprised of quantitative research where the “The Impact of Social Media as a tool for Recruitment” questionnaire was distributed to postgraduate students at UKZN. Phase 2 of the study consisted of qualitative research where interviews were conducted with HR practitioners across industry sectors regarding their perceptions and views on social media as a tool for recruitment.

As the study adopted a mixed methodology approach, themes were utilised in the discussion of results, and this provided an integrated explanation of the results of the study. After the conceptual framework, research aims and objectives of the study were taken into account; the following themes were discovered which enabled the researcher to provide a detailed and comprehensive discussion of the findings of this study.

Theme 1: The commonality and disparity between postgraduate students and HR practitioners

Theme 2: Social media creating generational communities for job seeking and recruitment

Theme 3: The conventional approach versus leading trends in job seeking and recruitment

Theme 4: The pull factors associated with social media recruitment

Theme 5: The push factors associated with social media recruitment

Theme 6: The advancement of technology leads to behaviour change of millennials

A discussion of the findings of the study is grouped under themes and sub-themes. The researcher also used literature to substantiate or refute the topic in question.

## **6.2 Theme 1: The commonality and disparity between Postgraduate Students and HR Practitioners**

According to the results of quantitative research as presented in Table 4.7, respondents favoured LinkedIn (67.1%) and Facebook (47.9%) as the preferred social networking sites for job seeking. The findings support Ahmad and Lodhi (2015) who found that LinkedIn was the most used social networking site for the purpose of job seeking by final year students and organisations.

These findings were also supported by Archana et al. (2012), who found that 36% of college graduates used Facebook, whereas 50% of college students used LinkedIn for job seeking. However, the results refuted the findings of Kumar and Kumar (2013) as cited in Subramani (2015) who found that Twitter was the second favourable social networking site amongst postgraduate's students in Tamil Nadu, India.

Similarly, in the qualitative research, the participants amongst all industry sectors believed that LinkedIn leads to effective recruitment; Twitter was also favoured. The findings were consistent with that of Vroman et al. (2016), Hada and Gairola (2015), Rahman, Arora, and Kularatne (2014) and Lal and Aggarwal (2013) who found that LinkedIn is popular and dominant recruitment platform for finding talent. Further supported by a survey conducted by JobVite, which confirmed that the use of social networking sites as a recruitment tool was on the rise, 54% of employers in 2012 used Twitter, 66% used Facebook, and 97% used LinkedIn to source potential candidates. These figures indicate that LinkedIn is by far the most popular social networking site for recruiters (Lewis et al., 2015).

Moreover, the findings were also supported by Villeda and McCamey (2019, p.69), they asserted that according to LinkedIn's website, "two new members joined every two seconds throughout 200 countries". Additionally, the findings of the research study supported the findings of Villeda and McCamey (2019) where Fortune 500 companies showed that 60% of job applicants used Twitter; and more than 70% use it to search for vacancies in and more than 50% follow companies.

Evidence both from the study and literature showed that LinkedIn is the preferred social networking site used by postgraduate students for job seeking and HR Practitioners as a tool for recruitment. However, a disconnect exists in terms of alternative social networking sites used by postgraduate students and HR practitioners. Facebook is the second favoured site by

postgraduate students for job seeking, whereas HR practitioners favoured Twitter to attract and source candidates for employment opportunities.

### **6.3 Theme 2: Social media creating generational communities for job seeking and recruitment**

According to the results of the quantitative research as shown in Table 4.8, the majority of the sample were millennials or generation Y, and 72.1% of the respondents agreed that they use social media sites for job seeking because it offers more job opportunities.

In comparison to the qualitative study, the findings indicate that social media recruiting targets candidates from different generational groupings, namely generation Y or millennials, graduates and senior management. The majority of the participants (83.3%) across industry sectors concur that social media is predominately used to attract and recruit graduates, while one-third of the respondents indicated that since generation Y or millennials are regular users of social media, they also seek job opportunities through social media. The participants also believed that individuals seeking senior management positions tend to be more responsive to job advertisements on social media platforms.

These findings supported the results of Vyas et al. (2015) and Hasan et al. (2018). Vyas et al. (2015) indicated that 96.25% of final year students were spending a considerable amount of time accessing the Internet daily in search of job opportunities. Hasan et al. (2018) found that in a study conducted by Potentialpark, 48% of graduates chose to find their potential job through social media. Subsequently, Generation Y choose online sites for job seeking because it offers increased opportunities to become connected with a broad range of professionals, graduates and skilled individuals (Hasan et al., 2018). Additionally, the research findings were consistent with that of Krishna et al. (2016) who found that millennials are vital players in the job market, and they are changing the recruitment landscape. Hence the main focus is to interact and attract these candidates through social media. In further support of the research findings, statistics indicate that 73% of millennials found their last job through a social media platform (Villeda & McCamey, 2019) and Stollak et al. (2014) found that 64% of millennials enquired about the company's social media policy during a job interview.

Subsequently, the research findings regarding the senior management grouping were consistent with the findings of Houran (2017) and Balasubramanian et al. (2016) they found that social media enabled the search for candidates for managerial positions. Houran (2017) showed that

LinkedIn is primarily used to recruit candidates for key management positions at Senior (87%) and Middle management levels (80%), but it is very seldom used for Entry level positions (8%).

#### **6.4 Theme 3: The conventional approach versus leading trends in job seeking and recruitment**

As shown in Figure 4.7 of the quantitative research, the findings are categorised in terms of fresh and traditional approaches to job seeking. The majority (86.4%) of the respondents ranked electronic recruitment websites such as Careers24, PNet and Indeed as the first choice for job seeking, whereas 82.1% of respondents ranked corporate websites as the second preferred choice for job seeking. According to Figure 4.8, the majority of respondents (ranging from 68% to 75%) have used E-recruitment websites, social networking sites or company websites for job seeking and would most likely continue to use these channels in the future. These findings of the quantitative research refuted the findings of Wright (2011) who revealed that while passive approaches to recruitment, such as advertising on company websites were rapidly declining, in 2009 it was reported that the recruitment website Monster.com saw a 31% drop in revenue (Lewis et al., 2015).

