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LinkedIn for Personnel Recruitment and Selection:

A New Zealand perspective

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

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by

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how the professional networking site LinkedIn is being used and perceived by recruitment and selection practitioners within New Zealand organisations. In recent times LinkedIn has seen large increases in membership and it has become a resource used by recruitment and selection practitioners. LinkedIn is conceptualised as a professional networking site which can be perceived differently to social networking sites such as Facebook. Specifically this study sought to determine how common the usage of LinkedIn was, the features being used by recruitment and selection practitioners, how these features affect or influence perceptions and decision making of recruitment and selection practitioners, and if LinkedIn was being used alongside Social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter.

Participants were recruited from various New Zealand university alumni groups, professional membership groups and various organisations. Eligibility for the research required individuals to be conducting the role of either recruitment or selection within their current positions within New Zealand. The final sample consisted of 135 participants, and descriptive and thematic analysis was conducted on the survey responses.

The results indicated that 66.4% of the sample were using LinkedIn for both personnel recruitment and selection. LinkedIn was used more for recruitment purposes with both recruitment and selection practitioners indicating that LinkedIn can be perceived as a resource for recruitment and selection. Results further indicated that many organisations did not maintain any formal policy regarding LinkedIn use within recruitment and selection procedures. Results

indicated that the most frequently used features of LinkedIn were the Profile, and Jobs & Hiring features. The professional information sub feature, alongside previous experience and qualifications obtained, was perceived to be the most important and it influenced aspects of recruitment and selection decision making. Facebook was indicated to be the most used social networking site alongside LinkedIn, with 88% of participants having reported using Facebook for recruitment and selection. The results also showed that recruitment and selection practitioners perceive many disadvantages of LinkedIn such as lack of credibility, inaccuracy of information and that LinkedIn may not be appropriate for certain job roles. However, LinkedIn was perceived as a resource which maintained beneficial professional information.

As stated by Barber (1998, as cited in Breaugh & Starke, 2000), this research has sought to address gaps in the literature regarding practitioners' attitudes towards recruitment sources and to investigate influencing aspects on recruiter and selectors' decision making. The research addresses both of these aspects by highlighting attitudes of practitioners towards LinkedIn and identifies some of the more influential features of LinkedIn on practitioners' decision making. This is beneficial for practitioners as it indicates the positive and the negative aspects of LinkedIn which is a scarcely researched topic while also addressing the research gaps mentioned by Barber (1998).

The current research has confirmed LinkedIn as a resource for recruitment and selection; however, LinkedIn lacks predictive validity and future research, such as predictive validation studies could be conducted to identify whether LinkedIn provides any incremental validity beyond the traditional predictors of job performance.

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And to you Kate my one and only...here is your long term investment in me paying off. Thank you for believing in me, even in times when I stopped believing in myself.

“There is nothing impossible to him who will try”

- Alexander the Great

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

LinkedIn and professional networking sites have received much attention in the last decade. According to the Digital Consumer Report (Nielsen, 2014), LinkedIn is the most used professional networking site with individuals accessing LinkedIn through laptops, smartphones and applications on tablets. A survey by Adcorp (2013a) shows that in June 2013 LinkedIn had 731,283 members within New Zealand. This was 16.36% of New Zealand's entire population at the time, and was the third highest membership for a social media website with Facebook and YouTube leading. By November of the same year (Adcorp, 2013b), membership of LinkedIn had increased to 859,919, accounting for nearly one fifth of the New Zealand population at 19.11%. Since then the LinkedIn press centre has announced one million members in New Zealand (LinkedIn, 2013). As LinkedIn is accessed by a large number of individuals, LinkedIn serves as a useful tool which can be utilised in the recruitment and selection process. LinkedIn noted that their site has become popular in usage for individuals with nearly a quarter of the population using the platform. This makes LinkedIn the most used professional networking sites in New Zealand, which has widespread implications for organisations and personnel recruitment and/or selection practitioners New Zealand wide.

Limited empirical research exists on LinkedIn and its usage for personnel recruitment and selection; however, a large amount of information surrounds statistics on individuals using LinkedIn and global memberships. Peacock (2009) reported that 25% of job interviewers across the globe were checking candidate's profiles or photos on social and professional networking sites prior to deciding if

they should progress to the interview stages. This represents a distinct notion of selecting candidates out of the pool of applicants for further progression onto the selection phase. Society for Human Resource Management (2008) research showed that usage of social networking sites (LinkedIn was classified as a social networking site) also increased with human resource practitioners using them more frequently as a human resource tool. They also showed that nearly one half of organisations in their study did use social networking sites (Social networking sites) to recruit and contact individuals. Their main goals were to search for passive recruits using Social networking sites which have more geographical reach. According to Jobvite (2014), 94% of recruiters in their sample were active on LinkedIn. This also is the highest percentage among social and professional networking sites in this survey. LinkedIn has appeared to be the front runner in professional networking for personnel recruiters and/or selectors; however, there is a dearth of research on LinkedIn in relation to the fields of personnel recruitment and selection, and attitudes surrounding LinkedIn.

LinkedIn defined

LinkedIn is a global professional networking site with similar ideas to a social networking site but has professional/business applications such as hiring potential employees, searching for appropriate candidates and networking with individuals in the professional world (Olsen, 2008). Founded in 2003 by Reid Hoffman and co-founders, it is currently accessible in twenty-two languages and available globally (LinkedIn, 2014a). According to a press release by LinkedIn (LinkedIn, 2014c), LinkedIn operate the world's largest professional network reporting having reached 300 million members spanning over 200 countries. They also boast a joining rate of two new members every second and show that 30 million

members are recent college graduates, which also make up LinkedIn's fastest growing demographic.

A brief history of LinkedIn

In 2003 LinkedIn was launched but growth was slow at first. In 2004 growth accelerated and LinkedIn introduced the groups feature. In 2005-2006 LinkedIn added more features such as jobs and subscriptions while reaching profitability in 2006, staking its claim as the front runner in professional networking. In 2008 LinkedIn went global with offices opening up around the globe and by 2010 it reached a global membership of 90 million individuals. Following that, LinkedIn transformed its interface and adapted to the new digital age, which brought exceptional growth. In 2013 LinkedIn celebrated having a 225 million strong membership. LinkedIn reported in April 2014 that they had reached the 300 million member milestone and since then have exceeded that number (LinkedIn, 2014b).

Through studies by the Nielsen Company (Nielsen, 2009, 2012), Archambault and Grudin (2012), and LinkedIn Press Release Centre (LinkedIn, 2014a) it is evident that LinkedIn has become a prominent professional networking site and continues to be used by individuals worldwide.

Statement of the research aims: LinkedIn for personnel recruitment and selection, a New Zealand perspective

As so far as I can determine, no research has been conducted identifying the usage and perceptions of LinkedIn or other professional networking sites for personnel recruitment and selection within a New Zealand context. With a population of 4.5 million individuals (Statistics New Zealand, 2014), the

population of LinkedIn users make up roughly a quarter of the entire population and with the meteoric rise in networking that value will undoubtedly continue to increase. Such a large proportion of individuals active on a single platform maintain obvious benefits for personnel recruitment and selection practitioners in terms of brand recognition and capturing active and passive job seekers. Barber (1998, as cited in Breaugh & Starke, 2000) suggests researchers could look at the reasons as to why employees recruit as they do, and what attitudes employers have regarding recruitment sources. Breaugh and Starke additionally suggest that real progress can be made in the areas of investigating recruiters and selectors' decision making and why recruitment sources such as social and professional networking sites are selected. With the observations of Breaugh and Starke in mind, the study has five aims:

Research Aim One:

The first aim of the research was to understand the usage of the resource LinkedIn for recruitment and selection among a New Zealand sample of personnel recruitment and/or selection practitioners. As recruitment and selection are two separate aspects, the research sought to determine the usage of LinkedIn for the roles of both recruitment and/or selection procedures, and whether LinkedIn is being used more for one of these aspects. Also the research attempted to determine whether practitioners were active on LinkedIn and posted regular job openings. Furthermore the research sought to determine whether or not organisations maintained specific policies regarding LinkedIn usage for recruitment and selection.

Research Aim Two:

Roulin and Bangerter (2013) discuss that there exists little research in personnel selection in the area of information which recruiters and selectors are attempting to obtain through professional and social networking sites. Therefore, the second aim of the research examined how LinkedIn was being used as a recruitment and/or selection tool and what information in particular was being utilised. Research aim two looked in closer detail at which features/parts of a LinkedIn profile was being used, and which phase they were being used for, recruitment and/or selection.

Research Aim Three:

The third aim of the research sought to determine how LinkedIn influences recruitment and/or selection practitioners when hiring new employees. This included identifying selection biases and looking at the credibility and verifiability of LinkedIn information, employee employability and self-report bias. This section largely deals with the attitudes of recruitment and/or selection practitioners towards LinkedIn.

Research Aim Four:

The fourth aim of the research attempted to identify whether or not LinkedIn was being used alongside alternative networking sites during recruitment and selection procedures. Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter may have been used alongside LinkedIn as a means to gain more information on an individual.

Research Aim Five:

The fifth research aim was to identify the perceived benefits and limitations of LinkedIn for recruitment and/or selection. In this section an attempt was made to understand whether practitioners valued LinkedIn and what limitations they maintained was important; also to identify the recruitment and selection practitioner's perceptions of self-report data.

Ultimately, this research seeks to clarify the research questions as stated above, to provide insights as to why recruitment and selection practitioners choose LinkedIn, and how their recruitment and selection decisions are influenced by LinkedIn.

Summary of research aims:

- 1) How common is the usage of the professional networking site LinkedIn by personnel recruitment and/or selection practitioners within New Zealand?
- 2) Which features of LinkedIn are personnel recruitment and/or selection practitioners using as a personnel recruitment and selection resource during hiring individuals?
- 3) How do the features of LinkedIn affect or influence the recruitment and selection decisions made by practitioners?
- 4) Is LinkedIn being used by practitioners alongside other networking sites?
- 5) What are some of the perceived benefits and limitations of LinkedIn which are held by recruitment and/or selection practitioners?

Professional Networking

To understand professional networking sites, the distinction between social and professional networking needs to be made. The Oxford English Dictionary ("Network", 2005) provides an apt definition of networking as, "A group of people who exchange information, contacts and experience for professional or social purposes." This definition implies a delineation of the professional and social spheres.

According to De Kay (2009) the first professional networking site Classmates.com was created in 1995 and provided a means for dispersed graduates of certain schools to connect and engage, breaking down the geographical barriers. In 1998 the first official business orientated social networking site, Ecademy was created. Ecademy according to De Kay was the original professional network created with the intention of creating a forum in which employees all over the world could locate and communicate with former and current colleagues. Over the past decade, Ecademy has been outflanked and rendered more or less obsolete by the likes of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, with LinkedIn now being the world's foremost and globally influential professional networking site. Boyd and Ellison (2007) described social networking as web based services which enable individuals to construct public or semi-public profiles within a system while making connections through their profiles. Finally, social networks also allow the user to navigate through the individual profile while interacting with those within the system.

The foundation of social networking is the social aspect: the interaction with personal connections and the sharing of personal information. When dealing with

social and professional networking sites, individuals do maintain an emotional split (LinkedIn, 2012). Individuals maintain different purposes and different mind-sets when dealing with social or professional networks. According to research by LinkedIn (2012) the top drivers for social networks involve socialising, staying in touch, being entertained, killing time and sharing content. This is in sharp contrast with the top drivers for professional sites which include maintaining a professional identity, making useful contacts, searching for opportunities, staying in touch and keeping career information up to date. This highlights a clear delineation of social and professional perceptions: one is clearly centred on socialising and relishing nostalgic interactions, whereas the other is based on purpose driven interactions while maintaining a professional identity for career advancement.

LinkedIn has become a resource for personnel recruitment and selection practitioners due to the plethora of information which can be gained from potential candidates through the click of a button (Caers & Castelyns, 2010). Unlike Social networking sites, LinkedIn requires individuals to surrender information regarding one's professional career which can be used in recruitment and selection procedures (Skeels & Grudin, 2009). Although LinkedIn may share many similarities with the definition given for social networking, LinkedIn remains unique because of the type of information elicited and the behaviours which individuals demonstrate while active on professional networking sites.

When comparing professional networking with social networking, Skeels and Grudin (2009) emphasise the professional sphere versus the personal sphere dilemma. Based on previous research (LinkedIn, 2012), it is clear that professional and social networking sites have different purposes. Skeels and

Grudin discuss the tensions arising from the intermingling of professional and personal personas and the lack of delineation between the spheres which can cause issues with hierarchy, power boundaries and communication. Baker (2013) reinforced these ideas and mentioned that finding the professional balance is key but is made up of the professional versus the personal roles/personas. The information within each sphere is unique and must be understood in the context of either professional or personal spheres. Research by Papacharissi (2009) discusses that electronic media has the ability to remove and rearrange the boundaries between professional and personal spheres. In a personnel recruitment and selection context, the blurring of these boundaries presents dilemmas for recruitment and selection practitioners; Cain and Romanelli (2009) argue that no boundaries exist to stop these issues and mention that these are the complexities which plague the use of social media for personnel recruitment and selection.

Overall, a clear distinction can be made between social and professional networking. As previously stated, personnel recruiters and selectors are inclined to hold individuals accountable for all information which is public through social and professional media. Furthermore, future research could attempt to maintain the delineation of the definitions of social and professional networking sites. If researchers place significance on understanding the concepts and ideas surrounding social and professional networking and their usage for recruitment and selection, separation of the concepts must be maintained in future research.

