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MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

A critical analysis of the implementation of social networking as an e-recruitment tool within a security enterprise

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Abstract: Many enterprises are operating in complex and competitive environments, and changes in the internal and external environment have prompted them to engage in better ways of doing business. In order to respond to these changes, and survive in today's volatile business environment, enterprises need to change their strategies. Human Resource departments are under pressure to keep operating costs low whilst also ensuring they are attracting, recruiting, and retaining talent within the enterprise. To achieve this, an increasing number of enterprises have adopted social networking into their recruitment strategy. This research aims to critically analyze the implementation of social networking as an e-recruitment tool within a Security Enterprise. The research key objective is to examine the importance of attracting Generation Y through the use of social networking sites and also to develop an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of using social networking as an e-recruitment tool. The research also looks at contemporary examples of enterprises that have implemented social networking into their recruitment strategy. A further objective of the research is to gain an understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of the use of social networking as an e-recruitment tool. To achieve this, the research has taken a mixed-methods approach whilst

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The key research activities of the authors in relation to the investigation reported in this study are in the areas of social networking, e-recruitment and enterprise studies. With regard to this Anthony Lewis is a Senior Lecturer in Human Resource Management in the Business School, University of South Wales, and Brychan Thomas is a Visiting Professor in Innovation Policy in the Business School at the University of South Wales. They have previously published research concerning whether e-recruitment is an effective e-entrepreneurship method in attracting appropriate employees for enterprises, and the exploration of the effects of social media as an innovative e-entrepreneurship method of recruitment for enterprises. Sophie James is a postgraduate in the Business School at the University of South Wales. Sophie was awarded her MSc in Human Resource Management in September 2013 and her dissertation was in the area of the implementation of social networking as an e-recruitment tool.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The research paper critically analyses the implementation of social networking as an e-recruitment tool within a Security Enterprise. Specifically it examines the advantages and disadvantages of using networking as an e-recruitment tool for Generation Y. The research also looks at contemporary examples of enterprises that have implemented social networking into their recruitment strategy. A further objective of the research is to gain an understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of the use of social networking as an e-recruitment tool. Data was gathered through an interview with the HR Manager at the Security Enterprise and a questionnaire was distributed to 22 employees within the enterprise and 84 respondents on social networking sites. The overall attitudes and perceptions of respondents showed that social networking can be effectively used as an e-recruitment tool as long as a traditional recruitment method is also used.



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focusing on an interpretivist stance. Data was gathered through an interview with the HR Manager at the Security Enterprise and a questionnaire was distributed to 22 employees within the enterprise and 84 respondents on social networking sites. The overall attitudes and perceptions of respondents showed that social networking can be effectively used as an e-recruitment tool as long as a traditional recruitment method is also used.

Subjects: Social Aspects of Human Computer Interaction; Social Impact of Computing & IT on Society; Social Impact of Human Computer Interaction

Keywords: social; networking; e-recruitment; security; enterprise; social media in management

1. Introduction

The aim of this research is to critically analyze the implementation of social networking as an e-recruitment tool within a Security Enterprise. Over the years, there has been a rapid increase in the number of organizations that use the internet as a recruitment tool. The internet provides access 24 h a day, 7 days a week, and has the potential to reach a global audience (Antonacci & O'Callaghan, 2008). An enterprise's ability to effectively recruit and select good-quality people stems from the organization's effort to hire the best people (Fletcher, 2011). Over the last decade, recruitment has rapidly transformed from paper-based adverts, to specialist recruitment to, at present, social networking websites and other Web 2.0 technologies (Welch, 2010).

According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), at present, "41% of the World's households are connected to the internet", within developing countries, 78% of households are connected to the internet (ITU, 2013). Further to this, in 2012, 21 million households in the UK had access to the internet (ONS, 2012). With the high number of internet users, there has also been a dramatic increase in the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. These social networking sites allow users to exchange ideas, post updates, and share interests. Facebook reportedly has 1.15 billion active users worldwide (Facebook.com, 2013), LinkedIn has 225 million users in over 200 countries; 10 million of these are based in the UK (LinkedIn, 2013). Twitter has over 200 million users worldwide, with over 10 million active users in the UK (Twitter, 2013). These findings demonstrate the worldwide popularity of the use of these social networking sites.

Kapse, Patii, and Patii (2012, p. 82) define e-recruitment as the, "use of online technology to attract and source candidates and aid the recruitment process." Torrington, Hall, and Taylor (2005, p. 131) claims that over the years, technological developments and increased web usage has improved the effectiveness of e-recruitment considerably. Barber (2006) identified that the main drivers for an organization using e-recruitment were to reduce recruitment costs, reduce the administrative burden, and improve the organization's image and profile. Popular methods for e-recruitment can be advertised via the employer's website, commercial job boards, and social networking (Kaushik, 2010).

This research focuses on recruitment via social networking sites, which is an element of e-recruitment. Berkshire (2005, p. 95) defines social networking as "software and web based services that enable users to leverage their personal relationships for networking, hiring, employee referrals and references." The number of social networking sites has increased rapidly over the years. This research paper focuses specifically on the social networking sites Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

In today's economic climate, many businesses are under pressure to keep operating costs low. This has prompted Human Resource departments to have a cost-conscious approach to recruitment, whilst ensuring that they are still attracting talent. Doherty (2010) acknowledges that, although the economy is slowly rising, businesses are still under pressure to keep operating costs low. In order for organizations to have a cost conscious approach to recruitment, many Human Resource depart-

ments have adopted social networking into their recruitment strategy. “Organizations are using social media to engage with candidates in innovative ways: creating campaigns that build relationships with active and passive job seekers, broadening their talent pool and positioning themselves as an employer of choice” (CIPD, 2005).

Technology today is continuously changing; this has created both opportunities and challenges for organizations with regard to how they operate their recruitment strategy. As a result of the continuously changing technology and the increasing importance of the internet, Web 2.0 was created in 2001 by Tim O’Reilly and Media Live International. O’Reilly (2005) states that Web 2.0 describes an array of both technical and social developments that leads to changes in the internet user’s behavior. This implies that users do not simply just surf the internet anymore, O’Reilly (2005) claims that today’s young people, generation Y, grow up using computers on a daily basis. The CIPD (2005) describe Web 2.0 as a “People-centric Web that stimulates conversations, interpersonal networking, personalization and individualism, all of which are (or should be) at the heart of the philosophy and practice of sophisticated human resources and people management.”