Notwithstanding the statistics, approximately 75% of the postgraduate students indicated that they would use social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter for job seeking. Further to this, the findings showed that respondents ranked traditional recruitment agencies and graduate recruitment received equal preferences (52.9%), whereas industry magazines (22.1%) for job seeking was the lowest ranking recruitment channel option.

These findings support Singh (2017) and Nigel Wright Recruitment (2011), as cited in Hasan et al. (2018) who found that 50% of the job seekers in the UK use social media to search for job opportunities. The findings were supported by Hivarkar (2018) who found that that 87.5% of HR practitioners in Pune city, India use social media for recruitment and 93.5% of them agreed that social media is a beneficial tool for recruitment. The findings are also supported by the findings of Vyas et al. (2015) and Villeda and McCamey (2019). Vyas et al. (2015) found that 96.25% of final year students are spending plenty of time accessing the Internet daily in search of job opportunities. Subsequently, Villeda and McCamey (2019) found the importance of using social media to attract millennials as traditional methods such as radio and television do not grasp the anticipated audience.

The findings of the quantitative research study supported this trend where it was found that approximately 38% to 41% of postgraduate students have used their personal networks, word of mouth, graduate recruitment fairs and recruitment agencies and newspaper advertisements, and would most likely continue to do so in the future for job seeking. Only a minority of respondents (ranging from 7.9% to 17.9%) indicate that they used and would most likely use events organised by companies, industry magazines and radio advertisements for job seeking. The trend is towards electronic recruitment and social media for job seeking as opposed to traditional recruitment channels.

The quantitative findings were supported by the findings of Lakshmi (2014) who reported that newspaper advertisements and college recruiting programmes were the least effective methods to source candidates, whereas employee referral programmes were highly effective in sourcing quality candidates followed by social professional networks and company career websites in 2013. Further supporting evidence includes the findings of Vyas et al. (2015), who found that only 3.75% of final year students are dependent on campus recruitment than social media recruitment.

Contrary to this, the research findings refuted the findings of Egbert et al. (2009) in Tanzania as cited in Mwashia (2013), who found that advertisements in newspapers and magazines were 84.6%. Further contradictory evidence was found by Yadav and Kumar (2014) in India who found that campus recruitment has become increasingly popular amongst organisations. While campus recruitment at universities was a costly process; it was nonetheless an attractive option to find talent, especially for global organisations, to leverage their competitive advantage.

In comparison to the findings of the qualitative research, there were consistent findings between postgraduate students and HR Practitioners that social networking sites were the preferred choice for recruitment. In addition, the use of recruitment agencies as a tool for recruitment is also favoured amongst HR Practitioners. Nonetheless, 50% of HR Practitioners indicated that employee referrals were used in the recruitment process, whereas only one-third of the participants felt that campus recruitment is an effective method to attract and identify candidates for the organisation.

These findings were supported by Rahman et al. (2014) who found that traditional recruitment methods are still being used despite the increased usage of social media in recruitment, for example, job boards and recruitment agencies. In addition, Yadav and Kumar (2014) pointed

out that recruitment agencies are predominately utilised for managerial and executive positions due to the accessibility to a wider professional network and steadfastness.

Nevertheless, the findings of the qualitative research were supported by multiple authors. The findings of Masa'd (2015) showed that HR departments of companies in the Middle East indicate that social networking sites are trending as a tool for recruitment. The majority of the organisations surveyed used LinkedIn for recruiting whereas only 17% of companies used social community sites such as Facebook. Further supporting evidence include the findings of Rahman et al., (2014) who found that 76% of the companies in Auckland, New Zealand use social media to recruit employees, of which 60% of the companies belonged to the private sector.

Furthermore, regarding the component traditional methods as shown in Table 4.4 results of B9 illustrated that 17.9% of postgraduate students agreed to the statement "I prefer traditional recruiting channels for job seeking over social media", whereas 38.6% provided a neutral response and 23.6% disagreed. The mean score of B9 (mean = 3.11, sd. =1.09) indicates that respondents had a neutral response to the statement "I prefer traditional recruiting channels over social media".

This finding of B9 "I prefer traditional recruiting channels for job seeking over social media", is consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Potentialpark with 30 000 university graduates as cited in Hasan et al. (2018), which revealed that 48% of university graduates preferred to find their potential job through social media. Additionally, many researchers have agreed that traditional recruitment is restrictive thus limiting the number of suitable candidates for vacant positions (Khillare & Shirsale, 2017; Narmadha & Nagi, 2017).

Based on the findings of the quantitative and qualitative approaches, social media is trending as the preferred choice for job seeking amongst Postgraduate students and as a tool for recruitment amongst HR practitioners. There appears a downward trajectory for traditional approaches, with the exception of recruitment agencies which is still popular amongst HR practitioners for recruitment to find candidates with niche or scarce skills, and senior management roles.

The research findings were supported Kaur (2015) who found that electronic recruitment methods are more popular than traditional recruitment methods, indicating that 66% of HR

professionals said that the jobs section of their own company’s website was used as a recruitment tool for most jobs.

## 6.5 Theme 4: The pull factors associated with social media recruitment

The following table illustrates the pull factors associated with social media recruitment.

**Table 6-1 The subthemes of the pull factors associated with social media recruitment.**

Number of Sub themes	Sub theme
Sub theme 1	Cost effectiveness
Sub theme 2	Accelerated recruitment
Sub theme 3	Employer branding as a competitive advantage
Sub theme 4	Global talent sourcing

### 6.5.1 Sub theme 1: Cost effectiveness

The results of the component Social media, item B17 in the quantitative research, indicated that 58.6% of respondents agreed to the statement “Social media has made recruitment less costly all over the world”, 12.9% provided a neutral response and 4.3% disagreed. The mean score of B17 ( $m=3.97$ ,  $sd. = 0,813$ ) indicated that respondents had a neutral response regarding the statement.

The findings of the social media component, B17 were supported by multiple authors. In a study conducted by Eisele (2006) in Aguenza et al. (2012) on the use of Internet as a tool for recruitment with 1000 of the largest companies in Germany, revealed that 67% of employers indicated an improvement in the recruitment process and 49% of organisations experienced a reduction in recruitment costs.

