

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**Acceptance of LinkedIn for human resources management: A case study in the
construction sector in Nigeria**

By

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2020**

DECLARATIONS

I, **Mariah Oluwaseun Omigade** declare that:

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Mariah Oluwaseun Omigade

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DEDICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Many organisations have accepted social media as an important platform for keeping up with global technological developmental trends. LinkedIn emerged as a social media platform that is used by human resources (HR) professionals across the world. It is renowned for its ability to facilitate communication between HR professionals. The main aim of the study is to understand the perceptions of HR employees in the construction sector on the acceptance of LinkedIn software in performing HR functions of the organisation in Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to understand its acceptance based on the perceived usefulness, and ease-of-use as described by Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The study also explored the challenges associated with the acceptance of LinkedIn in performing HR functions in a construction company. An exploratory research approach was adopted using the qualitative method to get in-depth knowledge of the identified phenomenon. A case study approach was adopted for the study, and a construction company in Lagos, Nigeria, was selected. Primary data was collected from HR officers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher where ten (N=10) HR department officers of the construction firm in Lagos Nigeria, were interviewed. The empirical results indicate that LinkedIn is not widely accepted in facilitating HR functions in the HR department. The results also show that the perceptions of the HR employees on the acceptance of LinkedIn are based on how it assists them in performing HR functions. The results also indicated that the use of LinkedIn is not only limited by security concerns, but by the lack of information, financial resources, required skills, and management buy-in. Furthermore, the results also show that the acceptance and use of LinkedIn for HR functions requires adequate buy-in from the executives of the organisation. HR employees must also be appropriately trained on the use of LinkedIn to perform HR functions and to mitigate LinkedIn security-related challenges.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resources Management
GENIE	General Electric Network for Information Exchange
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IRC	Internet Relay Chat
IT	Information System
MUD	Multi-User Dungeon
MNC	Multinational Corporations
PR	Public Relations
ROI	Return on Investment
SHRM	Society for Human Resources Management
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
T&D	Training and development
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
UTAUT	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology
WWW	World Wide Web

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The advancements in technology have seen many organisations adopting information technology (IT) to enhance human resources (HR) functions. Managing the human capital asset of the organisation requires selecting strategic platforms to handle the coherence of human resources management processes in the organisation (Ameh and Daniel, 2017). Social media has emerged as an important platform that is becoming relevant in performing HR functions. It is described by Doherty (2010) and Kaplan and Haenkein (2010) as a group of web applications that provide a platform for individuals and companies to create and exchange information. Social media has been accepted as an important platform for transforming the organisational process, and for keeping up pace with global technological development trends (Ling, 2013).

Within the last decade, LinkedIn has emerged as one of the popular platforms used by professionals across the world (Guillory and Hancock, 2012). Professionals use it to source for jobs and form collaborative networks across the world. Many organisations have rapidly incorporated it into the management of the human resource needs of the organisation. Since its inception, LinkedIn has had a tremendous impact on HR employment processes of organisations. Bondarouk and Luján (2013) suggest that the possible benefits of LinkedIn to HR department include easy-reaching out and responding to new audience, fast searching for candidates, and low-cost contacting with job seekers. LinkedIn has assisted many companies such as Starbucks, Deloitte, Goldman Sachs, and Microsoft in acquiring more information about an applicant seeking employment (King, 2006).

However, the acceptance of LinkedIn Software has brought about changes in many organisations across the world. Various frameworks were discovered to determine how different information technologies will be accepted in organizations. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) emerged as one of the models that is used to understand the acceptance of technologies in an organization. This study used TAM to understand the acceptance of LinkedIn software system by HR employees in the construction sector in Lagos, Nigeria. The study used two constructs, 'ease of use' and

‘usefulness’, from TAM to understand the acceptance of LinkedIn in the selected organizations. The choice of using TAM to guide this study was made considering the fact that the model is widely used to understand how technology is used to assist in performing different functions of the organisations. Therefore, TAM was used to understand the perceptions of workers on the basis of their perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use of LinkedIn on performing HR functions. Additionally, TAM was used in line with previous studies which suggest that it is applicable where the use of technology is mandatory, rather than in voluntary settings (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, and Davis, 2003). The choice was made considering the body of literature (Ajibade, 2018; Davis, 1989; Chuttur, 2009; Venkatesh et al., 2003), which state that personal and professional goals influence the degree of acceptance on the use of technology in an organization. Therefore, this study used TAM to explore employees’ perceptions on the acceptance and use of LinkedIn software in performing HR functions.

1.2 Background of the Study

The discovery of computers in the 1960s resulted in the introduction of various communication platforms in organisations (Greiff and Martin, 2015). Social media platforms emerged as major technological tool used in HR department across the world. Social media has been transformed and redefined from mere search and consult information (Web 1.0) to a more collaborative and interactive platform (Web 2.0) (Azeem and Yasmin, 2016). Social media root can be traced back to the early 1960s, when email was introduced to the public (Borders, 2010). Since then, social media platforms have become faster, cheaper, more flexible, and easier to use.

LinkedIn has emerged as an important social media platform that is internationally accepted, both as a business platform and an employment-oriented social networking platform (Van Dijck, 2013). Since its inception in 2002, LinkedIn has been accepted and used as a communication tool by many professionals across Europe, USA and other developed countries across the world. While LinkedIn is used to connect experts across the world, many organisations are incorporating it in HR functions for the purposes of hiring, recruitment and selection (Slovensky and Ross, 2012), by identify people with the required skill set (Pepper, 2013; Iheme and Chiagorom, 2018; Oladapo, 2019).

The importance of LinkedIn in facilitating human resources functions such as recruitment, selection and hiring processes is well documented (Pepper, 2013). LinkedIn is renowned for its ability to facilitate communication between HR professionals and prospective employees. Adaptation of LinkedIn in HR functions is synonymous with cost savings for the organization (Pepper, 2013).

1.3 Research problem

Social media has been globally accepted as a communication channel in the business world (McHugh and Zubillaga, 2010; Ling, 2013). It has changed much of the world as well as showing how businesses operate across the world. Studies have shown that there is limited research on the acceptance of LinkedIn in facilitating human resource functions of organisations (Etim, Uzonna, Steve and Chibuike, 2018). Hauptmann et al. (2011) pointed out that there are substantial amounts of research on social media and social networking services and their impact on the success of an organisation. However, these studies concentrate on the impact of other social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (Parry and Solidoro, 2013). Indeed, studies on the perceptions and attitudes of employees on the acceptance of LinkedIn in HR functions are limited (Peluchette and Karl, 2010; Etim et al., 2018). The gap that emerges is a need to understand the acceptance of LinkedIn in organisations, in relation to its perceived usefulness and ease-of-use by HR employees. This study, therefore, investigates the acceptance of LinkedIn by HR employees, focusing on its perceived usefulness, and ease-of-use attributes to assist in performing HR functions in the construction company used as case study for this study.

1.4 Research Questions

The main aim of the study is to understand the perceptions of HR employees on the acceptance of LinkedIn software system in the construction sector in Nigeria. The questions guiding the research are:

1. What is the acceptance of the LinkedIn software system by HR employees in the construction sector?
 - a) What are the perceptions of HR employees on the perceived usefulness of LinkedIn?
 - b) What are the perceptions of employees in HR department on the perceived ease-of-use of LinkedIn?

2. What are the challenges experienced by HR employees when using LinkedIn in HR functions?
3. How can the challenges experienced with using LinkedIn for HR functions be managed?

1.5 Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study are:

1. To understand the acceptance of the LinkedIn software system by HR employees in the construction sector.
 - a) To determine the perceived usefulness of LinkedIn software by HR employees on HR functions.
 - b) To understand the perceived ease-of-use of LinkedIn by HR employees on HR functions.
2. To explore the challenges experienced by HR employees when using LinkedIn software in HR functions.
3. To investigate how the challenges experienced with using LinkedIn software in HR functions can be managed.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The failure of HR departments to recruit highly-skilled employees has been identified as one of the contributing factors to increased project failure in many industries (Etim, Uzonna, Steve and Chibuike, 2018). This problem forces companies to seek strategic ways of enhancing their HR functions. Consequently, a number of organisations are now adopting social media platforms such as LinkedIn. LinkedIn is now used to develop a network where a pool of skilled and experienced individuals can be easily recruited. Since its inception in the corporate world, LinkedIn has been widely identified as one of the social media platforms, which HR department professionals can utilize for the purpose of recruitment (Slovensky and Ross, 2012).

This study is essential because it seeks to reduce the gap in the strategic management of HR function, where LinkedIn is regarded as an inferior business tool (Side, Elman, and Shahani-Denning, 2014). A qualitative approach was used to get an in-depth understanding on how LinkedIn is accepted as a strategic software to assist in performing some of the HR functions in the construction sector in Lagos, Nigeria. The approach provides an understanding of the perceptions of HR employees on the acceptance of LinkedIn considering its perceived usefulness

and ease-of-use in performing HR functions in an organization (Parry and Solidoro, 2013). The study is also important because it provides an understanding of how LinkedIn can be used to improve the management of HR functions. The research also explores the challenges faced by HR personnel when using LinkedIn. This is important, as it will assist in determining how organizations can use technology to solve some HR issues. Furthermore, the study offers an opportunity to understand those challenges and how they impact on the smooth functioning of the HR unit.

The results of this study add value to current studies in relation to the perceptions of HR employees on the acceptance of technology in performing HR functions.

1.7. Research Design

Research design is a blueprint that illustrates how participants are selected and how information is gathered for the study (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2009). This study adopted an exploratory research approach to explain, from the employee's perspective, the acceptance of LinkedIn in HR functions. A qualitative method was used to get in-depth knowledge on the topic of the study. An exploratory research design was selected in accordance with Saunders et al. (2009, p. 145) who posits that exploratory studies "are a valuable means of finding out what is happening, seeking new insights, asking questions and assessing a phenomenon in a new light." This statement was also supported by Sekaran and Bougie (2013), who ascertained that exploratory research can be carried out where little is known or no prior study has been conducted about the proposed study or how related problems have been resolved in the past.

A qualitative method was used for this study because the initial visits by the researcher to companies in the construction sectors, only two firms gave consent to carry out the study with their organisations. Further structure assessments of the firms showed that they all had few employees managing the HR department, and one of them was not using LinkedIn in performing its HR functions. Therefore, I opted for a qualitative study instead of a quantitative study (questionnaire survey). Qualitative research method and techniques were also chosen as a preference because it is one of the suitable methods of collecting primary data in research (Tellis, 1997).

It allows the researcher to gather in-depth data from the interviewees or participants. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data because it affords the interviewer the opportunity to get first-hand information from the participants. It also provides the participants with the opportunity to convey any new ideas that might not be included in the interview guide used by the researcher (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). The researcher used a qualitative approach because it is consistent with Quinlan (2011) and Creswell and Clark (2011) who suggested that it affords the researcher the prospects of acquiring in-depth knowledge on the interplay between the variables in a study. The interviews conducted were recorded using a voice recorder. Recorded interviews were transcribed for complete analysis. Recorded interview proceedings were transcribed and summarised in line with the objectives of the study. Content analysis method was used to identify themes from the interview data. Quinlan (2011, p. 77) points out that “theme” analysis involves a thorough examination of data, identifying important areas of focus, and classifying data to make a conclusive analysis.

1.8 Validity and Reliability

Research study procedures and tools influence the validity and reliability of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2005; Dahlberg and McCaig, 2010). Validity and reliability and pre-tests were carried out to measure standards and authentication of the research tools used in this study.

1.9 Limitations of the research study

The study adopted a case study approach where data was collected from a single company in the construction sector in Lagos, Nigeria. Therefore, the results may not be generalized across the entire construction industry in Nigeria, as it does not include the perceptions of HR department employees from other construction companies in the country. A further limitation of the study is the proximity of the study site. The researcher is based in University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus in South Africa. Thus, financial costs and logistical problems were encountered when collecting data in a construction company in Lagos, Nigeria. This is a limitation because getting access to the SA construction sector was a challenge, hence the researcher was forced to collect data from another country. Additional challenges include the unwillingness of some the construction company’s employees, and getting appropriate time for interviews with

workers because booking interview times clashed with work schedules of HR department employees.

1.10 Structure of the dissertation

This study is made up of five chapters:

Chapter 1: The chapter outlines the introduction and background of the study. The research problem is highlighted, followed by the presentation of research objectives, research problems, and rationale of the study. The chapter finally presents the limitations associated with this study.

Chapter 2: The chapter presents a literature review of the study and discusses the concept of social media by providing the background and its definition. It outlined various platforms associated with this technology. It further represents the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as the theoretical framework identified to guide this study. Additionally, the chapter discusses two TAM constructs used to explore and answer the research questions identified by the study. The chapter reviews literature on the use of LinkedIn in business with more attention to its alignment with human resources functions in the resources organisation. It further discusses the significance and implications of social media platform – LinkedIn on human functions.

Chapter 3: The chapter outlines the research methodology for the study. It discusses the research philosophies and presents the research paradigm adopted by the study. The chapter discusses the research design, data control measures and ethical considerations of this study. It further outlined the measures taken to provide validity and reliability of data and results of the study. Finally, chapter three discusses how the ethical issues were addressed and the research limitations associated with this study.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents the empirical findings and interpretations of research results collected from HR department employees in the construction company. It also discusses the research findings as extracted from the themes obtained from the interview data.

Chapter 5: Chapter five concludes the dissertation. It presents the research conclusion and recommendations of the study.

1.11 Summary of chapter

This chapter gives a brief overview of the study. The introductory section presents the background and pin-points the research problems identified for this study. The objectives of the study were clearly stated, followed by a discussion on the significance of the study. The chapter briefly discussed the research methodology of the study, the research design and data control measures for the study. Finally, the chapter discussed the limitations associated with the study. The chapter also outlined the structure of this dissertation. The proceeding chapter presents the literature review of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a literature review for the study. It discusses social media as a widely used business concept. The discussion is centred on the background overview and definition of social media. The chapter outlines various platforms associated with this technology. The chapter reviews the literature on social media in business with more attention to its use in human resources functions. It continues with further discussion on the significance and implications of the social media platform – LinkedIn on human resources functions. Finally, the chapter presents the TAM concepts used to guide this study. These constructs are ‘perceived usefulness’ and ‘perceived ease-of-use’. The constructs were chosen consistent with the literature which states and acknowledges them as the important concepts in determining acceptance of technology by users.

An efficient and effective human resource department has always been the cornerstone of the success of modern organisations (Ameh and Daniel, 2017). The emergence of technology has transformed HR functions over the years. The advancements in technology have necessitated many organisations adopting it to enhance HR functions. Managing the human capital asset of the organisation requires selecting strategic platforms to handle the coherence of human resources management processes in the organisation (Ameh and Daniel, 2017). Social media emerged as an essential platform that is becoming relevant in HR functions. It is regarded as a group of web applications that present people with the opportunity to create content and share it (Doherty, 2010; Kaplan and Haenkein, 2010). Many contemporary organisations have accepted social media as an essential platform for transforming the organisational process and for keeping up with global technological development trends (Ling, 2013).

LinkedIn emerged as one of the profound platforms used by professionals across the world (Guillory and Hancock, 2012). A significant number of organisations are rapidly incorporating it into the management processes of human resource departments. Since its inception, LinkedIn has had a tremendous impact on HR employment processes. Bondarouk and Luján (2013) suggest that the possible benefits of LinkedIn to the HR department include easy reaching out and responding

to new customers, fast searching for candidates, and low-cost job advertisement for the organisation. For example, over the years, Starbucks, Goldman Sachs, Microsoft, and Deloitte used LinkedIn to find additional information about job applicants (King, 2006). Since the advent of LinkedIn, the platform has been used as one of the engines that drives HR department to find skilled people for the organisation.

2.2 Computer Technology

The discovery of computers in the 1960s has resulted in the introduction of various communication platforms (Greiff and Martin, 2015). Borders (2010) points out the discovery of computers as a critical communication channel. In the 1970s, technological advancement led to the introduction of many social media such as Multi-User Dungeon (MUD) and BBS, which enable operators to categories a command through the usage of ordinary language. Literature reveals that in early 1978, Bulletin board System (BBS) was established as the system used by the operators to upload and downloads software, as well affords them the opportunities to send and receive messages (Borders, 2010; Greiff and Martin, 2015).

In 1980, the World Wide Web (WWW) was established as a system to upload news and articles that can be read and downloaded (Ritholz, 2010). Additionally, in the same 1980s, there was an increase in the establishment of many other new systems in the social media spheres. These new media systems include the introduction of Listserv, General Electric Network for Information Exchange (GENIE), and a system called Internet Relay Chat (IRC). The Listserv system was one of many systems created to enhance communication systems in the 1980s. It enables users to automatically send one email to many people at the same time (Ritholz, 2010).

The IRC system was created to improve and allow smooth communication between large numbers of people or groups. The system enabled users to have a private conversation, exchange and transfer data amongst groups or individuals (Ritholz, 2010). It was widely recognised as a faster, low-cost and more accessible communication tool.

2.3 Social media

Social media's roots can be traced back to its origins in the early 1960s computing technological advancements where the advent of the email was being introduced to the public (Borders, 2010). Social media platforms emerged as a significant technical instrument that is currently used in the HR department across the world. Social media is a web-based service that provides people with the ability to make customised personal profiles. It communicates the friend list of users with the people they are connected with and lets their friends navigate through their list of contacts, and the friend list of other users within the system (Mas-Bleda, Thelwall, Kouskaand Aquillo, 2014; Paliszkiewicz and Mądra-Sawicka, 2016). Social media has been transformed and redefined from being a mere search platform to a broad entertainment communication tool (Web 1.0) to a more collaborative and interactive platform (Web 2.0) (Darwish and Lakhtaria, 2011; Azeem and Yasmin, 2016). Since the advent of the social media platform, the system has been used continuously in facilitating communication among the users and enabling smooth operations.

Importantly, Greiff and Martin (2015) and Borders (2010) further argue that social media is a platform for social networking, used for educational, interactive, informational, or entertaining purposes. It presents itself in many related forms such as blogs, forums, podcasts, social bookmarking, widgets, photo sharing, and video. Over the years, various social media platforms were developed. (Paliszkiewicz and Mądra-Sawicka, 2016; Gissimee Doe, 2018). Some of the commonly used social media platforms sites include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram (Gissimee Doe, 2018). People uniquely use these platforms to share profile updates, videos, exchange information, as well as upload photos and other information. They are mostly preferred for they enable users to interact with friends and families and clients with few limitations. Cho, Chen, and Chung (2012) explained in their studies that social media enables users to develop and maintain work relationships and share ideas.

Effective communication is an integral element of any business, and creating an effective human-friendly communication system is paramount to business success. Studies indicate that social media communication is currently popular because of its user-friendly embedded elements such as communication-oriented software applications, and social-based operating systems (Paliszkiewicz and Mądra-Sawicka, 2016; Gissimee Doe, 2018).

Over the years, social media platforms have been transformed to include more customisation system that allows individuals to personalise their profiles. Social media technology advancements in platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and MySpace enable users to merge groups of people, share news and events, chat, share music and videos, play games, and search for job vacancies. According to Böhringer, Richter, and Koch (2009), social media platforms are used to support different functions, such as project management and customer relationships (Paliszkiewicz and Mądra-Sawicka, 2016). However, the usefulness of social media generally and its application to the human resources aspect cannot be over-emphasized. Social media provides a platform that showcases talents, knowledge, and other skills as may be required by users (El Ouiridi, El Ouiridi, Segers and Henderickx, 2014). To achieve HR goals, social media is used to facilitate the recruitment of applicants from a pool of skilled professionals. For this study, LinkedIn, as one of the social media platforms, will be used to understand the acceptance of the technology in performing HR functions.

2.3.1 Social media platforms

Some of the most recognised and dominated social media platforms are by Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn platforms. These platforms are accepted and used differently by people and organisations across the globe.

2.3.1.1 Facebook platform

Mark Zuckerberg pioneered Facebook in 2004. Initially, its usage was limited only to registered students at Harvard University (Facebook, 2004). Reports indicate that the platform was later introduced to the public in 2006 (Facebook, 2004; Bondarouk et al., 2013). Facebook emerged as the fastest and cost-effective platform used to connect with friends and businesses. This recognition led to an increase in its users between 2004 and 2010. Facebook recorded over 500 million users in the year 2006, and it was ranked the leading global social media platform in the world (TIMES, 2010). Facebook enables users to easily create a personal profile, search for friends on the platform, to access friend's photos and it allows users to create private chat through Facebook messenger.