The Security Enterprise is a privately owned company that has been established since 1978. It was originally formed as a business dedicated to the provision of complete security solutions. It deploys and manages a workforce of highly trained security officers and manned guards throughout the UK. The company has developed through strategic expansion and calculated objectives. The Security Enterprise Head Office is based in Essex; however, the company also has two other centers in the UK which are located in Nottingham and Ebbw Vale (South Wales). This paper exclusively focuses on the Ebbw Vale office. At the time of this research there were 29 employees based in the Ebbw Vale office, out of this figure, 9 were senior staff which includes, 1 Managing Director, 2 regional Managers, 1 HR Manager, 5 supervisors. The Security Enterprise currently recruits employees through Job Centre Plus, who advertise the job vacancies online.

The Security Enterprise specializes in providing security solutions to blue-chip organizations within the UK, focusing mainly on logistic/distribution, corporate, manned guarding security officers, manufacturing, retail and public transport sectors. The organization prides itself on its successful quality led approach; this is reflected in the numerous accreditations the company has gained. In 2006, the company was accredited the Approved Contractor Status by the Security Industry Authority. This accreditation takes a holistic view on how well an organization is managed, in addition to how effectively it services customers and how well it treats employees. Also, in 2008, the Association of Chief Police Officers granted the Security Enterprise the well-respected Rail Safety Accreditation Scheme and the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme.

This research explores both the benefits and challenges an organization faces when implementing social networking as an e-recruitment tool. The aim of this research is to “critically analyze the implementation of social networking as an e-recruitment tool within a Security Enterprise”.

The objectives of the research are outlined below:

- (1) To critically investigate the increase of the use of Social Networking as an e-recruitment tool.
- (2) To critically examine the importance of organizations attracting Generation Y through the use of Social Networking sites.
- (3) To develop an understanding of the advantages and challenges to organizations using social networking as a recruitment tool.
- (4) To critically explore contemporary examples of organizations that have implemented social networking as an e-recruitment tool.
- (5) To gain an understanding of people’s attitudes and perceptions of the use of social networking as an e-recruitment tool.

These objectives will aid the investigation to critically analyze the implementation of social networking as an e-recruitment tool.

2. Literature review

2.1. Introduction

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are continuously growing at a rapid rate (Raude, 2013). JobVite (2012) found that 92% of employers use, or plan to use, social networking as a recruitment tool, and that the use of these platforms will continue to be on the rise in the immediate future. The survey, which indicated that the LinkedIn website is by far the most popular social networking site for recruiters, also found that 60% of the organizations surveyed claimed that they had successfully hired a new employee through social networking sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and/or Facebook. Although, in previous years, many organizations may have ignored social networking sites, believing that they were a temporary fad, it has become evident that today, organizations cannot risk ignoring social networking sites. Supporting this view, Wright (2011, p. 14) states, "social media is here to stay and employers can gain significant advantage by adopting hiring methods that have a social media element." Therefore, with the continuous increase of social networking users over the years, it is vital that employers build a strong presence on the social networking platforms. If used effectively, the social networking sites can potentially create huge opportunities for sourcing talented candidates.

In recent years, job vacancies were primarily advertised in newspapers and recruitment agencies. However, more recently, organizations advertise through e-recruitment, which typically involves posting job adverts on the organization's website. Wright (2011) claims that these passive approaches to recruitment are rapidly declining, and indeed, in 2009, it was reported that the recruitment website Monster.com saw a 31% drop in revenue, this figure was greater than the overall decline in the global recruitment industry.

Today, organizations are creating their own social networking profile pages on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. In addition to this, recruiters are creating private profile pages to enable them to reach out and engage with potential candidates (Wright, 2011). According to Gensing-Pophal (2009), social media can be used in three ways during the recruitment process. Firstly, by posting available jobs on the social media websites, though Gensing-Pophal (2009) warns that application should be used selectively instead of being treated like a numbers game and posted across the site broadly, "networking is about really making a meaningful connection with someone" (Gensing-Pophal, 2009, p. 45). Another way it can be used is by trolling for potential candidates, as social networking is ultimately networking (Gensing-Pophal, 2009). The final way suggested by Gensing-Pophal (2009, p. 45) is by checking out applicants, "the internet makes it easy to find information about applicants to augment the traditional reference-checking process." A survey conducted by JobVite in 2012 found that 92% of employers use, or plan to use, social networking as a recruitment tool. The survey also found that 60% of the organizations surveyed claimed that they had successfully hired a new employee through social networking sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook. The survey conducted by JobVite concluded that the use of social networking as a recruitment tool is on the rise. It reported that in 2012, 54% of employers were using Twitter, 66% Facebook, and 97% LinkedIn to source potential candidates. These figures show that the LinkedIn website is by far the most popular social networking site for recruiters.

2.2. Importance of attracting Generation Y

Generation Y individuals born between 1980 and 1995 are viewed as the fastest growing segment in today's workforce (Armour, 2005). Those in Generation Y grew up with frequent use and easy access to technology. Huizing (2012) suggests that Generation Y is the most educated generation to join the workforce, which stresses the importance of organizations recruiting and retaining them. Social media is the second port of call for Generation Y when searching for a job, the first is online recruitment sites (Huizing, 2012), which implies that organizations who use these sites to attract and recruit will be engaging with the Generation Y talent pool.

Literature has shown that when an organization creates a recruitment strategy it is important that it attracts Generation Y. “As the workforce ages, businesses need to get more competitive in order to attract and retain the new generation of young, enthusiastic workers” (Doherty, 2010, p. 11). A study conducted by Skeels and Grudin (2009), which surveyed 430 employees, highlighted that LinkedIn and Facebook use is highest amongst employees aged between 26–45. The survey also found that 52% of the people surveyed use LinkedIn, 49% use Facebook, and 6% use Twitter. The results of this survey highlight that employers who use LinkedIn and Facebook increase their potential of engaging with young professionals in relation to Generation Y. According to the LinkedIn website, over 20 million of the site’s users are part of the generation Y workforce, which is LinkedIn’s fastest growing demographic (LinkedIn, 2012). This is evidence that organizations that use these social networking sites increase their chances of interacting with Generation Y.

Literature has demonstrated that organizations have difficulty retaining Generation Y. Schawbel (2012) claims that this is because Generation Y are an entitled group that was raised to expect, receive, and question everything, “This sense of privilege has caused some in this group to lack patience in developing professionally, an unconcern with paying their dues and a different perception of how work should work.” Ockenden (2012) claims that a stereotype has been created that labels Generation Y as lazy, internet addicted, and narcissistic. However, Horrigan (2010) disagrees with these views by arguing that Generation Y has, “abundant energy, they are IT savvy, and they want to work for organizations that are ethical.” However, Jones (2003) suggests that to overcome the problematic retention issues, the organizations need to ensure that Generation Y believes in the organization’s strategic direction. Jones (2003) claims that there is a direct correlation between the trust that Generation Y have in their employer’s vision, and their intention to leave the organization. Jones (2003) research suggests that to improve retention issues it would be effective for the employer to frequently communicate key points of the organization’s strategy and how it is being implemented.