Sharma (2014) further affirmed that online recruitment methods were often less expensive in comparison to traditional recruitment methods. Cost effectiveness is the main factor for executing the E-recruitment approach. Aguenza et al. (2012) found that the use of any online recruitment reduces the hiring cost by 87%, whereas Kumudha and Priyadarshini (2014) supported the previous studies by claiming that online recruitment could save 90% of hiring costs in comparison to traditional recruitment.

In the qualitative research, the majority of the HR practitioners (85.3%) across industry sectors concurred that cost effectiveness was a huge benefit of using social media as a tool for

recruitment. Many authors support the research finding. According to Hada and Gairola (2015), Ahmad and Lodhi (2015) and Emanuela (2018), social media is more effective for recruitment. Further supporting evidence was found by Melanthiou et al. (2015) and Singh (2017) who asserted that online recruitment methods are cheaper in comparison to traditional recruitment methods.

It appears that the participants across industry sectors view cost effectiveness as a key benefit in terms of using social media for recruitment. There is a cost reduction in comparison to traditional methods as supported above.

### **6.5.2 Sub theme 2: Accelerated recruitment**

In relation to this sub theme, most of the participants (66.7%) perceive that social media brings efficiency in the recruitment process. This finding was true across industry sectors, as participants feel that it can filter candidate searches on social networking sites, and it reduces the turnaround time to find prospective candidates for jobs.

Both the qualitative and quantitative findings are consistent. The quantitative results on the component on Social media item B8, showed that 45.7% of the respondents agreed, 33.6% strongly agreed that “Social media allows for me to find and share information about job opportunities faster than traditional recruitment channels”, whereas 17.1% of respondents provided a neutral response and 2.1% disagreed. The mean score of B8 (mean= 4.07, sd. = 0.84) was high, as more respondents agreed with the statement.

The qualitative research findings were supported by a report done by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), which indicated that more than 50% of organisations confirmed that the utilisation of social networking sites is an efficient method to hire candidates (Heathfield, 2018). Similarly, a study by Workforce (2000) indicated that online recruiting is proven to be up to 30% faster than other traditional methods of recruitment (Kroeze, 2015). From a recruiter perspective, E-recruitment enables the filtering of unqualified and unsuitable candidates which yields a 60% saving of recruiting time. This is a much quicker and efficient method of recruitment. Melanthiou et al. (2015) agreed that with the emergence of social networking sites in business, companies have chosen to include social media as a tool for recruitment as it is more cost effective and more efficient.

The findings of B8 “Social media allows for me to find and share information about job opportunities faster than traditional recruitment channels” indicated that 45.7% of the

respondents agreed with the statement. This finding is supported by multiple authors. Archana et al. (2012) found that job profiles can be easily shared on the company websites and employees can distribute the link to various social networking sites. Potential candidates and recruiters can engage with each other in an efficient, easier and informal manner. Both job seekers and recruiters need to act quickly as both parties may have numerous options to choose from. Additionally, Zin et al. (2016) and Kaur (2015), Kumudha and Priyadarshini (2014) found that E-recruitment was on average 70% faster than traditional hiring recruitment methods; and the findings of Singh (2017) indicated that in recent times more than 97% job seekers use the Internet to search for career opportunities. Based on the evidence from the research study, it appears that the social media as a tool for recruitment, yields efficiency in the process. This could mean that there would be a quicker turnaround time in candidate interactions, and a faster way to reach candidates.

### **6.5.3 Sub theme 3: Employer branding as a competitive advantage**

Wislow (2017) found that there was an interwoven nature of online recruitment and employer branding, this is in keeping with the results of the study. In the qualitative research, most of the respondents (66.7%), especially from the Retail and Cosmetic sector share the same opinion, that recruiting candidates through social networking sites promotes employer brand. As shown in Table 4.4 regarding the component social media, item B11; 47.1% of respondents agreed that “Companies should be more active in social media for recruitment”, while 9.3% provided a neutral response and 2.9% disagreed. The mean score of B11 (mean = 4.22, sd. = 0.79) was high as more respondents agreed with this statement.

A positive employer brand attracts potential candidates for job opportunities; employer brand and image are key elements in the recruitment process (Wislow, 2017). Doherty (2010) supports the importance of promoting the organisation’s image through E-recruitment demonstrates a unique and flexible strategy, which would entice fresh talent and passive employees with the necessary competencies to take the organisation to the next level.

Consequently, the findings of statement B11 “Companies should be more active in social media for recruitment”, were supported by the findings of Din et al. (2015) who found that more than 45% of respondents agreed that companies need to be more active in social media for recruitment. Literature supports this finding as companies without social media could become less relevant and less competitive in the market (Din et al., 2015).

Gibbs et al. (2015) found that slightly more than 50% of hotels in America and Canada use social media for their Human Resource activities. Additionally, the study also discovered that many HR managers use social media like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter exclusively for building awareness of their hotels and attracting individuals to apply to their organisation. Melanthiou et al. (2015) found that an increasing number of organisations started developing their own webpages and accounts such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter with a common aim to increase brand awareness and to reach as many people as possible.

The findings of the research study and the literature indicate that employer brand is a key component in attracting candidates for job opportunities. Likewise, social media as a tool for recruitment also plays a vital role in promoting the employer brand to attract more candidates.

#### **6.5.4 Sub theme 4: Global talent sourcing**

In the quantitative research regarding Component 3, that is, the effectiveness of social media, items B15 and B16 respectively as shown in Table 4.5. The results of B15 illustrated that 50.7% of respondents agreed that “Social media sites provide you the opportunity to access a large number of vacancies all over the world within a short time of period”, 17.1% provided a neutral response and 2.9% disagreed. In addition, the results show that 50% of respondents agreed with the statement of B16 that “I am able to respond very quickly to any vacancy posted on social media sites”, 12.9% provided a neutral response and 5% disagreed.