Additionally, the platform enables users to make comments on other user's pages. The platform further gives users the ability to block or un-follow any other users that might not be of interest on the contact list. The distinctive customisation characteristics of the Facebook platform differentiates it from other social media platforms. Importantly, Facebook was accepted by many companies across the globe, mostly because of its cost-effective method for business marketing activities and its broad users' coverage (Paridon and Carraher, 2009; Moore, 2014). Users use it to create company profiles for accessible communication with customers. For example, the platform is used to encourage users to post comments about the company's services. A study suggested that those comments enable companies to respond quickly to customer queries and improve their services (Bondarouk et al., 2013). Facebook is identified as one of the platforms used to advertise and promote products and services. Studies also indicate that the platform is equally used to recruit and select employees (Paridon and Carraher, 2009; Bondarouk et al., 2013).

2.3.1.2 YouTube platform

Historically, YouTube was established in the year 2005. The platform was acquired by Google Inc. in 2006, a year after it was launched. YouTube is well known as the platform that allows users to create and upload short and long videos that other users can access and download, watch, and possibly share on their timelines. The videos range from standard and sub-standard music videos, videotape, short TV clips, and home recording videos and movies. YouTube is also used as a medium to connect with different people. Some organisations use it as a medium to advertise their products and connect with customers (Freer, 2012; Moore, 2014). Study indicates that the ability of YouTube to attract and reach a large number of users strengthen its relationship between large and small businesses or organisations, advertising agency, film producers and many other content providers such as Warner Music Group, BBC and Sony Music Group (Moore, 2014). Over the years, the YouTube network and users have widely increased. The platform has recorded a significant increase in the number of professionals and non-professionals users (YouTube 2018) using it to advertise their products and services at a reduced cost (Paridon and Carraher, 2009; Freer, 2012).

2.3.1.3 Instagram platform

Instagram is one of the social media phenomena that transformed media network services. The platform was created and launched by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger on October 6, 2010. The term Instagram emanated from the words 'instant camera' and 'telegram' (Sengupta; Perlroth; Wortham, 2012; Kishundat, 2018). The rapid growth of Instagram users within three months in 2010 from one million to ten million users in 2011 excited the investor's interest in the procurement of the platform. In 2012, Facebook management acquired Instagram App for one billion dollars (\$1 billion) in cash and stock. Since the purchase, the transformation of Instagram was a phenomenon in the social media sphere (Instagram, 2016; Kishundat, 2018).

Importantly, what differentiates this platform from others was its strategic approach of not focusing on performing numerous things. Its core focus was to allow users to share pictures and watch videos (Sengupta, Perlroth, and Wortham, 2012). The system design enables users to take a photograph and modify it to their specifications. The system features are less complicated and have fewer advertisements pop up as compared to other platforms. Instagram enables users to make money from being a business profile influencer and also from photo tagging using a new feature called "Photos of You" (Instagram, 2016; Kishundat, 2018). All these benefits influence the massive increase of Instagram photo tagging and its popularity. Today Instagram is recorded as one of the most popular social media platforms that have dominated LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook platforms locally and internationally with over one billion users monthly (Instagram, 2016; Chaffey, 2016).

2.3.1.4 Twitter platform

Since Twitter emerged as one of the main social media platforms in the world, it has been viewed as the most effortless application as compared to other applications such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn (Duffy, 2011). Individuals and businesses have used it across the globe to communicate with the public. The platform is widely used by different users such as sports celebrities, socialites, public figures, and politicians to communicate, improve their image, create awareness, and engage with fans. The application enables users to tweet publicly visible messages and private messages that can be accessed by Twitter account holders. For instance, where employees are permitted to "tweet" positively about an organisation's products and services, and working environment, a

company could go viral thereby improving the image of such an organisation and possibly increase the customer base. The action has the potential to attract viewers, such as customers and job seekers (Bondarouk et al., 2013). Twitter's system also allows users to send private messages that can only be viewed by the intended recipient through a specialised setting provided by the system. Additionally, the platform enables the users to read and send messages which consist of not more than 140 words. Most of the messages or tweets sent by the users are often open to public viewers. Furthermore, studies indicate that some of the advantages that Twitter affords users include the opportunity to design and choose the desired background, upload and share photographs with contacts and other users that are not on the contact list. (O'Reilly, Milstein, Twitter Book; and O'Reilly Media, 2011). Studies have also shown that over recent years, there had been an increased number of Twitter users, it has established and cemented its presence in many organisations across the world (Kishundat, 2018; Slovensky and Ross, 2012).

2.3.1.5 LinkedIn platform

The LinkedIn platform is one of several social media facets of communication. It was established in 2002 and aims specifically at business users to build professional networks and business connections (Souvik Das, 2016). The platform emerged as a unique system focusing on associating itself with workplace professionals in modern organisations across the world.

Since its inception in 2002, LinkedIn has been accepted as a communication tool used by many professionals across Europe, the USA, and other developed economies across the globe. LinkedIn is used to connect experts across the world. Studies indicated that many HR departments are incorporating it into performing some HR functions (Slovensky and Ross, 2012) such as hiring, recruitment, and selection processes. Many organisations use the platform to identify people with the required skills (Pepper, 2013; Itheme and Chiagorom, 2018; Oladapo, 2019). The importance of LinkedIn in facilitating human resources functions such as recruitment, selection, and hiring processes is widely documented (Pepper, 2013). The acceptance of LinkedIn is renowned for its ability to facilitate communication between HR professionals and prospective employees. Adaptation of LinkedIn in HR functions is synonymous with cost savings (Pepper, 2013). It enables HR professionals to reach a large number of skilled applicants and sieve through their

profile in a short period, thus reduce the cost of employment and minimise some of the costs associated with recruitment and, hiring.

Additionally, HR professionals also understood that social networking sites such as LinkedIn could be used to reveal the image of a business and the uniqueness of an employee (Bondarouk, et al., 2013). LinkedIn also enables HR professionals to use new methods to enhance their HR daily activities. Studies further show that many employees used the LinkedIn platform as one of their communication strategies to enhance company image (Slovensky and Ross, 2012; Itheme and Chiagorom, 2018; Oladapo, 2019). Minchington (2014) noted that three-quarters of global companies used LinkedIn as the primary communication channel to improve their reputations.

LinkedIn was established as a social media platform for professionals to be able to connect with each other. LinkedIn is widely used mainly for job-related networking and gaining business leads (Okafor, 2016). The application of LinkedIn to the HRM functions allow organisations to address human resource issues strategically as regard to pre-hiring, hiring, and retention (Ulahsan, 2017). The role of LinkedIn aids the HR departments to deliver high-quality services in the aspect of skill selection and help attract and retain competent employees. (Okafor, 2016). As the HR department plays an important part in managing the human capital asset, adopting LinkedIn becomes a defining moment for the organisation (Minchington, 2014; Okafor, 2016). The platform allows HR departments to identify skilled people, hire and manage employees effectively, and thus increase the chances of producing a quality performance that will, in turn, increase the organisation's competitive advantages (Schneider, 2018).

Currently, technology advancement has enabled contemporary HR department to switch from the traditional way of job recruitment to the use of sophisticated tools such as LinkedIn Apps in choosing the prospective and suitable candidates required for a job (LinkedIn.com, 2015). LinkedIn has been identified as one of the social media platforms that change the traditional ways that HR departments used in searching for prospective job applicants and also influences how job applicants search for job vacancies (LinkedIn.com, 2015). For instance, Skeels and Grudin (2009) stated that Microsoft, a well-recognised company, used LinkedIn to establish a prospective employee database of skilled professionals and to recruit experts for the organization. LinkedIn

facilitates the creation and strengthening of collaboration between HR professionals who are willing to improve their respective organizations. LinkedIn also affords the verification of job applicants. The verifications efforts aided by LinkedIn significantly reduce hiring costs and time taken in traditional recruitment processes and thus increases the chances of employing the right and skilled individuals for a vacant job (Okafor, 2016; Ulahsan, 2017; Schneider, 2018).

2.4 Adoption of LinkedIn in the HR department

Okafor, (2016) and Guardian, (2018) explained in their study that LinkedIn is a social networking site for professionals and is gaining ground speedily in the business world. LinkedIn is widely recognised for its unique functions which allow colleagues and experts across the globe to connect and share expert ideas and knowledge. Over the years, LinkedIn has become the fastest social networking site that connects professionals and experts from different fields in the world (Okafor, 2016).

Studies indicate that over 350 million LinkedIn users often create attractive and compelling profiles that connect them to job applicants and prospective employers (Parry and Solidoro, 2013; Guardian, 2018). Similarly, studies show that it enables job applicants to apply and bargain for an inspiring position that assists them in having a sound career advancement in the future. The widespread use and recognition of LinkedIn have allowed many HR departments to build massive job databases. LinkedIn has provided a natural ground for job applicants to gain precise visibility of employers in their chosen respective job market and career choices (Guardian, 2018). Parry and Solidoro (2013) explained that over the years, LinkedIn had allowed many job applicants to search for prospective and lucrative jobs. Retrospectively, when LinkedIn is adequately integrated into the HR department, it aids potential employers with the opportunities of building profiles that attract professionals (Mayer, 2008; Guardian, 2018). When successfully adopted in the HR department, LinkedIn Apps enable HR to benefit from users' referrals such as non-organisation employees, current and former employees. This notion is in support of Guardian (2018), who suggested that positions in the modern business world are filled through referrals from online users.

However, studies reveal that the acceptance of LinkedIn software is prone to security challenges (Mayer, 2008; Parry and Solidoro, 2013). Mayer, (2008) highlighted that LinkedIn, like most

social media platforms, is vulnerable to security challenges such as privacy and data theft by users. Despite the identified security challenges associated with LinkedIn in the workplace, it is still widely recognised as an essential communication platform in the business sphere. Importantly, Parry and Solidoro (2013) noted that LinkedIn collaboration, greater transparency, increased trust between employees, and becoming a central vehicle for many internal communications that are important to the employees. Accordingly, previous studies further showed that LinkedIn could be used to search for prospective candidates and advertising job vacancies. It also enables employees to refer the job seekers to use LinkedIn as an employment platform for job search (Parry and Solidoro, 2013). Furthermore, Slovensky and Ross (2012) noted that social media platform such as LinkedIn is continuously used in selection and decision-making processes by HR professionals across the globe. This suggestion was evident in the Career Builder survey by Grasz (2009), which indicated that almost half of human resources management (HRM) activities use social media platforms such as LinkedIn to select prospective applicants.

Research studies also indicate that LinkedIn facilitates and enhance the exchange of knowledge between job seekers (Doherty, 2010; Miller-Merrell, 2012). LinkedIn can help the HR departments improve their functions such as hiring, selection, recruiting, and training. This affirmation agrees with Miller-Merrell (2012) who underlined the significant opportunity of LinkedIn to the HR functions and its professionals in making the recruiting process more exciting and efficient. For instance, LinkedIn can also be used as a medium to connect different people with similar job roles, expertise areas, or as a platform to brainstorm an idea with people in different countries or locations. The study asserts that embracing LinkedIn in HR employment processes such as recruitment, selection, and hiring processes would be an added advantage to employee performance. These are consistent with Doherty (2010) and Amade (2017), who assert that the use of LinkedIn and assertions Facebook could improve HR employment processes. Importantly, LinkedIn can be used to enhance the attitude and transform HR employee's behaviour towards their work.

Despite the above-highlighted assertions in previous studies of the significant opportunity of LinkedIn software to HR departments, studies still show that the acceptance and effective use of LinkedIn system is still limited (Minchington, 2014; Oladapo, 2019). The system is not widely

accepted and used because of various reasons such as lack of knowledge on how to use it, lack of proper skills to integrate the system into the HR department. However, LinkedIn continues to play an important role in performing HR functions. Significantly, some studies still recognised the importance of LinkedIn in the recruitment of professionals in the modern business world as the pinnacle for efficiency and effectiveness of the HR department (Chaudhary, 2017; Singh and Sharma, 2014).

2.4.1 Acceptance of Technology in Human Resources Management

Technology has been widely used as an important tool for transforming organisations across the world (Amaeshi, 2013). Its introduction to human resources management was received with mixed feelings in Nigerian companies. Very few companies in the construction sector are embracing technological systems or platforms to perform their HR functions. Previous studies show that there is limited research on the acceptance of technology in performing human resources functions in some sectors in Nigeria (Oyewobi, Olorunyomi., Jimoh, and Rotimi, 2021). This is because firms are reluctant to adopt technology in performing HR functions as they prefer to perform them manually. Nevertheless, a quantitative study by Amaeshi (2013) revealed the relationship that exists between information communication technology (ICT) and human resources management functions. ICT emerged as the main technology chosen by many organizations in Nigeria (Amaeshi, 2013; Agalamanyi, Eme and Emeh, 2012).

According to Agalamanyi et al. (2012), organisations use ICT to store, process, retrieve, disseminate, and share information within the organization. However, Amaeshi (2013) and Ilamosi, and Oluyinka (2020) argue that organisations are using human resources information systems (HRIS) to reduce the costs of performing HR functions. The assertion was supported by Ilamosi, and Oluyinka (2020) who posit that it is through the use of HRIS, that organisations are also able cut costs on recruitment activities such as screening, process applications, hiring new workers. Nevertheless, studies revealed limited research work which focuses on the acceptance of LinkedIn in performing HR functions in the construction sector in Nigeria.

2.4.2 Advantages of using LinkedIn in performing HR functions

Research shows that the advent of LinkedIn has assisted HR departments in enhancing their HR functions. Merrell (2012) indicated in his study that the adoption of LinkedIn in the HR department will increase the efficiency in recruitment and selection processes. Importantly, studies show that LinkedIn enables HR personnel to quickly verify candidates and make informed appointment decisions (Donath and Boyd, 2004; McClard and Anderson, 2008). This assertion is consistent with King (2006), who pointed out that LinkedIn aided businesses in discovering missed information in the job application of applicants. MacDonald, Sohn, and Ellis (2010), also suggested that LinkedIn could assist in identifying candidates that present fake profiles that reflect the good character to suit the advertised job specifications. These types of misrepresentations have a negative consequence for job applicants, as they will be discovered by their prospective employers. LinkedIn software can also be used to identify an individual's social behaviour. However, Hallam (2013) suggests that the use of LinkedIn software to do background checks such as religious, criminal records, and social behaviour on prospective job applicants might negatively or positively affect their chances of getting a job. Therefore, the onus is on the individual or social media users to be conscious of the type of information they put on personal profiles pages.

Furthermore, Zide, Elman, and Shahani-Denning (2014) suggested some of the challenges encountered in using LinkedIn software. These include the applicant's unwillingness to provide the correct information in personal profiles. Similarly, Davison (2011) and Davison, Maraist and Bing (2012) highlighted that legal issues may arise from discrimination of job applicants based on race, beliefs, political views, gender, age, and social standing. They further explained that the use of obtained information posted by third parties on social media for hiring purposes could attract legal disputes. Brown and Vaughn (2011) also suggested that the use of applicant's information obtained through any form of an online process without their knowledge could result in the invasion of privacy. This action is unethical and has legal implications for the organization. The study also indicated the EU 1995 Data Protection Directive law restricts HR recruitment officials and online employment agents from the use of such data for employment purposes unless the information was given anonymously.

Studies show that despite the identified challenges on the use of technology in the employment process, many recruiters still routinely use the sites like LinkedIn to identify qualified applicants for a job (Karl and Peluchette, 2013), because it gives access to a pool of professional job seekers and the cost-savings to recruitment and selection processes (Clements, 2012). Bondarouk and Luján (2013) also suggest the advantage of using LinkedIn in HR functions as the low cost of recruiting applicants from a broader scale and secure collaboration among employees. However, these advantages could be hindered by security challenges associated with the use of LinkedIn. DiStaso, McCorkindale, and Wright (2011) explained that the lack of control of employee interactions on LinkedIn could expose the vulnerability of users to a possible invasion of privacy and data theft. This statement is consistent with Mayer (2008), who underlined that LinkedIn security issues include invasion of privacy and data theft. Despite the evidence that pointed out the challenges associated with LinkedIn, there is evidence that most HR departments still recognise it as an essential contemporary platform that improves HR functions.

2.5 Human resources management (HRM)

Human resources management (HRM) is widely used as a concept that offers different dimensions to a business. Its unique identity resulted in universal acceptance and its applicability in the various business sphere. Therefore, there is no commonly accepted meaning for HRM. It is an administration concept that is associated with receiving the best outcomes from the collaboration of workers in the organisation (Storey, 2007). Furthermore, Storey (2007) points out that HRM "is a distinctive approach to employment management, which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic development of a highly committed and capable workforce using an array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques" (p.7).

HRM is known as personnel management which consists of all the activities undertaken to ensure the effective utilisation of employee's skills toward the attainment of individual or group goals (Dabic, Ortiz-De-Urbina-Criado, and Romero-Martinez, 2011). It's fundamental and distinctive role is underpinned by employees and their relationship with the management. HRM assist in getting maximum individual growth, the desired working bond between workers and the organisation. The pillars of HRM functions include recruitment, selection, development, utilisation, compensation, and motivation (Bratton and Gold, 2017).

HRM mainly focuses on the management of people (Lin, Peng, and Kao, 2008). However, it consists of actions that assist in managing people through the various phases of the employment cycle, which includes pre-hire, post-hire, and staffing of employed applicants (Mathis, Jackson, Valentine and Meglich, 2016). Mathis et al. (2016) explained in their work that the pre-hire phase involves planning practices which includes the selection process of qualified job applicants. While the selection phase process consists of the recruitment of selected applicants, assessing their qualifications, and ultimately selecting those considered to be the most qualified. Mathis et al. (2016) further explained that in the post-hire stage, HRM practices were established to manage people at the point of arrival effectively. Their explanation was consistent with Collins and Clarke (2003). They stated that efficient management of people encourages the HR department to develop a practice that gets the best out of employees which consequently increases their satisfaction levels. These practices include training and education that impact an employee's knowledge and skills needed to perform their job role within the area of their location. Additionally, a study further explained that the post-hire stage creates a conducive environment that motivates and align the work's objectives to the goals of the employees (Collins and Clarke, 2003).

Scholars revealed that the intensive increase of competition in the business environment caused various challenges in the HR department (Donaldson, 2010). These challenges emanated from factors such as deregulation, globalisation, and fast technology changes (Donaldson, 2010). The competitive pressure in the business sphere stimulates the application of the strategic plan, a process of anticipating future changes in the business environment, and alignment of various components in the organisation as a way to promote effectiveness (Donaldson, 2010). In response to the competitive pressures emanating from HR challenges, many HR departments developed a strategic plan of adopting social media platforms and thus implemented LinkedIn in the recruitment processes. These types of strategic plans enable many HR departments and job applicants to eliminate the use of job agencies, career builders and thus allow the employment department to have a direct connection with the conversant skilled job seekers beyond the national boundary.

2.5.1 Human resources management functions

HRM functions are tasks embedded in the HR department. They are concerned with activities such as recruitment, managing, training, remuneration, and giving direction to employees in the organisation. Additionally, HRM functions consist of selection, hiring, development, and motivation of workers in the organisation (Lin et al., 2008; Bratton and Gold, 2017). The acceptance of technology has seen these functions being transformed and aligned with the current demands of the organisations.

2.5.1.1 Recruitment process

Recruitment is an HRM function that is carried out to find and attract prospective skilled people to occupy available positions in an organisation. It is used to source candidates with the necessary skills and personalities that aspire to achieve the objectives of the organisation. Studies identify recruitment as a process that entails the identification of available jobs, analysing their requirements, reviewing candidates, screening, shortlisting, and choosing the right applicants (Leisink and Steijn, 2008; Lin et al., 2008; Bratton and Gold, 2017). Technology has emerged as a critical component of managing recruitment processes. Recruitment functions can either be conducted independently or out-sourced to external HR consultants (Castano, Wiesner, Hackett, and Methot, 2009). The recruitment process requires HR professionals to perform the procedure with consistency and compliance with the identified rules so that the right applicants are recruited to fill up the vacant position. The recruitment process usually begins when an employee leaves the organisation when there is a need to reshuffle, or the organisation is going through a significant change that requires transfiguration of human resource requirements (Newell, 2005). In most organisations, proper HR planning is needed to meet human social needs. (Armstrong, 2014).