Jones (2003) also states that, “as digital natives, word of mouth interaction has become much easier for Generation Y with online and social network infrastructures facilitating such communications”; which suggests that an organization’s reputation is partly influenced by Generation Y social interactions. Jones (2003) states that Generation Y uses these social networking channels to obtain information about jobs and the overall organization’s benefits. “For an employer to attract Generation Y talent, its employees must be spreading the good word about their high levels of job fulfillment and enjoyable working environment” (Jones, 2003). In addition to this, Huizing (2012) suggests that Generation Y do not only use social networking to search for jobs, they use it as a way to research the organization.

2.3. Advantages of using social networking as an e-recruitment tool

Wright (2011) suggests that organizations need to be where candidates are in order to engage them in the recruitment process, to use social networking effectively, it is important to invest time and resources into creating a strategy (Quast, 2013). If successfully implemented into its recruitment strategy, the use of social networking can create numerous benefits for an organization.

Firstly, it can help to increase job visibility; this is evident as Facebook has over a billion active users (Facebook.com, 2013). In addition to increasing an organization’s visibility, taking this vast audience into consideration, the site can act as a platform for recruitment and also create numerous opportunities to interact with potential candidates, whilst ultimately enabling an organization to reach a wider audience of prospective applicants.

Increasing job visibility ultimately enables an organization to reach a wider audience. Ollington et al. (2013) claims that, “social networking provides recruiters with socialising outlets to connect to and view the profiles of a broad array of talented and capable candidates, often located in niche communities.” Supporting this view, Rutledge (2008, p. 61) suggests that in addition to searching for potential candidates, recruiters can be proactive and market themselves on the social networking sites to help attract a wider audience. Social networking also has a high level of referrals; posts and tweets often get

shared which increase the chances of the ideal job candidate seeing the advert (Quast, 2013). These views imply that social networking gives employers the opportunity to interact with candidates that they would not necessarily meet via other traditional e-recruitment methods.

A further advantage that the literature has highlighted is that social networking sites can create a talent bank for future vacancies. Rutledge (2008, p. 61) states that, “the best recruiters develop connections with candidates even if they don’t match their current search needs and use social networks as a way to demonstrate their expertise and professional reputation as a recruiter.”

Barber (2006) suggests that, using e-recruitment as a social networking tool can potentially be cost-effective for an organization. Quast (2013) states that, social networking sites are often free to set up and use, which enables an organization to advertise available job opportunities to a wider audience, whereas using a traditional method would use a significant amount of the organization’s marketing budget. Barber (2006, p. 9) found that, “the average job posting online costs around £250 compared with £5,000 for a quarter page in a national newspaper.” In agreement with this, Gunelius (2010) claims that the success organizations have had in using social networking as a recruitment tool has led to a decrease in spending on traditional recruitment methods.

As well as reducing costs, it has also been identified that using social networking as an e-recruitment tool can speed up the recruitment process, “time to hire is reduced through immediate posting of jobs online and the ease of completing online application forms and attaching CV’s to emails” (Barber, 2006, p. 9).

This recruitment strategy can also contribute to a significant reduction in administrative tasks as the HR department is able to view a potential candidate’s personal data on a social networking site, such as their hobbies, interests, and employment history. Doherty (2010, p. 12) claims that viewing this information online is far more advantageous compared to the traditional CV method, as the information on the social networking site is more likely to be accurate and up to date, “Traditional CV’s are notorious for being out of date almost as soon as they are written, not to mention often being badly formatted and hard to read.”

Another significant benefit that recruiting via social networking can offer an organization is that it can also attract the passive jobseeker; this can be achieved by gaining the interest and attention of someone who is not necessarily searching for a new job (Galanaki, 2002). “By offering both direct and indirect ways to capture the attention of the elusive passive job seeker, social networking is a key tool in the arsenal of any web-savvy recruiter” (Rutledge, 2008, p. 66). These views are supported by a survey which was conducted by TimesJobs.com in 2012; the survey found that 49% of employers view social networking sites as a potential way to reach the inaccessible passive candidate. “Social networking sites are able to provide methods for recruiters to build two-way communication and engage job candidates” (Bicky & Kwok, 2011, p. 1). Agreeing with this view, Saha (2012) adds that social networking sites often work as communication tools between an employer and the employee, suggesting that social networking can be an effective way to recruit, engage, and attract talent to an organization.

2.4. Challenges of using social networking as an e-recruitment tool

The literature has highlighted the potential benefits of an organization implementing social networking as an e-recruitment tool, however, the implementation can also present the organization with many challenges. Although social media can be efficient and cost-effective (Holm, 2010; Jetter, 2008; Lee, 2005), it is important that organizations recognize its limitations before implementing the recruitment tool.

Organizations that recruit via social networking sites potentially face the risk of receiving a high number of applicants as it requires minimum effort to apply for a job on these sites. A high volume of applications can be time-consuming for the employer, “the lack of barriers of time and geography

and the ease in submitting information for the candidates intensifies the risk of overload” (Galanaki, 2002, p. 245). Filtering out unsuitable candidates can be very resource intensive and time-consuming (Barber, 2006), therefore, receiving a high volume of unsuitable applications can outweigh the benefit that the tool offers, as ultimately today time is money for organizations.

Another challenge that organizations have to consider before implementing social networking as a recruitment tool is the risk of discrimination, “an issue that is impossible to escape in the recruitment process regardless of how candidates are sourced and screened” (Doherty, 2010, p. 13). Supporting this statement, Wright (2011) states that, “assessing someone’s potential employability based solely on an online profile leaves the door wide open for unethical practices.” ACAS (2012) state that there are, “laws protecting people from discrimination on the grounds of age, sex, disability, race, marriage, religion and belief, and sexual orientation start at the recruitment stage” A survey conducted by TimesJobs.com in 2012 found that 23% of the employers surveyed consider ethical and legal issues like discrimination claims to be the main limiting factor to using social networking as a recruitment tool.

A finding by ACAS (2012) highlights the risk of social exclusion, in 2009, 30% of the population was not using the internet. In addition, those who do not have a social networking account would not be able to apply or be headhunted. This is a disadvantage for an organization as they may miss the ideal candidate as their recruitment drive does not engage with this segment. An additional challenge of this medium of recruitment has also been identified around the lack of personal touch (Pin, Laorden, & Sàez-Diez, 2001). This is questioned in the ability of recruiters to have personal contacts or face-to-face interactions with applicants, as most of the recruitment procedures are online based (Barber, 2006). As a result, several qualified applicants are believed to have been eliminated from recruitment moves based on procedures (Pin et al., 2001). ACAS (2012) suggest that for an organization to overcome the challenges presented by using social networking as an e-recruitment tool, an organization should use numerous recruitment channels. Due to today’s turbulent economic climate, organizations rely on internal recruitment to make the most of existing skills within the organization. In addition to social networking, another recruitment channel an organization could benefit from using is advertising the vacancy in newspapers. This could oversee social exclusion challenges; however, other challenges would have to be considered as this is an expensive method that has a considerably short shelf-life. “Some advertisers may lack funds to advertise frequently, which make it even less likely the business will reach its potential customers” (Green, 2012).