The mean score of B15 ( $m=4.03$ ,  $sd.=0.799$ ) was high as more respondents agreed to this statement; that social media sites provides individuals the opportunity to access a large number of vacancies all over the world within a short period of time. The mean score of B16 ( $m=3.95$ ,  $sd.=0.969$ ) indicated that respondents had a neutral response to this statement.

The findings on the component, effectiveness of social media, item B15 “Social media sites provide you the opportunity to access a large number of vacancies all over the world within a short time of period”, were supported by the findings of Lewis et al. (2015) who found that 43% of respondents associated reaching a wide network as an advantage and 39% of respondents thought that it enables them to market themselves effectively by keeping their profile up to date. In addition, Yadav and Kumar (2014) also found that E-recruitment provided job applicants with accessibility to a wider job market and more options of potential employers. There were insufficient research studies to either support or refute the findings of statement B16 “I am able to respond very quickly to any vacancy posted on social media

sites”. However, according to Villeda and McCamey (2019), statistics indicate that 73% of millennials found their last job through a social media platform.

In relation to the theme in the qualitative research, 50% of the participants concurred that access to passive candidates and the ability to attract a boundary less talent pool worldwide is possible using social media as a tool for recruitment. Passive candidates are not in the job market nor are they necessarily looking out for new job opportunities.

The findings were supported by the findings of Koch et al. (2018) who found that organisations should always thrive to identify and attract the best talent from the market especially during tough economic times instead of only seeking active candidates. The war for talent requires a proactive approach for organisations to succeed. Further evidence was found with studies of Archana et al. (2012) and Balasubramanian et al. (2016) who agreed that recruitment through social media helps to identify qualified candidates who may not be actively looking new job opportunities. Companies would have never found passive candidates nor would they have sought out organisations for job opportunities through traditional recruitment methods.

Given the exceptionally high number of users on social media, organisations started using social media to identify, attract and reach potential candidates for employment (Archana et al., 2012). Due to the wide contact network that is built by social media, referrals and recommendations, it increases the reach to more potential candidates. The company may not reach the right person directly, however social media allows for reaching candidates through friends and colleagues within their networks. In a study conducted by Lewis et al. (2015) it was found 43% of respondents associated reaching a wide network is an advantage.

From the supporting evidence in literature and the research findings, it can be deduced that the participants believe that social media impact recruitment as it is able to attract a wider talent pool of candidates for employment opportunities.

## **6.6 Theme 5: The push factors associated with social media recruitment**

The following table illustrates the push factors associated with social media recruitment.

**Table 6-2 The subthemes of the push factors associated with social media recruitment.**

Sub theme 1	Concerns about company image
Sub theme 2	Privacy concerns
Subtheme 3	Quality over quantity

### **6.6.1 Sub theme 1: Concerns about company image**

In the qualitative research, approximately 50% of the participants across industry sectors concurred that social media as a tool for recruitment may have a negative impact on the organisation's image and reputation.

The finding was supported by Balasubramanian et al. (2016) who pointed out the key risk of social media as a tool for recruitment. They asserted that sometimes talented job seekers may be annoyed because they were ignored for job opportunities. As such, they could post harmful information on social media which may damage the company's reputation. In addition, the findings of Vicknair et al. (2010) showed that job offers have been cancelled and internships have ended due to negative messages.

From the statements above and the available literature, it is evident that social media as a tool for recruitment may have a negative impact on the company's reputation. As such, concerns regarding company image may have adverse consequences on attracting potential applicants for employment opportunities.

### **6.6.2. Sub theme 2: Privacy concerns**

The quantitative findings of the component on traditional methods, item B10 showed that in Table 4.4, 26.4% of respondents agreed that "Traditional recruiting channels are more trustworthy than social media", whereas 35% provided a neutral response and 11.4% disagreed. The mean score of B10 (mean=3.55, sd. = 1.081) indicated that respondents had a neutral response to this statement.

The findings of statement B10 "Traditional recruiting channels are more trustworthy than social media", were supported by the findings of a study by Lewis et al. (2015) who indicated that 83.2% of respondents' associate privacy concerns as a disadvantage when using social networking sites to search for job vacancies.

As shown in Table 4.5 regarding the component on traditional methods item B13, the results illustrated that 39.3% of respondents agreed that "Social media allows for more open and transparent communication", 27.9% provided a neutral response and 9.3% disagreed. However, the results show that 19.3% of respondents of B18 agree that "Social media provides sufficient privacy protection", while 42.9% provided a neutral response and 17.9% disagreed. The mean score of B13 (m=3.74, sd. = 0.939) showed that respondents had a

neutral response regarding the open and transparent communication that social media provides.

The findings of statement B13 “Social media allows for more open and transparent communication”, refute the findings of Hada and Gairola (2015) who found that Facebook was originally designed for social communications with friends and family rather than companies, as such candidates could feel uncomfortable to connect with prospective employers through Facebook. They also found that LinkedIn was restrictive in terms of the number of emails that a user could send to other contacts, thus making communication challenging. Privacy settings on social networking sites made communication problematic.

The mean score of B18 ( $m=2.98$ ,  $sd.=1.086$ ) is low, as respondents disagree that social media provides sufficient privacy protection. Moreover, the findings of B18 “Social media provides sufficient privacy protection” refute the findings of Vroman et al. (2016) who found that social media was initially used as a form of personal communication and connection.

Information about individuals that was once considered as private and difficult to access can now be easily retrieved from individual profiles on a variety of social media platforms.

### **6.6.3 Sub theme 3: Quality over quantity**

In relation to this sub theme, in the qualitative research, 50% of the participants indicated that the challenge of using social media as a tool for recruitment is the high volume of applications, which is further compounded by the poor quality of applicants. The respondents who felt this way were from the Retail and Cosmetic industry.

The research findings are supported by Khillare and Shirsale (2017) who revealed that businesses often receive numerous applications in relation to published job advertisement. The consequence is that sometimes applications are unrelated or from unknown sources, and it is time consuming to screen and review each application.

According to the findings of the study and literature, it appears the rise of social media and the high number of users are driving the high volume of applicants for job opportunities. Since social media is highly publicised, participants feel that anyone could apply for a vacancy regardless of whether they meet the job requirements or not, which essentially increases the number of job applications for any given position which tends to be time consuming.