Studies indicated recruitment as a delicate process that need not be interrupted by HR personnel as this may jeopardise the overall HRM objective and may lead to hiring wrong or incompetent applicants (Leisink and Steijn, 2008; Castano et al., 2009). Furthermore, it has been pointed out that an appropriate tested and trusted technology system must be adopted to support recruitment processes, and mitigate problems that may be encountered in the recruitment process (Leisink and Steijn, 2008; Bratton and Gold, 2017). This affirmation is consistent with Cole (2002), who suggests that companies that recruit online skilled and competent individuals can transform

business activities. The companies will be able to establish a skilled workforce that is capable of responding to challenges and take advantage of possible opportunities available in the market. Recruitment also refers to the establishment of sufficient numbers of suitable and qualified applicants where the HR employment personnel can choose the most appropriate person or people to occupy the vacant position or positions in an organisation (Bearrdwell and Wright, 2002; Bratton and Gold, 2017). Contemporary HRM theorists suggested that the success of a recruitment process hinges on the selection of the most suitable technological system and recruitment strategies (Storey, 2007; Bratton and Gold, 2017).

Recruitment process (**Figure 2.1**), extracted and formulated based on findings from the literature. The process that can be amplified by technology includes the "establishment of recruitment planning, strategy development, searching, screening, evaluation, and control" (DeCenzo and Robbins 2009, p. 51).

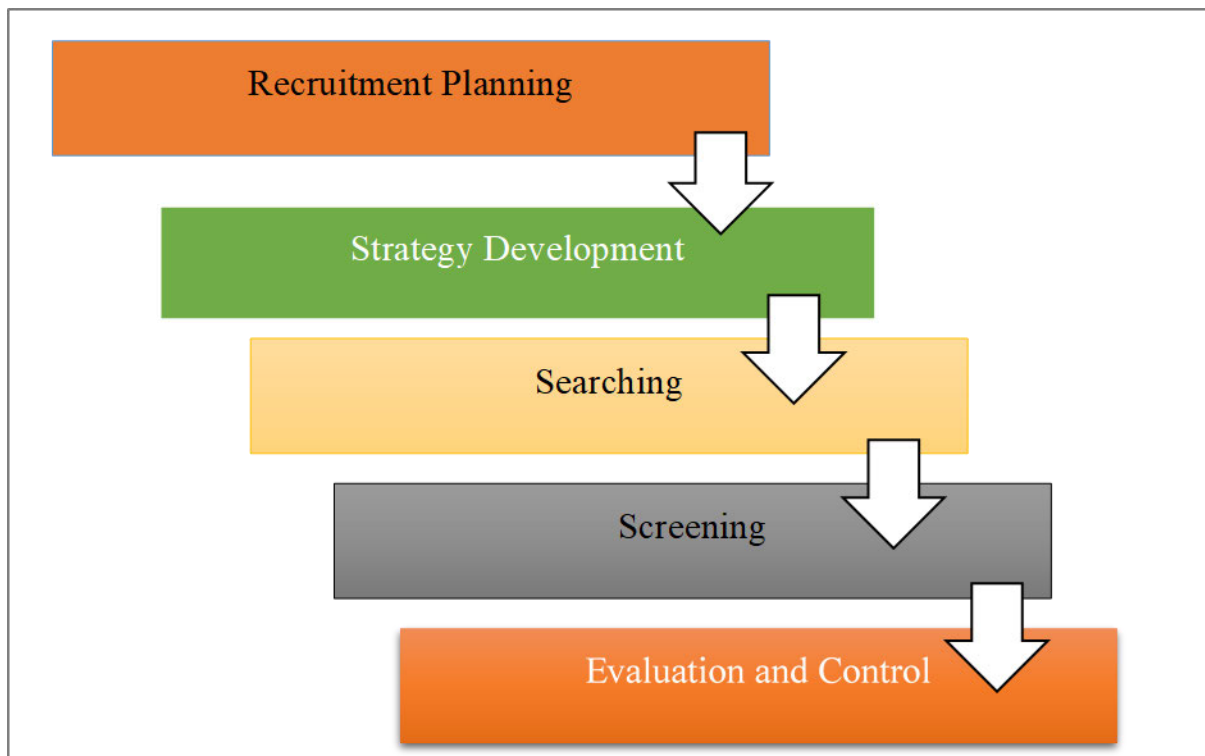


Figure 2. 1 Recruitment process

Source: DeCenzo and Robbins (2009).

2.5.1.2 Selection process

Selection is considered an essential HRM process that involved selecting the right applicants with qualifications or skills to take up a vacant position in an organisation. Selection as one of the key HR functions can also be facilitated by acceptance and use of suitable technology. Studies confirm that selection is a relatively long and complicated process for it includes several steps before the right candidate is selected (Gusdorf, 2008; DeCenzo and Robbins 2009). However, selection techniques differ from company to company. In most situations, the length of the selection process is determined by the urgency associated with filling up of vacant position.

According to DeCenzo and Robbins (2009, p. 157) and Bogatova (2017, p. 15), the selection process (**Figure 2.2**) comprises of the following steps "(i) initial screening interview, (ii) completion of the application form, (ii) employment tests, (iv) comprehensive interview, (v) conditional job offer, (vi) background investigation, (vii) medical examination, and (viii) permanent job offer".

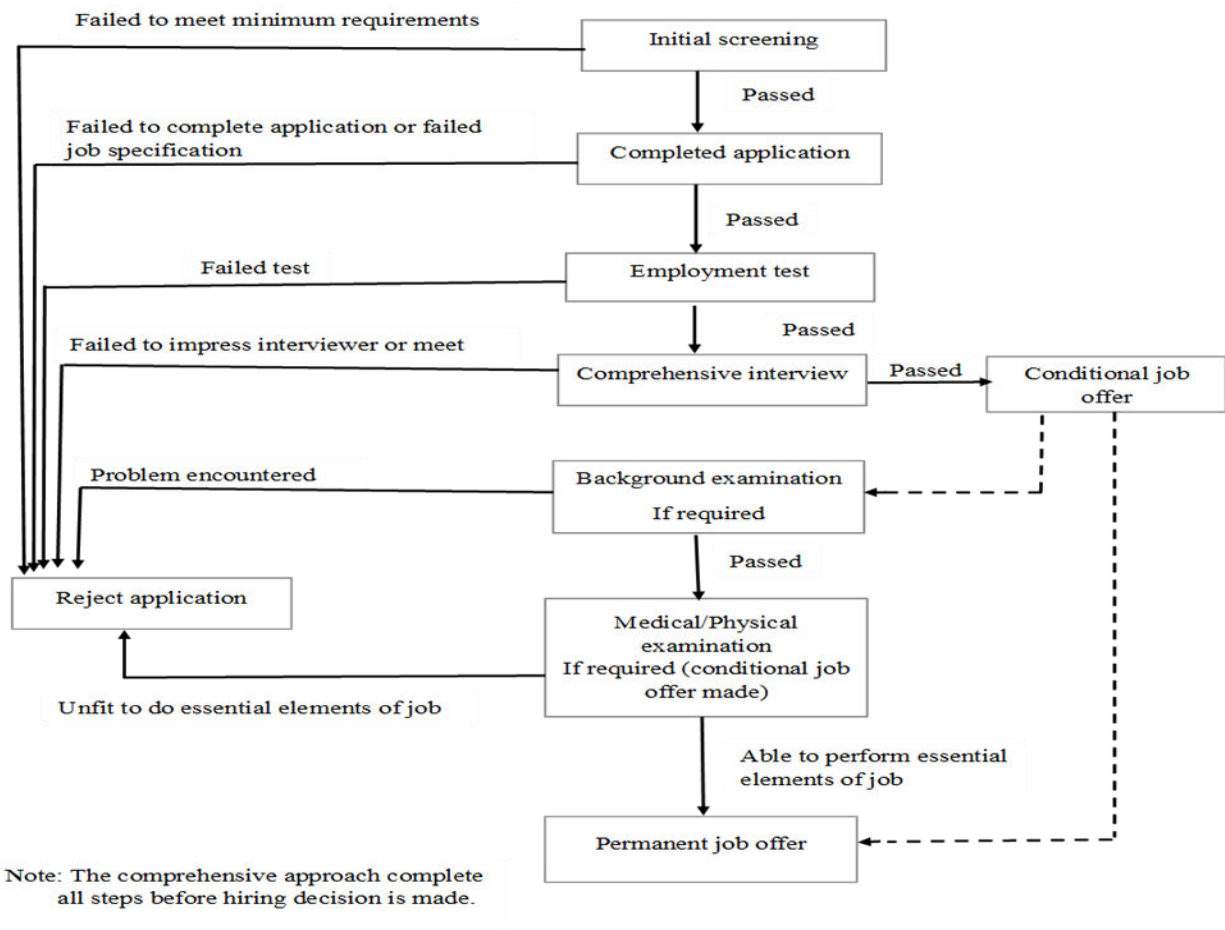


Figure 2. 2 Selection process

Source: DeCenzo and Robbins (2009, p. 157)

The steps are explained as:

- **Initial screening** of prospective applicants is regarded as the key phase in the selection process. It includes conducting various interviews where some applicants with less experience and inappropriate skills are eliminated (DeCenzo and Robbins 2009). However, the screening process allows applicants to get more information about the vacant post and what is expected of them.

- **Completion of the application form** is a step where forms are issued to potential applicants. Applicants are asked to give general information such as name, telephone number, and address. The application forms will also have a section where applicants are asked to state their professional profile. The applicant's profile will afford the HR personnel the chance to get more information

about the applicants. Finally, the potential applicant will be asked to put her/his signature as a declaration that all information was correctly filled (Gusdorf, 2008).

- ***Employment tests*** are used to predict candidates who will perform effectively in the position. Various tests are used to test candidate skills, abilities, intellectual capabilities, competencies, and characteristics of the candidates.

- ***Comprehensive interview*** is conducted to get detailed information on the applicant who passes the initial screening process. HR personnel uses this stage of a selection process to examine and test applicants on what contributions and differences will they make to the organisation performance if hired to take up the position. HR managers use comprehensive interviews to interrogate, motivate issues, values, and test the attitude of applicants towards the organisation. Extensive interviews are conducted to understand whether applicants will be able to adapt to the company's work ethics and able to work under pressure.

- ***Conditional job offer*** is given to the candidate who passes all the steps of the selection process. The successful candidate will be offered the job when he/she pass background and medical examination.

- ***Background investigation*** is conducted to verify if the information provided by an applicant is correct. HR managers/personnel will carry out a verification task where they contact previous employers, references, and educational institutions to double-check if the information provided by the applicants is correct. HR managers also use this stage to get more details, such as performance appraisals, the work ethic of applicants.

- ***Medical/physical examination*** is carried out to ascertain if the candidate will be able to deal with the physical nature of the job. HR managers use it to assess if the candidate is physically fit enough to carry out the duties associated with the position. For example, some companies conduct drug and mental tests on prospective job applicants.

- ***Job offer*** is the final step of the selection process. At this phase, the successful applicants are offered the opportunity to occupy the vacant position (DeCenzo and Robbins 2009).

The selection steps are critical in assisting the organisation in getting the best information about applicants. However, not all organisations follow every step. The study indicated that some organisations omit some of the steps citing costs and the urgent need to fill up the vacant position (DeCenzo and Robbins 2009).

2.5.1.3 Hiring process

Hiring is considered one of the stressful HR functions in an organisation. The problem mostly emanates from hiring the wrong people for a job. However, studies indicated that hiring risks can be mitigated when HR managers invest in identifying a suitable technology that can reduce time and resources in identifying and selecting the right person for the job (DeCenzo and Robbins 2009; Girard and Fallery, 2010). The hiring process includes defining a process that involves identifying the hiring team and hiring costs associated with the whole process. The plan must also spell out how a prospective candidate will be attracted and selected. A suitable budget must be drawn so that the hiring process is completed with minimal interruptions. Some organisation design hiring model used as a guideline whenever there is a vacant position in the organisation. **Figure 2.3** shows a hiring model that can be used to hire people by an organisation.

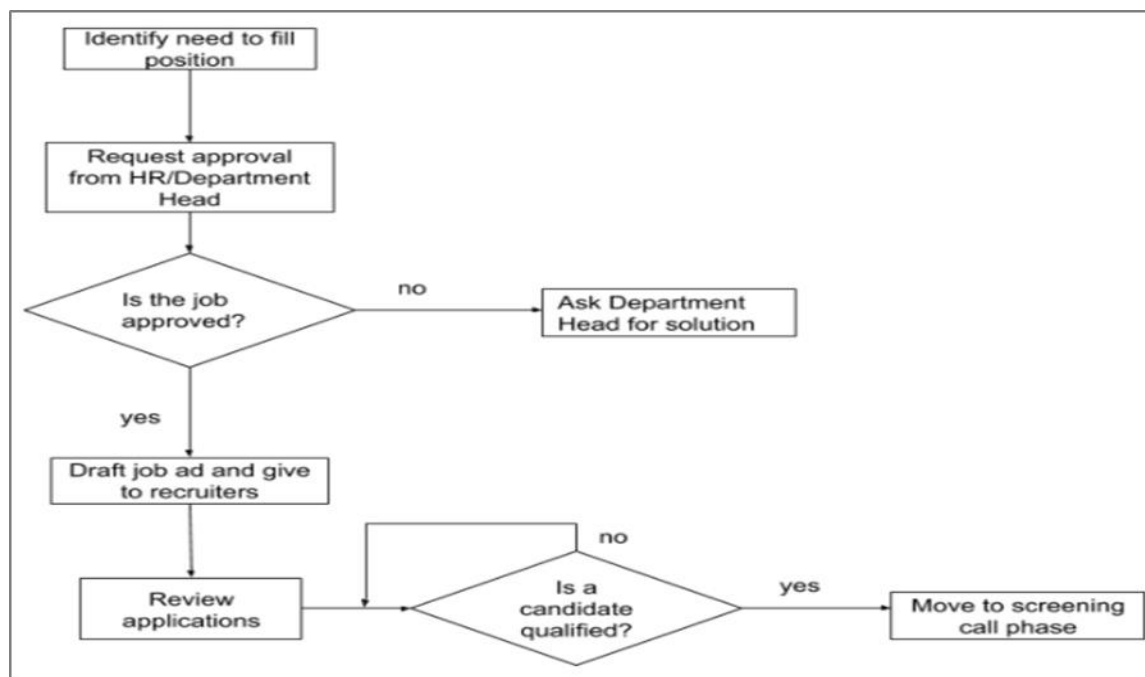


Figure 2. 3 Hiring flow chart

Sources: Bika (2019)

The hiring process begins with planning and identifying the skills and competencies needed for a specific position. Additionally, it includes selecting the platform that will be used to advertise for the vacant position. Once all the planning is completed, HR managers will then seek approval from the head office of the organisation. After that, the executives approve the request to fill the vacant position and the budget, and HR managers are permitted to advertise the job (Bika, 2019).

2.5.1.4 Training and development (T&D)

The rapid changing of information systems (IT) has brought about transformation and contemporary innovations into the HR department. According to Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) (2002, p. ii) cited in Meret, Fioravanti, Iannotta, and Gatti (2018, p. 115), IT has brought about "continuous innovations in technology and has fundamentally changed the way HR work is accomplished". It has been accepted into the HR department to transform and manage human resources functions in the organisation. IT is widely used to "collect, store, use, and disseminate information" (Meret et al., 2018, p. 115). Social media platforms emerged as essential IT tools used to transform and facilitate HR functions in organisations today. LinkedIn was identified as one of the tools used to manage training and development related problems effectively.

However, T&D challenges associated with the acceptance of the LinkedIn platform (LinkedIn training) in modern organisations are immersed (Chelovechkov, Lefkowitz, Spar, and Van Nuys, 2019). These include content and training program designs, budget constraints, identifying the right workers for training programs, aligning training to the overall strategy of the organisation, ascertain return on investment (ROI), and lack of executive buy-in and security. T&D affords HR professionals to mix and match training content (Chelovechkov et al., 2019). However, identifying the right content and the right balance system that accommodates skilled recipients is a daunting task for talent developers in contemporary organisations. Importantly, T&D cannot achieve great results when its content is outdated and not in line with recent times. The challenge is to make sure that content for T&D programs is up to date and in line with current times and organisation training program. Therefore, the HR professional should strive to find the right training program's content that can appropriately be incorporated into the organisation HR training system. (Chelovechkov et al., 2019). Gautam (2017) identified that budget constraints and identifying the right workers to

send to training programs are significant problems. Lack of financial resources is compounded by the inability of HR managers to determine how the organisation can benefit from LinkedIn training programs. Lack of evidence of an increase in income revenues associated with LinkedIn training led to organisations failure to avail resources and embrace LinkedIn training programs in the HR department.

Incorporating LinkedIn into T&D programs is centred on the need to align it with the main strategy of the company. Failure to do so could lead to problems such as lack of employee commitment. The lack of management buy-in affects the alignment of LinkedIn training programs and rolling out of the system into the HR department. The company executives must accept the new training system as a 'gap filler' to its daily operational challenges (Gautam, 2017). It is a surmountable task for many organisations to align it with the overall strategy of the organisation. Identifying the real training needs facilitated by LinkedIn is sometimes tricky as the method of identifying them is limited in many organisations. The inability to recognise these training needs is equally a challenge since calculating the return on investments (ROI) of LinkedIn T&D investments is difficult to establish. The failure to ascertain the increase in ROI from using LinkedIn T&D is identified as one of the contributing factors of lack of management buy-in. However, Gautama (2017) and Chelovechkov et al. (2019) suggest that T&D powered by LinkedIn can be a source of employee retention in an organisation. It is viewed as a security system that effectively gives feedback and produces reports on every element of the training programs. T&D powered by LinkedIn features are also acknowledged as user friendly and workers motivation. Importantly, workers are eager to accept a training program when they identify the benefits associated with it. Such benefits are considered as employee motivation and acceptance. Engaging workers during LinkedIn T&D is a significant impediment to a successful program. Consequently, when workers engaged fully in the program, it is often led to employee engagement and knowledge retention.

2.6 Challenges of human resources management

The continuous evolution of communication technology has redefined HRM, calling many organisations to restructure their HR departments to accommodate new technological updates. These developments pose a considerable challenge to HR departments (Ball, 2001). However, the study (Ball, 2001) indicated the need to reconfigure HR department activities and align them with

current technology dictates. The use of LinkedIn in the selection of skilled personnel goes a long way in developing a qualified human capital and to mitigate some of the challenges experienced in HR departments (Mensah, 2013). Additionally, the study further pointed out that HR decisions on operations have been greatly influenced by the increase of global competition and, hence make it difficult for the HR department to achieve its goal efficiently (Mensah, 2013).

2.6.1 Recruitment and retention

Maharajana (2018), in his work, identified the increase in project scope and operations as some of the many forces that sometimes drives the need to recruit new and skilled talents. During the recruitment phase, some HR personnel encounters the challenges of selecting and hiring the best candidates, which sometimes led to problems of employee retention (Maharajana, 2018). The inability to design a system that will integrate a prospective candidate into the current culture settings in the HR department is also identified as another HRM challenges. The successful recruitment and retention of an employee require the HR department to carefully select highly skilled candidates and a team builder who can co-exist with other employees (Atlas et al., 2015). The ability of employees to co-exist will strengthen the working relationship among workers and in return, may increase employee's productivity and retention rate of an organisation (Mensah, 2013; Maharajana, 2018). Employees' retention is essential as it minimises the employee turnover rate. According to Atlas et al. (2015), the retention of employees is a significant problem in the HR department as discussed below:

i) Contingent workforce

The contingent workforce includes temporary contract, part-time, and work-at-home employees. Keeping employees in this category is a problem because they are less attached to the organisation, which becomes a significant issue for the HR department. The issue of offering the above-mentioned workforce long-term job opportunities, and ensuring their sense of belonging in an organisation is one of the contributing factors to HR retention challenges (Atlas et al., 2015).

ii) Demand for expert employees

People with scarce skills and technical acumen are mostly in demand in the job market. Their importance in the contemporary HR department is associated with high performance and adaptability capabilities. Such employees are considered as valuable assets. Therefore, the focus

of every HR manager is to keep them (Atlas et al., 2015). However, the lack of organisation management buy-in to adopt other recruitment processes brought about technology (Social Media-LinkedIn), different from traditional ways of recruitment such as in-house and succession processes hinder them from exploring other recruitment opportunities beyond their boundaries. This makes it difficult for many HR departments to recruit and retain professional employees with the required skilled.

iii) Productivity

Maximising profit and minimising costs are amongst the goals of every HR manager. Their success defined their ability to maintain higher productivity levels consistently. Importantly, HRM always focuses on maintaining a high productivity level (Maharajana, 2018). However, productivity investment and efforts availed by management pose considerable challenges to HR managers. Despite HRM's continuous efforts of maintaining a high productivity level, they still sometimes get unsatisfactory results. Productivity related issues call for the HR unit to adopt low-cost recruitment platforms that aid the creation of a skilled workforce (Maharajana, 2018).

iv) Globalisation

Pani and Singh (2012), defined globalisation as the removal of barriers between different countries which allows the free movement of goods and services, people, and information across the international borders. Additionally, Hashim, (2013) also described globalisation as the flow of people, capital, goods and services, concepts, and information beyond national borders. Similarly, it is also considered as a process that enables firms to operate on a transnational scale and establish global influence (Palistha and Maharja, 2018). Such developments pose enormous challenges for HRM, which needed to be dealt with to remain competitive in the dynamic global market.