Personnel recruitment and selection defined

Personnel recruitment and selection are very distinct practices and defining these concepts is important for drawing conclusions, making assumptions

and understanding the differences of LinkedIn practices for personnel recruitment and selection.

Recruitment

Breaugh and Starke (2000) favour a definition of recruitment offered by Barber (1998, as cited by Breaugh & Starke, 2000) which mentions that recruitment includes the practices and activities carried out by an organisation for the main purpose of attracting potential applicants. Breaugh (2013) builds on this definition and further delineates recruitment by identifying external recruitment. Breaugh states that external recruitment can be defined as the actions which are intended to bring a job opening to the attention of potential applicants, influence whether these individuals apply for the opening, whether they maintain interest in the position and whether they accept the position. Although these definitions are concise, for the purposes of this research the definition by Ollington, Gibb and Harcourt (2013) will be used. Ollington et al. point out that recruiters perform two essential functions as recruiters: generating potential viable candidates for positions, which they refer to as 'attraction'; and eliminating individuals from the applicant pool and identifying individuals who are most likely to fit person-organisation specifications, which is referred to as 'screening'. Screening, according to Gatewood et al. (2011), is also used to increase the success rate of the selection process. This can be done by reducing the applicant pool by eliminating individuals who are not adequately qualified and who do not possess the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs). Networking in the form of LinkedIn can be used to attract and screen individuals for job roles (Ollington et al.). Although Ollington et al. split recruitment into two aspects, for the purposes

of this research, attraction and screening will be implied when discussing recruitment.

Selection

Once the recruitment process has been completed successfully, practitioners will then engage in the selection process. Gatewood et al. (2011, p. 3) offer a comprehensive definition of personnel selection and the selection process as, “ the process of collecting and evaluating information about an individual in order to extend an offer of employment...” The selection process can involve identification of relevant KSAs needed for the job by conducting assessments, interviews and accepting or rejecting of an individual. For the purpose of this research, selection will be used as an overarching concept which will include all the aspects of the selection process as stated by Gatewood et al. (2011). Aamodt (2010) discusses that at the end of the selection process, practitioners engage in hiring of an individual. Again for the purposes of this research, hiring will be implied when discussing selection. Overall, selection will encompass all the processes after the recruitment stage of attraction and screening. Many personnel recruitment and selection roles are intertwined; however, certain roles are explicitly either recruitment or selection but in some cases individuals may not fully understand the key differences between recruitment and selection. The research requires a definition of both, as LinkedIn may be used differently for both personnel recruitment and selection, and the delineation will help in delivering accurate perceptions and conclusions of how LinkedIn is being used for both personnel recruitment and selection. Also, for research to be accurately conducted for personnel recruitment and selection, clear and concise definitions

need to be made. Traditionally when research has been conducted on professional and social networking, it has focussed mainly on the recruitment phase (Emerald Group, 2013; Ollington et al., 2013; Watkins & Johnston, 2000). This could be due to the idea that networking sites provide information on applicants and can be a cost effective mechanism in which personnel recruiters can attract and screen applicants.

REVIEW OF THE CONCEPTS AND RELEVANT WORK

Research Aim 1: How common is the usage of the professional networking site LinkedIn by personnel recruitment and/or selection practitioners within New Zealand?

LinkedIn as a Professional Networking Site

LinkedIn has become a tool which encompasses a whole range of tasks and can be utilised by personnel recruitment and selection practitioners. Searching for employees, hiring employees, finding useful occupational information and networking with like-minded professionals are some of these tools (Olsen, 2008); organisations have begun to understand and tap into this resource for personnel recruitment and selection (Kluemper & Rosen, 2009). The Digital Consumer (Nielsen, 2014) reports that in the US, LinkedIn usage increased by 37% through computers and by 80% through smartphone browsers between 2012 and late 2013. Jobvite (2014) reported that in a US sample, 94% of recruiters were active on LinkedIn with general population usage on the rise as well. These reports identify a common theme which is that LinkedIn is becoming the ‘go to’ resource for personnel recruiters and/or selectors.

Owing to the large volume of information, efficiency and cost, LinkedIn has become a resource which is used by recruitment and selection practitioners worldwide (Kluemper & Rosen, 2009; Olsen, 2008; Shea & Wesley, 2006). The internet also offers affordable costs regarding personnel recruitment and selection (Lybaert, 2002) and could be a contributing factor to the increased usages of LinkedIn for personnel recruitment and selection. With global financial crises occurring less than a decade ago, organisations are still feeling murmurs of the fallout and thus find that the use of web applications for personnel recruitment and selection is more efficient and affordable (Bonson & Bednarova, 2013).

Coupled with the rise in social media platforms on the internet, recruitment and selection practitioners have made subtle shifts from older paper based systems to efficient electronic based systems (Osterlund, 2008). With information technology evolving daily, personnel recruitment and selection methods have also made shifts to electronic methods such as professional networking sites like LinkedIn. The increasing use of social media websites and internet dictate that more individuals are available through the internet which means that professional websites such as LinkedIn are able to reach a wider range of potential employees, and personnel recruitment and selection practitioners can increase their selection pools dramatically (Danet & Herring, 2007). The research surrounding LinkedIn displays many benefits for LinkedIn use and describes changing mechanisms in personnel recruitment and selection.

LinkedIn as a Personnel Recruitment and Selection resource

Limited research exists exclusively focussing on the usage of LinkedIn as a resource for personnel recruitment and selection, but the large majority of

research (Archambault & Grudin, 2012; Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Caers & Castelyns, 2010; Fenner et al., 2012; Skeels & Grudin, 2009) tends to focus on Social networking sites such as Facebook. However, some early work on LinkedIn by Skeels and Grudin showed a large proportion of their sample maintained LinkedIn profiles and that LinkedIn was useful for recruiters and selectors with 50% maintaining that LinkedIn can provide initial information, but can also help in selecting key candidates for roles. Kluemper and Rosen (2009) build on this knowledge and discuss future employment and selection methods. An important concept they discuss is that social networking websites are providing increasing amounts of knowledge, which is key for personnel recruiters and/or selectors. Shea and Wesley (2006) report that 50% of employers admitted to using social and professional media to screen for candidates. A longitudinal study by Archambault and Grudin report the longitudinal usage of Social networking sites between 2008 and 2011; this is an extension of the work done by Skeels and Grudin. They found that major social and professional networking sites experienced large increases in their usage, particularly Facebook and LinkedIn. Overall, throughout the research, both empirical and anecdotal (Caers & Castelyns, 2010; Chapman & Webster, 2003; Kluemper & Rosen, 2009; Roberts & Roach, 2009; Shea & Wesley, 2006; Zaharie & Osoian, 2013), the general trend that emerges is that professional networking and LinkedIn is being used more frequently as a resource within personnel recruitment and selection. Recent work on LinkedIn in personnel recruitment and selection by Andrews (2012) highlights the opportunities and advantages of using social and professional networking for recruitment and selection with cost effectiveness, speed and efficiency topping her list. Work by Benson and Bednarova (2013)

reinforces the ideas of cost effectiveness and speed. They mention that in the wake of the recent global financial crises, many HR departments have cut budgets and this is affecting the resources available for recruitment and selection.

Research Propositions 1 and 2:

- 1) Personnel recruitment and/or selection practitioners will use and perceive LinkedIn as a resource which can be utilized for personnel recruitment and selection purposes
- 2) LinkedIn will be used more for the purposes of personnel recruitment as compared to the purposes of personnel selection, which is the trend indicated in the research (Archambault & Grudin, 2012; Shea & Wesley, 2006)

Brown and Vaughn (2011) suggest that policy and legal recourses need to be created to remedy the issues of the incorrect use of information. This view is congruent with Cain et al. (2010), and Barker, Wehbe-Janek, Bhandari and Bittenbinder (2012) who found that most of their samples reported little or no formal policy for the use of networking for personnel recruitment and selection, and that the majority of the samples agree that policy is required to regulate the use of networking sites when making personnel recruitment and selection decisions. Very few organisations maintain any formal policy and as such a doorway for discrimination and misuse of information opens, although, as Roulin and Bangerter (2013) argue, LinkedIn appears to be the preferred networking site for the personnel recruitment and selection process due to the professional nature of the information and its relevance to the job roles.

Research Proposition 3:

- 3) Personnel recruitment and/ or selection practitioners are likely to report that their respective organisations maintain little to no policy regarding the use of professional networking for personnel recruitment and/or selection decisions.

Research Aim 2: Which features are personnel recruitment and/or selection practitioners using as a personnel recruitment and selection resource during hiring individuals?

Features of LinkedIn

Based on the work by Olsen (2008) LinkedIn is divided into four main categories: profile, network, interaction, and jobs and hiring. LinkedIn has evolved since the work conducted by Olsen (2008) which includes differences such as updated profile changes, jobs and hiring changes, and interactional changes. These changes have been included in the subsequently emphasised taxonomy which is specific to research aim two and research proposition four.

Profile

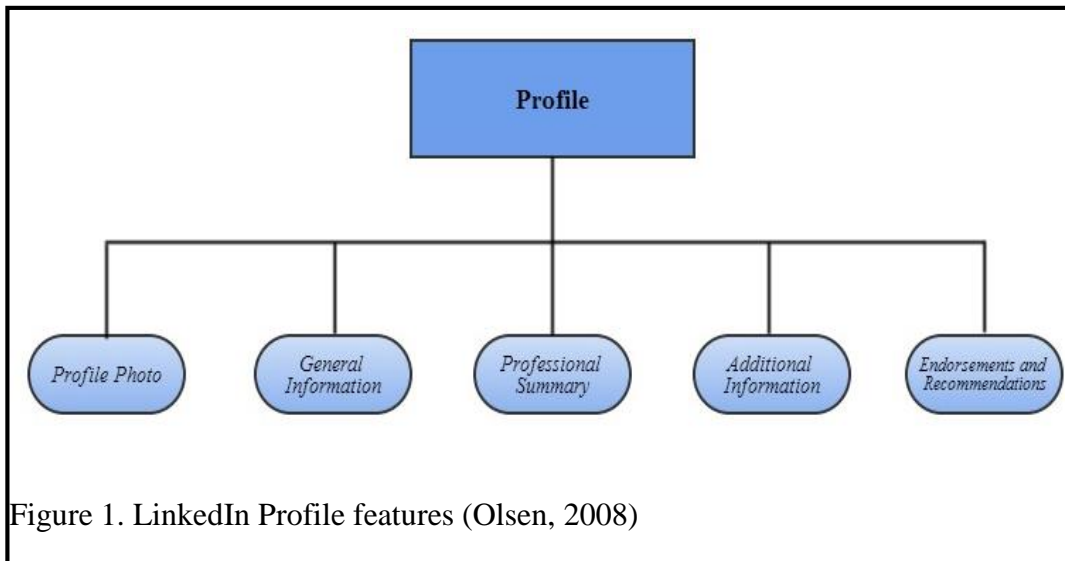


Figure 1. LinkedIn Profile features (Olsen, 2008)

As seen in Figure 1, the LinkedIn profile is where LinkedIn users can add, edit and display personal information. This is the most public aspect of LinkedIn for any individual user and is a direct reflection of the user. The first aspect of the profile is the profile photo: users can add photos to complement their profile. Users can also add general information about themselves which may include full name, current and past positions, and the institutions or organisations for which they work or are/were educated at. As LinkedIn is a professional networking site, a professional summary of working and educational experience is expected. This may include background information, education received and working experience. Additional information can also be added which can complement the previous information and adds a holistic view of an individual. This may include languages spoken, personal interests, and personal details. Lastly, there is information about recommendations and endorsements; this section includes an area in which the user can identify knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs). These KSAs can then be endorsed by individuals who have worked with the user or who know that a

certain user maintains these KSAs. Recommendations can also be made by individuals in the user's network. Recommendations can range from identifying working experience to highlighting the proficiency of the user in his/her given occupational field. These aspects make up a user's LinkedIn profile. All of the information is non-compulsory with the exception of basic information required to create a LinkedIn profile.