Many of the challenges mentioned in the literature occur when social networking is used incorrectly, which highlights the necessity for an organization to have an effective strategy in place before the tool is implemented.

2.5. Contemporary examples of organizations using social networking as an e-recruitment tool

An example of an organization that has successfully created a social networking recruitment strategy is General Mills, the World’s largest food company. General Mills is an example of an organization that has identified recruitment challenges and addressed them through implementing social networking as an e-recruitment tool.

One of the main challenges that General Mills identified was that Generation Y jobseekers generally expect organizations to have established a presence on social media sites (General Mills.com, 2011). General Mills found that this sector wanted to engage with potential employers via social networking sites, such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook; the organization successfully addressed this by implementing social networking into its recruitment strategy (General Mills.com, 2011).

Each social networking site that General Mills uses has a different purpose or strategy. They have successfully created a strategy by using LinkedIn to focus on engaging and sourcing candidates. They have a careers page on LinkedIn which hosts discussions about the organization, which have

proved to be an interest to prospective candidates (General Mills.com, 2011). The organization uses Twitter and Facebook to provide users with job search advice, provide information on events, and share the latest job opportunities.

General Mills.com (2011) claims that social networking as an e-recruitment tool is a dynamic process and in order to remain effective it should be monitored like any other important aspect of a business. General Mills achieves this by using both monthly and quarterly measures on their social media sites (General Mills, 2011). It is beneficial for an organization to track social media to help determine the success and effectiveness of the organization's online efforts (General Mills.com, 2011).

The coffee chain Starbucks is another example of an organization that has effectively implemented social networking into its recruitment strategy. Starbucks modified their online recruitment system in order to humanize their recruitment system. In 2009, the organization encountered a flaw within their online recruitment system as they were receiving a high volume of applicants; unsuccessful applicants were notified by email. Management at Starbucks saw this system as impersonal and claimed it risked alienating the brand's customer base (Robins, 2012). To overcome this issue, Starbucks implemented social media into its recruitment process, which enabled them to engage better with jobseekers, "this dramatically changed recruitment at Starbucks" (Robins, 2012). Robins (2012) claims that this recruitment strategy is effective as it enables jobseekers to ask questions about jobs they have applied for and why they were not successful at obtaining the job. They can query why they were rejected and in the view of the authors, this strategy enhances engagement significantly. Starbucks recruitment strategy satisfies Rutledge (2008) view that, "the most effective social networking is all about building relationships, engaging with others, and developing solid word of mouth marketing." They have successfully achieved this by engaging with candidates through social networking and raising brand awareness.

Although many organizations have successfully used social networking sites to enhance their recruitment strategy and attract top talent, some organizations have received negative attention by overstepping privacy boundaries during the recruitment process. For example, in America, there has been a rise in cases where employers are requesting during the interview process that the potential employee hand over their social networking login information. By receiving this information, employers are able to keep track of whether the employee is actively seeking employment or even being headhunted by other organizations. However, there was recently an attempt to prohibit US employers from asking employees for their social networking passwords, but this was blocked by Congress. "A last minute alteration to the controversial Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act (CISPA) that would have prevented employers demanding that prospective employees disclose social media passwords as a condition of employment was voted down in the House of Representatives" (Gates, 2013). According to the Huffington Post (2013), the proposal that was put forward by Democrat Ed Perlmutter was outvoted 224-189.

Due to the increasing popularity of social networking sites, it is quite common for employers to view public profile pages that are publicly available. However, in the United States, employers are going beyond just glancing at a candidate's social network profile, instead they are asking potential candidates for their social network login information. With the increasing number of applicants per vacancy, this method enables employers to vet applicants and also allows them to gain a better understanding of the potential candidate (Arthur, 2012).

McFarland (2012) states that even those organizations that do not necessarily ask for passwords have taken other steps, such as asking the applicant to befriend a Human Resource manager on the social network site or to log into their profile during the interview. In addition to these steps, McFarland (2012) adds that some employers require the newly recruited employee to sign a non-disparagement agreement that prevents them from talking negatively about the organization on a social networking site. Poerio and Bain (2012) stress the importance of employers weighing the risks and benefits before gaining access to an applicant's social network account. Gates (2013) claims that this is an invasion of

privacy, “employers essentially can act as imposters and assume the identity of an employee and continually access, monitor and even manipulate an employee’s personal social activities and opinions.”

2.6. Conclusion

It is evident from the research that the use of social networking as a recruitment tool can offer organizations numerous benefits, such as low costs, potential to reach a wider audience, and attract talent. However, the challenges this recruitment method pose, such as discrimination, can tarnish an organization’s reputation. Therefore, for this recruitment method to be successful, the organization should establish an effective strategy.

In view of the authors, recruiting via social networking sites should not be considered as an alternative to physically interviewing and selecting the candidates face to face, instead it would be more beneficial to use this tool in conjunction with other methods. “It is important that organizations fully understand the potential benefits and pitfalls, so that they are able to use the right social networking tools to meet their recruitment needs” (Doherty, 2010, p. 12). Berkshire (2005) believes that social networking sites should be used by organizations to help support and enhance recruitment strategies, instead of simply replacing the traditional recruitment methods.

3. Research methodology

The research used a mixed-methods methodology through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. Defined by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson (2012, p. 61) as “using a range of different methods within the same study the researcher will increase validity and generalizability of the results and the potential theoretical contribution.” The main objective of using mixed methods in the research is based on what Bahari (2010) highlights, that it focuses on not replacing the former approach, but instead attempts to maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research strategies.

The rationale for the research using mixed methods is that using quantitative or qualitative methods individually would not sufficiently provide enough information to answer the research question. As the research objective is to develop an understanding of respondents’ attitudes and perceptions to the use of social networking as an e-recruitment tool, using a mixed-methods approach would enable the research to explore these views in depth.

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) state that mixed-methods research can be used sequentially or concurrently. This research will be using concurrent mixed methods, which involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative throughout the questionnaires and interviews to complement each other in the research. The purpose of this chosen method is to explore people’s attitudes and perceptions of the use of social networking as an e-recruitment tool, by seeking quantitative and qualitative data, more primary data can be collected which can ultimately enhance the credibility of the research (Trochim, 2006).

Primary research was conducted and primary data collected through the means of questionnaires and interview. The CIPD (2005, p. 89) defines primary research as “research that produces data that are only obtainable directly from an original source.”