However, the findings refuted the findings of Melanthiou et al. (2015) who found that better quality candidates are found through social media; who are computer literate and familiar with such technology. Further contradictory evidence was found by Hivarkar (2018) and Krishna et al. (2016). Hivarkar (2018) found that social media has assisted in improving the parameters such as quality and quantity of the candidates whereas Krishna et al. (2016) found that 49% of candidate quality was improved when the organisations utilised social media in the recruitment process compared to candidates that are sourced only through traditional recruiting channels.

The research findings on the quality of candidates are in contradiction to the literature studies as those studies indicate that better and improved candidate quality is found through social media. However, in this research study approximately one-third of the participants from the retail industry perceive that the disadvantage of using social media as a tool for recruitment is that it results in poor quality candidates.

#### **6.7 Theme 6: The advancement of technology leads to behaviour change of millennials**

In the quantitative research, as shown in Figure 4.5 the results indicate that more than 60% of the respondents spent at least three hours on social media each day, whereas approximately 37% of the respondents spend anything from less than an hour to two hours on social media on a daily basis. With the rapid advancement of technology, more individuals, especially the millennial generation are spending time on the Internet.

The findings refute the findings of Hussain et al. (2017) who found that 48.23% of students spend on to two hours per day on social networking sites, whereas only 11.4% of post-graduate students spend less than an hour on social media, and that approximately 25% spend less than an hour, with 15% spending two to three hours on social networking sites per day. However, the findings of the study support the findings of Kroeze (2015) who found that social networking was known as the territory for teenagers and young students.

As shown in Figure 4.6, the results showed that more than 98% of the respondents visited at least two social media sites every day, with 60% visited at least three social media sites everyday ( $p < 0.001$ ). The findings are supported by different authors on the reasons to visit social media sites, these include information exchange, cultivate relationships and new friendships, academic learning and consumer engagements (Din et al., 2015; Ijeoma & Burke, 2013).

Results in Table 4.5 on the component effectiveness of social media as a tool for recruitment, item B12 indicated that 41.4% of respondents agreed that “Social media tools (E.g.: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) are simple to use in job seeking”, 17.1% provided a neutral response and 7.9% disagreed. The mean score of B12 ( $m=3.95$ ,  $sd. = 0.969$ ) showed that respondents had a neutral response regarding this statement.

Subsequently, 39.3% respondents agreed with statement of B14 that “It is very easy for me to find a job opportunity on social media sites”, 32.9% provided a neutral response and 7.1% disagreed. The mean score of B14 ( $m=3.67$ ,  $sd. = 0.915$ ) showed that respondents had a neutral response regarding this statement.

The findings of the research study were supported by the findings of Vyas et al. (2015) who found that 96.25% of final year students were spending a considerable amount of time accessing the Internet daily in search of job opportunities. They also kept abreast of social media recruitment; 47.2% of the students were on Facebook whereas 20% were on LinkedIn. As such, majority of the students were satisfied with applying for jobs on social networking sites as it was easy to access, and it had a high response turnaround.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study attempted to provide insight to a fairly new topic of research in South Africa, namely, the role of social media as a tool for recruitment from the perspective of postgraduate students and HR Practitioners.

The chapter discussed the quantitative phase and qualitative phase of the study. The results were analysed and discussed. The findings of the research study have been compared with previous research studies which enabled the researcher to draw comparisons or contrasts. The next chapter will focus on the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 Introduction

The main objective of the study was to examine the impact of social media as a recruitment tool amongst postgraduate students, specifically Honours students in UKZN and HR practitioners from various industry sectors in South African organisations. The summary of the findings and the conclusions will be discussed below in relation to the research objectives of the study. The chapter will also provide the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

##### **7.1.1 Objective 1: To examine the use of social media for job seeking amongst UKZN Postgraduate students.**

Ninety five percent (95 %) of postgraduate students indicated that they had a professional account on social media. 72.1% of the postgraduate students agreed that they use social media sites to find jobs because it offers more job opportunities. More than 60% of the postgraduate students spent at least three hours on social media each day ( $p < 0.001$ ). The two most favoured sites were LinkedIn (67.1%) and Facebook (47.9%).

Since respondents spend a considerable amount of time on social networking sites, and the majority of them have a professional account on social media, there is a high probability that they use sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook for the purpose of job seeking. The researcher has concluded that postgraduate students actively use social media for job seeking.

##### **7.1.2 Objective 2: The perceptions of Cosmetic, Law and Retail HR Practitioners towards social media as a recruitment tool.**

The feedback from HR practitioners is based on their experience in the respective organisations, opinions and perceptions in general. The themes which surfaced from their feedback include Targeted Talent Sourcing; Accelerated sourcing process; Increased employer brand value; Access to passive candidates and Geographically diverse talent pool.

Targeted Talent Sourcing was a common theme that surfaced among HR Practitioners across industry sectors. Social media has been adopted by a range of diverse candidates, including candidates from different generational groups. HR practitioners felt it was useful to use social media to attract potential candidates such as Generation Y or Millennials and Graduates for

graduate recruitment and to fill Senior Management positions. While social media is useful in attracting diverse candidates, HR practitioners expressed that it is also used to attract a geographically diverse talent pool.

The findings also indicated that social media recruitment enabled an accelerated sourcing process. In addition, HR practitioners from the Retail and Cosmetic sectors shared similar sentiments, by stating that social media recruitment also increased the employer brand value. They also felt social media recruitment allowed them to tap into a network of passive candidates; those who are not ordinarily in the job market or looking for a new job.

The researcher found that HR practitioners see the value and benefit of using social media as a tool for recruitment. Several organisations in different sectors have implemented social media in their recruitment process and they have reaped the benefits while there are still a few organisations that are still introducing social media in their organisation.

### **7.1.3 Objective 3: The impact of social media on traditional recruitment from UKZN Postgraduate students and HR Practitioners perspective.**

#### **7.1.3.1 Postgraduate Students perspective**

The feedback that was provided in the findings with regards to the impact of social media on traditional recruitment is as follows. The majority (80%) of the respondents indicated that they would use company websites to find employment opportunities, whereas over 85% of the respondents would use recruitment websites such as Careers24, PNet and Indeed for job seeking. About 75% of respondents indicated that they would use social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter for job seeking.