Network

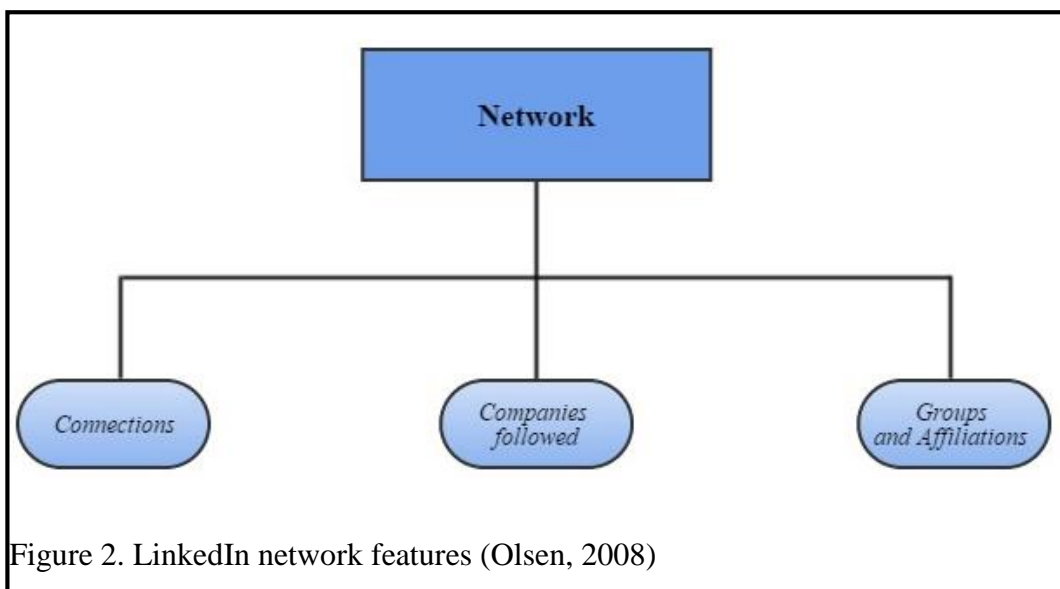


Figure 2. LinkedIn network features (Olsen, 2008)

The first and possibly the most important aspect of a network are the connections (Figure 2). Connections are the links or relationships made with other LinkedIn users. Users can request to connect with one another and if the invitation is accepted they become connected. Connections are then added to the user's network of connections and can interact and view the new connections' profiles at any point. A large network can provide many benefits for a user such as increased publicity and better access to occupational opportunities. Relatively newer aspects of LinkedIn include following companies, becoming affiliated, and joining a group on LinkedIn. Organisations can now be followed which is a practical

medium in which information about their organisations can be provided as well as information of potential job openings within the organisation. Following an organisation allows a user to keep up to date with organisational information, new research and other aspects related to the organisation. Joining groups allows a user to become an active member within a specified group. Commonly, users will join groups in which they have expertise or have been a part of in the working world. Joining a group allows the user to engage in active discussions, post material and gives the user access to aspects unique to the group. Again, a group provides an excellent medium in which to display targeted information.

Interaction

Having a profile, and joining and following groups and organisations can stimulate interaction. Figure 3 describes the aspects of interaction.

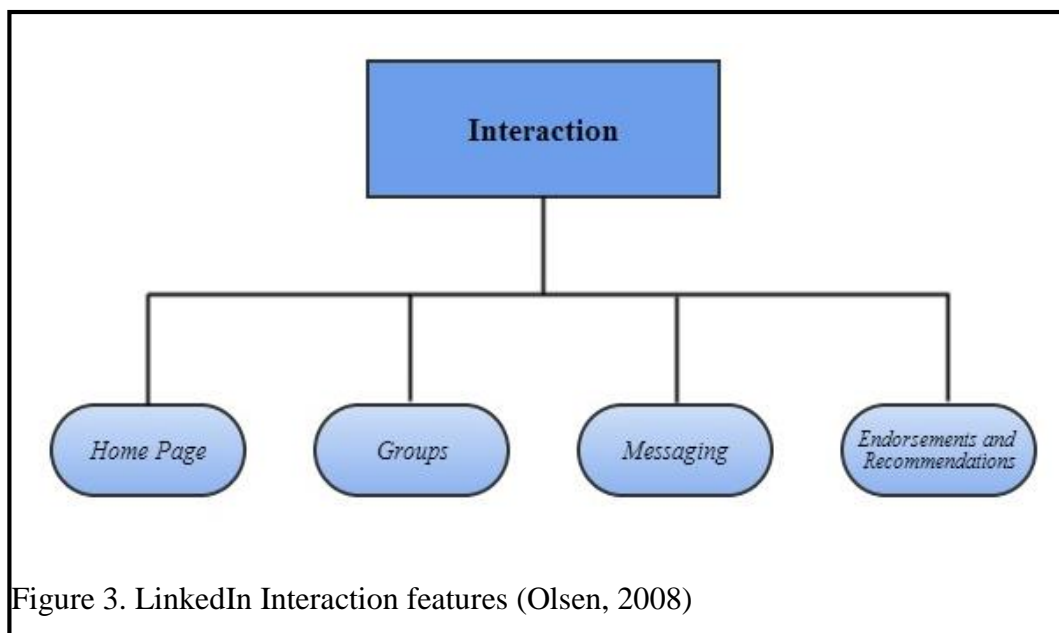


Figure 3. LinkedIn Interaction features (Olsen, 2008)

The home page is the first aspect of interaction. On a home page the user can indicate interest, comment, post relevant material and provide updates. Groups provide a similar notion to a home page in the sense that a user can post within the group, contact individual members, search for relevant jobs posted within the group, and post and answer questions. Groups can provide valuable expertise on certain aspects, and the question and answer system can be very helpful for certain members who require specific expertise. An important aspect of interaction is the messaging system: this allows information flow between users and also between users and employers. This is a common tool with which employers reach out to users. Endorsements and recommendations make up the final aspect of interaction; through this users can endorse their connections and provide recommendations where applicable. Information about a user's KSAs can be very important regarding job openings. Therefore, endorsements of specific KSAs and recommendations from a user's connections is an important aspect regarding interaction.

Jobs and Hiring

LinkedIn provides a platform in which employers can post job openings within their organisation and where users can search for relevant jobs. Figure 4 outlines the main aspects of jobs and hiring.

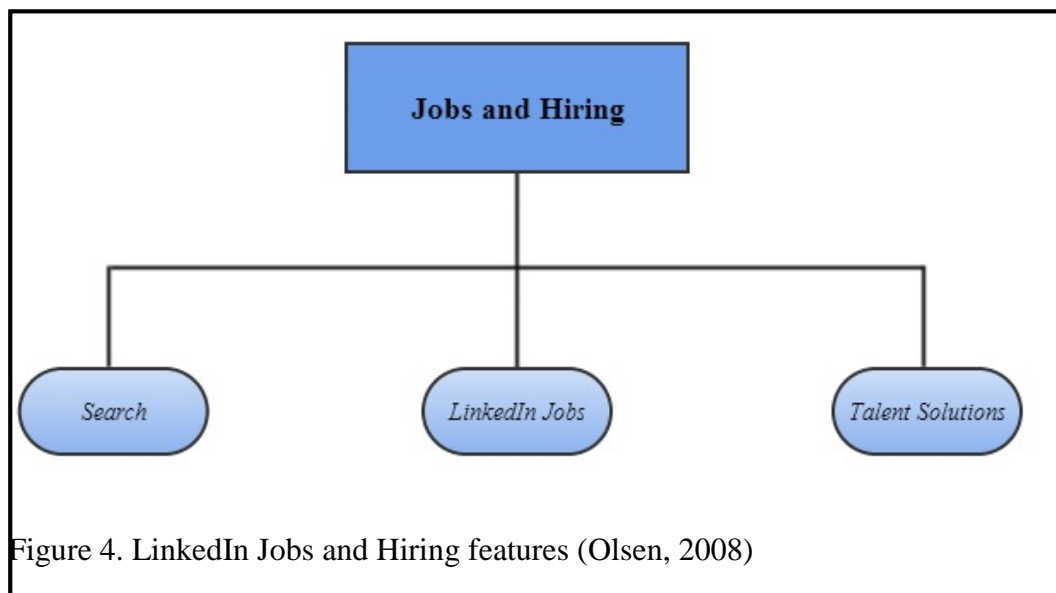


Figure 4. LinkedIn Jobs and Hiring features (Olsen, 2008)

After a profile has been created, users can search for jobs through LinkedIn. The job search mechanism allows users to search for jobs with specific criteria and is probably the most used tool regarding jobs and hiring. This searching tool allows users to filter jobs and tailor their searches thus making them specific to their chosen fields or education received. LinkedIn Jobs is the platform on which personnel recruiters and selectors can post jobs, create job specific frameworks for candidates and advertise these positions. If recruiters, selectors or talent acquisition managers cannot find appropriate candidates they can use Talent Solutions. LinkedIn Talent Solutions is a tool that helps recruiters and selectors find the most suitable candidates for the positions they have available within their organisations. By using the information on user profiles, talent solutions finds the best suited candidates and provides recruiters and selectors with a valuable applicant pool with the appropriate KSAs.

Research Proposition 4:

- 4) Certain features of LinkedIn, such as the Profile and Jobs & Hiring features, will be used by practitioners for recruitment and selection more often than other aspects of LinkedIn

Research Aim 3: How do the features of LinkedIn affect or influence the recruitment and selection decisions made by practitioners?

E-Professionalism

Due to the contexts of both the professional and personal spheres, individuals have to maintain separate personas. The behaviours exhibited within the confines of a social network may be jovial, casual and at times informal; however, behaviours exhibited within a professional networking site may be much more formal, specialised and proper in nature. Cain and Romanelli (2009) discuss these behaviours and have termed this form of behaviour through professional networking, e-professionalism. They maintain that due to the changing nature of social networking, the professionalism paradigm needs to be expanded. They define e-professionalism as the attitudes and behaviours reflecting traditional professionalism through digital media. Similar ideas of e-professionalism are touched on by Cain, Scott and Smith (2010). Their description of e-professionalism is almost a mirror image of Cain and Romanelli's definition; however, in their research they argue that individuals should be held accountable for their information regardless of whether they are in the professional or personal sphere as this information is made public and can be used inherently for personnel recruitment and/or selection procedures. They report that more employees are utilising Social networking sites for personnel recruitment and selection but are

substantially affected by the attitudes and behaviours which are made public. Both studies highlight important questions which are being considered by many academics (Cain & Romanelli):

- Should practitioners be allowed to access and interpret personal information?
- Should information displayed for social purposes be used for judgements of professionalism?

Due to the different contexts of professional and personal spheres, it is vital to delineate them, as issues surrounding context start to plague recruitment and selection procedures. Other research on networking for recruitment and selection lent ideas to the professional versus the personal spheres. Shea and Wesley (2006) conducted research looking at how social networking affected students and their careers. What they identified was that employers were actively seeking personal information on Social networking sites and too often found information which the employees deemed as unprofessional. These attitudes of professionalism affect the employers in both positive and negative ways. The idea that professional and personal information should be made separate is a view shared by the aforementioned researchers and is a common theme occurring in the contemporary research of social and professional media for personnel recruitment and selection. Nicole (2009) suggests that professional and social networking are two very different ideas and should be confined to their relevant spheres; however, she argues that they are not mutually exclusive and need to overlap. The question from this statement that needs to be addressed is the applicability of the overlapping of professional and personal spheres in certain employment sectors, and their usage for personnel recruitment and selection contexts. Employees and

organisations in certain sectors, for example, retail might rely on the overlapping of these spheres but the applicability of these spheres overlapping in the sectors of personnel recruitment and selection may be dubious. The idea of e-professionalism is a growing trend and individuals have to be ever mindful of the etiquette surrounding professionalism in professional spheres.

Research Proposition 5:

- 5) Personnel recruitment and selection practitioners will maintain a clear difference in perception between the professional nature of LinkedIn and the social nature of Social networking sites

Self-promotion through LinkedIn

Olsen (2008) discusses the idea of LinkedIn as the self-updating business card which is more efficient and creates the ability to network successfully with like-minded professionals. LinkedIn is a space in which professionals can promote themselves and tailor their online professional personas. Van Dijck (2013) describes professional networking sites as a means of self-promotion; he observes that self-promotion through the professional networking platform has become a normalised idea and although LinkedIn is a professional networking site, individuals engage constantly in active self-promotion. As LinkedIn is a platform whereby individuals engage in professional relationship maintenance, Van Dijck suggests that professional spheres elicit self-promotion that is professional in nature.

One way in which individuals can engage in self-promotion is through the process of impression management (Papacharissi, 2009). Goffman (1973, as cited by Giddens, 2006) asserts that individuals maintain many faces and these faces

change or are adapted depending on the situational context. He highlights that individuals will engage in what he termed ‘impression management’ in order to convey an impression to others in which it is in their interests to convey. Papacharissi applies this to the online world in which individuals can constantly engage in the presentation of one’s self. As one of the most notable aspects of a professional or social networking profile, the profile picture can serve as a useful method whereby individuals can engage in impression management (Siibak, 2009). Siibak (2009) found that individuals are very strategic and conscious of what they put into the networking realm and that profile photos are carefully selected for public display through their networking sites. Self-promotion is a key tool in which individuals adapt their LinkedIn personas; this adaptation may influence recruitment and selection decisions.

Building Social Capital and Employability through LinkedIn

Social capital is an important part of the interactions through LinkedIn. Siibak (2009) discusses that sites such as LinkedIn are becoming increasingly popular as virtual platforms in which individuals can collect social capital. Social capital can be described as the size and quality of benefits which can be drawn from an individual’s network of connections and how effectively an individual can use these connections to achieve a goal (Benson, Morgan, & Filippaios, 2014). The authors continue and assert that professional ties constitute an important aspect of one’s social capital. Coughlan, Swift, Jamal and Macredie (2012) discuss similar ideas in their work but provide a different definition for social capital. In their definition they shift the emphasis from the size and quality of a network to the accumulation of resources through people’s interactions and

the resources from a network of connections. Professional networking plays an important role because creating and maintaining strong professional ties could eventuate into benefits for the individual. These benefits can be translated into three main areas according to Thackeray and Hunter (2010): creating opportunities to participate via connections, socialising around an issue and helping to shape career decisions. They argue that the use of technology is vital in building social capital, and can be especially beneficial for young adults on the cusp of engaging in their professional careers. Bonzionelos (2003) and Seibert, Kraimer and Liden (2001) identify that building social capital and interpersonal relationships are contributors to career success and that the size and density of an individual's social or professional network is a determinant of career success. These ideas just highlight the main point that professional ties constitute a large and important part of one's social capital and that maintaining these ties can result in positive benefits for individuals. LinkedIn provides a platform which enables users to exploit social capital to its fullest extent.