After careful consideration, questionnaires were chosen as one of the data collection methods. In view of the researchers, using a questionnaire to gain an insight into participant’s attitudes and perceptions of using social networking as an e-recruitment tool is a suitable solution for this research.

The sampling technique used was purposeful sampling through the basis of self-selection sampling, where individuals identify their desire to take part in the research (Saunders et al., 2012). The questionnaire web link was sent to the Security Enterprise employees and was also publicized on the social networking sites Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn asking people to take part, as long as they met the sample criteria.

Those who wished to be included in the sample population had to meet specific criteria in order to ensure the correct data could be obtained. The sample criteria are outlined below:

- Be an employee/employer
- 18 years or older
- Have a social networking account

Horn (2012, p. 104) states that, “it is important to set criteria that makes it clear who or what is included in a population.” The sampling criteria were listed on the postings distributed online to ensure that the target population of the research were the only ones completing the questionnaire. It was important that respondents met the criteria otherwise it would reduce the validity of the results.

The questionnaire was distributed by email with the web address attached, to the employees at the Security Enterprise, however, taking into consideration that there were only 22 suitable participants within the organization who fitted the sampling criteria, the research decided to post the questionnaires on the social networking sites Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to gain a higher volume of responses. Further, the research is targeted towards individuals who use social networking sites, therefore, by distributing them on the chosen social networking channels the questionnaires were more valid and applicable to the research question. Horn (2012) suggests that using social networking to find participants is the easiest approach considering the number of people on the sites, this can yield a high volume of responses. Using Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, in addition to sending the questionnaires to the Security Enterprise employees, helped enhance the credibility of the research as more primary data were able to be collected.

The questionnaire was designed on the online survey website Survey Monkey; this is “an online survey tool for creating, delivering and collecting responses using web-based questionnaires.” This online survey website was also used to collect and analyze the data. This method of data collection was much quicker and thorough than analyzing the data by hand, especially considering the number of respondents and the short time frame.

The questionnaire format was web based, “the questionnaire is located on a website, and each respondent is sent the web address in order to access it” (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012, p. 230). The web address for the questionnaire was posted on the chosen social networking sites and was also emailed to employees at the Security Enterprise. The type of research is dependent on the goodwill and availability of respondents (Bell, 2010). However, Horn (2012) claims that this method of administration poses some potential drawbacks, such as a low attrition rate, “the average postal or self-administered questionnaire has an attrition rate of 66–75%.” It was therefore important to develop a strategy to cope with the potential high attrition rate (Horn, 2012); the research overcame this potential drawback by sending out an increased number of questionnaires to participants on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The questionnaire was reposted on these social networking sites over the 3 days; this helped to enhance the likelihood that more people would respond. In addition to the risk of low attrition rates, the number of respondents was dependent on the amount of time available when conducting the research (Bell, 2010), as time was a limitation with this research realistically the amount of respondents were very high.

Before the questionnaire was distributed, a pilot test was conducted. Saunders et al. (2012, p. 451) stress the importance of ensuring the questions in the questionnaire are defined precisely prior to the data collection, “the purpose of a pilot test is to refine the questionnaire so that respondents will have no problem in answering the questions and there will be no problems in recording the data.” The questionnaire was piloted with a number of people known to the authors, this helped to ensure

that the questions were clear, which ultimately enhanced the validity of the research. Also, as the questionnaires were not completed face to face, it was important to ensure that all of the questionnaires could be easily understood in order to avoid questions with non-responses.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section focused on gaining demographic data such as the respondents' age, gender, and profession. In view of the research, this information added validity when interpreting the results, for example, whether the majority of respondents who search for job vacancies on social networking sites are part of generation Y or of a certain profession, which was a key point highlighted in the literature review. The second section focused on gaining information on respondent's attitudes to social networking sites and how they perceive the use of the chosen sites when searching for a job vacancy online, which is a key focus for the research objective.

The majority of questions within the questionnaire were closed questions, which provided numerous options per answer for the respondents to choose from. This type of question is usually quicker and easier to answer as minimal writing/typing is required (Saunders et al., 2012). Some open questions were also asked within the questionnaire, the aim of this was to create explanatory research in order to find out the respondents' opinions and gain qualitative data. According to Saunders et al. (2012), when questionnaires are distributed to a large number of respondents, the responses to open questions are usually time-consuming to code. Taking into consideration the short time frame available for the research, it was decided to keep the use of open-ended questions to a minimum.

List questions were also present within the questionnaire; this format was used for gaining demographic information such as age, sex, and profession. It was also used to seek attitudes regarding the respondents' view regarding the advantages and disadvantages associated with using social networking to search for job vacancies.

A Likert-style rating was used in the questionnaire, "a way of measuring a respondent's agreement or disagreement to a question" (Horn, 2012, p. 112). The main objective of using this style of question was to collect opinions on how important respondents saw the use of social networking when searching for a job vacancy.

Although the use of questionnaires enabled the research to explore respondents' attitudes and perceptions, Saunders et al. (2012, p. 419) recommend using questionnaires with another method, such as interviews, to gain more in-depth information on attitudes, "a questionnaire to discover customers' attitudes can be complemented by in-depth interviews to explore and understand these attitudes."

Following on from Saunders et al. (2012) recommendation, the research chose to use an interview to gain opinions from the HR Manager at the Security Enterprise. Moser and Kalton (1971) as cited by Bell (2010, p. 161) describe an interview as, "a conversation between interviewer and respondent with the purpose of eliciting certain information from the respondent." The objective of the interview focused on gaining qualitative information by using a structured interview style. Horn (2012) states that, "structured interviews are used in situations where the research problem is well defined and the theoretical drivers are well understood."

As an objective of the research was to gain attitudes and perception of social networking within the Security Enterprise, it was important that qualitative data were obtained, therefore allowing the respondent to express their opinions. During the interview, a set of key questions were listed which was similar if not identical to the questions asked within the questionnaire. Horn (2012) recommends using a similar type of data requirement sheet that was used for the questionnaires, as this would allow for all aspects of the research problem to be explored and also assist in the analysis of the data collected. Also, by asking similar questions, it would allow the research to see the difference in perceptions from the employer and employee.

The questions were open questions which enabled the respondent to answer freely and as in depth as they required. “An open question is designed to encourage the interviewee to provide an extensive and developmental answer, and may be used to reveal attitudes or obtain facts” (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 391).

4. Research findings and analysis

4.1. Introduction

In this section, the results from the data collected are analyzed and discussed. The data from the questionnaire is discussed first followed by the data obtained from the interview with the HR Manager at the Security Enterprise.

The aim of the questionnaire was to gain respondents’ attitudes and perceptions of the use of social networking as an e-recruitment tool, with the interview focusing on the HR Manager’s attitude towards the implementation of the strategy within the Security Enterprise.