Lussier and Hendon (2015) explained in their study that the challenges and the effects of globalisation are more evident in the diverse workforce and work ethics. Globalisation does not pose enormous obstacles to HR department professionals. However, it is underlined by the HR managers' ability in aligning skills from a diverse workforce towards the achievement of their goals. Globalisation introduces unique competition to HRM across the globe. This competition calls for different HR department efforts to address these challenges and deal with pressure from foreign businesses that continue to influence and define ways of managing cultural ethnicity issues,

unique personal needs, and international rewarding structure problems. The increase in business competition brought about globalisation subsequently led to many unfamiliar work environments and thus influencing employee's work ethic. Maharajana (2010) points out that various global businesses are battling to adjust to new HRM challenges emanating from globalisation. Consequently, research indicated that the complexity of globalisation still affects the HR department in balancing the different problems related to global business practices. It includes cultural differences, international market needs, employee benefit packages, and also designing an educational system that will aid employee's children learning overseas (Saha and Rowely, 2015; Lussier and Hendon, 2015).

2.6.2 Privacy and Safety Issues

Human resources management plays a critical role in managing the human social assets of an organisation. However, managing the human resources of an organisation call for the need to address privacy and safety issues associated with it. The privacy and safety issues in managing human resources include handling and capturing of correct workers' data. Handling employee's information in an organisation raises legal implications if not managed properly (Maharajana, 2018). Privacy and safety issues that emerged from the adoption of a technology system (LinkedIn) into the HR functions include sustainability and information technology problems such as system hackers and identity theft.

i) Sustainability issues

Sustainability remains a major concern in the HR department. Mensah (2013) emphasised that retaining highly skilled workers is a problem in the modern business sphere. Given the dynamic forces in the global market, firms are left with no option but to adopt strategies that retain skilled workers (Aung, 2015). Additionally, HRM must strive to avoid policies and practices that could negatively harm the workforce and its development (Ehnert, Harry, Zink, and Klaus, 2014). However, retaining workers remained a sustainable issue for HRM. Identifying and addressing employee's concerns timeously and the considerations of their welfare is a vital strategy to hire and retain highly talented employees (Aung, 2015). The total reward system should also be regarded as an employee right by HRM. These will assist them to attract, retain talented and committed employees. Addressing sustainability issues includes implementing decisive promotional and performance appraisals as incentives to retain employees.

2.7 Theory underpinning the study

The study is guided by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) written by Davis in 1989. The study utilized two TAM variables to investigate the perceptions of human resources department employees on the acceptance of LinkedIn in human resources functions. The utilised constructs are perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use. These constructs were selected as they are the determinants of intention, which in turn determines its acceptance and use in performing functions like Human resources in an organisation. The use of constructs drawn from TAM was made consistent with Davis (1989) who highlighted that people's acceptance of new technology or information system is determined by its perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use by users. Furthermore, the model was used for this study in line with other scholars who argue that TAM is useful when predicting the acceptance of technology in performing various functions in the organization (Davis, 1989; Yusoff, Ramayah, and Ibrahim, 2010). TAM was adopted in this study to determine the acceptance of LinkedIn in performing HR functions in the construction company. This study used the perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use as the main predictors of the acceptance of LinkedIn software by HR employees of the organization used as the case study. The TAM used for this study is depicted in **Figure 2.4**.

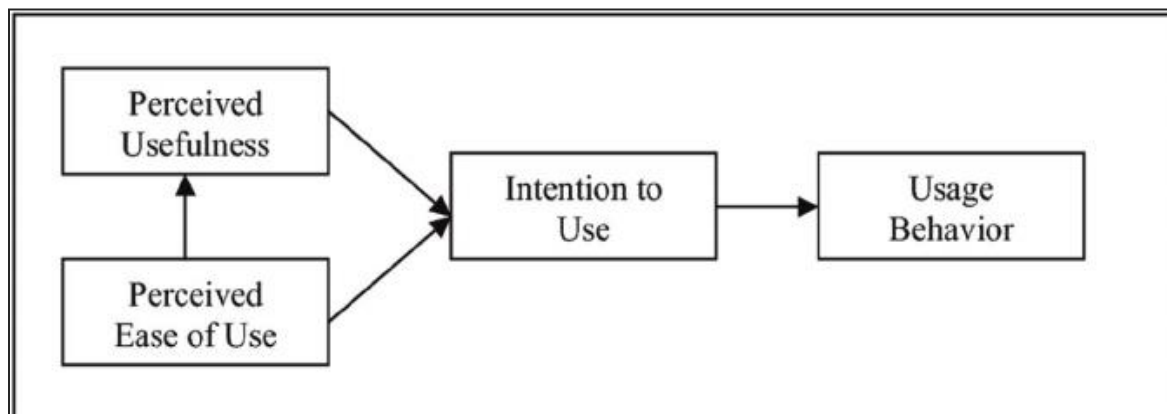


Figure 2. 4 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Source: (Davis, 1989).

2.8 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was written by Fred D. Davis, Jr in 1989 as a philosophy engaged in understanding people's acceptance of new technology. According to Davis (1989), TAM is employed to determine people's perceptions and attitudes towards using new technology or information system. Paul, John, and Pierre (2003) highlight that TAM is used to predict perceptions of the adoption of technology. TAM is further used to ascertain the behavioural intention of users towards their acceptance of new technology or information system. Also, Davis (1989, p. 320) pointed out that the model consists of "perceived usefulness, perceived ease-of-use, intention to use, and usage behaviour". These constructs were identified as critical variables that are used to determine the acceptance and motivation of people on the use of new technology (Davis, 1989). Generally, perceived ease-of-use and perceived usefulness are referred to as the most vital variables in the TAM as it explains the extent to which a person believes that using technology would be free from effort and the use of such technology would enhance their job or task performance" (Scherer, Siddiq, and Tondeur, 2019, p.15). Contextually, "free from effort" means free from difficulty or great effort" (Davis (1989) cited in Scherer et al., 2015, p.15). This assertion was supported by Scherer et al. (2015) study. They suggested that these two constructs from the TAM are closely interrelated to capability values. As clearly illustrated by Davis (1989), perceived ease-of-use and perceived usefulness influence the behaviour of individuals towards the use of new technology or systems.

However, Straub (2009) argued that the experience of successful users of new technology may determine the actions of future users. The behaviour of a user has a great influence on the choice to use a particular technology or system (Chuttur, 2009). The intention that one has before showing real behaviour is known as the behavioural intent of such an individual. One's behaviour is determined by the attitude which may be considered as positive or negative towards something (Chuttur, 2009). Davis (1989) points out that the acceptance of technology or system hinges on the behaviour of a person.

It is evident in literature that various attempts were made to modify TAM or efforts to align it with other models (Agarwal and Prasad, 1998; Chau and Hu; 2002; Surendran, 2012). For example, Lim (2000) and Moon and Kim (2001) attempted to modify TAM by introducing new variables

such as playfulness factors, and experience, perceived risk, self-efficacy, experience, and social influence respectively. Chau (1996) revised TAM by incorporating two near-term and long-term to assess the perceived usefulness of the model. The modification of TAM also saw Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) emerging as another model to assess the acceptance of the technology. The model was written by Venkatesh et al. (2003) as an alternative for TAM. UTAUT consist of four constructs – "are performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influences, and facilitating conditions". UTAUT constructs are moderated by age, gender, experience, and voluntariness Venkatesh et al. (2003). The model was also built on the foundations of two main TAM constructs (perceived usefulness, and perceived ease-of-use). UTAUT also use subjective norm (social influence, facilitating conditions, and voluntariness) as key alternative variables to TAM (Keong, Ramayah, Kurnia, and Chiun, 2012). UTAUT and TAM2 share similar factors. For example, the subjective norm from TAM2 has a strong impact on user intentions, and also above perceive usefulness, and ease-of-use of mandatory technology used in the organization. Similarly, UTAUT's construct, the social influence works well in voluntary settings where individuals determine their own perceived usefulness of a particular technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Lai (2017) argued that TAM only uses perceptions of people to ascertain whether a new technology or information system is accepted or not. The researcher further argued that TAM should give further measurements than relying on predictions and attitude as the main mediator between variables (Lai, 2017). Despite efforts exerted in trying to modify TAM, the model remained relevant to information system practitioners across the world in assessing the adoption of new technology or information system among users (Samaradiwakara and Gunawardena, 2014). Meta-analysis and critical evaluation by Scherer, Siddiq and Tondeur, (2019) on TAM confirmed that the model is valid and robust in determining people's perceptions regarding the acceptance of technology in the organization. The model is currently used in education to evaluate and facilitate learning while in business it is used to facilitate e-commerce acceptability, and to enable e-service adoption in government (Salloumm and Shaalan, 2018; Scherer, Siddiq and Tondeur, 2019; Xie, Song, Peng, and Shabbir, 2017).

Studies indicate one of many efforts made to incorporate TAM with other models as TAM3. The literature revealed that such determinations are still built on the foundations and pillars of TAM as established by Davis in 1989 (Pavlou, 2003; Pikkarainen et al., 2004; Ervasti and Helaakoski, 2010; Shafeek, 2011). TAM is currently used to understand the variables of technology acceptability that could be transferred to various technology and information systems. (Abu-Dalbouh, 2016). Davis (1989) suggested that whether a new technology or system is developed in-house or outsourced from external vendors, its acceptance still has a huge influence on the character and behaviour of people.

2.8.1 Perceived usefulness as a TAM construct

Davis (1989) stated that there are factors that influence people to use new technology or information system. People's choice of acceptance of new technology or information system is the assurance that it will assist them to perform their tasks much better. Davis (1989, p. 320) hypothesized that perceived usefulness is one of the central variables that influence people's choice to adopt a technology or information. Davis (1989) describes perceived usefulness as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance." This definition is derived from the word "useful" which implies "capable of being used advantageously." The notion of perceived usefulness is drawn in recognition that technology or a system's high perceived usefulness is when workers acknowledge that there is a strong relationship between the use and its performance (Davis, 1989).

Studies further revealed that the high level of perceptions of usefulness generally means the attitude and acceptance of the technology or system is high (Kucukusta, Law, Besbes and Legoharel, 2015; Muchran and Ahmar, 2018; Teo, 2011). The perceptions on the acceptance of technology are determined by the benefits users get from using it (Muchran and Ahmar, 2018). When people discover the use of a particular technology or system as useful, they are likely to embrace it. For example, the research by Bere and Rambe (2013) on acceptance of WhatsApp by students concluded that the platform is accepted as useful by students and it is positively influencing e-Learning at Cape Town University. These findings are supported by the suggestion that perceived usefulness has a huge impact on the actual use of technology or system (Davis, 1989; Bere and Rambe, 2013; Kucukusta et al., 2015; Suki and Suki, 2011; Wu et al., 2011).

Hence, this study, therefore, employed the above construct to understand the perceptions of HR department employees on the perceived usefulness of LinkedIn in the HR functions. The quest to use TAM's perceived usefulness to examine the acceptance of the use of LinkedIn is consistent with Davis (1989) and Guritno and Siringoringo (2013) who suggested that the construct has a positive influence on the acceptance and usability of technology among employees. This assertion is also supported by Kuo and Yen (2009) who pointed out that high perceived usefulness is the major determinant on the choice of adopting the technology. The Perceived usefulness construct was adopted in this study to investigate the acceptance and use of LinkedIn in the HR department because it has a major influence on the behavioural intention of workers in the organisation (Subhasish, 2012).

2.8.2 Perceived ease-of-use

According to Davis (1989, p. 320), perceived ease-of-use is "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort". This construct was derived in the recognition that people tend to accept technology or system when they view it as easy to use. This definition stems its meaning from Radner and Rothschild (1975) who identified effort as a predetermined resource that is allocated to different tasks by people. A task is acceptable by people when it is considered as easy when compared to another task (Davis, 1989).

Bandura (1982) cited in (Chuttur, 2009) noted that perceived ease-of-use is critical in determining one's behaviour. However, such behaviour is projected by outcome judgements and self-efficacy. Chuttur (2009) points out that self-efficacy is similar to perceived ease-of-use as it is referred to as decisions on how one carries out tasks needed to deal with a specific situation or outcome. It is similar to perceived usefulness as it establishes the behaviour once a judgement is well carried out and gives intended results. Studies suggest that perception of ease-of-use is the predictor of perceived usefulness of technology and it has a huge influence on the acceptance and adoption of computer systems in the organisation (Gefen and Straub, 2000). Grounded on the past studies on TAM, acceptability of technology is determined by perceptions of ease-of-use and the extent to which people find it friendly to use (Davis, 1989; Ashraf et al., 2014; Hsiao et al., 2015). This study used this construct to explore the perceptions of HR employees on the perceived ease-of-use on the acceptance and use of LinkedIn in performing HR functions in the organisation.

2.8.3 Behavioural intention to use

Behavioural intention described the extent to which an individual makes a conscious plan of how to conduct themselves with certain behaviours in the future (Davis, 1989). There are various factors, such as beliefs and values that influence behaviour. Beliefs and attitudes determine an individual's behavioural intention to use a technology or system. Keong et al. (2012) and Chemingui and Lallouna (2013) explained that behaviour intention to use refers to one's preparedness and promptness to use technology or computer system. One's attitude critically determines his or her choice to use technology (Davis, 1989; Ashraf et al., 2014). This notion is in line with the research findings of Letchumanan and Muniandy (2013), who concluded that student's attitudes had a huge influence on the acceptance and use of eBooks among mathematics students. Behavior intention to use is hugely affected by one's inner schematic beliefs that determine the acceptance and the use of technology. Behaviour intention to use is determined by whether one will continue to use the technology (Muchran and Ahmar, 2018). However, studies suggest that when behaviour intention to use a particular technology is low, people will not use such technology more often (David, 1989; Alleyne and Lavine, 2013; Ashraf et al., 2014). Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, and Davis (2003) suggested that continuous use of technology is also determined by the perception of usefulness and perception on the ease-of-use.

Experience, however, plays a moderating role between the three TAM variables (perceived usefulness, perceived ease-of-use, and behavioural intention). Venkatesh et al. (2003) also argued that behavioural intention to use technology is established as an upshot of sensible decision-making procedures.

2.8.4 Actual system use

The 'actual system use' or usage behaviour refers to the acceptance of technology (Davis, 1989). The actual system use was created as the final construct to strengthen TAM's main purpose of predicting the use of technology. It is usually determined by the duration an individual spends in using the new technology or information system (Davis, 1989). The study suggested that both perceptions of usefulness and perception of ease-of-use are related to usage (Mao, 2002; Tella and Olasina, 2014). Contrary, actual system use fails where everyone must use a particular system to

perform a task. For example, in China, Korea, the US, and most European countries, every employee must use an established technology in the organisation to perform most tasks (Park, 2009). In contrast, Davis (1989) established that actual system use is primarily determined by the behavioural intention of the users and the actual technology use is also influenced by the user's feelings towards it. Anandarajan and Simmers (2003) and Park (2009) suggest that the variables in the TAM theoretical framework are referred to as the most dependable ones. It also depends on the other constructs such as behavioural intention which are influenced by perceptions of usefulness and ease-of-use of a given technology or system (Park, 2009; Muchran and Ahmar, 2018).

2.9 Summary of chapter

This chapter presented a review of the literature for the study. The review was guided by the research objectives of the study. The chapter begins by exploring concepts identified as critical for this study. These include computer technology, social media, and its platforms, human resource management, and HR functions. These concepts were discussed to get a background perspective and detailed knowledge of their significance to the research topic. The reviewed literature revealed various perceptions on the use and advantages of LinkedIn software in many organisations across the world. Literature showed that there is a wide gap in its acceptance by HR professionals in the construction sector in Lagos, Nigeria. Reviewed literature also indicated that many organisations have different views on how they use LinkedIn to perform HR functions. The chapter also explored some of the HRM-related challenges commonly experienced in the HR department in relation to how organisations accept technology to perform HR functions. The chapter also presented a discussion of TAM which is a central model used to assist in answering the research questions for this study. The model was chosen as the main framework to explore the determinants of the acceptance of technology by users and organisations. Finally, the chapter presented two TAM concepts adopted to guide this study. These concepts are perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use. The concepts were chosen consistent with literature which states and acknowledges them as the important concepts in determining acceptance of technology by users.

The subsequent chapter discusses the research methodology for the study

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the literature relevant to this study. This chapter outlines the research methodology used in this study. It discusses some of the philosophical paradigms to give a background view of the research methodology of the study. It outlines the research paradigm followed by this study. The chapter presents the research design for the study. The chapter discusses reliability and validity as data control measures used to ascertain how quality data and reliable results were obtained. Finally, the chapter discussed the ethical considerations and limitations associated with this study.

A research methodology is an expression used to explain approaches, processes, and necessary procedures to get answers to the questions of a research study (Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell, 2007; Pickard 2013). Nani (2011) and Creswell (2014) point out that research methodology outlines the well-defined steps that should be followed to ensure a research study is carried out systematically. For this study, the researcher used the research onion technique to outline the process that was followed in conducting this research. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 106) acknowledged the research onion as a "strategic tool" that is used to guide researchers on the chronological steps that should be followed in conducting research work. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 107), stated that "the main layers of research onion are research philosophy, strategy, choices, time horizon, techniques and methods of data collection."

The research onion begins with a research philosophy that states the established beliefs regarding the true characteristics of the things being studied (Saunders et al., 2009; Bryman, 2012). However, there are various research philosophies assumptions and values that pose a great challenge to the researcher on choosing a suitable research philosophy for a particular study. Given the fact that research philosophies have different dimensions, studies show that the researcher's choice is determined by the type of knowledge being examined (Saunders et al., 2009; May 2011). Understanding a research philosophy is important as it assists in familiarising with the type of assumptions made in the research process and the type of research methods chosen for a particular

study (Flick, 2011). Therefore, the research onion recommends that researchers must understand a research philosophy appropriate for the study before they commence the research process (Kulatunga et al., 2007; Saunders et al., 2009; Bryman, 2012).

3.2 Research Philosophy (Paradigms)

Research philosophy is referred to as some established beliefs regarding the realities that are being studied (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014). Weaver and Olson (2006, p. 460) regard research philosophy as "patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames, and processes through which investigation is accomplished". It provides the norms to be followed in collecting data in a research study. Research philosophy is also understood as a lens, model, and procedure that should be followed to answer questions in a research study. It establishes how research data is to be gathered and analysed (Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell, 2014). A research paradigm assists the researcher to select the research methods necessary for the study (Trautrim, Grant, Cunliffe, and Wong, 2013; Creswell, 2014). Given the role played by a research philosophy, it is recommended to first identify a relevant research paradigm before embarking on the research process of the study (Bryman, 2012; Trautrim et al., 2013; Creswell, 2014).

Saunders et al. (2009) coined the research onion to illustrate the processes to be undertaken in a research study. The research onion comprises five research processes which include "research philosophy, research approaches, research strategies, time horizons, and data collection methods" (Saunders et al., 2009. p. 106). These processes are depicted diagrammatically as layers of an onion. Peeling away each layer leads to another layer as a step towards the accomplishment of the research study. Additionally, Saunders et al. (2009) distinguished that completing a research process requires researchers to work chronologically from the outside layer into the inside layers. According to Saunders et al. (2009) research onion, research philosophy kick starts the research process as depicted in **Figure 3.1**, and as it defines the research strategy adopted by the researcher for this study.

There are various types of research philosophies which include "positivism, realism, interpretative, objectivism, subjectivism, pragmatism, functionalist, interpretative, radical humanist, and radical

structuralist" (Saunders et al., 2009). The commonly used research philosophies are post-positivism, constructivism, transformative, and pragmatism (Mertens, 2014; Creswell, 2013). Once the researcher identifies the research philosophy for a particular research study, the research onion proposes the type of approach to be used to collect data. These approaches include deductive and inductive approaches which the researcher can utilise in a research study. Saunders et al. (2009) recommend that as the research study is informed by the research philosophies, it is advisable to determine study goals and limitations so that an appropriate research approach is adopted for the study. Once the research approach is clearly defined and identified, the researcher identifies the research strategy(s) to be used to collect data.