Benson et al. (2014) argue that networking has been linked to increasing and reinforcing social capital and that people who are better connected and experience higher social capital tend to enjoy greater advantages in their careers. Coughlan et al. (2012) are in favour of this view and go further to explain that intense use of networking sites can increase and bridge social capital, which can in turn have effects on perceived employability of the individual. These articles are underlined by the same idea which is that maintaining a presence through LinkedIn and building social capital is a method which can bolster an individual's employability. Hogan, Chamorro-Premuzic and Kaiser (2013) describe employability as an individual's ability to gain and maintain a job within a formal

organisation. Benson et al. (2014) write that the notion of employability is changing from the focus on an individual's hard skills such as numeracy, literacy and job specific skills to increased focus on an individual's soft skills which include social skills, social intelligence, work ethic and personality. Hogan et al. (2013) emphasise their model of employability which is in congruence with the changing nature of employability. They discuss that research places most emphasis on traditional aspects of employability such as cognitive ability and personality traits such as conscientiousness which correlate fairly well with job performance; however, their research suggests that aspects which are actually highly sought after are aspects such as social skills and whether the individuals are rewarding to deal with.

In response to these ideas, Hogan et al. (2013) created the RAW model. This model identifies the determinants of employability as: whether individuals are *Rewarding* to deal with, *Able* to do the job and *Willing* to work hard. This model focuses on the soft skills which individuals possess such as social intelligence, abilities and expertise, work ethic and ambition. LinkedIn as a professional networking platform creates an environment in which individuals can build social capital. It can be a mechanism in which individuals can display their hard and soft skills which can act to increase their perceived employability. These articles (Benson et al., 2014; Bozionelos, 2008; Coughlan et al., 2012; Hogan et al., 2013; Seibert et al., 2001) emphasise the importance of networking and the effects it has on an individual's employability.

Research Proposition 6:

- 6) LinkedIn may indicate determinants of an individual's level of employability to personnel recruitment and selection practitioners through the information on their LinkedIn profiles

Personnel Recruitment and Selection Biases

Kowske and Southwell (2006) further discussed the issues of the use of personal and social information in a professional context. The authors found that discrimination is the driving issue and cautioned the corporate usage of personal information within the professional context. Caers and Castelyns (2010) looked at the extent to which personnel recruitment and selection practitioners use LinkedIn and Facebook. They found that LinkedIn and Facebook were being used as an extra tool for recruiters and selectors but that Social networking sites may allow biases such as attributing personality traits (Extroversion or Conscientiousness) to any given profile photo to occur in the selection process. Early research by Borkenau, Mauer, Riemann, Spinath and Angleitner (2004) lends support to the idea that individuals can attach certain personality traits to certain types of individuals and that stereotypes related to gender and age are widely shared by individuals within their sample. Rooth (2009) describes a concept termed 'differential treatment,' which occurs during the recruitment and selection procedures. Rooth (2009) describes how personnel recruiters and selectors engage in behaviours in which they act on the expectations of a particular group, for example, obese individuals who may be unproductive due to their size. The author maintains that bias exhibited by personnel recruiters and selectors are common for obese and attractive groups of job applicants. A meta-analysis conducted by

Rooth (2009) supports ideas from Puhl and Brownell (2001), who found that in an employment setting, prejudice, discrimination and insensitivity does occur for groups such as obese individuals. That is, individual selectors attach positive or negative labels to groups, and formulate ideas around these labels.

Implicit Personality Theory

Commisso and Finkelstein (2012) relate some of these stereotypical behaviours to the Implicit Personality theory. The Implicit Personality theory describes that individuals have schemas or ideas about what traits and characteristics are distinguishable by certain looks and behaviours. The original work by Schneider (1973) on Implicit Personality theory discusses that individuals assume inferential relationships among the attributes of people. Through this mechanism, individuals make decisions in selection based on what they believe, and networking sites such as LinkedIn can fall prey to these types of issues and selection bias. As LinkedIn displays a multitude of information, aspects such as profile photos, languages spoken and personal information could be used to assume inferential relationships. Given the nature of selection biases, individuals may be less likely to admit to instances where bias and discrimination of any kind occurred, and therefore, the information received through the present study may not accurately capture the attitudes and perceptions of recruiters and selectors.

Research Proposition 7:

- 7) Individuals will maintain strong perceptions regarding certain aspects of information from a LinkedIn profile such as education and gender

Research Aim 4: Is LinkedIn being used by practitioners alongside other networking sites?

Contextual Information Professional vs Personal Spheres

Fuller (2006), as stated in Kluemper and Rosen (2009, p. 2) ask the pertinent question, “Is information found on social rather than professional networking sites, relevant to the job and are employers inappropriately using this information?” These authors highlight an area which is fuelled with much debate and that is the area of contextual information and its relationship with recruitment and selection decisions. Sprague (2007) provided some anecdotal evidence in the form of interviews with former employees after losing their jobs for displaying company information online. He concluded that as the information posted via blogs and networking sites is public, individuals maintain very little security against invasions of these domains and their employers using this information in employment decisions; he also noted that these individuals need to be careful about what is displayed online.

The differences in context of information (Personal vs Professional) is often times not delineated and may be used out of context (Cain et al., 2010). Roulin and Bangerter (2013) argue that information relating to the personal and professional spheres can be found in different networking sites. Their research showed that recruiters used LinkedIn as a resource because LinkedIn maintained more job related and professional information; and they used Facebook because it maintained personal information. They argued that information gathered from these sites can act as antecedents which can indicate Person-Job and Person-Organisation fit. Brown and Vaughn (2011) support the research by Roulin and

Bangerter and Cain et al., and they argue that context of information is one of the major flaws in using professional (and social networking) for hiring decisions. In their research they insist that context is the key in the misinterpretation of information and that a problem arises when personal information is used for professional contexts and vice versa.

Research Proposition 8:

- 8) Personnel recruiters and selectors are likely to use information from Social networking sites alongside information from LinkedIn for recruitment and selection decisions to gain a holistic view of an individual.

Active and Passive Job Seekers

LinkedIn now maintains over 300 million users (LinkedIn, 2014c), and therefore maintains substantial reach within the professional networking world. Other noted advantages of LinkedIn are global reach and the ability to target specific populations, especially in relation to LinkedIn where employers and employees alike can connect in a professional context. Alongside global reach comes the ability to target and attract active and passive job seekers. Bonson and Bednarova (2013) describe active job seekers/candidates as individuals who are actively searching for new vocational opportunities and who maintain high levels of interest. Passive job seekers can be described as individuals who are not actively searching for new vocational opportunities; however, Social networking sites are becoming increasingly common to find passive job seekers (Aamodt, 2010). This is reinforced by Gatewood et al. (2011) when they state that LinkedIn is a more efficient platform in which to recruit passive candidates.

Davison et al. (2011) describe how sites such as LinkedIn allow for targeted recruitment which allows for the attraction of both the active and the elusive passive job seeker populations. De Kay (2009) describes how passive job seekers are often well qualified and stable but generational differences could determine the reach capability of LinkedIn for these groups. Overall the research does highlight the opportunity for LinkedIn to attract passive job seekers, which can bolster the recruitment applicant pool for employers (Davison et al., 2011; DeKay, 2009; Martinez, 2000).

Person-Environment Fit

Herriot (2002) discusses how personnel recruitment and selection, and self-selection for organisations and potential employees can be seen as a social process, whereby each party compares their perceptions of one another in order to discover compatibility between the candidate and the organisation. The combination of Herriot (2002) and Kent and Taylor (1998) lend ideas to the basic premise of professional networking in the 21st century. Herriot also maintains that the ideas of person-job and person-organisation fit are factors which are influenced by the information gleaned through the social process.

As a professional networking site, LinkedIn is a tool which is being used to build relationships and provide relationship opportunities globally for professionals and practitioners. The social process as discussed by Herriot (2002) is an important idea for both social and professional networking. This process involves selecting potential employees for recruitment and selection pools, screening applicants on the basis of organisational compatibility, and ascertaining whether individuals are a suitable fit with the job and a suitable fit with the organisation. As the LinkedIn

slogan states, “Relationships Matter”, the social process through professional networking is of paramount importance as organisations attempt to generate relationships with individuals and attempt to determine whether the individual’s characteristics and beliefs align with that of the organisation.

With the increasing demand for individuals to maintain the ‘soft skills’ within an organisation setting, Person-Environment fit has become an increasingly important aspect for recruiters and selectors to consider when choosing an applicant for a role. Sackett and Walmsley (2014, p. 1) refer to these soft skills as ‘non-cognitive attributes’ or ‘social and emotional competencies’ and in their research they show that not only should an individual maintain the hard skills but individuals are now also expected to maintain the non-cognitive attributes. Jansen and Kristof-Brown (2006) describe that the Person-Environment fit is made up of multiple dimensions and that these dimensions are aspects of the working environment with which the individual comes into regular contact. Aspects of fit include (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006): Person-Job, Person-Organisation (most common in I/O research), Person-Vocation, Person-Group and the least researched, Person-Person fit. Roulin and Bangerter (2013) argue that LinkedIn provides information which can be used as antecedents for certain dimensions of fit, i.e., an individual’s skills and abilities might display that they maintain the ability to perform a specific job role, thus displaying the notion that the individual may maintain a good person-job fit.

Herriot (2002) maintains that personnel recruitment and selection could be seen as a social process in which each party (potential employee and potential employer) compare information and perceptions of one another to discover compatibility. She argues that dimensions of fit such as Person-Job fit and Person-Organisation

fit are influenced during this exchange and based on perceived compatibility. Individuals will either continue with the process or self-select themselves out of the recruitment and/or selection process. Dineen, Ash and Noe (2002) discuss concepts of Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) based on the work by Schneider (1987) which seeks to frame the concept of individuals trying to find aspects of fit with an organisation. ASA is a theoretical framework used to describe the notion that individuals attempt to seek employment with organisations that exhibit characteristics which closely resemble their own. Their research showed that web based sources of recruitment can display levels of Person-Organisation fit and could influence the aspects of the personnel recruitment and selection process. A web based platform such as LinkedIn can be a resource for personnel recruiters and selectors in assessing potential levels of fit and, as the research by Roulin and Bangerter (2013) indicates, information from LinkedIn can act as antecedents for overall fit or particular aspects of the fit dimensions. The ASA theory can be used as a guide to understanding the need for individuals to find degrees of fit with an organisation and the social process as discussed by Herriot (2002).

Research Propositions 9 and 10:

- 9) Individuals are more inclined to view information from socially orientated networking sites as information relevant to make assessments for Person-Organisation fit
- 10) Individuals are more inclined to view information from LinkedIn as information relevant to make assessments for Person-Job fit

Research Aim 5: What are some of the perceived benefits and limitations of LinkedIn which are understood by recruitment and/ or selection practitioners?

Self-reported Data

Through LinkedIn, impression management and the expression of one's self is a core aspect; however, the information which is present on LinkedIn can be scrutinised due to the nature of self-report. Buffardi and Campbell (2008) discuss how networking sites can at times be seen as a superficial ground in which individuals use the forums for self-enhancement and to over inflate one's personality and abilities. Decker (2006) mentions the idea of the online self-reported persona and how individuals can distort data to enhance themselves. As LinkedIn is a professional networking site, issues of self-report may be relevant as an over inflation of one's self may lead to possible vocational opportunities in the future. Social desirability may be a contributing factor, which Miller (2012) identifies, that individuals may distort information due to social desirability, i.e., provide inflated information such as abilities related to a certain field which the individual may not be entirely competent at. This could be done because these skills may be the benchmark for a certain job role and can be seen as the norm to gain entry into the field. Nevertheless, Narisi (2009) provides a pertinent opinion related to information through LinkedIn. Narisi (2009) suggests that individuals may be more truthful in their profiles on LinkedIn as the individuals who are connections may be of a more professional nature and thus the consequence of lying and being found untruthful may be detrimental to an individual's career.

Research Proposition 11:

- 11) Recruitment and selection practitioners are aware of the self-reported nature of the information available on LinkedIn and the implications of self-report information

Summary of the Research Propositions:

- 1) Personnel recruitment and/or selection practitioners will use and perceive LinkedIn as a resource which can be utilized for personnel recruitment and selection purposes
- 2) LinkedIn will be used more for the purposes of personnel recruitment as compared to the purposes of personnel selection as is the trend in the research (Archambault & Grudin, 2012; Shea & Wesley, 2006)
- 3) Personnel recruitment and/ or selection practitioners are likely to report that their respective organisations maintain little to no policy regarding the use of professional networking for personnel recruitment and/or selection decisions.
- 4) Certain features of LinkedIn such as the Profile and Jobs & Hiring features will be used more often by practitioners for recruitment and/ or selection
- 5) Personnel recruitment and selection practitioners will maintain a clear difference in perception between the professional nature of LinkedIn and the social nature of Social networking sites
- 6) LinkedIn may indicate determinants of an individual's level of employability to personnel recruitment and selection practitioners through the information on their LinkedIn profiles
- 7) Individuals will maintain strong perceptions regarding certain aspects of information from a LinkedIn profile such as education and gender

- 8) Personnel recruiters and selectors are likely to use information from Social networking sites alongside information from LinkedIn for recruitment and selection decisions to gain an holistic view of an individual
- 9) Individuals are more inclined to view information from socially orientated networking sites as information relevant to make assessments for Person-Organisation fit
- 10) Individuals are more inclined to view information from LinkedIn as information relevant to make assessments for Person-Job fit
- 11) Recruitment and selection practitioners are aware of the self-reported nature of the information available on LinkedIn and the implications of self-report data

Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the current literature and with the aforementioned research I can adequately identify that the professional networking site LinkedIn has increased dramatically in usage and has become the most popular professional networking site. Surveys by Jobvite and the Nielson Company (Jobvite, 2014; Nielsen, 2012) show that LinkedIn is a dominant force in the networking world and is becoming a frequent resource for employers and employees alike due to its expanding membership and professional nature. This chapter has highlighted the research aims and the research propositions and has provided evidence for the relevance of the research for recruitment and selection within New Zealand. The following chapter will detail participants and eligibility criteria for the research, the procedure of the study, how the questionnaire was constructed and some of the analysis techniques used to examine the data.