4.2. Questionnaire

Out of the 22 questionnaires that were emailed to employees at the Security Enterprise, 18 employees responded. In addition to this, the questionnaires were also distributed on the social networking sites Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, this resulted in 84 respondents. This gave a total of 102 respondents. The aim of issuing the questionnaires on the social networking sites was to increase the number of respondents, as opposed to just distributing them to the employees at the Security Enterprise. Taking into consideration the vast amount of people on the social networking sites, a high volume of responses can be generated (Horn, 2012).

4.3. Questionnaire Section A results

The questionnaire consisted of two sections, the objective of Section A of the questionnaire was to gather demographic information from the respondents; this aided the research in identifying if there is a link between demographics and the attitudes and perceptions of social networking as an e-recruitment tool.

Some 55% of the respondents were female and 45% were male, and 72% of the respondents were 30 years or under, which categorizes those in the Generation Y segment, 28% of respondents were 31 or over. The main purpose of only having two age options for these questions was to distinguish between the attitudes and perceptions of respondents who are part of Generation Y and those who are 31 and above.

It is evident from the results that the questionnaire was responded to by a wide range of respondents within different professions. Out of the 102 responses to the questionnaire, 3% worked in Accounting, 2% in Admin/Clerical, 8% in Finance, 7% in Customer Service, 2% in Construction, 7% in Human Resources, 5% in IT, 5% in retail, 9% in Marketing, 16% in Health Care, 15% in Education, 3% in Skilled Labor, and 18% in other sectors. This data contributed to gaining a varied overall picture of the respondents’ attitudes and perceptions to the use of social networking as an e-recruitment tool.

4.4. Questionnaire Section B results

The objective of Section B of the questionnaire was to gain data on respondents’ attitudes and perceptions of the use of social networking as an e-recruitment tool. This section consisted of 11 questions which varied in format.

For question 4, a ranking scale was used (Table 1), this style of question enabled the research to discover the importance of the three different social networking sites in personal preference order. Out of the 102 respondents, 2 chose to skip this question. It is evident that 75% of respondents ranked Facebook as a site they use the most, 18% of respondents ranked Twitter as number one, and 7% ranked LinkedIn as a social networking site they use the most. The data for the social

Table 1. What social networking site do you use the most?

Answer options		1	2	3	Rating average	Response count
Facebook		75	17	8	1.33	100
Twitter	Twitter	18	59	23	2.05	100
LinkedIn		7	24	69	2.62	100
Answered question	Answered question	Answered question	Answered question	Answered question	100	100
Skipped question	Skipped question	Skipped question	Skipped question	Skipped question	2	2

networking sites ranked at 2nd was 17% Facebook, 59% Twitter, and 24% LinkedIn. Respondents ranked the site they use the least out of the three, 8% Facebook, 23% Twitter, and 69% LinkedIn.

Question 5 of the questionnaire aimed to explore respondents' perceptions of the purpose of using social networking sites. Overall, the majority of the respondents saw the purpose of using Facebook as a way of keeping in touch with friends/family and socializing. The use of Twitter was mainly referred to as a way of keeping up to date with celebrities, news, and a way of marketing. LinkedIn was largely associated with being used as a form of professional networking and finding job opportunities.

A Likert style rating question was used in question 6. Saunders et al. (2012, p. 436) describe the style of questions as, "in which the respondent is asked how strongly she or he agrees or disagrees with a statement or series of statements." This research used one question on how important the respondents regard social networking when searching for a job vacancy, they were given an option of five rating scales. Out of 102 respondents, 2 viewed social networking as very important, 19 important, and 26 moderately important when searching for a job vacancy. Further to this, the data collected show that 38 of respondents regard it as of little importance and 17 respondents view it as unimportant when seeking a job vacancy. Some 26% of respondents have used social networking to search for a job vacancy, whereas 74% have reportedly never used this method. Out of the 102 respondents, 1 person skipped this question.

Question 8 (Table 2) is related to the question asked in question 7, the purpose of this question is to discover what social networking sites were used by those who said that they use the sites to search for job vacancies. Table 2 shows that 36 respondents completed this question. It appears that LinkedIn is the most popular social networking site for this research as 19 respondents confirmed that they use it to search for job vacancies. Whereas 10 respondents admitted to using Facebook and 10 respondents use other social networking sites to search for job vacancies. The data in Table 2 also highlights that only 4 out of the 36 respondents use Twitter when searching for a job vacancy.

Table 2. What social networking site did you use?

Answer options	Response (%)	Response count
Facebook	27.8	10
Twitter	11.1	4
LinkedIn	52.8	19
None of the above	27.8	10
Answered question	36	36
Skipped question	66	66

Question 9 focused on gaining respondents' attitudes towards giving employers their social networking log in information. Employers are requesting this information from potential candidates during the interview process (Arthur, 2012), therefore, the research wanted to explore respondents' attitudes towards this, which was done in more depth by collecting qualitative data in question 10.

However, the data collected in question 9 highlight that only 7% of the respondents would be prepared to give their potential or current employer their social networking information. Unsurprisingly, 93% of the respondents would not be willing to give their log in details, the reasons for saying yes or no is explored in question 10. Out of the 102 respondents, 2 decided to skip this question.

In order to enable the research to explore the respondents' attitudes of giving a potential or current employer their log in information, a qualitative question was included. Out of the 102 respondents, 3 skipped this question.

The data collected showed that the majority of respondents would not give their log in information due to privacy concerns, with many describing the idea as an invasion of privacy into their personal life. However, regarding the respondents who were willing to give their log in information to a potential or current employer, they stated that they had nothing to hide and therefore saw no reason not to give the information.

The purpose of this question was to discover if the respondents had ever been headhunted on a social networking site, this information allows the research to discover how popular headhunting is on social networking sites. The data collected shows that 23% of respondents had been headhunted on a social networking site, as opposed to 77% of respondents who had not. Only 1 respondent skipped this question out of the 102.

This question was related directly to the previous question. The purpose of this was to discover what social networking sites the respondents were headhunted on and who answered yes in the previous question.

The data collected (Table 3) highlighted that the majority of respondents had been headhunted on Linked in, this figure was 65%. The second most popular answer was Facebook with 26%, followed by the option other at 19%. The least popular answer was Twitter, with only 11% of respondents confirming that they had been headhunted on the social networking site.

Data were collected (Table 4) regarding respondents' attitudes and perceptions associated with using social networking to search for job vacancies. For this question, employees were asked to tick at least one box. Interestingly, 59 respondents saw connecting and networking with other professionals as an advantage, 51 respondents chose able to follow and friend businesses as an advantage, and 47 chose convenience as an advantage. Further to the 44 respondents associated reaching a wide network as an advantage, 39 respondents thought that it enables them to market themselves effectively by keeping their profile up to date and 8 respondents chose the option "other" as associated advantages.