With reference to traditional methods, approximately 52% of the respondents preferred graduate recruitment fairs and recruitment agencies, whereas 55% of respondents indicated that they would resort to newspaper job advertisements for job seeking. Over 50% of respondents indicated that they would use personal networks or word of mouth for job seeking. The findings also show that less than 30% of the respondents would resort to industry magazines or listen to radio advertisements for job seeking.

It is evident that there is a higher preference towards the use social networking sites and E-recruitment tools for job seeking as opposed to traditional methods among postgraduate students.

### **7.3.1.2 HR Practitioners perspective**

The feedback that was provided in the findings with regards to the impact of social media on traditional recruitment are explained below.

HR practitioners expressed that in addition to social networking sites, organisations still utilised traditional recruitment methods such as recruitment agencies, employee referrals and campus recruitment. The findings show that recruitment agencies were best used to find candidates with niche or scarce skills and to fill senior management positions. This trend was consistent across the Cosmetic, Law and Retail Sector.

HR practitioners also disclosed that while social media is used as a tool for recruitment, employee referrals are considered valuable, as internal employees are aware of the requirements of the role and can assist in finding the right person for the job. Additionally, in terms of campus recruitment, there was consensus amongst the HR practitioners that campus recruitment is a targeted approach to identify and attract potential candidates to the organisation.

Interestingly, the findings showed that while campus recruitment is a traditional approach, the recruitment strategy in some organisations include social media as a recruitment tool to attract graduates for campus opportunities or graduate recruitment fairs.

The above findings indicate that while organisations use social media for recruitment, traditional recruitment methods are not something of the past. It appears that organisations use a blended approach of traditional and social media in the recruitment process to ensure that the best candidates are hired.

This finding is in line with that of postgraduate students as they also use both approaches of traditional methods and social media for job seeking. 80% of the respondents indicated that they would use company websites to find employment opportunities, whereas over 85% of the respondents would use recruitment websites for job seeking. About 75% of respondents indicated that they would use social networking sites for job seeking.

In organisations traditional methods of recruitment are still being used. Recruitment agencies are used by all organisations, 50% of organisations use employee referrals and 33.3% used campus recruitment. In addition, social media is used in all organisations; however, the reasons differ. In some organisations, social media is used a recruitment tool whereas other

organisations use social media for promoting their brand image and sharing their future projects. With reference to the above it is evident that social media is being used in all organisations, however it still needs to be fully developed in some organisations. While some organisations are still developing social media in their recruitment process, traditional methods of recruitment are being used to enhance social media recruitment. This indicates that organisations adopted a blended approach for recruitment.

#### **7.1.4 Objective 4: The extent to which social networking sites leads to effective recruitment from UKZN Postgraduate students and HR Practitioners perspective.**

##### **7.1.4.1 Postgraduates perspective**

The feedback from the findings with regards to which social networking sites lead to effective recruitment showed that LinkedIn and Facebook were the topmost used social networking sites for job seeking.

Over 40% of postgraduate students agree that social media tools such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter are simple to use in job seeking, and about 39% of postgraduate students agreed that social media allows for more open and transparent communication. About 50% of postgraduate students agreed that they can respond quickly to a vacancy posted on social media sites.

It was also noted that approximately 60% of respondents agreed that social media recruitment is less costly. Only a negligible number of respondents (below 20%) indicated that social media does not provide sufficient privacy protection.

##### **7.1.4.2 HR Practitioners perspective**

The feedback that was provided in the findings showed that LinkedIn and Twitter are the social networking sites that lead to effective recruitment.

LinkedIn is favourable with regards to filling senior management positions; while Twitter attracts graduates for employment opportunities. All the HR practitioners across industry sectors agreed that the use of LinkedIn and Twitter leads to effective recruitment. Although the use of Facebook and Instagram surfaced in the feedback, it was not prominent nor extensively used for effective recruitment across industries in South Africa.

In summary, the findings highlighted that while postgraduates use LinkedIn and Facebook for job seeking, organisations use LinkedIn and Twitter for recruitment. There appears to be a

disconnect between postgraduate students and HR practitioners in terms of job seeking and recruitment.

### **7.1.5 Objective 5: The benefits and challenges of social media as a tool in recruitment from UKZN postgraduate student and HR Practitioners perspective.**

#### **7.1.5.1 Postgraduate students' perspectives**

The postgraduate students indicated that the key benefits for social media as a tool in recruitment included the following: easily accessible, fast, cost-effective, worldwide job opportunities and vacancies easily found on social media.

The postgraduate students indicated that the main disadvantages for social media as a tool in recruitment were scams, lack of privacy/security of information, untrustworthy, data costs and low response/feedback for applications done online.

#### **7.1.5.2 HR Practitioners perspective**

The feedback that was provided in the findings with regards to benefits of social media as a tool in recruitment were cost effectiveness and efficiency. HR practitioners consider cost effectiveness are a key benefit for using social media for recruitment as there is a reduction in costs in comparison to traditional methods. HR practitioners across industry sectors agreed that filtering of candidate searches on social networking sites reduced the turnaround time to find prospective candidates for jobs.

The above indicates that there is consensus between postgraduate students and HR practitioners regarding the cost effectiveness and efficiency of social media as a tool for recruitment.

The feedback that was provided in the findings with regards to challenges of social media as a tool in recruitment were negative company image and reputation, high volume of applicants and poor quality of candidates.

HR practitioners across industry sectors felt that the company image and reputation influence the recruitment process. A negative company image through social media may have adverse consequences on attracting potential applicants for employment opportunities. It was noted that there are increasing number of users on social media, and HR practitioners are receiving a high volume of applications; candidates tend to apply even though they do not meet the minimum requirements of the job. HR Practitioners find that it is a time-consuming process to go through

applications. Lastly, a small percentage of HR practitioners indicated that the disadvantage of using social media as a tool for recruitment is poor quality candidates.