CHAPTER TWO: METHOD

Participants

Participants in this research were performing the job roles of personnel recruitment and/ or selection within the organisations they represented, and were either employed in an organisation within New Zealand or were self-employed. They were invited to complete the questionnaire whether or not they used LinkedIn for personnel recruitment and/or selection.

Surveys were made available to four organisations and four New Zealand universities. The four organisations included professional membership organisations, and a privately held interest group for individuals within private and public sector roles. Surveys were also made available through the Facebook alumni pages of four New Zealand universities. The membership numbers of these groups are unknown. Comments on the percentage of response rates cannot be made as the total number of individuals presented with research participation opportunities is unknown.

Qualtrics (2014) identifies that the number of surveys completed is the number of surveys submitted by respondents who have reached the final page and have been screened out of the questionnaire; however, the requirement for this research was that participants complete the first question, “Do you use the professional networking site LinkedIn as a resource for recruitment and/or selection for the organisation you represent?” (Refer to Appendix B for Research Questionnaire) From 136 individuals that accessed the survey and started the questionnaire, five cases (3.7%) were removed as they did not complete the first question and were

subsequently removed from data analysis. The final sample comprised 131 participants with an overall completion rate of 96.3%.

The final sample comprised 83 females (63.4%) and 25 males (19.1%). The most common age bracket was between 31-40 years of age (26%) followed by 20-30 years of age (21.4%). A bachelor's degree was the most frequent highest qualification (N=45, 34.4%) followed by a bachelor's degree with honours or post graduate diploma (N=19, 14.5%). The most commonly represented region was Auckland (N=38, 29%) followed by Wellington (N=21, 16%). The majority of the sample (N=68, 51.9%) were employees in organisations which employed 100+ FTEs (Full time employees) which are considered large organisations in New Zealand. This was followed by 6-49 FTEs (N=24, 18.3%) which are considered small organisations in New Zealand. The sample of participants represented roughly 46 industrial sectors in New Zealand (N=104). The most represented industrial sector was general recruitment (N=14, 13.5%), followed by local government (N=8, 7.7%) and education (N=6, 5.8%).

Procedure

Ethical approval was given by the Research and Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology, University of Waikato in May 2014. The questionnaire was administered online, and therefore consent was implied by the completion of the questionnaire. Consent was also stated in the survey preamble prior to the questionnaire being completed. Other information present in the survey preamble was participants' rights, eligibility criteria and research information. The questionnaire was created and administered using the Qualtrics software and was accessible through the research website.

The four organisations were contacted with a letter and research flyer which stated the purpose and research goals, and requesting support for the research (Refer to Appendix C for letter to participating organisations). This support required the organisations to distribute or make public the research questionnaire to their members. All four indicated their support and subsequently distributed the research questionnaire through monthly newsletters, research emails and public notice boards. The questionnaire was available for four weeks but due to the low overall response rate, this was extended to eight weeks before closing. Four of the major universities in New Zealand were contacted and invited to support the research (Refer to Appendix C). This support required the alumni groups to distribute the survey information and survey website link to its members. Four universities indicated their support and allowed the advertising of the research through their respective Facebook alumni pages. In the posts survey information was presented and a link to the research website was given. Research participation was possible for two months before the questionnaire was closed.

Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling can be described as a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher purposefully selects a group of participants based on their attributes or qualities (Creswell, 2003). For the current research, purposive sampling was used to gain a representative sample of personnel recruitment and selection practitioners within New Zealand; hence the sample was gathered through professional bodies and alumni groups of the major universities in New Zealand via Facebook and other related sites (Creswell, 2003). Larger organisations which have dedicated departments for recruitment and selection

may have had specific individuals working within those roles. Smaller organisations may not have had dedicated departments for recruitment and selection but may have had individuals who were performing these roles within the organisations in addition to their contractual job roles.

Snowball sampling

As the sample required was a purposive sample, it was useful to use snowball sampling in order to find eligible participants because snowball sampling allowed individuals to recommend or forward the research information on to individuals they believe might have been eligible (Miles & Huberman, 1994). There are issues surrounding snowball sampling such as representativeness of the sample, i.e., a participant based in Auckland, New Zealand might maintain most of their contacts in the Auckland region and therefore a large proportion of the sample may snowball within this region. The snowball sampling intention was stated when the research information was distributed and it was unclear as to how many participants supported this intention.

Piloting the Questionnaire

The self-constructed questionnaire was reviewed for face validity and piloted by a sample of students (N=6) of the University of Waikato who provided feedback on questionnaire content, navigability, usability and overall questionnaire structure. The students were enrolled within a Master of Applied Psychology with specialisations in Organisational Psychology, and all maintained a suitable amount of experience required to understand and complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered in paper and pencil format, and upon completion, the time taken to complete the survey was recorded and issues

resulting from the questionnaire were recorded. Minor formatting issues on certain sections existed as well as structure and correct assignment of skip logic which enabled the questionnaire to send respondents to a future point in the survey based on certain conditions, e.g., if a participant did not use LinkedIn, skip logic would send the respondent to Section five, skipping Sections one through four altogether. These were corrected and transferred into the revised version. The final questionnaire (Refer to Appendix B) consisted of 104 questions, including six demographic questions and the rest split among the five main sections. The questionnaire was input into the Qualtrics questionnaire programme and was administered to the same group of students (N=6). No issues existed and this version was then used for data collection. The final revised questionnaire took between 5-20 minutes for completion and could be accessed through the research website.

Measures

The previously mentioned questionnaire was used in the current research and the large variation in completion time, as stated above, was due to the number of sections a participant may have been eligible to answer, e.g., a selection practitioner would complete the selection section but would not have completed the recruitment section.

The questionnaire was created in five sections namely: The application of LinkedIn, Recruitment, Selection, Don't use LinkedIn and General information. The first section (questions 1-9) qualified whether participants used LinkedIn and asked participants questions surrounding LinkedIn policy in their organisations and frequency of usage. The response scales for this section included dichotomous

scales 'Yes' and 'No', and a multi-option format. A sample item is "Do you use the professional networking site LinkedIn as a resource for recruitment and/ or selection for the organisation you represent?" and "How frequently do you use LinkedIn".

The second section asked questions relating to the practice of recruitment (questions 10-49). A qualifier was displayed and participants identified whether they performed recruitment in their roles. If they chose 'yes' which displayed they perform recruitment roles, they were presented the recruitment section questions. If they did not perform recruitment roles then skip logic was programmed so that participants were not subject to the non-applicable questions. The response scales for this section included a 5-point Likert scale 'completely disagree' (1) 'completely agree' (5), dichotomous scale 'Yes' or 'No', five degree rank order scale 'not important'(1) to 'very important' (5) and an open-ended response section. A sample item includes "Recommendations and endorsements in LinkedIn profiles of individuals can display whether they are rewarding to deal with."

The third section asked questions relating to the practice of selection (questions 50-92). A qualifier was displayed and if selection roles were performed, they were presented with the selection section questions. If they did not perform selection roles, skip logic was programmed to avoid non-applicable questions. The response scales for this section included a 5-point Likert scale 'completely disagree' (1) to 'completely agree'(5) , a dichotomous scale 'yes' and 'no', five degree rank order scale 'not important' (1) to 'very important' (5), an open-ended response section and a multi-option format. A sample item is "Social networking sites such as

Facebook can provide implicit information about candidates which cannot be acquired through formal processes such as interviews”.

The fourth section asked questions relating to participants who did not use LinkedIn (questions 93-97). If in section one a participant indicated that they did not use LinkedIn, skip logic was programmed to avoid sections one, two and three and bring the participant to section four. The response format in this section included a multi-option format. A sample item includes, “What alternatives do you use for recruitment and/or selection?”

The fifth section asked general questions and served as demographic information. These questions included a gender identifier, highest qualification, industry of employment, organisational size and the area of New Zealand participants perform their roles as recruitment and/or selection practitioners. Participants who did and did not use LinkedIn were asked to complete questions in section five. This response formats for this section included a dichotomous format ‘male’ or ‘female’ and a multi-option format. A sample item is, “What industry are you currently employed in?”

After the completion of the questionnaire, participants could contact the researcher via email and request a summary of the results.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis (frequencies) of the data were conducted to understand the data collected through the questionnaire. Descriptive analysis allowed quantitative description of the data and allowed me to provide retorts to the research aims and research propositions. For questions where participants responded as ‘other’ which was followed by an open-ended response (i.e., How

frequently do you use LinkedIn: Other (Please state), the responses were categorised using the summing and grouping method used by Berry (2009). This method involves summing the responses made and then grouping similar responses. Berry (2009) created categories which were as follows: categories with three or more responses created a new category, and categories with two or less responses were grouped under the category of 'other'. Questions categorised using the summing and grouping method included: 82, 101.

For the more complex open-ended questions, an analysis of themes was conducted. Thematic analysis enabled me to identify and report major themes in answers provided through the open-ended questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Following the guidelines highlighted by Braun and Clarke, the questions analysed using themes analysis were: 8, 49, 92-97, 104. The results from the above statistical analyses are explored and reported in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

The results of the study are categorised by the five research aims and the eleven research propositions. Descriptive analyses are provided for the relevant questions as well as an analysis of themes which was conducted for the open-ended questions. The results of the analysis have been used to indicate the level of support for the research propositions and to explore the research questions. Selected research propositions have been analysed in terms of recruitment responses as well as selection responses; when reporting the results either recruitment or selection was illustrated and made explicit.

Research Aim One

The first research aim investigated how common the usage of LinkedIn is for personnel recruitment and/or selection practitioners within New Zealand. The results showed that 66.4% (N=87) did use LinkedIn for recruitment and/or selection, with 33.6% (N=44) indicating that they did not use LinkedIn. An analysis of themes indicated that LinkedIn is commonly used for recruitment as and when it is needed. *“More ad hoc...as vacancies tend to come in waves.”* Propositions one, two and three were used to investigate research aim one.

Proposition One

Research proposition one investigated whether or not participants perceived LinkedIn as a resource for personnel recruitment and selection. The results showed that 47.6% of the participants completely agreed that LinkedIn could be used as a recruitment tool, with 96.4% indicating that LinkedIn provides important information about candidates which could be used for the recruitment

process. When looking at verifiability and credibility of information available through LinkedIn for recruitment purposes, 89.1% of participants indicated that they used other methods to verify the information provided on LinkedIn; however, only 45.5% partially indicated that they perceived the information available on LinkedIn to be accurate. The majority of participants (45.5%) indicated that they felt individuals would convey the truth through their LinkedIn profiles with 50.9% and 58.2% indicated that the skill list was accurate at communicating an individual's skills and that the skill endorsements could be seen as credible. Overall, 67.3% partially and completely disagreed that skill endorsements are accurate indicators that individuals can perform specific skills.

For selection the results show that 93% indicated that they partially and completely agreed that they used LinkedIn to verify information received through an individual's CV and an individual's CV to verify information available on LinkedIn, with 74.2% indicating that they use LinkedIn to verify information received through structured and unstructured interviews. Only 38.7% partially agreed that they perceive information on LinkedIn to be accurate, with 41.9% indicating that they partially agreed that individuals will convey the truth through their LinkedIn profiles. Participants indicated that they partially disagreed (33.3%) that the skill list is accurate at communicating an individual's skills with the majority (51.6% & 54.8%) indicating that they completely disagreed that skill endorsements can be assumed as credible and that the skill list was an accurate indicator that an individual can perform specific skills. Overall, 96.7% indicated that they felt that many benefits existed for selection practitioners who used LinkedIn and 92.8% indicated that the information available on LinkedIn can be used as a resource for personnel selection. The results indicate that LinkedIn was

perceived as a resource which could be utilized for personnel recruitment and selection which lends support for proposition one.

Proposition Two

Research proposition two investigated whether LinkedIn was used more frequently for the purposes of recruitment or selection. The results show that 78.16% of the sample (participants who used LinkedIn) indicated that they used LinkedIn for recruitment purposes and 39.1% used LinkedIn for the purposes of selection. The results also report that 58.8% of participants who used LinkedIn for recruitment actively recruited candidates through the LinkedIn Talent Solutions and that 72.1% of participants actively screened individuals in the applicant pool using the information present on their LinkedIn profiles.

Overall, the results indicate that LinkedIn is used more for recruitment purposes as compared to the purposes of selection, which shows strong support for proposition two.

Proposition Three

Proposition three investigated organisational policy regarding usage of LinkedIn. The majority of participants who used LinkedIn (71.1%) indicated that their organisations did not maintain any policy regarding LinkedIn usage and 28.9% indicating that they did maintain a policy. Of the 71.1% that indicated no policy was present, 51.7% reported that they did not envision any policies being created in the near future; 48% percent of participants reported that they did envision a policy being created in the near future and 96.4% indicated that policy changes would be in favour of LinkedIn usage. The majority of the sample

indicated that no policy existed for LinkedIn use, which supports proposition three.