Table 3. What social networking sites were you headhunted on?

Answer options	Response (%)	Response count
Facebook	26.9	7
Twitter	11.5	3
LinkedIn	65.4	17
Other	19.2	5
Answered question		26
Skipped question		76

Table 4. What advantages do you associate with using social networking to search for a job vacancy?

Answer options	Response (%)	Response count
Convenience	47.0	47
Can connect/network with other professionals	59.0	59
Able to follow/friend businesses to keep up to date with job postings	51.0	51
Reach a wide network	43.0	43
Market yourself effectively by keeping profile up to date	39.0	39
Other	8.0	8
Answered question		100
Skipped question		2

The next question (Table 5) is closely linked with the previous question; however, it focuses on gaining the disadvantages that respondents associate with using social networking to search for job vacancies. It is evident from the data that 84 respondents associate privacy concerns as a disadvantage, whereas 47 respondents chose that searching for a job vacancy on a social networking site could potentially damage their current employment status. Further to this, the results show that 40 respondents consider it not as personable as speaking face to face, 35 respondents view that not all organizations are on social networking sites, and 6 respondents chose the option other as a disadvantage.

4.5. Interview results

A structured one-to-one interview was carried out with the HR Manager at the Security Enterprise; the interview consisted of five questions. Due to the time and accessibility, only one interview was able to be carried out.

The interview explored the research objective of gaining an understanding of the interviewee's attitude and perception of the use of social networking as an e-recruitment tool. The questions asked were similar; some were identical to the questions asked within the questionnaire discussed above. The purpose of this was to enable the research to compare and contrast the different attitudes and perceptions for both the respondents and the interviewee. Further to this, Horn (2012) recommends using similar types of questions used for the questionnaires, as this allows for all the aspects of the research question to be explored. Although the questions were prepared in advance, there was no coding system in place for the respondents' answers; this enabled the researchers to gather more in-depth and qualitative data.

Question one confirmed that the Security Enterprise currently recruit via Job Centre Plus, this is their only method of recruiting. Question two discovered that implementing social networking as an e-recruitment tool has never been discussed within the organization; however, the HR Manager

Table 5. What disadvantages do you associate with using social networking to search for a job vacancy?

Answer options	Response (%)	Response count
Could potentially damage current employment status	46.5	47
Privacy concerns	83.2	84
Not all organizations are on social networking sites	34.7	35
It is not as personable as speaking face to face	39.6	40
Other	5.9	6
Answered question		101
Skipped question		1

stated that as there are not many employees in the Ebbw Vale office, and staff turnover is not frequent so the organization does not recruit often. However, this recruitment channel may be a necessity if the organization was to expand in the future. Question three focused on the perceived advantages of social networking as an e-recruitment tool, the HR Manager viewed this strategy as having the potential to reach a wide audience, which could ultimately enhance the organization's profile. The HR Manager also referred to the advantages of using LinkedIn as it enables networking with professionals. Question four was aimed at gaining the disadvantages associated with the suggested recruitment strategy. The HR Manager believed that it may actually increase the time of the recruitment process, as it would involve someone from the organization searching online and viewing applicants, at the moment the Job Centre perform these tasks. When asked question 5, regarding asking potential employees for log in information so the organization can see if the employee is searching for work or being headhunted, the HR Manager stressed that this is something that would never be implemented in the Security Enterprise due to the confidentiality of the information.

5. Discussion

In this section, the findings from the research and its relevance to existing literature are discussed. Throughout this section, reference is made to the research aim, which is to analyze the implementation of social networking as an e-recruitment tool in the Security Enterprise. Reference is also made to the research objective of gaining an understanding of respondents' attitudes and perceptions of the use of social networking as an e-recruitment tool.

Throughout the research, the aim has been placed on critically analyzing the implementation of social networking as an e-recruitment tool. One of the main advantages discussed in the literature was the possibility of attracting and engaging with Generation Y. As stated by Huizing (2012), Generation Y are the most educated generation to join the workforce, which stresses the importance of organizations recruiting and retaining them. Out of the 102 respondents, 74 were 30 years or under, this puts them in the Generation Y segment. This high rate of Generation Y responses allows the research to have an insight into Generation Y's attitudes and perceptions on social networking as an e-recruitment tool.

Respondents of the questionnaire were asked to rank on a scale of 1–3 what social networking site they use the most (1 being the highest, 3 being the lowest) and in a separate question, they were asked what purpose they used the websites for. The majority of respondents (75%) chose Facebook as their number one social networking site, most of the respondents claimed that they used this site to keep in touch with friends. Some 18% of respondents ranked Twitter as number one and stated that they used this as a way of keeping up to date with celebrities. LinkedIn was ranked as number one by 7% of respondents, however, this site was largely associated as a form of professional networking and finding job opportunities.

Literature has shown that not only are more organizations using social networking to recruit, but also applicants are increasingly using the sites to search for job vacancies, this is often done through networking with other professionals (Bullock, 2013). The findings from the data collected through the questionnaire showed that only 24% of respondents had previously used social networking to search for a job vacancy. Further to this, the findings showed that only 2 respondents viewed social networking as important when searching for a job vacancy, 19 respondents considered it important, and 26 viewed it as moderately important. In contrast to the literature discussed, the majority of respondents considered social networking as of little importance when searching for a job vacancy. These findings indicate that although the respondents may use or consider using social media sites when searching for a job, it may be seen as less important as other recruitment channels, such as popular job sites. These findings correlate with Huizing's (2007) view that Generation Y use social networking sites as a second option when searching for a job vacancy, their first option is online recruitment sites. Therefore, it would be beneficial for the Security Enterprise to implement a social networking recruitment strategy, in addition to their traditional recruitment method.

Although the literature has discussed the advantages and disadvantages associated with using social networking as an e-recruitment tool, there was a sufficient lack of contemporary studies to effectively compare and contrast. The findings from the questionnaire highlighted that the majority of respondents perceived this strategy as a chance to network and connect with other professionals (59 respondents) and also a way of following businesses and keeping up to date with events and job postings (51 respondents). The majority of respondents confirmed that the main disadvantages associated with using social networking to search for job vacancies were concerns about privacy (84 respondents) and the potential to damage their current employment status (47 respondents). If the Security Enterprise implemented social networking into their recruitment strategy, it would be advantageous for the organization to use LinkedIn, as findings have shown this site is perceived as a way to connect and engage with other professionals. Therefore, an employee using this site does not necessarily mean they are actively seeking employment. This helps to eliminate the disadvantages found in the data collected that using social networking to search for a job vacancy could damage their current employment status.