The research strategies are depicted in layers indicating research approaches that are followed to conduct research. According to Saunders et al. (2009, p. 108), these approaches include "survey, experiment, action research, case study, archival research ethnography, and grounded theory". These strategies describe how data was collected by the researcher. The research strategies lead to the fourth layer, which includes choices of data collection methods. At this stage, the researcher can use mixed methods, the multi-method, and the mono method to assemble the study data. The layer of the researcher's choices leads to the time horizon layer, which defines the period at which the research study is to be completed (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2012). The time horizons include cross-sectional and longitudinal, which involve the collection of data for a specifically defined period and repeatedly over extended time respectively. Time horizons lead to the final layer of the research onion. This layer contains the techniques and procedures to be used to collect data. However, how data is analysed depends on the type of research methods adopted for study (Saunders et al., 2009). The research onion model is depicted below in **Figure 3.1**.

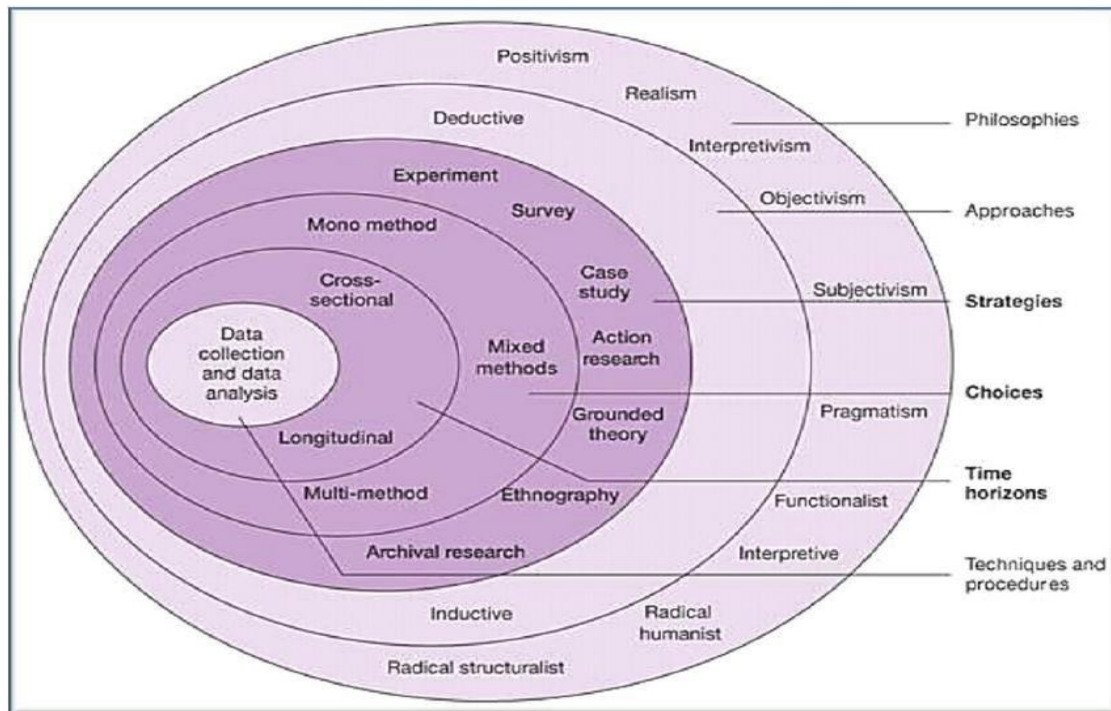


Figure 3. 1 Research onion

Source: Saunders et al. (2009, p. 108)

3.2.1 Positivism

Positivism argues that the purpose of a research is to describe an occurrence that can be clearly observed and accurately measured (Saunders et al., 2009; Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). Positivism is supported by the notion that new knowledge is gained from a positive interpretation of results. Positivist theorists utilise logical reasoning to come up with theories that can be tested by a research strategy. Positivism underlines that assumptions in research study follow traditional settings which are associated with quantitative data collection methods than qualitative methods. Positivism paradigms also acknowledge the use of multiple research methods in collecting data to respond to issues identified in a phenomenon. Significantly, the positivism research paradigm describes deterministic research techniques where knowledge is reduced into small distinct sets to allow effective testing, observation, and measurement of the truth that exists, and to finally verify the conceptual or theoretical frameworks adopted to guide the study (Creswell, 2014).

3.2.2 Realism

Realism focuses on the truth and values which currently exist in a given setting (Saunders et al., 2009; Novikov and Novikov, 2013). Realism paradigms describe scientific approaches that do not depend on people's viewpoints (Pickard, 2013). Two types of realism philosophy include direct and critical realism. Direct realism is underpinned by the notion that "what you see is what you get" and view the world through people's minds. Critical realism asserts that people have a different perspective on the way they view the world (Novikov and Novikov, 2013). Therefore, realism philosophy argues that what people perceive may be deceptive and may not depict the actual world. The literature points out that critical realism is mostly preferred by researchers at the expense of direct realism as it gives the researcher the chance to capture a wider area of the study (Saunders et al., 2009; Novikov and Novikov, 2013).

3.2.3 Pragmatism

The pragmatism paradigm looks at utilising different techniques objectively to address the phenomenon identified by the researcher. Unlike other research philosophies, pragmatism focuses on the research question and calls for researchers to focus on the research problem and not only on the methods used to address the problem (Mertens, 2014; Creswell, 2014). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), the pragmatism research paradigm also shares the same attributes with other paradigms where research participants' views are used to assist in solving the research problem.

The pragmatism philosophical viewpoint is understanding the relationship between theoretical frameworks with practical evidence (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). Therefore, pragmatism calls for the utilization of various research methods to gain knowledge for a social science problem. According to Creswell (2014) and Sekaran and Bougie (2013), pragmatism research advocates for the use of mixed methods where different research techniques, diverse thoughts, varied norms, different procedures of gathering data, and analysis approaches are used to get dependable results in a single research.

3.2.4 Interpretivist Paradigm

Interpretivism is also referred to as constructivism (Creswell, 2014; Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006; Wahyuni, 2012). The paradigm posits that the world is socially constructed (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). Essentially, it looks at understanding the laws and how it is applied by people to the world they live and work by investigating what people think. Bunniss and Kelly (2010) and Creswell (2014) suggested that interpretivism is centred on drawing meaning from understanding people's life experiences. Creswell (2014) points out that the interpretivists paradigm relies on qualitative research methods to gain knowledge about reality. The major difference between interpretivism and positivism is that positivism claim that knowledge is gained through scientific techniques while interpretivists uphold that ideas are generated by people, which contradicts the notion that there is one method to produce meaning (Andrew, Pedersen, and McEvoy, 2011). Therefore, interpretivists acknowledge the bond that exists between the researcher and study participants to achieve the intended results. However, interpretivism asserts that the knowledge, values, morals of the researcher may influence the study processes and the results. Therefore, interpretivism underlines that in-depth qualitative methods are recommended where results are viewed as conciliation and personal interpretation of the researcher (Saunders et al., 2009; Boksberger and Melsen, 2011).

3.3 Research paradigm for this study

The researcher used interpretivism as its study paradigm. The paradigm is also referred to as a constructivism paradigm which draws its significance on the belief that people derive meaning from social interaction (Creswell and Creswell, 2005; Wahyuni, 2012). This paradigm was chosen based on the notion that interpretivist theorists believe that people use rules to understand and appreciate the world they live and work in by effectively interacting with each other (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). This choice was also made in line with Bunniss and Kelly (2010) and Creswell (2013), who underscored that the paradigm depends on an individual's life experience to give meaning to a given problem. Importantly, interpretivism is inclined to qualitative methods in a research study. The paradigm was also chosen because the researcher sought to get an in-depth understanding of the acceptance of LinkedIn software in performing human resources functions. The choice of interpretivism was also centred on its ability to assist the researcher obtain data from a detailed interactive discussion with participants (Saunders et al., 2009). The researcher sought

the use of the paradigm through a qualitative research method because of the reflexivity characteristics embedded in it. Shaw (2010) and Lambert et al. (2010) also support the reflexivity of the qualitative technique where the researchers can use it to authenticate research methods used to carry out a research. Interpretivism advocate that a qualitative approach conceptualises the researcher as an active participant who is important in achieving an in-depth understanding of issues being investigated. The research onion used for this study is shown in **Figure 3.2**.

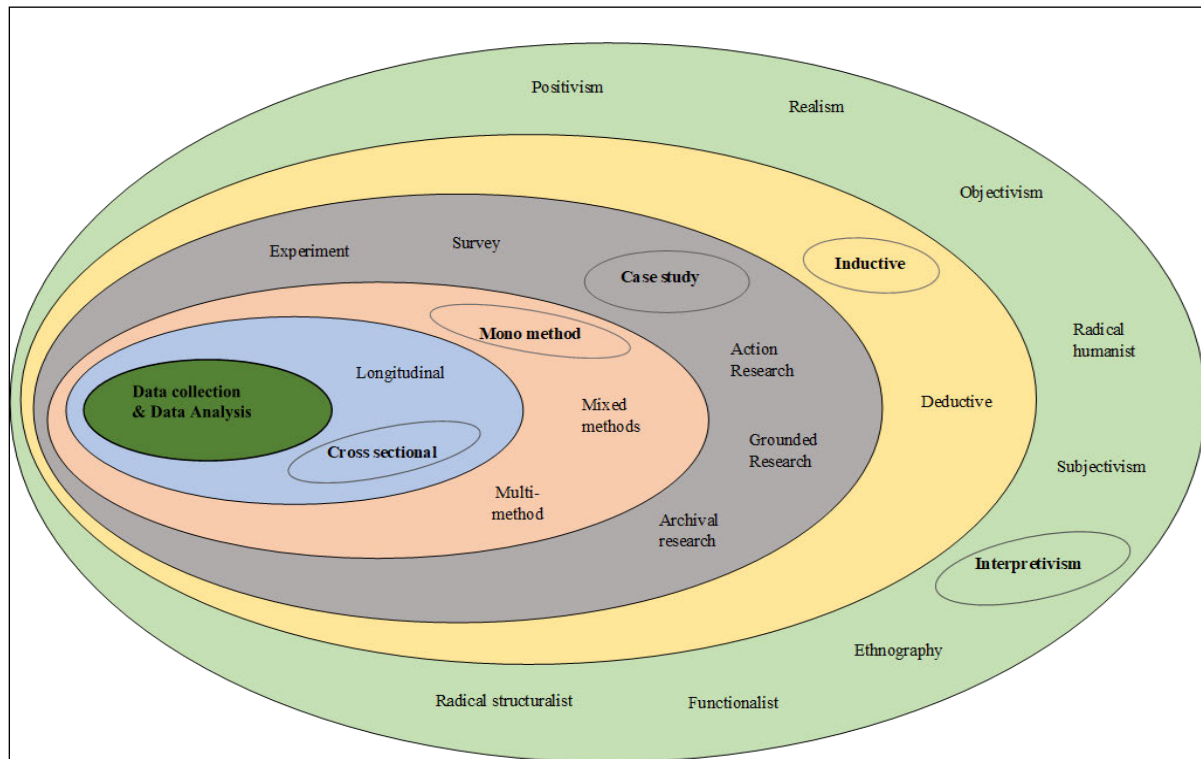


Figure 3. 2 Research paradigm for this study

Source: Adopted from Saunders et al. (2012).

3.3.1 Case study

A case study is a detailed research of a given phenomenon. It uses an assortment of approaches to get an in-depth understanding of issues under review (Yin, 2002; Zucker, 2009). Yin (2002, p. 13) described case study research as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident."

Merriam (1998) cited in Yazan (2015, p. 139) pointed out that qualitative methods are usually associated with a case study where they offer "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit". A case study research is normally considered as an empirical investigation approach used to explore the problem being confronted in a natural setting and where questions on how and why are raised to address the phenomenon (Yazan, 2015). Usually, a case study technique is chosen when the researcher is motivated to pursue a complicated phenomenon. A case study can be exploratory or explanatory where it is used to get an in-depth understanding of issues being investigated. It may focus on one or more cases (Yin, 2014). The current study used one case- a construction company in Nigeria. The choice of using a case study was made after I failed to get the intended number of companies with the required number of HR employees suitable for a quantitative study. The choice was made after the realization that the acceptance of LinkedIn for HR functions was not common in many construction companies in Lagos Nigeria. A case study approach is also consistent with Yazan (2015)'s assertion that it is suitable to understand a complicated phenomenon. Therefore, a case study approach was viewed as a suitable option for this study since it gives an in-depth analysis of the acceptance of LinkedIn for HR functions.

3.4 Research objectives

The research objectives of the study are:

1. To understand the acceptance of the LinkedIn software system by HR employees in the construction sector.
 - a) To determine the perceived usefulness of LinkedIn software by HR employees on HR functions.
 - b) To understand the perceived ease-of-use of LinkedIn by HR employees on HR functions.
2. To explore the challenges experienced by HR employees when using LinkedIn software in HR functions.
3. To investigate how the challenges experienced with using LinkedIn software in HR functions can be managed.

3.5 Research Design

The Research design is a blueprint on how participants are selected and information is gathered for the study (Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell, 2009). This study adopted an exploratory research approach to explaining the phenomenon from the employee perspective on the acceptance of LinkedIn in HR functions, hence the qualitative method was used to get in-depth knowledge on the topic of the study. An exploratory research design was selected in accordance with Saunders et al. (2009, p. 145) who argue that the design is "a valuable means of finding out what is happening, seeking new insights, asking questions and assessing a phenomenon in a new light". This selection was also in line with Sekaran and Bougie (2013), who assert that exploratory research can be carried out where little knowledge is known about the problem being investigated. It can also be conducted where no or limited studies have been conducted. An exploratory study is also carried out where the proposed study is related to how problems have been resolved in the past. A Qualitative research design method was chosen as a preference because it allows the researcher to gather both factual and informed information from the interviewees or participants (Wood, 2011).

A qualitative approach was used to collect data using semi-structured interviews because it affords the interviewer a chance to get first-hand information from participants. It also provides the participants with the opportunity to convey any new ideas that might not be included in the interview questions list (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). The research approach was selected because it is also consistent with Quinlan (2011) and Creswell and Clark (2011) who suggested that it affords the researcher the prospects of acquiring in-depth knowledge of the interplay between the variables used to explore the study's objectives.

A semi-structured interview was used to get deeper insights into the perception of HR employees on the use of LinkedIn on HR functions. The study adopted an exploratory research approach, using the qualitative method. Interviews were recorded using a voice recorder. Recorded interviews were transcribed for subsequent analysis.

3.5.1 Study Site

Simons (2009) pointed out that a study site is a location where the research is done. The Nigerian construction sector was selected as the study site for this study. The sector is perceived as one of the main contributors to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). It is projected that its contribution to the development of the country will continue through urbanisation. For example, Veitch (2016) points out that the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN) statistics indicate that the demand for housing exceeds the supply in recent years. The construction sector is projected to provide major investments into the country. The construction sector is composed of both local and international multinational corporations (MNC). The sector is widely recognized as one of the major employers in the country.

A single company was used as a unit of analysis to investigate the use of LinkedIn in performing HR functions in the construction sector because there was a constraint to get another company on board. Out of the three companies that were sampled, two gave the researcher consent to carry out the study with them. However, only one of the two companies uses LinkedIn to manage its HR operations.

3.5.2 Target Population

Sekaran and Bougie (2013), defined population as the total number of individuals, events, or elements that the researcher intends to study. While Cox, (2008) stated that the population includes people or elements with characteristics, which the researcher wants to use in a study. Having a breadth understanding of the character of the target population assisted the researcher in eliminating issues related to study expenses, response level, and value of collected data (Saunders et al., 2009). The research population included fifteen (N=15) current employees in the HR department of a selected construction company in Lagos, Nigeria.

3.5.3 Sample Size

The sample size is regarded as the number of elements or units drawn from the study population (Welman, et al, 2009). The target population was fifteen (N=15), which was referred to as the sample size. However, ten (n=10) employees consented to the interview and agreed to be interviewed. The remaining five HR employees cancelled the scheduled interviews due to a strike

protest that employees embarked on in the course of the data collection period. Due to limited time, the researcher was unable to reschedule the interview dates with them.

3.5.4 Sampling Strategies

According to Saunders et al. (2003), sampling is a strategy used in a study to assist the researcher in choosing the suitable and correct data for the study. The study utilises a non-probability sampling strategy to select participants. The non-probability sampling approach is used to select participants from the research population where the opportunity of picking anyone is not known (Zikmund et al., 2010). Convenience sampling was chosen as the sampling strategy to select participants. It involves a conscious selection by the researcher of certain subjects or elements to take part in the study (Saunders et al., 2019). This sampling technique was used because it allowed the researcher to choose respondents who are present at the time the researcher arrives at the premises (Welman et al., 2009). This approach was selected because it is regarded as an effective way of collecting data. It is also a cheaper way of gathering empirical evidence for the study (Welman, et al., 2009; Zikmund et al., 2010).

3.5.5 Data Collection Methods

Qualitative methods were used in this study to collect empirical data. A semi-structured interview was used to gather data important to achieve the objectives of the study. The interviews included ten (n=10) HR department employees.

3.5.6 Primary Data Collection Instruments

Semi-structured interviews

Primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews. The researcher drafted an interview guide that was used to guide the researcher during the interview process. The interview guide questions were structured based on the constructs identified for the study. Using an interview guide to gather data in the research study was consistent with the data collection method in the study of Quinlan (2011) who suggests that it allows the researcher to explore and get an in-depth perspective on the topic being investigated. A semi-structured interview approach was chosen for this study because it enables the researcher to probe for further information relevant to the study (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). It is also referred to as the cheapest way of collecting primary data in

a qualitative study (Morris, 2012). The semi-structured interview technique enabled the researcher to get more insights better than using other research methods such as questionnaire surveys.

3.5.6.1 Interview Protocol framework

Interview protocol frameworks are used to collect good, reliable, and valid qualitative data (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Yeong, Ismail, Ismail, and Hamzah, 2018). Various interview protocol frameworks could be used to collect qualitative data. These include future possible selves (FPS), social cognitive career theory (SCCT) which are commonly used in engineering studies (Lent et al., (1994) and Markus and Nurius, (1986) cited in Pe., Pe., Matusovich and Paretti, 2013). Interview protocol frameworks are used to keep the researcher focus on research objectives during interview processes. They are important in guiding the researcher when faced with an outspoken participant who dominates the discussion. Interview Protocol Refinement (IPR) Framework by Castillo-Montoya (2016) emerged as one of the important protocols that are used to collect quality data. It provides a systematic method of perfecting the research questions. The IPR framework consists of four steps that are followed to design research instruments. The IPR framework also consists of the final step, which includes pilot testing research questions before they are used in the main study. The feedback received in the pilot test is integrated into the final research instrument to be used in the fieldwork.

According to Castillo-Montoya, 2016 and Yeong et al. (2018), the interview protocol consists of four steps. These steps are:

1. Ensuring alignment between interview questions and research questions,
2. Constructing an inquiry-based conversation,
3. Receiving feedback on interview protocols and
4. Pilot testing of the interview questions.

The steps are shown in **Figure 3.3**.