Overall the results of the research provide support that LinkedIn was being used as a resource for personnel recruitment and selection. With 75.6% actively advertising jobs through LinkedIn, 45.1% using LinkedIn at least once a day and 36.6% using LinkedIn at least once a week, the results do indicate that LinkedIn usage is common for personnel recruiters and selectors and that LinkedIn is more frequently used for recruitment. Lastly, the majority of the organisations who were represented through this research do not maintain any policy regarding LinkedIn use.

Research Aim Two

Research aim two investigated which features of LinkedIn were being used as a resource for recruitment and selection practitioners during the hiring of an individual. The results are reported by features of LinkedIn used for recruitment and selection. Proposition four was used to investigate research aim two.

Recruitment:

Profile (Defined in “Features of LinkedIn”, p. 25)

The results indicate that 95.3% of participants (who used LinkedIn for recruitment) partially and completely agreed that they took an interest in an individual’s profile.

For background information on the profiles, 86% of participants partially and completely agreed that background information was used to add to their

knowledge of a candidate. The majority of participants (82.9%) indicated that they used information on education levels to add to their knowledge of a candidate's educational attainment and qualifications. Past experience was the most used feature of an individual's profile with 95.3% indicating they completely or partially agreed to using this feature to add to their knowledge of a candidate's level of career experience. Results also show that 50% of participants used additional information such as languages spoken and interests. Recommendations and skill endorsements display the most variable usage with 34.9% partially agreeing, 19% maintaining neutrality, 17.5% partially disagreeing and 19% completely disagreeing to using this feature.

Network (Defined in "Features of LinkedIn", p. 26)

Results show that 53.1% of participants checked a candidate's network of connections, with 47.5% indicating that they partially and completely disagreed with checking the companies which individuals follow. Lastly, 51.6% partially and completely agreed with checking which groups candidates are members of or affiliated with.

Interactional services (Defined in "Features of LinkedIn", p. 27)

A large proportion of participants (78.1%) indicated that they completely and partially agreed to using the messaging service to get into contact with individuals, with 51.6% indicating that they partially and completely agreed to posting and adding comments within groups to advertise the organisation they represent.

LinkedIn Jobs and Talent solutions (Defined in "Features of LinkedIn", p. 28)

Results indicate that 77.7% of participants completely and partially agree that they use LinkedIn jobs to post positions which are available in their organisations, with 28.1% of participants indicating they partially agree to using forums and discussions to advertise job openings within the organisations they represent. Participants (29.7%) also indicated that they partially agreed to using the search engine to view similar positions available in other organisations. Results also indicated that 28.1% of participants partially agreed with using Talent Solutions to find appropriate applicants for positions within the organisations they represented.

The full analysis of the results for proposition five can be found in Appendix E.

Selection:

Profile (Defined in “Features of LinkedIn”, p. 25)

Of the participants who used LinkedIn for selection purposes, 62.5% completely agreed and 37.5% partially agreed to taking an interest in an individual’s profile.

Participants (100%) either partially or completely agreed to using background information, 90.4% either partially or completely agreed to using educational information and 96.7% indicated that they partially or completely agreed to using candidate’s past experience information to add to their knowledge of a candidate’s career experience. Lastly, 46.9% indicated they either partially or completely disagreed with using recommendations and skill endorsements.

Network (Defined in “Features of LinkedIn”, p. 26)

The results show that 28.1% of participants partially agreed to checking a candidate’s network of connections. Results also show that 31.3% of participants partially agreed to checking which companies candidates follow. Lastly, 43.8% participants partially agreed with checking which groups candidates are members of or affiliated with.

Interactional services (Defined in “Features of LinkedIn”, p. 27)

Results show that the majority of participants (68.7%) indicated that they use the messaging service to get into contact with candidates.

The full analysis of the results for proposition five can be found in Appendix E.

Proposition Four

Proposition four proposed that certain features of LinkedIn such as Jobs & Hiring and the Profile would be used more often by recruitment and selection practitioners. Results indicated support for proposition four because the profile and jobs, and hiring were the most utilized features, with the sub-features of past experience being used more in the profile, and LinkedIn jobs being used the most for jobs and hiring. Results indicated that for personnel selection, the profile was utilized the most by selection practitioners with the sub-feature background information being used the most. The results indicate the profile to be the most used feature of a LinkedIn account during the process of both personnel recruitment and selection, thus providing support for proposition four.

Research Aim Three

Research aim three investigated how the features present in research aim two affected or influenced the recruitment and selection decisions made by practitioners. Research propositions five, six and seven were used to assist in investigating research aim three.

Proposition Five

Proposition five proposed that recruitment and selection practitioners maintain clear differences in perception between the professional nature of LinkedIn and the social nature of Social networking sites. The results show that for recruitment, 96.4% of participants indicated that LinkedIn provides important professional information about candidates and this is similar for selection, where 100% of participants indicated that LinkedIn provides professional information.

Comments on social networking for recruitment cannot be made as questions relating to social networking were only present in the selection section. The results showed that 55.6% of participants indicated that other networking sites such as Facebook provide important information about candidates. A substantial percentage of participants (61.1%) indicated that Social networking sites such as Facebook can provide implicit information about candidates. Overall, results indicate that LinkedIn provides professional information about candidates for recruitment and selection, and provides partial support that Social networking sites provide important personal information about candidates for the selection process. The results indicate partial support for proposition five.

Proposition Six

Proposition six proposed that LinkedIn may indicate an individual's level of employability through the information present on their accounts; employability was defined by Hogan et al. (2013) as an individual's ability to gain and maintain formal employment and was characterised by the R.A.W model.

Recruitment:

The results indicate that 14.5% of participants who used LinkedIn for recruitment thought LinkedIn was a good indicator of an individual's cognitive ability; 29.1% of participants indicated that previous experience and skill endorsements of an individual can signal whether they are able to do the job.

Selection:

Of the participants who used LinkedIn for selection, 38.7% partially disagreed that LinkedIn profiles were good indicators of an individual's cognitive ability; 32% of participants partially agreed that previous experience and skill endorsements displayed whether candidates were able to do the job.

The results show diverse perspectives on LinkedIn information displaying employability; however, the majority of the responses lie in the neutral, partially disagree and completely disagree categories. This would indicate that LinkedIn may not indicate an individual's level of employability as proposed. Therefore proposition six is not supported.

The full analysis of the results for proposition six can be found in Appendix E.

Proposition Seven

Proposition seven stated that participants will maintain strong perceptions regarding certain aspects of information available on a LinkedIn account. The results are categorised by recruitment and selection preferences.

Recruitment:

The results indicated that the majority of participants deemed the aspects of an individual's profile as unimportant, with perceived sexual orientation being the least important (89.9%). For general and additional information, 13.3% found education provider(s) very important with 76.7% indicating an individual's name to be not important. For professional information, 73.3% found previous experience to be very important, with 33.3% having indicated that qualification(s) to be very important; also 40% found skill endorsement(s) not important with 28.3% indicating that professional recommendation(s) are slightly important. For networks, 41.7% indicated that companies followed was slightly important with 21.7% displaying that connections/contacts were fairly important.

Selection:

The results for selection maintained a high level of similarity with the recruitment section. Previous experience (65.6%) and qualification(s) (34.4%) were found to be very important; 34.4% of participants indicated background information to be very important. The least important preferences were perceived sexual orientation (93.8%) and gender (81.3%).

The full analysis of the results for proposition seven can be found in Appendix E.

The results show that for both recruitment and selection practices the responses appears to be fairly similar. Also indicated was that professional information was the most important aspect with the majority of the participants indicating previous experience and qualifications to be very important. The aspects which were indicated as the least important were profile pictures with special emphasis on perceived sexual orientation and gender. Based on the results it is clear that participants did maintain strong perceptions regarding certain aspects and therefore proposition seven was supported.

Overall the results indicate that LinkedIn displayed professional information about candidates; however, it partially supported the premise that Social networking sites provide additional information. Results also indicate that LinkedIn may not display an individual's level of employability and that participants maintained the strongest perceptions of importance regarding professional information on LinkedIn.

Research Aim Four

Research aim four investigated whether or not selection practitioners were using LinkedIn alongside other networking sites to make selection decisions.

Research propositions eight, nine and ten were used to explore research aim four.

Proposition Eight

Proposition eight stated that personnel selectors were likely to use information from socially orientated networking sites alongside LinkedIn information for selection decisions.

The results show that 54.8% of the participants that use LinkedIn for selection purposes indicated that they may use other Social networking sites to gain information about a candidate. Facebook appeared to be the most commonly used (88.2%), followed by Twitter (23.5%) and 23.5% of participants also used Google Plus. Results showed that 72.2% of participants who indicated using other networking sites value using the combination of Social networking sites alongside professional networking sites as a selection resource. Overall, 22.2% of participants felt that by using Social networking sites they could gain an all-round perspective of a candidate. The results show that over half of participants who perform personnel selection roles use Social networking sites to gain more information; therefore, proposition eight is supported.

Propositions Nine and Ten

Proposition nine stated that participants were more likely to view information from socially orientated sites as information relevant to making assessments of person-organisation fit, and proposition ten stated that individuals are more likely to view information from LinkedIn as information relevant to make assessments of person-job fit. The results from proposition nine analysis show that 27.8% of the participants who responded to the question indicated that Social networking sites display information which could show whether candidates maintain similar ideals to the organisation. For proposition ten, the results show that 70% of the participants who perform selection roles indicated that LinkedIn can determine whether candidates are suitable employees for the job. Overall, the results illustrate that information from socially orientated networking sites may not be relevant to make assessments of person-organisation fit; this does not

support proposition nine. The results of proposition ten show that information from LinkedIn may be relevant to make assessments of person-job fit and therefore proposition ten is supported.

The aforementioned results show that LinkedIn is being used alongside other networking sites during the selection process and LinkedIn could be used to make assessments of person-job fit.

Research Aim Five

Research aim five investigated some of the perceived benefits and limitations of LinkedIn while research proposition eleven was used to explore research aim five.

Proposition Eleven

Proposition eleven stated that recruitment and selection practitioners were aware of the self-reported nature of information available on LinkedIn and its implications. This was examined for both recruitment and selection practices.

Recruitment:

Results showed that a large proportion of participants who used LinkedIn for recruitment (87.3%) completely agreed that they understand that LinkedIn maintains self-reported information, with 47.3% of participants completely agreeing that LinkedIn information may lack credibility due to the self-reported nature of the information. An analysis of themes indicate that there are four important themes in relation to LinkedIn and its limitations for recruitment as evidenced by participant responses received through the open-ended questions:

Accuracy of information

Many participants felt that the self-report nature of the information decreased the accuracy of the information. The majority of the information on LinkedIn is user generated and a common theme indicated through the open-ended responses was the lack of information accuracy. *“LinkedIn relies on self-reported data and respondents are likely to display themselves in a positive light...”* Common perceptions held by participants seemed to centre on the self-inflatory nature of self-reported data. *“It may create a false picture if someone was that way inclined.”*

Lack of credibility

Lack of credibility for skill endorsements and recommendations was a common and important theme. Skill endorsements and recommendations are often performed by individuals with very little or no knowledge of the individual’s ability to perform the skills or maintain the competencies in question. This view is evidenced by the following abstract from a participant’s response: *“Lack of credibility around skill endorsements, it prompts you to endorse people’s skills whom you may never have actually work with...”*

Inappropriate job roles

Many participants felt that LinkedIn may not have been relevant for most roles within their organisation or industry or that their industry may not have been represented within the LinkedIn population of New Zealand. *“Not all industries are represented on LinkedIn... Not all prospective candidates are on LinkedIn...”*

Many participants felt that LinkedIn may not have been appropriate for semi-

skilled, part time or blue collar roles and that traditional recruitment methods such as print media may be more effective.

Profile aspects

Inconsistencies within the profile was the final theme for limitations of LinkedIn for recruitment. This involved incomplete profiles which were frequently characterised by missing information in key aspects as evidenced from the responses to the open-ended questions. *“Profiles are often incomplete or missing key information that would assist with recruitment...”* Other aspects of the profile included profiles which were not up to date which could have included outdated employment history and old photographs. Participants indicated that they had no way of telling whether or not an individual’s profile was up to date. *“Candidates profiles not always be up to date...decreased accuracy of information due to lack of indication of last update”*

Selection:

The results from the selection section show similar frequencies to the recruitment section with a large proportion having indicated they completely agreed to understanding that LinkedIn maintains self-reported information, with over 51.6% of selection participants indicating they completely agree that the information on LinkedIn can lack credibility due to its self-report nature. An analysis of themes conducted on the limitations of LinkedIn for selection revealed three common themes as evidenced from the participant responses to the open-ended questions:

Accuracy of information

The self-reported nature of the information was the most common theme among the selection participants which was congruent with the themes analysis for the recruitment limitations. A common perception among the participant responses was that self-reported information on LinkedIn was unverified and therefore was perceived as a limitation. *“Self-reported information may not be fully accurate...people lie and self-reporting reduces perceived credibility.”* Many participants reported that exaggeration and dishonesty are commonplace and undermine an individual’s information.