In summary, the findings indicate that postgraduate students receive a low response on applications that are completed online. There is a high probability that this is as a result of HR practitioners receiving too many applications and hence, they are unable to provide feedback to all applicants.

## **7.2 Limitations of the study**

One of the limitations of the study was that questionnaires were handed out to only 140 UKZN postgraduate students, specifically Honour students in the School of Management, IT and Governance at the University of Westville Campus. Other faculties from UKZN was not included in the sample population of the study. This could have resulted in the possibility of a sampling error in the results. Moreover, the study was conducted in a single academic institution; therefore, findings may not be applicable and reasonable to be generalised on all academic institutions.

Furthermore, the questionnaires were only given out in English although some of the students were Zulu speaking which may have led to misinterpretation of the questions as English is not their first language. Handing out questionnaires in another language, for example, Zulu, would be costly to translate as sometimes the context of the questions gets changed during translation.

In addition, another limitation was that the researcher only interviewed HR practitioners from the Cosmetic, Law and Retail sector in South Africa. Other sectors were not included in the study due to accessibility, cost and time constraints.

## **7.3 Recommendations for future research**

- This research study has been fruitful in nature; however, a similar research study should be conducted in other countries to get a more holistic view of the topic.
- Additional research is required on the use of social media by recruitment agencies and not just by organisations.
- The research study should cover all the different sectors and not just the Cosmetic, Legal and Retail Sector as done in this study.

- HR practitioners are not fully utilising social media as they may not be technologically savvy to screen a high volume of candidates on social networking sites, due to a skills gap. It is recommended that HR practitioners need training on how to use social media for effective recruitment.
- Future research is required on the use of social networking sites for job seeking among postgraduate students, and the social networking sites that are used by HR practitioners for recruitment.
- Additionally, future research is required on the privacy of social media as a tool for recruitment.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

This research study investigated the impact of social media as a tool for recruitment within South Africa. The findings of the study indicated that social media is a crucial component of the recruitment process. Even though recruitment via social media is beneficial, there are limitations that do not offer solutions to recruitment challenges. Furthermore, organisations are still dependent on traditional methods for niche or scarce skills. It is, therefore, prudent that organisations in South Africa do not adopt a singular approach, but a blended approach of traditional methods and social media for a successful recruitment.

This study effectively contributed to the importance of social media as a tool for recruitment in South Africa, the study also validates the role of social media in talent management, within organisations in South Africa. The research study demonstrates that how recruitment is conducted via social media in South Africa varies from other countries.

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## APPENDIX A: ORIGINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

# UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

### APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL For research with human participants

#### Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Greetings,

My name is Suman Dayanand from School of Management, Information Systems and Governance, 0713081064, [214533958@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:214533958@stu.ukzn.ac.za).

You are being invited to consider participating in a study entitled “**The role of social media as a tool for recruitment from the perspective of postgraduate students and HR practitioners**”. The main aim of this study is to examine the impact of social media as a recruitment tool within South Africa. I am using this questionnaire to find out your perception on the impact of social media for job seeking and to gain a better understanding of social media as a tool for recruitment.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the School of Management, IT and Governance, UKZN.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HSS/1760/018M).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at (0713081064, [214533958@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:214533958@stu.ukzn.ac.za)) or my supervisor Dr.Ashika Maharaj (031-260-8182, [maharajash@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:maharajash@ukzn.ac.za)) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**  
Research Office, Westville Campus  
Govan Mbeki Building  
Private Bag X 54001  
Durban 4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA  
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609  
Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

All data, both electronic and hard copy, will be securely stored during the study and archived for 5 years. After this time, all data will be destroyed.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the study, please contact me or my research supervisor at the numbers listed above.

Sincerely

Suman Dayanand

-----

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE**

I \_\_\_\_\_ have been informed about the study entitled the role of social media as a tool for recruitment from the perspective of postgraduate students and HR practitioners by Suman Dayanand.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at (214533958@stu.ukzn.ac.za).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private

Bag

X

54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **SECTION A**

### **BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS**

- You are humbly requested to complete the details in the allocated spaces provided.
- Mark the boxes most applicable to you with a cross (X).

#### **1. Your age (years)**

- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35 and older

#### **2. Gender**

- Female
- Male

#### **3. Marital Status**

- Married
- Single
- Widowed
- Divorced or separated

#### **4. Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?**

- Unemployed
- Part-time employee
- Full time employee

## SECTION B

Mark the boxes most applicable to you with a cross (X).

**1. Do you have a professional account in social media (for example: LinkedIn)?**

Yes

No

### Use of social media

**2. Please indicate the number of hours you spend on using social media sites every day.**

Less than 1

1-2

3-4

5-6

7 or more

**3. Please specify how many social media sites do you visit every day?**

None

1 or 2

3 or 4

5 or 6

7 or more

**4. Have you used any of the following social media sites to source potential jobs?  
(Please select all that apply)**

LinkedIn

Facebook

Twitter

None of the options

**5. I would consider using social media sites to find a job because it offers more job opportunities.**

Yes

No

Maybe

### **Traditional methods vs Social media**

**6. Which social media channels would you use to find a job? Please cross (X) all that apply.**

- Newspaper job advertisements
- Company website
- Recruiting agencies
- Graduate recruitment fairs
- Events organised by company's
- Radio advertisements
- Industry magazines
- Personal networks / word of mouth
- Social networking sites (Eg: Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter )
- Recruitment websites (Eg: Indeed, Careers24 , Pnet , Career junction)

**7. Through which of the following channels have you applied for a job or internship in the past or will likely apply for it in the future? Please cross (X) all that apply.**

- Newspaper job advertisements
- Company website
- Recruiting agencies
- Graduate recruitment fairs
- Events organised by company
- Radio advertisements
- Industry magazines
- Personal networks / word of mouth
- Social networking sites (Eg: Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter )
- Recruitment websites (Eg: Indeed, Careers24 , Pnet , Career junction)

### **Instructions:**

- Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements.
- Use the scale provided below as a guide to assist you when answering this questionnaire.

- Cross an (X) in a box for each question.
- Do not leave any question blank.