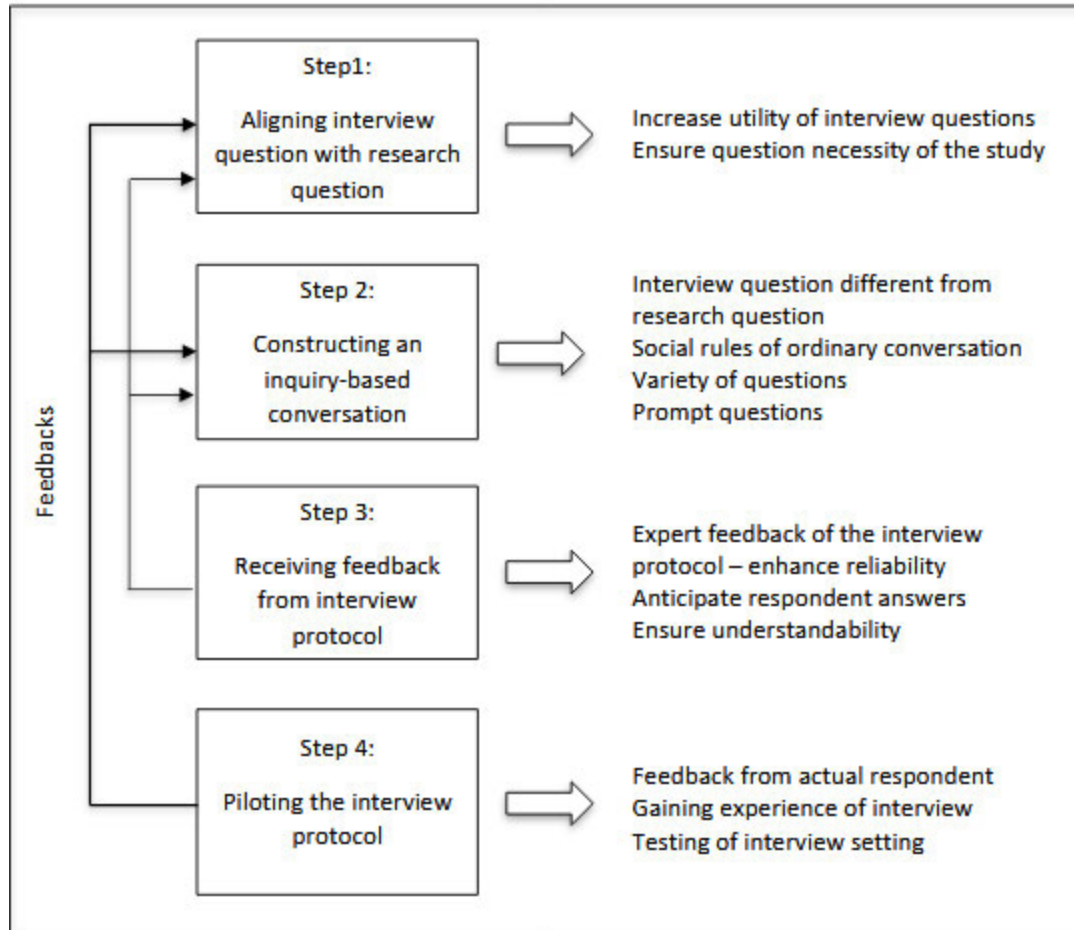


Figure 3. 3 Interview Protocol Refinement (IPR) Method

Source: Castillo-Montoya (2016)

3.5.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis entails analysing data to get a deeper understanding of the identified problem that is being investigated (Taylor et al., 2015; Sekaran and Bougie 2013). According to Silver and Lewins (2012), qualitative data analysis is referred to as a non-mathematical procedure that is used to analyse people's words, behaviour, and beliefs. The thematic analysis method was used to identify themes from data collected from the interview. Braun and Clarke (2006) identified a six-stage thematic analysis model that can be followed to analyse qualitative data. Braun and Clarke (2006) recognize the thematic analysis model as the basis of analyzing qualitative data.

The six stages include data familiarization, generation of initial codes, identification of themes, reviewing of coded data extracts, defining and naming themes from the data, and produce a report.

Maguire and Delahunt (2017) pointed out that thematic analysis also helps to detect patterns in qualitative data. Quinlan (2011) points out that "theme analysis involves a thorough examination of data, identifying important areas of focus, and classifying data to make a conclusive analysis. Studies point to the flexibility of thematic analysis as one of the important attributes of a qualitative study (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Maguire and Delahunt, 2017; Nowell, Norris, White and Moules, 2017). The researcher capitalized on the flexibility attributes of the thematic analysis model to thoroughly analyse data for this study.

Braun and Clarke (2006)'s six stage thematic analysis model is depicted on **Figure 3.4** below:

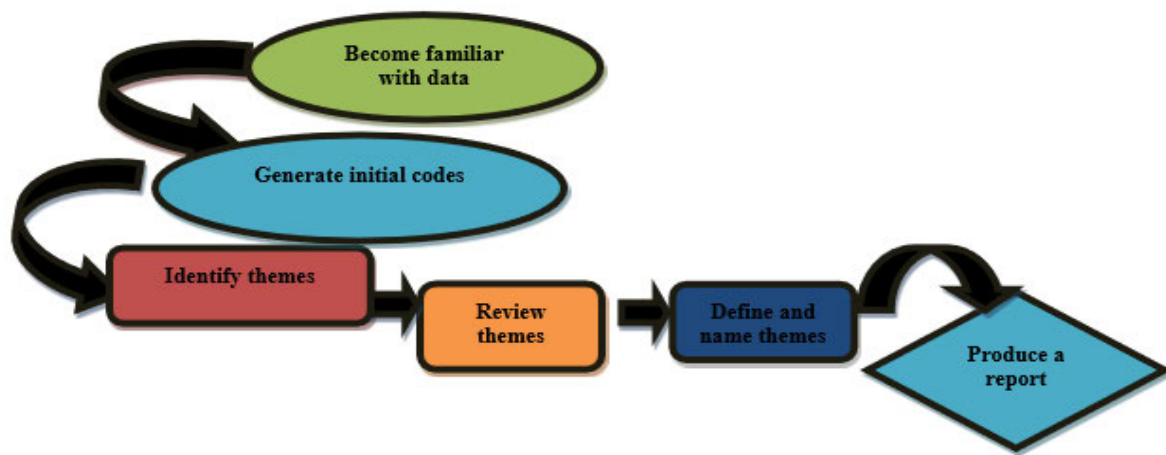


Figure 3. 4 Braun and Clarke's six phase framework for doing a thematic analysis

Source: Maguire and Delahunt (2017).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the thematic analysis model consists of six stages that are followed sequentially to analyse qualitative data. The stages include data familiarization, generation of initial codes, identification of themes, reviewing of coded data extracts, defining and naming themes from the data, and produce a report.

Stage one- Data familiarization: This stage includes transcribing recorded interview data into written form. It entails rigorous and thorough writing down interview accounts of verbal and nonverbal sounds (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It includes familiarization with the content of the interview data. It involves repeatedly reading data searching for meaning and patterns. It allows the researcher to get a clear picture and make connections with participants' views, thus eliminating

impulsive conclusions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This stage lays the foundation for the proceeding stages of the data analysis process.

Stage two- Generation of initial codes: This stage involves reading and revising data after having the idea of what is contained in it, recognizing areas of interests, and repeated patterns or themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The transcribed interview data will be open coded or indexed on the identified themes or patterns. Open coding of data affords the researcher the ability to capture the richness of qualitative aspects of the areas under study. It calls for the researcher to constantly return to data to reflect on it. This is consistent with Alhojailan (2012) who suggests that researchers utilizing thematic analysis should constantly reflect on data and occasionally scrutinize it to pick up emerging interesting patterns for the study.

Stage three- Theme identification: Braun and Clarke (2006) point out that the theme identification stage involves sorting and collating relevant extracted coded data into themes. It is the stage that captures the interesting areas of data. For this study, the researcher used deductive thematic analysis as it gives a more in-depth analysis of elements of data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Theme evaluation by the research supervisor helped improve the theme reliability and validity of this study.

Stage four- Reviewing coded data extracts: This stage includes reviewing coded extracts to understand if they form a comprehensible pattern (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This stage includes modifying and refine themes from stage three into themes that were specific to capture sets of ideas from recorded texts (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017).

Stage five- Defining and naming themes: This stage calls for the researcher to determine the aspects that every theme captures and understand the main interests each offer (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Stage six- Producing report- Organizing and interrogating data. This stage includes producing a brief, comprehensible, coherent, non-repetitive, and stimulating description of data within and across themes. This final stage entails the process of unifying and probing data to deliberate on the links, develop accounts, highlight delicate variations and make interpretations thereby drawing meaning from the given data to research questions of the study (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Direct quotes were used for ethical reasons and to illustrate that the views were from participants. This is

consistent with Clarke and Braun (2013) who encourage the use of direct quotes from participants to support the understanding of explicit ideas and reveal the occurrence of themes. Selected long and shorter quotes can be used in the report to illustrate the participant's views. All the quotes should be accompanied by a unique identifier. The results can also be compared with reviewed literature where it was supported and contradicted with previous studies. The comparison helps in answering the research question of the study. The study used the thematic analysis model presented by Braun and Clarke (2006) to answer the research questions of the study.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Research study procedures and tools influence the validity and reliability of the study (Babbie and Mouton, 2005; Dahlberg and McCaig, 2010). Validity, reliability, and pre-tests were outlined and carried out to measure standards and authenticate the research tools to be used in this research study.

3.6.1 Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which research tools to be used will be able to examine what it intends to measure and achieve (Dahlberg and McCaig, 2010; Zikmund et al., 2010). The researcher conducted an internal, external measurement, and content validity to ascertain if the research instruments will help collect appropriate data for this study. The research tool (interview guide) were examined by HR expert to determine its internal and content validity. External validity means the extent to which research outcomes can be generalised beyond the setting of the research (Bryman and Bell, 2007). As the study was exploratory, its findings may not be generalisable. Measurement validity is referred to as "construct validity" and it assesses the capacity of research instruments to verify whether the research constructs will assess what is expected to be measured (research objective) (Welman et al., 2007). The researcher carried out a pilot study to assess the construct validity of the interview guide question to be used in the research.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability includes the ability of the research instruments to generate dependable results if they are tested numerous times (Zikmund et al., 2010). For this study, the researcher addressed the

reliability of the research study by focusing on the credibility, transferable, dependable, and confirmable standards to achieve intended results.

Credibility- Credibility looks at how confident the researchers are about research results (Noble and Smith, 2015; Zikmund et al., 2010). The researcher gave a summary of all information recorded during interviews. Secondary data and empirical data were used to get credible research results. The researcher also established friendly engagements with participants as way of getting to know them, build trust and rapport, and at the same time collect data from them. The researcher also did credibility check by applying a triangulation approach where different data collection sources were used to get more insights on the problems identified by this study.

Transferability- Transferability pertains to the ability of research results to be relevant when they are applied to other similar situations (Zikmund et al., 2010). This approach assists the researcher in addressing transferability issues where the research findings can be utilised in similar studies. For this study, the researcher gave participants the interview guide, and other relevant information that could be given to other researchers conducting similar studies in future.

Conformability- looks at bias in research results (Noble and Smith, 2015). To address conformability issues in this study, the researcher maintained an audit trail where all data analysis steps were outlined and followed to avoid research bias. This approach assisted in presenting exact data as gathered from the research participants. Once the interview data were transcribed, the researcher compared the transcript data with recorded interviews to check if what was transcribed is correct.

Dependability Research dependability pertains to the ability of the research data to give similar results when used by other researchers (Zikmund et al., 2010). For this study, the researcher sought help from a research expert to carry out an inquiry audit to ascertain research dependability.

3.6.3 Pilot Testing

According to Denscombe (2014), pilot testing refers to conducting a preliminary study on a smaller research sample to assess if the questions in the research instruments will be easy to understand and can/will help to collect information that is necessary to achieve the objective of the study. The main purpose of conducting a pilot test is to identify and remove problems in research tools. If the

pilot results are positive, this shows that the tools used will produce similar results when used in the main study. The researcher carried out pilot testing to identify and remove promptly any problem that may be identified in the interview guide questions to be used in the main interviews for the study. A convenience sampling technique was used to select participants for the pilot study. Five (5) HR employees with experience in the construction industry were selected to participate in the pilot study. The participants were not part of the targeted population for this study. The results of the pilot study indicated that HR employees were not aware of the terms used in the study. The term TAM and its constructs were not clear to them. The interview guide was readjusted to include an explanation of the TAM model and how it is used to understand the acceptance of technology in an organization

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The Ethical considerations as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal were followed in this study. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University Research Ethical Review Committee before the researcher proceeded to contact any research participants. Participants were given consent forms to sign and indicate that they agree to participate in the study. The participants were informed of the research method and assured of confidentiality through anonymity as their names and identities would not be revealed during and after the conducting of the study.

3.8 Research Limitations

The study used only one organisation. Therefore, the results may not be generalisable across the entire construction industry. A further limitation of the study is the proximity of the study site. The researcher is based in the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus in South Africa. Therefore, financial costs and logistical problems were encountered when collecting data in a construction company in Nigeria. Additionally, the willingness of the construction company's employees and getting appropriate time for interviews with workers whenever the researcher went to the company was challenging as booking of interview times sometimes clashed with the work schedules of some of the employees.

3.9 Summary of chapter

The chapter highlights the research paradigm and design that was chosen for this study. The chapter discusses reliability and validity as data control measures used to ascertain how quality data and reliable results were obtained for the study. The following chapter outlines data analysis, interpretation, and discussion of research findings.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The data analysis model by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to analyse data for the present study. The method used involved six stages which entail data familiarization, generation of initial codes, identification of themes, reviewing of coded data extracts, defining and naming themes from the data, and produce a report. The model was used to understand the acceptance of LinkedIn in performing HR functions in a construction company. The following stages were followed to analyse data:

4.2. Data analysis stages

Stage 1: Data familiarization: The researcher transcribed recorded interview data. This was followed by a thorough reading of all recorded notes written during interview proceedings.

Stage 2: Generation of initial codes- transcribe data was open coded. The researcher generated codes that were then used for the identified themes.

Stage 3: Identification of themes- emerged themes were identified and collated from coded data. The researcher read through the data and identify themes. The themes were then coded, and their frequency was established.

Stage 4: Reviewing coded data extracts- Coded data extracts were reviewed to identify patterns from themes to capture ideas in recorded interviews. When the researchers identified the themes from data, data was then reviewed to identify patterns from them.

Stage 5: Defining and naming themes- Themes were defined and named to understand what they mean to the main aim of the study. After establishing the patterns from themes, the researcher established their meaning with the acceptance of LinkedIn in HR functions in the construction company.

Stage 6: Producing a report. Data were organized and interrogated to produce a brief, comprehensible, coherent, non-repetitive, and stimulating description of data within and across themes. The report was presented in a discussion format to understand participants' views on the acceptance of LinkedIn in the company.

To conform to research ethics, names were not disclosed in the presentation and discussion of the results. Codes were established and used to identify participants. The codes are presented in **Table 4.1**.

Table 4. 1 Key to code names of research participants

TARGETED PARTICIPANTS	CODE <i>(Pseudo name)</i>
HR Manager	P1
HR Public Relations	P2
HR Operations Officer	P3
Recruitment Officer 1	P4
Recruitment Officer 2	P5
HR Policy Officer	P6
Senior Personnel	P7
Payroll Officer 1	P8
Payroll Officer 2	P9
HR Coordinator	P10

P, as used in table 4, means Participants. Hence, P1 means Participant 1.

4.3 Response rate

The response rate is indicated in **Table 4.2**.

Table 4. 2 Response rate

Research Activity	Participants	Population (n)	No of Respondents (n)	Response Rate (%)
Semi structured Interviews	HR Employees	15	10	67%

Source: Author's own compilation

4.4 Background information

The participants were asked to give background information on their highest level of education. The results indicated that the two (n=2) participants had Postgraduate degrees, while six (n=6) had Bachelor degrees. Two (n=2) had College Diplomas. The results on the period of working in the organisation revealed that three (n=3) participants have been working for two years while two (n=2) have been work for three years. Three (n=3) participants have been working for over five years while the other two (n=2) participants have been working for less than one year.

4.5 Job description of participants

The results indicated that one (n=1) participant was an HR manager while two (n=2) participants performed payroll functions of the organisation. One (n=1) participant was tasked to perform HR coordination duties of the company while one (n=1) participant was a senior personnel officer. One (n=1) participant was an HR policy manager, while two (n=2) was responsible for the recruitment functions of the company. One (n=1) participant was responsible for performing HR operations while another one (n=1) performed HR public relations. The results of Job positions of participants are depicted in **Figure 4.1**

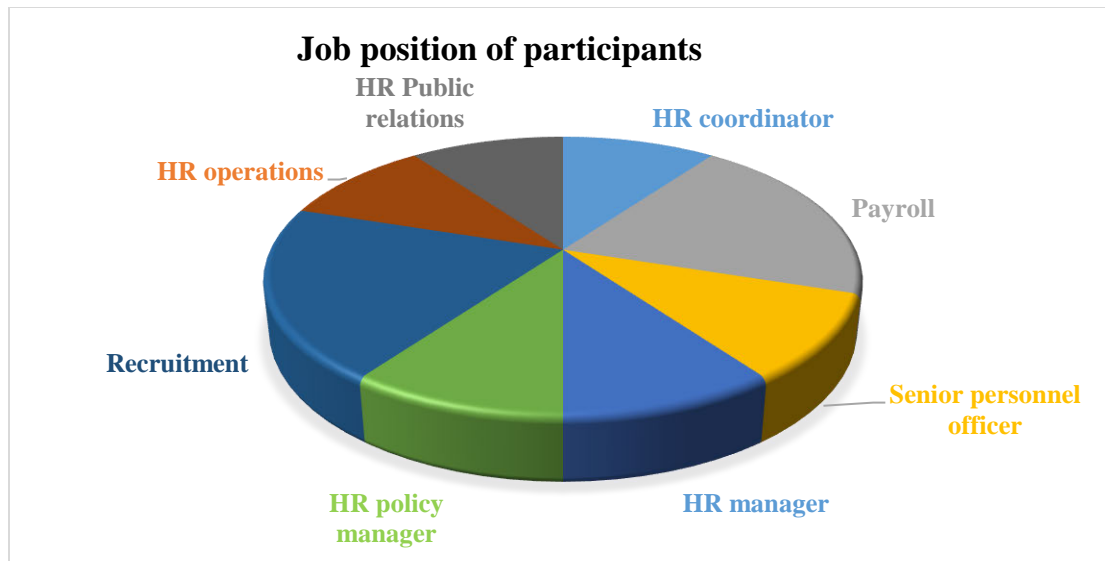


Figure 4. 1 Job positions of participants

4.6 Research Objective 1: The acceptance of LinkedIn software system by HR employees in the construction sector

Research results

Research Objective 1 was used to explore the acceptance of LinkedIn software by HR employees in the construction sector. The responses of the participants were summarized and coded. Various themes, sub-themes, and frequencies were identified and tabulated in **Table 4.3** below:

Table 4. 3 The Perceptions on the Use of LinkedIn in HR functions

Themes	Sub-themes	Themes Frequency (n)
Recruiting highly qualified people	Get experienced people, Skilled candidates, recruitment of scarce skilled.	8
Job advertisement	People know the vacant position, identify right expertise.	3
Encourage collaboration	Team formulation, working together, collaboration with other organisations, largest network of professional.	2
Recruitment of scarce skills	Largest network for professional, selection of professionals, get the right personnel, speed selection process,	6

Protect organisation future	Safeguard future, support the future	2
Headhunting candidates	Poaching of skilled people, used to identify right expertise.	2
Improves the company image	Brand known, most people know us, now a well-established company in Nigeria.	2
Enhances employee relations	Speed up dissemination of information, formation of working teams, perfecting organizational standards, enhance professional relationships, aids social relationship.	2
Global accepted tool	Used by many companies, international sourcing tool, used to source across the globe.	1

In the interview, HR officials were asked about their perceptions of the acceptance of LinkedIn in performing HR functions in the HR department. The questions were used as an introduction to the interview process. The interview results showed a wide range of views on the acceptance of LinkedIn in the HR department. Various themes were obtained, representing wide-range views of the participants. Nine (n=9) themes emerged from eight participants who use LinkedIn in performing HR functions in the department. The themes represent varied assessments on the use of LinkedIn in the department. These themes include job advertisement, recruitment of scarce skills, protect the company's future, and globally used. Eight (n=8) participants indicated that they use LinkedIn in performing HR functions in the organisation. The empirical results indicated that the organisation had a formal policy that regulates and promotes the use of LinkedIn in the HR department. The policy spells out how LinkedIn is used in the organisation and more importantly, in the HR department. The results also revealed varied themes with regards to employee's perceptions on the use of LinkedIn in HR functions.