Profile aspects

Many participants found that perceived inconsistencies in profile information was an important issue. This involved incomplete information available on an individual’s profiles as well as profiles not being updated on a regular basis. *“Incomplete and irrelevant information...Individual profiles may not be up to date.”*

Lack of credibility

Lack of credibility for skill endorsements and recommendations was another common theme among the selection participants. The analysis highlighted that skill endorsements and recommendations were often performed by individuals who did not possess the appropriate knowledge of the individual, or by close friends and family members. *“Endorsements are not necessarily reliable or from suitably qualified people (e.g. friends and family).”* Another aspect evident in the theme analysis was the idea of ‘endorsement reciprocity’, where an individual endorses another individual in response to an endorsement received

from that individual. *“Reciprocal nature of endorsements and recommendations means that these may not be genuine, but only given as a way of getting back.”*

The results stated above provide support that recruitment and selection practitioners are aware of self-reported information available on LinkedIn and the implications of this type of information; therefore, proposition eleven was supported. Additionally important themes exist regarding the limitations of LinkedIn for both recruitment and selection. Congruence of limitations is evident between recruitment and selection practices as seen above.

Do not use LinkedIn

Forty-four participants (33.6% of the total sample, N=131) indicated that they do not use LinkedIn and were therefore presented with the questions of section four ‘Don’t use LinkedIn.’

Of these participants 61.3% indicated that they prefer to use traditional recruitment and selection methods, with 31% indicating they do not use LinkedIn as they are unfamiliar with it. An analysis of themes highlighted a few common themes which explain why participants do not use LinkedIn in. The majority of the participants indicated that LinkedIn may not be relevant due to job roles not being appropriate for a professional networking site. This may include semi-skilled employees and part time roles as well as other blue collar roles. *“Apart from top level management, many of our candidates do not use LinkedIn...LinkedIn would not be appropriate for many of our vacancies.”*

Results indicated that alternative methods used for recruitment and selection included word of mouth (84.1%), electronic job boards (84.1%) and internal recruitment (91%). An analysis of themes indicated that a common alternative for

recruitment and selection was recruitment and consulting agencies, print advertising and professional industry websites.

When asked if their organisations maintain any future ambitions of using LinkedIn, 70.5% indicated that there are possibilities of adding LinkedIn to the recruitment and/or selection procedures. The most common limitation indicated by participants was that the applicants needed for the employment sector may not be available on LinkedIn (45.5%), which is congruent with the results of the themes analysis where the common theme was that LinkedIn may not be relevant for many roles within a particular industry. The accuracy of LinkedIn information was another limitation, with participants indicating that it may not be accurate to use (34.1%).

The final question asked whether participants used any other form of social or professional networking site for recruitment and/ or selection. 34.1% indicated yes and the results of the themes analysis indicated that the usage of Facebook was most common, followed by professional industry related websites and Seek.

Summary

The results indicated that a large proportion of the sample were using LinkedIn for personnel recruitment and selection. Both personnel recruiters and selectors indicated that LinkedIn was perceived as a resource and that LinkedIn was being used more frequently for the purposes of personnel recruitment. Results also indicated that many organisations did not maintain any formal policy for LinkedIn usage but many did envision policies being created in the near future advocating for increased LinkedIn use for recruitment and selection.

Features of LinkedIn which were more frequently used by recruiters and selectors were profile and jobs, and hiring with the professional information indicated as the most influencing aspect of LinkedIn for personnel recruitment and selection practitioners. The results indicated that LinkedIn may not display all aspects of an individual's employability; however, LinkedIn is perceived as a platform which provides important professional information about possible candidates.

The results provided evidence that personnel selectors are using other Social networking sites alongside LinkedIn to gain other information about candidates. Facebook was indicated as the most commonly used followed by Twitter and Google Plus. Results indicated that information from socially orientated networks may not be relevant to make assessments of person-organisation fit; however, information from professional networking sites such as LinkedIn could be used to make assessments of person-job fit.

The results provided evidence that practitioners are aware of the self-reported information available on LinkedIn and their implications. Themes analysis identified accuracy of information, profiles aspects and lack of credibility to be the most common limitations of using LinkedIn for both personnel recruitment and selection.

The results indicated that for the individuals who did not use LinkedIn, preferring to use traditional recruitment methods was most common. Word of mouth was the most commonly used alternative to LinkedIn and a large majority indicated that possibilities exist for adding LinkedIn to the personnel recruitment and selection procedures. A commonly evidenced limitation for LinkedIn was that it may not be appropriate for the types of roles in the employment sector.

These results and their implications will be discussed further in the next chapter alongside the strengths and limitations of the research, directions for future research and possible implications for personnel recruitment and selectors.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

This study explored the use of the professional networking site LinkedIn and its use in personnel recruitment and selection and it was categorised into five research aims.

A dearth of research exists for exploring the features of LinkedIn that are being used by recruiters and selectors; therefore, the research also sought to explore which specific features were being used frequently. Previous research (Caers & Castelyns, 2010; Siibak, 2009) has tended to focus on profile pictures and their effects on recruitment and selection procedures. The current research sought to further investigate how the features of LinkedIn influence recruitment and selection decisions. Previously when LinkedIn has been examined (Bonson & Bednarova, 2013; Davison et al., 2011), it has been categorised as a social networking site. In the current research I provided a clearer definition for the type of platform LinkedIn operates under, as a professional networking site which elicits professional behaviour and conduct from its members and I encourage future research to maintain the delineation between social and professional networking.

Due to the accessibility of information through the networking realms, context of information has become an issue when making recruitment or selection decisions (Cain et al., 2010). The current research explored whether recruitment and selection practitioners maintained a clear difference in perception between the professional nature of LinkedIn and the social nature of Social networking sites such as Facebook. The research also explored perceptions of certain aspects of a

LinkedIn profile which are made explicit through LinkedIn such as gender, age and physical attractiveness.

Prior research (Caers & Castelyns, 2010; Kluemper, Rosen, & Mossholder, 2012) attempted to determine whether differing perceptions of information available on LinkedIn influence recruitment and selection decisions. With the freely available nature of personal and professional information through networking sites, this research explored whether recruiters and selectors were using LinkedIn alongside other networking sites when making selection decisions. In a study by the Society for Human Resource Management (2008) it was shown that recruiters and selectors have reported using other Social networking sites as well as LinkedIn for recruitment and selection decisions. The current research sought to determine whether participants were gleaning different types of information from different networking sites. As LinkedIn maintains user generated information, the aspect of self-report was also explored, alongside perceived limitations and benefits of LinkedIn.

Overall, results of the survey confirmed that LinkedIn was being used for both recruitment and selection by practitioners in New Zealand. Additionally, LinkedIn was being used more for recruitment than selection. Within this chapter the main findings of the present study are examined and discussed, and the implications of the study identified followed by a discussion of its strengths and limitations as well as possible areas for future research.

Main findings

The findings are interpreted and discussed for each research question and the subsequent research propositions.

Research Aim One

Research aim one sought to identify how common LinkedIn use was for recruitment and selection practitioners and was investigated by three research propositions.

Proposition One

Proposition one suggested that practitioners would perceive LinkedIn as a resource which could be utilised for personnel recruitment and selection purposes. The results showed that LinkedIn was being used as a resource for both recruitment and selection, with the majority of participants reporting that LinkedIn provides important information about candidates regarding recruitment and selection purposes. The results provided support for proposition one, which indicates that LinkedIn is perceived as a resource which can be used for personnel recruitment and selection. Research outside of New Zealand (Caers & Castelyns, 2010; Kluemper & Rosen, 2009; Shea & Wesley, 2006; Zaharie & Osoian, 2013) has confirmed that LinkedIn is being used frequently as a resource for personnel recruiters and selectors, with many employing the more informal platforms such as Social networking sites as well as LinkedIn for recruitment and selection purposes.

Empirical evidence (Jobvite, 2014) has shown that LinkedIn is being used as a resource; however, as far as I can establish, no research has been conducted in New Zealand that displays whether LinkedIn is being used as a resource. The results obtained evidence of a trend that can be seen in other countries; however, Matthews (2011) and Chamberlain (2012) are cautious in their approach to networking platforms and discuss that information overshare may have potential

legal and ethical consequences for recruitment and selection practitioners. They mention further that the potential which networking sites promised has not been realised for recruitment and selection.

Due to the small population size of New Zealand and the large LinkedIn membership New Zealand maintains, many benefits such as wider and more targeted geographical reach appear to exist for practitioners, and the active and passive candidate populations indicate that LinkedIn may be a valuable tool in the recruitment and selection procedure. The information gained through LinkedIn versus the time spent obtaining the information from LinkedIn is substantial and therefore could be a cost effective tool to be used within the recruitment and hiring process. The results indicate further that LinkedIn may also be an effective method in which practitioners can verify information received through CVs and other information sources. Nicole (2009) discussed that certain LinkedIn users may be less likely to embellish their information for fear of being discredited by colleagues or connections established through LinkedIn.

Proposition Two

Proposition two stated that LinkedIn would be used more for personnel recruitment as compared with personnel selection. The findings confirmed that LinkedIn was being used by 67% of the sample and that it was being used more for recruitment than selection, with 78% of the participants who indicated using LinkedIn (67%) reporting they use LinkedIn for recruitment purposes compared with 22% for selection, thus indicating support for proposition two. Jobvite (2014) reported from their survey that 94% of recruiters were on LinkedIn and were actively searching for job candidates. Their report focussed solely on

recruiters and did not take into account selectors being active on LinkedIn. Most of the previous research findings appear to echo the same trend (Brandenburg, 2008; Ramasamy & Raman, 2014) and discuss LinkedIn primarily as a recruitment tool which can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the recruitment and screening process. Caers and Castelyns (2010) maintain that social and professional networks may be used as a method in which a human resource panel could increase the volume of information for the selection interview and the selection process.

The findings follow the trend displayed by previous research that LinkedIn may be used frequently for recruitment purposes, because LinkedIn maintains many benefits such as geographical reach, cost effectiveness and efficiency (Bonson & Bednarova, 2013). Using LinkedIn for recruitment appears to be a cost effective method to screen individuals and increase the selection pool due to the basic nature of the information available through LinkedIn. The selection procedure requires a methodical and systematic approach to selecting individuals although the information available through LinkedIn may not be sufficient to assess individuals on specific knowledge, skills or abilities or job related competencies. The implication highlighted is that LinkedIn may be limited in its usage for purposes such as selection.

Proposition Three

Proposition three states that practitioners are likely to report that their organisations maintain little to no policy regarding LinkedIn use for recruitment and selection purposes. The results reported that the majority of the organisations represented by the sample that use LinkedIn maintain little to no policy governing

LinkedIn usage. However, nearly 50% indicated that they envisioned policy being created in the near future with 96% of those participants indicating that policy change would be in favour of LinkedIn use. The results also showed support for research proposition three which displays similar trends as evidenced by the Society for Human Resource Management (2008), which reports that 72% of organisations indicated no formal policy. Zaharie and Osoian (2013) reported that some organisations have shown the usage of more informal practices for personnel recruitment and selection, and often do not maintain any policy regarding usage. Barker et al. (2012) found in their sample that little to no policy existed when using networking sites for personnel recruitment and selection.

The results of the current study are congruent with previous research with the majority of participants indicating that no policy exists for the usage of LinkedIn; however, the results do support the trend that LinkedIn is becoming a more frequently used resource for recruitment and selection with many participants indicating that policy change would be in favour of LinkedIn usage. Brown and Vaughn (2011) suggested that policy needed to be created as the incorrect usage of LinkedIn could have negative consequences for recruitment and selection practices such as being indefensible in court or maintaining unreliable and invalid selection procedures. Therefore the results mentioned are important as they highlight the lack of policy in New Zealand organisations and also highlight the necessity for policy implementation for LinkedIn use in recruitment and selection procedures. Policy implementation would create a legal framework in which recruitment and selection practitioners could use LinkedIn for recruitment and selection. This would ensure that the organisation as well as practitioners remain defensible against allegations of discrimination or misuse of information.

Summary Research Aim One

Overall, research aim one was designed to explore how common the usage of LinkedIn was for recruitment and selection practitioners in New Zealand.

Research propositions one, two and three were all supported and showed that LinkedIn use is common among recruiters and selectors, with LinkedIn being used more for recruitment than selection. A lack of policy emerged but this could be due to the infancy of LinkedIn and the recent growth in the use of networking platforms for personnel recruitment and selection. With LinkedIn usage becoming more frequent as discussed previously, more organisations are likely to create and ratify policy for its use.

Research Aim Two

Research aim two sought to identify the features of LinkedIn that were used for recruitment and selection procedures during hiring individuals and was investigated by research proposition four.

Proposition Four

Proposition four suggested that certain features such as the profile would be used more frequently than other aspects such as the network. The findings confirmed that for both recruitment and selection procedures, the profile and jobs, and hiring features were most used, and the sub features of past experience and background information for the profile and LinkedIn jobs for the jobs and hiring features. Gatewood et al. (2011) discussed that there is value in assessing past behaviour to identify if an applicant will perform well in the future. They discuss that this can be done by assessing previous working experience; however, applicant distortion of information can occur. Kuncel, Ones and Sackett (2010)

report that cognitive ability is one of the most useful predictors of future job performance and discussed that a high cognitive ability are related to occupational attainment and stable employment.