*Please rate your responses accordingly.*

- Strongly disagree (SD)
- Disagree (D)
- Neutral (N)
- Agree (A)
- Strongly agree (SA)

**Traditional methods vs Social media**

	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
<b>8.</b> Social media allows for me to find and share information about job opportunities faster than traditional recruitment channels.					
<b>9.</b> I prefer traditional recruiting channels for job seeking over social media.					
<b>10.</b> Traditional recruiting channels are more trustworthy than social media.					
<b>11.</b> Companies should be more active in social media for recruitment.					

**Effectiveness of social media as a tool for recruitment**

	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
<b>12.</b> Social media tools (E.g.: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) are simple to use in job seeking.					
<b>13.</b> Social media allows for more open and transparent communication.					
<b>14.</b> It is very easy for me to find a job opportunity on social media sites.					
<b>15.</b> Social media sites provide you the opportunity to access a large number of vacancies all over the world within a short time of period.					
<b>16.</b> I am able to respond very quickly to any vacancy posted on social media sites.					
<b>17.</b> Social media has made recruitment less costly all over the world.					
<b>18.</b> Social media provides sufficient privacy protection.					

**Benefits and Pitfalls of social media as a tool for recruitment**

**19.** In your opinion, what are the advantages of using social media to search for a job vacancy?

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**20.** In your opinion, what are the disadvantages of using social media to search for a job vacancy?

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**END OF QUESTIONNAIRE.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!**

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

*Dear Participant,*

*My name is Suman Dayanand and as part of my Master's thesis in Human Resource Management (UKZN), I will be interviewing you to find out your perceptions about the impact of social media for recruitment. The key aim of the interview is to gain a better understanding of social media as a tool for recruitment.*

*The interview will take about 30 minutes. The interview will be recorded via a audio recorder and note taking. All responses in the interview will be kept strictly confidential and used only for academic purposes.*

### **Biographical Information:**

*Name of participant:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date of interview:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Industry Sector:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Age:* \_\_\_\_\_                      *Gender:* \_\_\_\_\_                      *Race:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Qualifications:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your cooperation.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Suman Dayanand*

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Recruitment is an integral part of human resources management, and social media is a part of Electronic recruitment. What do you think is the impact of social media as a tool for recruitment?

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2. Does your organisation use social media sites for recruitment? If yes, which social media sites are used for recruitment?

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3. In your opinion, which social networking sites are candidates using to seek job opportunities these days?

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4. Traditional methods of recruitment in organisations include newspaper advertisements, job boards, job fairs, recruitment agencies, employee referrals and campus recruitment. To what extent is social media used for recruitment vs traditional recruitment methods in your organisation?

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5. Tell me in your experience how effective is social media in recruitment and why?

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6. In terms of the overall vacancies for your department/ company, how many candidates do you hire through the use of social media vs traditional recruitment?

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7. There are different types of job applicants such as graduates, managers, senior executives, specialists to name a few. Which type of job applicants do you find are more responsive to social media advertisements for job opportunities?

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8. What advantages do you associate with using social networking sites to search for a job vacancy?

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9. What disadvantages do you associate with using social networking sites to search for a job vacancy?

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Thank you for your time!

## APPENDIX C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



07 January 2018

Ms Suman Dayanand (214533958)  
School of Management, IT & Governance  
Westville Campus

Dear Ms Dayanand,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1760/018M

Project title: The role of social media as a tool for recruitment from the perspective of post graduate students and HR Practitioners

### Approval Notification – Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 01 October 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Ashika Maharaj  
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Isabel Martins  
cc School Administrator: Ms Angela Pearce

---

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 290 3587/3590/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 292 4609 Email: [hr@hssc.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:hr@hssc.ukzn.ac.za) / [myresearch@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:myresearch@ukzn.ac.za) / [ethics@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ethics@ukzn.ac.za)

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## APPENDIX D: GATE KEEPERS LETTER



School of Management, I.T. & Governance  
College of Law and Management Studies

June 4, 2018

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

#### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Research students undertake projects that invariably involve the collection of empirical data from organisations. In this way students are given the opportunity to investigate and report on the practical issues facing organisations in real life settings. Typically, this project necessitate data gathering by paper-based questionnaires or interviews.

Suman Dayanand (214533958) has chosen to undertake a research project entitled:

#### **To Examine the Impact of Social Media as a Tool for Recruitment**

Supervisor's name: Dr Ashika Maharaj Supervisor's telephone number: 031-2608182

Supervisor's e-mail address: Maharajash@ukzn.ac.za

The student has identified your organisation as an excellent site for the study.

Your assistance in permitting access to your organisation for the purposes of this research is most appreciated. Please be assured that all information gained from the research will be treated with the utmost circumspection. The student will strictly adhere to confidentiality and anonymity.

I am available at any stage to answer any queries and/or to discuss any aspect of this research project.

Thank you for your assistance in this regard.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suman Dayanand".

---

**Suman Dayanand**

**The School of Management, IT and Governance  
College of Law and Management Studies**

## APPENDIX E: LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

SURY BISETTY  
EDITORIAL SERVICES



---

To whom it may concern,

I have edited the dissertation entitled, *The Role of Social Media as a Tool for Recruitment from the Perspective of Postgraduate Students and Hr Practitioners* by Suman Dayanand, Student number: 214533958, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Commerce at the School of Management, IT and Governance - College of Law and Management Studies, UKZN.

*Sury Bisetty*  
*20 November 2019*  
Language and Technical Editor

**MEMBER OF:**

Professional Editor's Guild (BIS002)  
South African Council of Educators (222277)  
South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (761237008333)

**CERTIFICATION:**

Peggs: Critical Reading  
Editing Mastery: How to Edit to Perfection  
Complete writing, editing master class.

---

**CONTACT DETAILS**

Email: [surybisetty11@gmail.com](mailto:surybisetty11@gmail.com)  
Cell no: 0844932878  
Tel.: 031 7622 766

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Disclaimer: I provided only **language and technical editing** as per discussion with the client. **The content of the research proposal was not amended in any way.** The edited work described here may not be identical to that submitted. The author, at his/her sole discretion, has the prerogative to accept, delete, or change amendments/suggestions made by the editor before submission.