Furthermore, the eight (n=8) participants also highlighted that their acceptance of LinkedIn is determined by the way it helps them do their job in the HR department. For example, LinkedIn is accepted as a platform that they use to conduct HR functions and it increases the chances of the department to recruit highly qualified applicants for vacant positions in the organisation. For example, participant **P1** stated that:

P1: *"To me, the world is dynamic, unlike the day when there is a vacancy that you always have to go to the newspapers. But now that social media has taken the place, I can say LinkedIn is the*

largest network for probably if you want to recruit and now people you meet there are not just random people, they are professionals. So, if you want to get value for money LinkedIn is the right way to go". LinkedIn is the largest network to recruit and to meet professional candidates. If you want to get value for money LinkedIn is the way to go"

Two (n=2) participants (P5 and P7) pointed out that they are using LinkedIn to support their HR duties and to headhunt prospective candidates. Three (n=3) participants (P10, P3, and P7) pointed out that LinkedIn job application systems improve the organisation's internal and external collaborations, increases good employee relations, and assists in solving organisational employment-related issues in-house job allocation conflicts, and duplication of tasks. For example, participants P4, and P7 highlighted that:

P4: *"LinkedIn encourages organisational collaboration within the department even with other companies."*

P7: *"Yes, it has helped them in numerous ways. Like I said earlier it helped in gathering, in collaborating, it helps in collaboration and it also helped in... it helped really. It has helped the selection, hiring, and training processes. If you look at it, it is a good one."*

These assertions were echoed by participants P1 and P3 who pointed out that the use of LinkedIn is very important in conducting HR practice because it improves the image and supports the future growth of the organization. For example, participants, **P2** and **P4** stated that:

P2: *"It is good because it is also buttressing the future of the company in the sense that and it will connect and also expose the aim of the company."*

P4: *"LinkedIn could assist in protecting the organisation's future growth in terms of selecting the right qualified professionals for the company."*

One participant (n=1) (P1) stated that LinkedIn is globally accepted and is widely used in recruitment processes, thereby enabling the organisation to reach out to a wider range of applicants across the globe. The participant pointed out that LinkedIn is a good advertising tool for any job vacancy and used as an organisational awareness tool in promoting organisation's products. For example, participant **P1** stated that:

P1: *"LinkedIn is good because it can be used for job and company advertisement."*

The empirical results also showed that two (n=2) participants (P10 and P8) indicated that they were not using LinkedIn to enhance HR functions. They mentioned the non-use of LinkedIn in their HR daily activities was associated with various reasons such as the lack of awareness and lack of skills. While one (n=1) participant explained that the top management does not avail training programs that will equip them with skills to incorporate the LinkedIn system in their daily activities. For example, participant **P10** specified that:

P10: *"The company managers are not willing to incorporate social media platforms in all the HR departmental functions."*

Thus, one (n=1) participant (**P2**) indicates that inadequate finances are the main reason for the lack of top management support. For example, participant **P8** illustrated that:

P8: *"...may be financial issues experienced by the company make it difficult to incorporate LinkedIn to managing all HR functions."*

The non-usage of LinkedIn indicated by P10 was also affirmed by participants P8 and P9 who stated that LinkedIn is not used by them because their section is not allowed to use LinkedIn. For example, participant, P9 pointed out that:

P10: *"The organisation does not see the usefulness of LinkedIn in managing the other sections of the HR department."*

Discussion

The main focus of objective one was to explore and understand the perceptions of HR employees on the acceptance of LinkedIn in performing HR functions. The response from HR employees indicated various views. The results also indicated the need to have a standard policy that guides the use of LinkedIn software across all departments of the organisation. These results are consistent with Slovensky and Ross (2012); Ehnert, et al. (2014) as well as Maharajan (2018) who state that adopting technological systems in performing HR functions is a major strategic way of addressing HRM-related issues. The empirical results reveal varied perceptions of the participants on the use

of LinkedIn in the department. They suggested that LinkedIn could assist to improve the organisation image, and thus strengthen the future growth of an organisation. These perceptions were also suggested by Minchington (2014), Iheme and Chiagorom (2018), and Oladapo (2019) who pointed out that international businesses use LinkedIn Apps to enhance their organisation image. This assertion is in line with Davis (1989) who pointed out perceive usefulness of TAM determines the acceptance of technology by users.

However, the results also showed that despite the given different perceptions that HR employees had on the acceptance of LinkedIn, the sentiments showed that LinkedIn is an important communication platform that can be used to encourage collaboration with global firms and advertise available vacant positions to a wider audience. These perceptions are in agreement with the body of literature which suggests that LinkedIn could provide a suitable platform that enhances HR employee's collaboration with other HR professionals and position the company favourably on a global scale (Atlas et al., 2015; Donaldson, 2010; Mensah, 2013).

4.6.1 Research Objective 1(a): Perceptions of HR employees on the Perceived Usefulness of LinkedIn in HR functions

Research results

The main focus of Research Objective 1(a) was to understand the views of HR employees on how the perceived usefulness of LinkedIn determines its acceptance in performing HR functions in the construction company. Themes, sub-themes, and frequencies were identified, as shown in **Table 4.4** below:

Table 4. 4 Perceptions on the Perceived Usefulness of LinkedIn in HR functions

Themes	Sub themes	Theme Frequency (n)
Collating ideas	Help in collecting knowledge.	2
Selection of applicants	Assist to verify the candidate profile, streamlining prospective candidate list, gives equal chance to the job.	2
Professional tool	Used by most professionals, trusted by experts.	2

Administration activities	Improves organisational functions, smooth flow of information, adds value to HR functions.	1
Job advertisement	Used to advertise a vacancy, many people see the vacant position, job advert appears to many people.	1
Getting employment job done	Easy interactive platform, reduces waiting period, produces results,	1
Selection of professionals	Search for new skills, good tool to identify qualified people.	1
Enhances professional relationship	Encourages teamwork, good to get well standard personnel.	1
Filters active and passive candidates	Helps identify right experts, gets right personnel to the position.	1
Streamlining application list	Streamline the searching of job applicants, Assist selecting the rightful number of people required.	1
Encourages teamwork	Links other organizations, professional relationships, creation discussion forums.	1

Many themes emerged from eight participants who use LinkedIn in the department. Eleven themes were identified with regards to the perceived usefulness of LinkedIn in performing HR functions. The themes emerged from a wide-ranging sub-theme to reflecting the views of participants regarding the acceptance of LinkedIn based on its perceived usefulness. The concept of perceived usefulness on the acceptance of LinkedIn was regarded by participants as to how useful it is in performing HR functions in the organization. The emerged themes include its usefulness in selecting applicants from a pool of recommended skilled people, use in administration work, and creation of professional workforce, enhance working relationships, assist in filtering active and passive candidates, and encourages teamwork. Two (n=2) participants highlighted that LinkedIn helps in collating ideas from other organisations while it is equally used to assist in selecting applicants from a pool of recommended experts. For example, participants P4 and P1 indicated that:

P4: *"It helps organisations advertise a specific area that is needed. LinkedIn assists in selecting applicants from the pools of recommended experts."*

P1: *"Well.... It is a good tool in hiring, in recruiting when we are short of staff, we can easily go to LinkedIn to check people's profile to know who is good, who qualify or what position they need and the likes."*

The usefulness of LinkedIn in HR functions was viewed as an administrative tool used in getting employment jobs done and advertise posts available in the company. This assertion was supported by participant P2 who stated that:

P2: *"LinkedIn is useful in the area of job advertisement in an organization."*

The above point was also supported by recruitment officers (P5) who highlighted that LinkedIn is useful in selecting qualified candidates. One participant also supported this point by concluding that LinkedIn is essential in establishing a professional workforce for the organisation. For example, participant P7 pointed out that:

P7: *"LinkedIn is very...very useful at least for people who are in the same profession".*

"LinkedIn helps in establishing a professional workforce."

Discussion

The empirical results further revealed varied sentiments on the acceptance of LinkedIn based on its perceived usefulness in HR functions. The results showed that the acceptance of LinkedIn in HR functions is associated with how it was useful in performing HR processes. Despite multifaceted sentiments, the participants stated that LinkedIn is very critical in advertising job vacant positions. LinkedIn is central to attracting skilled professionals who are scarce in the organisation. This is in line with the research work, which stated that LinkedIn is important in attracting professionals into the organisation (Bratton and Gold, 2017; Iheme and Chiagorom, 2018; Oladapo, 2019). These perceptions on the usefulness of LinkedIn by participants support the suggestions made by Minchington (2014) and Okafor (2016) who pointed out that LinkedIn is important in establishing a diverse and skilled workforce drawn from a global scale.

The empirical results further revealed varied opinions on the usefulness of LinkedIn in HR functions. Although the company adopted LinkedIn to facilitate functions of the HR department, HR coordinators and payroll officers are not required to use it. This assertion is in support of Kuo and Yen (2009) who argued that high perceived usefulness is the major determinant on the choice of adopting a technology. Despite multifaceted sentiments, the recruitment officer stated that LinkedIn is very critical in advertising job vacant positions and aid recruitment processes. The above view is considered essential in attracting scarce skills to the organisation. This point affirms the research work which stated that LinkedIn is important in attracting highly skilled personnel into the organisation (Bratton and Gold, 2017; Ihome and Chiagorom, 2018; Oladapo, 2019).

4.6.2 Research Objective 1(b): The perceptions of employees in the HR department on the perceived ease-of-use of LinkedIn

Research results

The main focus of Research Objective 1(b) was to understand the acceptance of LinkedIn by HR employees based on their perceived ease-of-use in conducting HR functions. The responses of the participants were summarized and coded. Various themes, sub-themes, and frequencies were identified and tabulated, as shown in **Table 4.5** below:

Table 4. 5 Perceptions on the perceived easy-of-use of LinkedIn on HR functions

Themes	Sub themes	Themes Frequency (n)
Creation of discussion groups	Creating forums, network formation.	1
Gets job done	Speed processing applications,	1
User friendly	Easy to use, appealing to people, ease to understand, friendly functional tools.	2
Multi-functioning	Allows many functions, allows applicant verification.	2
Streamline application list	Checks applicants' credentials.	2
Easy to use	Speed processing, saves time, ease features	2
Trusted network	Used by professionals, globally accepted network	2

Effective communication channel	Speeds up the dissemination of job information, interactive application for the users, enables employees to discuss work.	1
Make HR job easier	Quick results, allows to do many things, directs HR employees to departmental needs.	1
Speed up innovation	Aid employee performance and creativity, assist in acquiring additional knowledge.	1

Ten themes emerged on the acceptance of LinkedIn with the perceived ease-of-use associated with the system. The identified themes showed that participants had various views on the acceptance of LinkedIn based on their perceived ease-of-use. Ten themes were recorded from employees who used LinkedIn in the department. The themes reflected their views on the acceptance of LinkedIn based on their perceived ease-of-use in HR functions. Two employees (P8 and P9) pointed out that they do not use it in carrying out their daily tasks, while eight employees use it in performing HR functions. The identified themes include ease in creating discussion groups, assist in getting the job done, user-friendly, effective communication channels, and speed up innovation. Two participants (P10 and P6) highlighted that LinkedIn was easy to use in creating a discussion group when the needs arise. While another participant explained that LinkedIn assists users in getting a job done effectively. One (n=1) participant described LinkedIn as a user-friendly system, self-educator, well-designed system, and it is easy to use. For example, participant P4 indicated that:

P4: ".... It is easily applicable. It is easier mostly in other areas of connection, hiring, and all that. Easy to use, very easy"

However, two (n=2) participants (P4 and P5) confirmed that it can be tasking to use the LinkedIn system mostly to search and streamline the list of prospective applicants. One (n=1) participant (P6) also mentioned that the user-friendly element of LinkedIn as an effective communication channel, assist to reach out and communicate with a large number of local and international applicants. This observation was echoed by five (n=5) participants (P2, P3, P1, P7, P8) who indicated its user-friendliness makes their HR job easier and also enhances their creative and innovative skills.

Discussion

These empirical results revealed that the use of LinkedIn in the HR department is an important element that helps to achieve sustainable HRM. This response is in agreement with Minchington (2014) and Okafor (2016) who argue that modern organisations need to reconfigure HR department activities and align them to currently available technology. The systems are recognised as useful and easy to use in performing HR functions. The results also revealed that the participants' sentiments were centred on personal experience which includes using LinkedIn to create discussion groups, assisting the HR employees in getting the job done effectively, and efficiently mostly in hiring prospective candidates. The results further revealed that LinkedIn was recognised as a user-friendly platform which explained the ease-of-use of LinkedIn in the department. Two participants expounded that the process of searching for prospective candidates from a pool of expertise is tasking. Thus, confirming their acceptance of LinkedIn in performing HR functions in the department. Conversely, LinkedIn is being recognised as an effective communication channel. The research result validated the idea expressed by participants who suggested that LinkedIn makes HR job easier by integrating HR processes with other departments in the organisation. This assertion is consistent with Amade (2017) and Doherty (2010) who state that the use of LinkedIn assists in the integration of HR functions and speeds up the employee's innovation endeavors in transforming the HR department.

4.7 Research Objective 2: The challenges experienced by HR employees when using LinkedIn in HR functions

Research results

The key focus of Research Objective 2 was to explore the challenges associated with the acceptance of LinkedIn in performing HR functions in the construction sector. Various themes, sub-themes, and theme frequencies were identified and shown in **Table 4.6** below:

Table 4. 6 Challenges experienced by HR employees when using LinkedIn in HR functions

Themes	Sub themes	Themes Frequency (n)
CV information manipulation	Candidate information misinterpretation, people give fake profiles and skills, easy manipulation of CV information by applicants.	4
Time consuming	Technical problems, prolonged online searching	2
Account hacking	Profiles not appearing, account infiltration, tempered profiles and applications.	2
Technical issues	Network freezing, not understanding technical language.	2
Network problem	Network overload, hacked websites.	1
Lacks personal touch	Not easy to use, accounting setting issues, difficult to create profiles.	1
Non-appearance	Lost applicant profiles, hacked profile information.	1
Identity theft	Account compromised, provided information not corresponding.	2
Impersonation	Misrepresentation of profiles, manipulated CV information.	4
Integration problems	Not used by other sections and departments	3

Ten themes emerged from the interviews of HR personnel. The derived themes showed that challenges associated with the acceptance of LinkedIn were influenced by the kind of problems HR employees experience when using it. Some of the identified themes include manipulation of candidates' CVs, time-consuming in screening applications, account hacking issues, technical issues, network problems, lack of personal touch, non-appearance issues, identity theft issues and impersonation, integration issues, and streamlining selection problems. Four (n=4) respondents suggested manipulation of a candidate's profile as one of the critical challenges that the HR department encountered when using LinkedIn in conducting HR functions. For example, participants **P5**, **P7**, and **P1** illustrated that:

P4: *"Not getting genuine candidates - 50% of candidates do not give genuine and correct information."*

P7: *"Lot of people don't give correct information -Genuine information is a 50/50 thing, you may be lucky and may not be lucky."*

P1: *"The challenges that would happen with LinkedIn will be the fact that there is so much false profile".*

Furthermore, participants P4 and P2 also pointed out that using LinkedIn in conducting HR functions is time-consuming and this is compounded by security and technical issues related to its usage. The participants further illustrated that profile manipulation by candidates to attract companies is one of the main problems the company fails to use LinkedIn to manage HR functions. Empirical results suggest that candidate withholding crucial information such as the reference in their CVs is another key challenge that emanates from the use of LinkedIn. Participants P4 and P5 highlighted that 50% percent of job applicants don't give correct and accurate information in their profile and CVs. This poses a huge obstacle to HR personnel in cross-checking with stated references and identifying prospective candidates with honest information on their profile and CVs. This situation, therefore, derails the hiring process and increase the waiting period of filling up of vacant position.

Five (n=5) participants (P1, P10, P8, P3, P4) pointed out that challenges associated with the use of LinkedIn include infringement and privacy-related issues. Two participants (P3, and P1) echoed the same view where they described that the technical nature of the LinkedIn system is difficult to understand how to use some of its features. Due to its nature, participants indicated that they spent more time on the computer searching for prospective candidates. The delay causes a major problem to quickly identify a suitable person to fill the vacant position. These participants also highlighted that seating in front of a computer for hours in searching for candidates can be tiring and cumbersome. These processes hindered employees to effectively and efficiently perform other tasks. For instance, participants P6 and P4 pointed out that:

P6: *"Infringement of privacy and explanation of technical part of LinkedIn. Simply the technicality of the use of LinkedIn is major challenges faced."*

P4: *"The searching parts, it is scary. You have to look for suitable candidates You spend a long time on your computer."*

Six participants pointed out that challenges faced with the use of LinkedIn includes network problems, identity theft, and impersonation. System hacking is considered as one of the major challenges feared by the organisation and HR employees when using LinkedIn. The organisation is concerned that its system could be hacked while HR employees are scared that personal computers could also be attacked when they log on LinkedIn App at the workplace. Participant P6 believes LinkedIn is prone to system hacking which may lead to identity theft and impersonation by an intruder. This can compromise the privacy of employees and the organisation if hackers get into crucial internal information.

Internet network failure increases the time spent online searching for suitable candidates, and it can hinder the users to fully explore LinkedIn functions and decrease the chances to screen for a suitable candidate. Prolonged time on the internet also increases data costs to the company. For example, participant **P2** stated that:

P2: *"Network problem. If there is no network, that is the only thing that can be a problem. Only network because if your phone or computer is on and your data is on. So, it starts connecting."*

Furthermore, the lack of personal touch was indicated by one participant (P4) as the contributing factor to the LinkedIn challenges. The empirical results indicated a lack of personal touch from the HR employees as other challenges. The lack of employee's enthusiasm for learning new things, conducting research, exploring new technology, and updating their skills was also indicated. The fact that some of the HR employees lack the enthusiasm of learning new things makes it a big challenge. The result also showed technical issues as additional challenges feared by the organisation in adopting LinkedIn. These challenges reduce the chances of the organisation from fully utilized the advantages associated with the use of LinkedIn. The results also showed that employee's lack of personal touch is associated with the inability to recruit people with skills and expertise to solve technical and technological issues. These problems are viewed as major issues that derailed the efforts of integrating new employees which lead to employees underperforming and inefficient in the HR department. For example, participants **P4** and **P8** noted that:

P4: *"Personal touch is not there. Testing of attitude is required."*

P8: *"Difficult to check technical skills from applicants.... Follow skill training needed."*

Discussion

The themes that emerged in research objective two revealed various challenges experienced by HR employees when using LinkedIn in HR functions. These challenges are identified as some of the dominant reasons for the lack of organisational buy-in of LinkedIn in HR departments. The findings suggest the manipulation of the candidate's profile and CVs as one of the key challenges that emanate from the use of LinkedIn in conducting HR functions. Participants highlighted that 50% percent of job applicants don't give correct and accurate information in their profiles and CVs. These results are consistent with Zide, Elman, and Shahani-Denning (2014) studies that suggested user's refusal to fill incorrect information in their profiles as a LinkedIn challenge. This poses a huge challenge to HR personnel in identifying candidates with skills and experience. It, therefore, derails the hiring process and increase the waiting period of filling up of vacant position.

Additionally, the results revealed that system hacking issues are considered as another reason why the organisation does not fully embrace the adoption of the LinkedIn application in all its HR functions. The management is of the view that LinkedIn is prone to system hacking which may lead to identity theft and impersonation by an intruder. This result was in line with Mayer (2008), who also highlighted in his study that LinkedIn, like most social media platforms, poses security challenges such as privacy and data theft from users. These perceptions were raised by two HR employees who highlighted that the inability to formally use LinkedIn in all HR functions in the organisation is due to some reasons such as security and privacy issues. These sentiments concurred with the body of literature which suggested that adopting social media platforms in the management of HR functions exposes the company to security problems such as privacy, and system hacking (Itheme and Chiagorom, 2018; Maharjan, 2018; Oladapo, 2019).

The empirical research results also showed that two HR employees do not use LinkedIn due to a lack of training and specific guidelines from top management. This is in agreement with prior studies which indicated that failure by top management to properly train and guide employees on the use of newly introduced technology systems into the organisation makes it fail to achieve its

intended objectives (Mensah, 2013; Atlas et al., 2015). The two participants also indicated their inability to use LinkedIn in performing HR functions was because they lack proper skills to incorporate the technology into their daily tasks. This point was in line with reviewed studies which indicated that lack of skills and managerial support affect employees' performance (Atlas et al., 2015; Donaldson, 2010; Mensah, 2013). The results further indicated that the adoption of LinkedIn in performing all HR functions in the organisation of the study exposes its employees to many problems. This sentiment supports the body of literature which indicates that due to problems associated with social media platforms, organisations are reluctant in adopting it and other technology systems in the management of HR functions (Minchington, 2014; Okafor, 2016; Schneider, 2018).

However, the results also indicated that LinkedIn challenges can be mitigated if management can invest their resources in identifying the appropriate training program and selecting the right people for the training. The results also have shown technical issues, network problems as an additional challenge feared by the organisation in adopting LinkedIn. The empirical results also showed issues related to lack of user-friendly of the system by HR employees, lack of employee's keenness to learn new things such as conducting research and exploring new technology, creating innovation and improving computer-related skills hindered the full utilization of LinkedIn.