Similarly to the respondents of the questionnaires, the HR Manager at the Security Enterprise identified networking with other professionals through LinkedIn as a main advantage of implementing social networking within the organization. The need to attract Generation Y has been emphasized throughout the research, as Generation Y are the future of the workforce (Adams, 2013). LinkedIn's fastest growing demographic is Generation Y, which accounts for over 20 million of the site's users (LinkedIn, 2012). The findings from the questionnaires and interview show that LinkedIn is perceived as a professional social networking site which can be used effectively to advertise and search for job vacancies as well as connect and engage with other professionals. The findings from the data collected, and the literature discussed, suggests that the most suitable and appropriate social networking site for the Security Enterprise to use would be LinkedIn. As this will enable them to connect and engage with candidates and also post job vacancies.

However, a disadvantage that the HR Manager associated with this strategy was that it would increase the recruitment process and time to hire. This disadvantage was also highlighted in the literature review, if an organization receives a high volume of applicants, this can be time-consuming for the organization (Galanaki, 2002). Adding unnecessary time to the recruitment process is a significant disadvantage as for many organizations, time is money (Barber, 2006). The HR Manager stated that Job Centre Plus currently does all the recruitment tasks for the organization. Therefore, if the Security Enterprise was to implement a social networking strategy on LinkedIn, it may be advantageous to incorporate it with its traditional recruitment method by creating a link that sends the candidate's application form/information directly to Job Centre Plus. However, in the view of the authors, there should be a vetting system in which the organization communicates with the potential applicant through the social networking site before prompting them to send an application; this will reduce the risk of receiving an unnecessary amount of applications.

Throughout the literature, privacy was highlighted as a contemporary and extremely controversial topic when discussing social networking and recruitment. As discussed above, the findings show that the majority of respondents consider privacy concerns as the main disadvantage when using social networking to search for a job vacancy. It is evident that privacy concerns and social networking are closely associated with each other; this may be a result of employers asking applicants for their confidential social networking information. The number of employers who have requested access to applicants' social networking profiles has risen over the last year; understandably many applicants view this as distressing and a breach of privacy (Suddath, 2012). When the respondents to the questionnaire were asked if they would be prepared to hand over their login information to a potential or current employer, the majority said no (93% respondents). When asked their reasons for their answer, the majority of respondents stated that they would not give their login information due to privacy concerns and it would be an invasion of privacy into their personal life. The respondents who were willing to give their login information answered that they had nothing to hide and

therefore there was no reason not to give the information. When the HR manager was asked if he would ever consider asking applicants or employees for their login information, he emphasized that this information would never be requested by the organization as it is confidential.

6. Conclusions

The literature explores numerous theoretical frameworks to achieve the research aim of critically analyzing the implementation of social networking as an e-recruitment tool within a Security Enterprise.

One of the key objectives of the research was to develop an understanding of the advantages and challenges that organizations face when implementing social networking as an e-recruitment tool. As recommended by Doherty (2010), organizations should understand the potential benefits and challenges so they can use the right social networking site to meet their recruitment needs. The research has effectively explored this objective; it has been highlighted throughout the paper that social networking offers many advantages and challenges. If implemented correctly, security enterprises can reach a wider audience, attract Generation Y and create a talent bank for future vacancies. However, it is important that the organization establish an effective strategy before implementing social networking, as if done incorrectly, it can increase the time to hire, which ultimately will cost the organization money.

Another objective of the research was to gain an understanding of people's attitudes and perceptions of using social networking when searching for a job vacancy. It is evident through the literature discussed and the data collected that the use of social networking as an e-recruitment tool will continue to rise in the future. The data collected showed that respondents generally use the three social networking sites for different purposes. The majority of respondents associated LinkedIn as a professional social networking site that can help them connect with other professionals and search for job opportunities.

The combination of the literature discussed and the data collected through the questionnaires and interviews leads to the conclusion that the implementation of social networking within the Security Enterprise would be beneficial. However, it has been highlighted throughout the research that LinkedIn is the most suitable social networking site for recruitment, due to the HR Manager and the majority of respondents viewing this site as a way of connecting and engaging with professionals and keeping up to date with job opportunities. The literature has continuously emphasized that LinkedIn is the most popular site for the Generation Y segment. Therefore, by solely focusing on advertising via LinkedIn, the Security Enterprise can connect and engage with Generation Y. Although the study's focus is on Generation Y, it must be remembered that other types of job applicants can benefit from e-recruitment tools which can involve not only the main networking sites investigated, but also other ones. In addition to this, as LinkedIn is generally associated as a professional networking site, using it may reduce privacy concerns for potential candidates, as using this site does not necessarily mean the employee is actively seeking employment. In addition to this, time was associated as a major disadvantage for the organization, due to this; it would be beneficial to initially just implement one social networking channel within the recruitment strategy.

Both the literature and the findings have emphasized that social networking should be used in conjunction with another recruitment channel. The Security Enterprise would benefit from sourcing potential candidates from LinkedIn whilst still using their traditional recruitment method through the Job Centre Plus. It would be effective if the Security Enterprise engaged and attracted the applicants that are suitable for the available vacancy through LinkedIn, however, they can then put them in touch with Job Centre Plus, so they can perform the necessary tasks. This will help to reduce the risk of prolonging the time to hire, which was stated as a potential disadvantage for the organization. Further to this, even if job vacancies are not available, the organization can still connect and engage with potential future candidates, not only will this expand the organization's profile; it will also create a talent bank for when a vacancy arises. However, if the organization expands in the fu-

ture, the need to advertise more job vacancies and expand the organization's profile may be required; therefore, additional social networking channels may need to be considered.

The literature discussed and the findings collected have shown that LinkedIn is a suitable recruitment channel for the Security Enterprise. However, taking into consideration that they do not recruit on a frequent basis and that time to hire is a concern for the HR Manager, it is recommended that the organization incorporate LinkedIn into their current recruitment strategy, instead of replacing their traditional recruitment method. This can successfully be implemented by engaging and connecting with candidates on LinkedIn and then referring them to Job Centre Plus. Berkshire (2005) recommends that social networking sites should be used by organizations to help support and enhance recruitment strategies, instead of replacing the traditional recruitment methods. Further to this, by using LinkedIn, the organization can increase the organization's profile whilst creating a talent bank for future vacancies.

This research has critically analyzed the implementation of social networking as an e-recruitment tool within the Security Enterprise. However, as the use of social networking is a contemporary topic, it has been difficult to compare and contrast a vast amount of literature. Due to this, it is recommended that further research is conducted to explore this topic further.

Taking into consideration the time and cost constraints that limited this research, it is recommended that further studies should attempt to gain a more in-depth understanding of the organization's attitudes and perceptions of using social networking as an e-recruitment tool. This could be done by conducting interviews with all the senior staff so the implications of implementing this recruitment strategy can be explored in more detail. An objective that could be considered for future studies is the impact that social networking has had on the organization's recruitment strategy.

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