4.8 Research Objective 3: Investigate how can the challenges experienced with using LinkedIn for HR functions be managed

Research results

The key focus of objective three was mainly to investigate the strategies that could be used to manage the challenges experienced with the use of LinkedIn in HR functions. Various themes were identified and shown in **Table 4.7** below:

Table 4. 7 Proposed strategies to manage challenges on the use of LinkedIn in HR functions

Themes	Sub-themes	Themes Frequency (n)
Creation of HR system	Use other platforms, use HR manager software application.	4
One -on- one interviews	Make phone calls, have real face to face interviews,	4
Use agents	Must use other professional companies, contract other people, use professional experts, use of LinkedIn experts or professionals, use daily advertising newspapers.	3
Practical interviews	Call for personal meetings, organise on the job tests.	3
Background checking	Check authentic of candidate information	2
Training workshops	Use in-house training initiatives. organizing training and seminal meetings	1
Verify CV references	Call or email CV references. Cross checking references in CVs.	1
Video call interviews	Do online conference calls, use Facebook Zoom, Instagram, WhatsApp, Microsoft outlook	1
Psychometric tests	Carry out mental assessments, mental attitude evaluation.	1
Re-testing candidates	Trade testing programs, give tests to successful applicants.	1

The interview results showed ten (10) themes that were identified from research participants who used LinkedIn in performing HR activities in the department. The themes include the creation of

an additional system to scrutinize and streamline the employment process, one-on-one interview, use of recruitment agents, organising training and seminars, use of video call interviews, verification of applicant references and CVs, Psychometric tests and mental attitude evaluation, re-test and check of candidates' capability after selection. Four (n=4) participants (P4, P6, P7, P3) suggested that the creation of an additional separate system to scrutinize and streamline the employment process. For example, participant P6 suggested that:

P6: *"We need them to create a platform whereby they can test these people (applicants) before they can even open or write a profile or create an account. It will make sense for them to test so that they will be able to say that yes, whoever that say they are in HR on LinkedIn are indeed HR personnel".*

The results also indicated four respondents (n=4) recommended the company to use one-on-one interviews together with LinkedIn in performing HR functions. This was highlighted by Participants **P5** and **P2**, who recommended the use of social media platforms together to complement one-on-one interviews.

P5: *"Physical interview to be done after the use of LinkedIn in recruitment candidates".*

P3: *"I think follow up training and face to face need to be done... instead of depending on online systems".*

The research results also suggested the use of video calls can be used to mitigate challenges emanating from the use of LinkedIn. The participant suggests that the approach will be used to complement one-on-one interviews. For example, participant **P4** said:

P4: *"Well, if you talk about appearance now, I remember that I mentioned appearance if LinkedIn could have like a video call. A video call where you will be able to talk to the person one-on-one. Now, this is not about voice calls. It is about video call when you do video call you can be able to know through body language that yes, this person is good in this field or not. And you know once you show your face this is you when we want to see you physically you can't bring someone else to the interview. It has to be you because we already have an image of whom we are expecting".*

Two (n=2) participants (P4 and P1) suggested that a background check must be conducted as a verification process to authenticate the information provided by aspiring applicants. For example, participant **P4** indicated that:

P4: *"Background check... we call it visibility study. To verify if that person fits the job at hand".*

One (n=1) participant (P5) noted that personal touch is lacking, practical testing is required. The practical tests of the candidate capability after selection are critical approaches that can be used to deal with challenges experienced by the use of LinkedIn in the management of HR functions.

Discussion

The main point of objective three was to understand how HR employees are managing the challenges associated with the use of LinkedIn. The results showed various strategies recommended by participants. Participants recommended that the management must create additional systems that will assist in analysing applicants' database to identify prospective candidates with honest and correct information. The systems will be used to compliment LinkedIn in performing HR functions. This will assist in streamlining employment processes. Face-to-face interviews were also pointed out as an important method in conducting the recruitment process. This will assist in identifying applicants who fake profiles and CVs just to get the job. The results concurred with Okafor (2016), Ulahsan (2017), and Schneider (2018) who view face to face interviews as critical platforms used in dealing with fake profiles and misrepresentations of skills by online job applicants. The organisation can use external companies that are well vested with online hiring platforms such as LinkedIn. The results also indicated the need to use psychometric tests and mental evaluation as some of the ways to managing challenges that could be experienced with LinkedIn usage by HR employees. This approach will assist in testing the physical and mental strengths of prospective candidates. The ability to determining the physical and mental attributes of the applicant goes a long in positioning the candidate to the right position.

The results also indicate that challenges associated with the use of LinkedIn could be managed with the video call interviews to get a glimpse and ascertain that the applicant exists. The results further show that a construction firm is a sector that requires the use of physical and capability attributes from people. Therefore, participants suggested that challenges associated with the use of

LinkedIn could be minimised when prospective candidates are exposed to a pre-testing exercise where their skills and capabilities are tested and evaluated in line with the advertised position. Participants further suggested that some of the identified challenges can be mitigated by the management by implementing a training system and seminars where employees can be trained and motivate on how LinkedIn and related technology can be used and applied to their daily activities.

4.9 Summary of chapter

Chapter four presented the empirical results of the study. The results include the response rate, background information of participants, period of working, and job description of participants in the organisation. The results contain the thematic analysis outcome obtained from interview data. The results showed that participants had various perceptions of the acceptance and use of LinkedIn in the organisation. Their perceptions on the acceptance of LinkedIn in performing HR functions are associated with the way it assists in performing the HR functions. The views were based on the perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use of LinkedIn in performing HR functions in the organisation. The results on the perceived usefulness of LinkedIn associated with its ability to assist in selecting a pool of prospective candidates, headhunting, creation of a skilled workforce, and filtering of passive and active candidates. The results also indicated that LinkedIn was not used in the payroll and HR coordination activities of the company. The chapter provided the results and discussion on the acceptance of LinkedIn based on its perceived ease-of-use. Participants pointed out that their views regarding the perceived ease-of-use are evident in LinkedIn's ability to speed up searching and recruitment processes of prospective candidates, creation of discussion forums, user-friendly, streamlining applications and speeding up innovation in the HR department. Finally, the chapter presented and discussed the challenges faced by HR employees when using the LinkedIn system in performing HR functions. It also highlighted how these challenges were managed in the organisation. The experienced challenges included easy manipulation by prospective candidates, system hacking, identity theft and impersonation, technical issues, and network problems. These challenges could be managed by providing training to HR employees, follow-up video calls to verify the existence of applicants, psychometric testing on selected candidates, and the creation of an additional application process on the website to assist the use of LinkedIn in verifying and streamlining employment processes for the organisation. The

proceeding chapter gives a summary of the study, pointing to the contributions and recommendations for future research on the topic.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

Chapter four presented the research results and discussion. This chapter presents a summary of the main issues highlighted in previous chapters. It also provides a summary of research results that concluded the study. Finally, Chapter Five presents the research contributions and recommendations for future studies on the topic of this study.

The main focus of this study was to understand the acceptance of LinkedIn in performing HR functions. It explored the perceptions of HR employees based on the perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use of LinkedIn in performing some HR functions in the construction company. The study also explored the challenges faced by HR employees when using LinkedIn in performing HR functions such as recruitment, selection, and hiring activities. Finally, the study explored strategies that could be used to deal with challenges experienced when LinkedIn is used in performing HR functions. This chapter presented the summary, conclusion, and outlines the recommendations for future studies on the topic. Finally, the chapter provides the limitations of the study.

5.2 Dissertation conclusion

Chapter 1

The main focus of chapter one was to outline the purpose and research problem identified by the researcher. It also gives the main research objectives and questions to be answered by this study. The chapter presented the main objective of the study as the need to understand the acceptance of LinkedIn by HR employees in handling HR functions. The chapter pointed to the two constructs (perceived usefulness and ease-of-use) that were adopted from the TAM theoretical model to achieve the objectives of the study. Chapter one also presented the significance of the study. It also presented the widening gap of knowledge on the use of social media platform - LinkedIn in performing HR functions as the main motivation for this study. Lastly, the chapter provides the structure of the dissertation.

Chapter 2

Chapter two provided insights that are drawn from reviewed literature that was considered relevant for this study. It reviewed the literature on computer technology as modern development confronted by businesses nowadays. The chapter also reviewed the literature on social media and various platforms associated with it. It also discusses the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as a theoretical framework adopted for this study. The study adopted two TAM constructs (perceived usefulness, and perceived ease-of-use) to understand the acceptance of LinkedIn in a construction company. It also provided insights on human resource management as business functions central to the topic of this study. The chapter reviewed the literature on recruitment, selections, hiring, and training and development as key functions performed by HR departments in line with the acceptance of technology in the organization. Finally, it provides literature on the challenges faced by HR departments when they incorporate LinkedIn to manage their HR functions.

Chapter 3

This chapter provides the research methodology adopted by the researcher to find answers to the research questions of the study. It provided a research paradigm adopted to guide this study. As the study was exploratory, the researcher used a qualitative method design to address its objectives. A case study approach was used to collect empirical data from a single construction company in Lagos, Nigeria. A sample of fifteen (N=15) HR employees were considered for this study. Ten (n=10) HR employees were interviewed. The chapter presented data control measures used to ensure the validity and reliability of data gathered for this study. Lastly, it provided the ethical considerations and limitations associated with this study.

Chapter 4

Chapter four provided the empirical findings of the study. It showed several themes that emerged from the interview proceedings. The interpretation of interview data also includes key quotations from interviewed HR employee's responses. The chapter also discussed the research findings regarding insights obtained from the review literature and in line with the research objectives.

Objective one:

The results indicated that HR employees had varied perceptions of the acceptance of LinkedIn in performing HR functions. They pointed out that the construction company had a formal policy that stipulates the use of LinkedIn in the organisation. However, not all HR officers in the HR department were required to use LinkedIn. They identified the security challenges such as privacy issues and system hacking. The results also indicated that the lack of training derails the full utilisation of LinkedIn in recruitment processes and the selection of skilled people for the organisation.

Objective 1(a)

The findings showed that HR employees had varied perceptions with regards to the perceived usefulness of LinkedIn in performing HR functions. The findings indicated that despite the challenges associated with the use of a technology system such as LinkedIn, some HR employees identify its usefulness as an important factor that determines their choice to accept it. They associated it with its ability to accelerate recruitment, hiring, and selection processes. The results also indicated that HR employees' lack of skills affects the use of LinkedIn in performing HR processes. However, HR employees pointed out that LinkedIn is useful as it allows the integration of HR functions and improves their performances. It is also associated with enhancing job advertisement that leads to the attraction of skilled personnel to the organisation.

Objective 1(b)

The findings indicated that HR employees had different perceptions regarding the acceptance of LinkedIn based on their perceived ease-of-use to perform HR functions. The commonly shared view was that participants acknowledged the way LinkedIn helped them to perform HR functions. The HR employees also explained that given the attributes of LinkedIn, it allows them to create networks with other employees from other organisations which will enable the sharing of ideas and knowledge on how to improve their departments. The findings also indicated that LinkedIn is user friendly as it offers HR employees the ability to integrate HR departmental functions with other departments in the organisation.

Objective two

The findings showed that there were various challenges associated with the adoption of LinkedIn. These challenges are limited to buy-in by the management, manipulation of profiles by candidates. HR employees pointed out that misrepresentation of information resulted in some delays in the recruitment, hiring, and selection processes. The results also indicated that system hacking and privacy issues are major concerns when using LinkedIn. Despite hacking, the results also indicated technical issues such as, network problems as additional challenges that worry HR employees. The findings also revealed non-appearance issues, identity theft, and impersonation as some of the problems experienced by HR employees when they use LinkedIn.

Objective three

The findings of objective three indicated that HR employees had various suggestions that could be used to deal with challenges related to the use of LinkedIn. They suggested the creation of additional computer systems that can analyse databases to identify potential candidates. The system will assist in streamlining employee processes and align them to the objectives of the organisation. HR employees suggested the use of face-to-face interviews, psychometric tests, and mental evaluation exercises on prospective candidates. They also suggested the use of video calls to get a glimpse and ascertain that an applicant exists. HR employees further suggested that challenges associated with the use of LinkedIn could be minimised when prospective candidates are exposed to pre-testing exercises where their skills and capabilities are tried and evaluated in line with the specification of the advertised position.

Chapter 5

Chapter five presents a summary of the dissertation. It also highlighted the research contributions and recommendations for future studies on the reviewed topic.

5.3 Research Contributions

The research results gave different managerial contributions to the field of human resource management. The contributions are outlined in the proceeding sections:

5.3.1 Managerial Contributions

The insights drawn from the literature review on the acceptance of LinkedIn in performing HR functions indicated various benefits to contemporary organisations. Prior and similar studies on the use of computer technology such as LinkedIn have associated it with benefits such as the creation of a skilled workforce and efficient functioning of the HR department. Results on the use of LinkedIn in performing HR functions have indicated that it is associated with integrating HR functions such as recruitment, hiring, selection, training, and development activities. It is viewed as a glue that binds HR functions together.

The study established that adopting a training and policy that guides the use of computer technology and LinkedIn software is important in transforming the administration functions that will assist the HR department. The results pointed out that HR employees have positive feelings regarding adopting a policy that guides the use of LinkedIn in conducting HR functions in the organization.

5.4 Research Limitations

The study adopted a case study approach where data was collected from a single company in the construction sector in Lagos, Nigeria. Therefore, the results may not be generalised across the entire construction industry. A further limitation of the study is the proximity of the study site. The researcher is based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus in South Africa. Therefore, financial costs and logistical problems encountered when collecting data in Nigeria. Additionally, the willingness of the construction company's employees and getting appropriate time for interviews with workers whenever the researcher went to the company was challenging as booking of interview times sometimes clashed with the work schedules of HR employees. The strike action embarked on by company employees also affected data collection processes.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the results, the study made the following recommendations:

- The results observed a widening gap with the acceptance of LinkedIn as a social media platform in performing HR functions in the construction company. The results revealed the need to train HR employees so that they are fully skilled to use LinkedIn in the HR

department. The study recommends that given the nature of the construction sector in Nigeria, firms should embrace LinkedIn as a critical platform that assists in getting skilled professionals from across the world. The platform could be equally used to streamline applications and integrate HR functions such as recruitment, hiring, and selection processes.

- Similarly, the study showed that LinkedIn is likely to continually change and determine the dynamics of recruitment programs which could aid its acceptance in many firms in construction sector. The results revealed that even though LinkedIn is formally used in the company under study, the study recommends that the company executive should establish how LinkedIn or other social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube could be used to aid HR functions and other departments in the company. Failure to adopt other social media platforms will invite employees to personally choose to use them to aid their HR activities and other tasks, thereby unwillingly exposing the organisation to privacy and security issues associated with these platforms. Adopting a clear social media policy will safeguard employees and thereby establishing a skilled workforce for the organisation.
- More studies should be carried out, where researchers will explore success factors that determine the successful implementation of LinkedIn in construction firms. The studies may be carried out with a bigger population to get varied perceptions on how technology can benefit companies. These studies will assist in presenting the model and benefits associated with the implementation of LinkedIn. The studies will also help in clarifying misconceptions associated with the use of LinkedIn and encourage executive's buy-in.
- The perceived usefulness of LinkedIn cannot be overemphasized. Research results revealed that it is a source of getting new opportunities and is mainly used to identify highly qualified candidates. It helps in collating ideas from other organisations and also assists companies to advertise a specific skill needed in the organisation. The result further reveals that the company understudy was taking full advantage of the perceived usefulness of LinkedIn as it is a suitable tool for recruitment, selection, and hiring process. However, more needs to be done to ensure that the technology is fully utilised in other departments.

CVs and profile manipulations impersonate issues are some of the challenges associated with the use of LinkedIn. These challenges affect the perceptions of employees in accepting and use LinkedIn in the organisation. Essentially, the findings showed that HR employees recognised the perceived usefulness of LinkedIn as it assists in the establishment of a skilled workforce. Therefore, the study recommends that the company executive should craft a detailed social media (LinkedIn) policy that will assist in establishing a skilled workforce. The policy should be consistent with the organisation broader goals, business ethics, and principles. It will define and direct how LinkedIn will be used by the HR department in performing HR functions such as recruitment, hiring, and selection processes.

- The research results indicated that LinkedIn can be used to enhance training and development programs. However, it also revealed that some employees in the company understudy lacked technological skills that include the inability to use LinkedIn software to effectively perform HR functions in the organisation. The study recommends that to effectively introduce a technological system to manage the contemporary HR systems, HR department employees must be trained and equipped with appropriate skills. The research findings also found out that LinkedIn acts as a motivation tool for employees in learning new technology systems. However, this can be enhanced through strategic training and development process. Therefore, the study recommends the acceptance of LinkedIn to manages the ever-changing HR department needs. The study noted that satisfied employees are more productive and therefore will increase the company's employee retention.

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Appendix A: Interview guide

SECTION A: Background information

1. What is your highest educational qualification?

SECTION B: Business profile

2. How long have you been working in the organisation?
3. What is your job description within the HR department?

SECTION C: The perceptions of HR employees on the use of LinkedIn in HR functions

This study seeks to understand your views on the acceptance of technology in the organisation. The study will be guided by Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) which was written by Fred D. Davis, Jr in 1989, It is a model used to understand people's acceptance of new technology. According to Davis (1989), TAM is used to determine people's perceptions and attitudes towards using new technology or information system. TAM is used to predict perceptions on the adoption of technology.

4. Does your organisation use LinkedIn in its HR department functions, If yes, explain and if not why and which ones do you use?

(i) Could you please explain why it is necessary to use LinkedIn in your organization?

5. What is your perception towards the use of LinkedIn in recruitment process?

(i) What is your perception towards the use of LinkedIn in selection process?

(ii) What is your perception towards the use of LinkedIn in hiring process?

(iii) What is your perception towards the use of LinkedIn in training process?

SECTION D: The perceptions of HR employees on the perceived usefulness of LinkedIn

6. Could you please explain your perception on the usefulness of LinkedIn in managing HR functions within the HR department?

7. Could you please confirm if the use of LinkedIn within the HR department has improved the mentioned HR functions? (Recruitment, Selection, Hiring and Training)

- (i). If YES how?
- (ii). If No, why?

SECTION E: The perceptions of HR employees on the perceived ease-of-use of LinkedIn

8. Could you please describe your experience on using LinkedIn by HR managers in the HR department? (If LinkedIn is used).

9. Could you please confirm if LinkedIn is easy to use by HR employees within the HR department?

- a. If YES, please explain?
- b. If No, why?

SECTION F: The challenges faced by HR employees when using LinkedIn in HR functions

10. Could you please confirm if LinkedIn is been used in HR functions

(i) If YES, Kindly explain, based on your knowledge and perceptions, the possible challenges that are/could be encountered with the use of LinkedIn in the management of HR functions within the HR department?

(ii) If NO, what are the social media platforms that your HR department are using in conducting HR functions within the HR department?

11. Please explain how you are overcoming some of the challenges encountered in the HR department if you are using LinkedIn in HR department?

SECTION G: Possible solutions on how LinkedIn related challenges could be managed

12. Could you please explain the measures in place to facilitate the management of the challenges associated with the use of LinkedIn in managing HR functions in the HR department if you are using LinkedIn in HR department?

(i) If not, could you please recommend other communication solutions that could be used to facilitate smooth operations of HR department in your organization?


THANKS YOU!!

Appendix B: Gatekeepers' letter


Gatekeeper's Consent

I, Mr. PLES ABAYE in my capacity as Asst. Mgr. hereby give permission to Student name: Marish Oluwaseun Omigade (Student No. 208530434) to conduct research in my organization.

The student MAY/~~MAY NOT~~ (delete whichever is not applicable) use the name of the organisation in the dissertation.

Signature of Manager/Owner/Gatekeeper: _____
Company Stamp: 

Date: 17/03/2019

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Appendix C: Turnitin report

12/19/2020
Turnitin

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Appendix D: Ethical clearance letter



19 January 2021

Miss Mariah Oluwaseun Omigade (208530434)
School of Management, IT & Governance
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Miss Omigade,

Protocol reference number: H55REC/00000635/2019

Project title: The Perceptions of Human Resources Employees on the use of LinkedIn in Human Resource Functions

Amended title: Acceptance of LinkedIn for Human Resources Management: A Case Study in the Construction Sector in Nigeria

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 05 November 2020 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in title

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an 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.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/ms

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 6356 / 4557 / 3587

Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

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