Summary Research Aim Two

The results obtained by the current study highlight that past experience was the most used sub feature for recruitment which follows the trend as previously discussed. Background information on LinkedIn also highlights educational attainment and this information used alongside previous experience can elicit information which can be used as valuable predictors of future job performance. Using previous experience and background information is important as it highlights that recruitment and selection practitioners are using job-relevant information during recruitment and selection procedures that are reliable and valid predictors of job relevant aspects. This is important as the research highlights that practitioners are using professional information during the recruitment and selection procedures, which may give practitioners and organisations the biggest advantages in assessing future job performance and other traditional predictors of job performance. This also may have implications for potential job seekers as making their job relevant information visible may lead to increased exposure and better employment opportunities.

Research Aim Three

Research aim three sought to identify how the features of LinkedIn affect or influence the recruitment and selection decisions made by practitioners; this was explored through research propositions five, six and seven.

Proposition Five

Proposition five suggested that practitioners would maintain a clear difference in perceptions between the professional nature of LinkedIn and the social nature of Social networking sites. The current research reported that 96.4% of participants agreed that LinkedIn provided professional information about candidates for the recruitment process. This was similar for selection procedures; however, only 55.6% agreed that Social networking sites such as Facebook provide important information about candidates, with 61.1% indicating that Social networking sites can provide implicit information about candidates. The results indicate that individuals understand the professional context of the information available on LinkedIn; this is supported by Cain and Romanelli (2009) who discuss E-professionalism and the nature of the professional and personal spheres. Although maintaining both professional and private spheres may be difficult when dealing with information from each sphere, the context of information needs to be understood (Nicole, 2009).

The current results suggest that recruitment and selection practitioners understand that LinkedIn maintains professional job relevant information and that information from socially orientated networking sites may not maintain job-relevant information for recruitment and selection purposes. The difference in perception is important for practitioners as professional and social platforms maintain different types of information and therefore should be used for different purposes. Using correct job related information in the recruitment and selection procedures will ensure rigorous recruitment and selection procedures. The context of information is important and will continue to be important as information

becomes more freely available. The practice of using information in the correct contexts should be a focal point for recruitment and selection practitioners.

Proposition Six

Proposition six stated that LinkedIn may indicate determinants of an individual's level of employability. The findings display diverse perspectives for employability through LinkedIn information. None of the results definitively supported that LinkedIn may display aspects of employability according to the conventions of the R.A.W (*Rewarding, Able and Willing*) model. Coughlan et al. (2012) state that using networking sites may actually increase an individual's employability due to social capital gained and the information available. Using Hogan et al.'s (2012) R.A.W model of employability (as discussed in *Building social capital and employability through LinkedIn*), the results of the present study were not congruent with Coughlan et al. (2012). With employability becoming an increasingly important aspect of gaining formal employment (Benson et al. 2014), these results may identify the need for individuals to increase the transparency of their employability through their LinkedIn profiles, which could be achieved through understanding what employability is and providing information through the LinkedIn profile which may support these aspects.

Proposition Seven

Proposition seven stated that practitioners maintain strong perceptions regarding certain aspects of information available through LinkedIn such as educational attainment and gender. As expected the results indicated that for both personnel recruitment and selection, professional information was indicated to be

the most important, with previous experience and qualifications indicated as the most important. Gatewood et al. (2011) endorse the importance of identifying an individual's previous experience. An individual's qualifications can be identified as an antecedent for cognitive ability and an important predictor of future performance (Kuncel, Ones, & Sackett, 2010). The results of the present study are similar to previous studies and highlight that recruiters and selectors place the highest importance on job relevant information. As previously mentioned, practitioners are less likely to admit to instances of discrimination or bias in recruitment and selection procedures, and therefore the research presents difficulties in identifying the stereotypical behaviours as described by the Implicit Personality Theory.

Summary Research Aim Three

Overall, LinkedIn is perceived to be a platform in which valuable professional information can be elicited as compared with social networking platforms where the veracity of information can be questionable. Although professional information is evident, it seems that LinkedIn does not display employability according to the conventions of the R.A.W model because recruitment and selection participants did not definitely indicate that LinkedIn information shows whether individuals are rewarding to deal with, able to perform the job and are willing to work hard. Employability has become an increasingly important aspect when hiring and seeking employment and a full understanding of employability may be lacking when utilizing professional networking sites for recruitment and selection. Professional information was perceived to be the most important; however, the private nature of selection biases, for example, cultural background and sexual orientation, and may present a formidable challenge when

attempting to understand perceptions held by recruiters and selectors. Professional information may be perceived to display whether an individual may be able to perform the job; however, it may not display the other aspects of employability according to the R.A.W. model. This is important as it highlights the need for practitioners who hire to seek out information beyond LinkedIn to ascertain whether or not individuals may possess other aspects of employability.

Research Aim Four

Research question four was aimed at identifying whether LinkedIn was being used alongside other networking sites and was explored by research propositions eight, nine and ten.

Proposition Eight

Proposition eight stated that practitioners were likely to use information from Social networking sites alongside LinkedIn to gain a more holistic view of an individual. As expected the findings indicated that 54.8% of participants were using Social networking sites alongside LinkedIn to gain more information about a candidate, also indicating that 22.2% of participants valued using both social and professional networking sites, thus supporting proposition eight. Kluemper and Rosen (2009) discussed the entanglement of social and professional information and explained that the context of information is important; however, Archambault and Grudin (2012) and Barker et al. (2012) show that recruiters' and selectors' use social networking and non-job relevant information for judgements of a professional nature. The current results show that Facebook is the most commonly used social networking site; this is congruent with previous research. Skeels and Grudin (2009) discuss that Social networking sites have gained

significant momentum due to their perceived productivity and the ability to grant increased exposure of personal information. The separation of social and professional networking sites enables users to generate different information on each platform and thus contribute different aspects of themselves. The results support that both socially orientated information as well as professionally orientated information was being used by recruiters and selectors as this provides a more holistic view of an individual, hence using sites such as Facebook as well as LinkedIn during the hiring process. This is particularly important as within recruitment and selection, it is imperative that job relevant and non-job relevant information is used correctly.

Proposition Nine and Ten

Propositions nine and ten stated that individuals are more likely to view information from socially orientated networking sites as information relevant to make assessments of person-organisation fit, and information from LinkedIn to make assessments for person-job fit. The findings failed to indicate support for proposition nine because an insignificant proportion of participants (27.8%) reported that socially orientated networking sites may not be relevant to making assessments of person-organisation fit. Proposition ten was supported as the results indicated that information elicited from LinkedIn may be relevant to make assessments of person-job fit. Roulin and Bangerter (2013) argue that networking sites may elicit information which recruiters and selectors may use as antecedents for making judgements of fit. The ideas of Roulin and Bangerter are consistent with LinkedIn; however, they are inconsistent for Social networking sites such as Facebook. As Social networking sites elicit information from the personal context, information available through the professional context of LinkedIn may be viewed

as more reliable by recruiters and selectors. Being able to perform the job is an important aspect in an individual's perceived employability (Hogan et al. 2012) and therefore the research highlights the importance of LinkedIn displaying antecedents of an individual's person-job fit.

Summary Research Aim Four

Overall, LinkedIn is being used alongside Social networking sites; also, LinkedIn is perceived as a platform in which information relevant to making judgements of person-job fit can be gained. Herriot (2002) describes selection as a social process whereby both parties assess compatibility through information available. Although the current research showed that Social networking sites may not be used to indicate levels of person-organisation fit, it is clear that social networking is being used alongside LinkedIn and that participants do value using both professional and social sites. It is unclear as to what purpose Social networking sites serve in the recruitment and selection process or the added validity the use of Social networking sites may have on the recruitment and selection process.

Research Aim Five

Research aim five investigated some of the perceived benefits and limitations of LinkedIn, namely, self-reported data and its implications; this was explored through research proposition eleven.

Proposition Eleven

Proposition eleven stated that practitioners were aware of the self-reported nature of the information available through LinkedIn and the implications they

have for recruitment and selection practitioners. Proposition eleven was supported as findings indicate that recruitment and selection practitioners are aware of the self-reported nature of data on LinkedIn. The open-ended responses in the survey highlighted key themes for both recruitment and selection. Among them, accuracy and lack of credibility were the key themes. Participants reported that the self-reported data contributed to the lack of accurate information. User generated information could be distorted, changed and exaggerated to suit an individual user's needs. Skill endorsements and recommendations were reported to maintain a lack of credibility. Through LinkedIn an individual may have their skills endorsed or recommended by any connection and therein lies the issue, with many participants reporting that this may have often occurred from unreliable sources such as family or close friends. Buffardi and Campbell (2008) discuss that networking forums can often act as a stage for over inflation and self-enhancement of one's knowledge, skills and abilities. This is supported by Miller (2012) who argues that individuals distort information through networking platforms due to social desirability. This can occur frequently on platforms such as LinkedIn where an individual may distort a skill or ability to acquire a certain job role.

The results in the current research are similar to the ideas stated by Buffardi and Campbell (2008) and Miller (2012), and indicate that information available on LinkedIn may not be accurate for every candidate and that inflation of information does occur. This is important as Narisi (2009) mentions that individuals may be more truthful through their LinkedIn profiles due to the professional context of information; however, the evidence may suggest that this may not always be the case. This is important for practitioners and highlights that information obtained

through LinkedIn should be scrutinised and verified to ensure that the information used in the recruitment and selection procedures is accurate.

Do not use LinkedIn

Findings indicated that approximately a third of the sample were not using LinkedIn for recruitment or selection purposes. Many participants indicated their preference for using traditional recruitment and selection methods; however, a themes analysis of questions 92-97 of the research questionnaire highlighted the issue of appropriate and inappropriate job roles. Participant responses illustrate that LinkedIn may not have been appropriate for many of the job roles which practitioners have hired for which includes roles of a semi-skilled nature or part time roles. Strategic Human Resource Management (2008) reported that a quarter of their sample (N=54) did not use social networking for recruitment and selection as the networking site did not maintain suitable applicants at the job level the organisations were recruiting at. The research from SHRM is consistent with the current research and highlights that LinkedIn and other networking sites may not be appropriate for many roles within organisations. Further research could be conducted to assess the types of roles practitioners are using LinkedIn to hire for. Seventy percent of participants who did not use LinkedIn indicated that LinkedIn may be added to recruitment and selection procedures in the future. Strategic Human Resource Management (2008) shows that LinkedIn was increasing in its usage by organisations for recruitment and selection, and between 2005 and 2007 usage increased from 21% to 44%. This is supported by Jobvite who reported that 94% of recruiters are active on LinkedIn. It is clear from both current and

previous research that LinkedIn is increasing in usage and intentions for adding LinkedIn to the recruitment and selection processes are positive intentions.

Finally, Facebook was indicated as the most commonly used social networking site used for recruitment and selection. Facebook maintains a larger membership base than LinkedIn but it is not exclusively a networking site for professionals. As previously discussed, context of information is important (Cain, Scott & Smith, 2010), and the misuse of information is an issue that plagues recruitment and selection procedures (Brown & Vaughn, 2011). Information available on Social networking sites may not be appropriate to use for judgements of a professional nature and therefore the current findings are important as they highlight that socially orientated networking sites are frequently used for recruitment and selection procedures.

Practical Implications

With the gradual rise of networking sites and the transparency they bring for both the organisation and a potential job seeker, the findings from the current study echo the trends from previous research that LinkedIn is increasing in usage globally with recruiters and selectors using it during the hiring phases. One application of LinkedIn that is clear is its usage for recruitment purposes, more so than selection purposes. The majority of the previous research has discussed social networking and its usage for recruitment, more specifically screening (Brandenburg, 2008; Chapman & Webster, 2003; Davison et al., 2011; Watkins & Johnston, 2000), where recruiters select individuals into a pool of applicants based on certain job criteria. Peacock (2009) and Kowske and Southwell (2006) report that Social networking sites are more frequently being used as the first point of

information gathering for practitioners due to the relative ease and accessibility of information and candidates through these platforms.

The Society for Human Resource Management (2008) report that 53% of participants indicated using networking sites to search for passive recruits and 47% indicated that networking is used prior to contacting the individual; however, close to 30% indicated using networking sites after offering a formal interview.

Kelly Services (2014) echo this trend and report that 56% of Australasian organisations use networking platforms to recruit individuals and 42% of New Zealanders are searching for jobs through networking sites such as LinkedIn (2013). Caers and Castelyns (2011) discuss that Social networking sites may be used by recruitment practitioners as a way of increasing information to be used within the selection interview. The Society for Human Resource Management report that a major advantage of using networking for screening is that the information gained through these platforms is high in comparison with the time and effort used to obtain the information. The current findings also suggest that for recruitment purposes, approximately 90% of participants indicated that they used LinkedIn to verify information received through CVs, and through structured and unstructured interviews. Anecdotal evidence (Leveson, 2014) indicates that employers were looking at both LinkedIn profiles and CVs to make sure that information is consistent between both sources. This is supported by SHRM who report that a third of their sample used networking sites as a way of verifying information on an applicant's CV.

The veracity of the information available on LinkedIn may at times be questionable and therefore the process of verification may be necessary in certain circumstances. As LinkedIn maintains user generated information, accuracy of

information may be lacking. For these reasons, networking sites such as LinkedIn may be limited to a resource for recruitment, with structured interviews permitting practitioners to elicit further information.

The findings indicated that the majority of organisations did not maintain any policy to govern and instruct how to use LinkedIn for recruitment and selection purposes. As many as 71% of participants indicated that their organisations maintained no policy for LinkedIn usage; however, a significant proportion indicated that policy changes which may occur would be in favour of LinkedIn usage. The current findings show striking similarities to research from SHRM (2008) in which nearly 75% of participants indicated no formal policy but a smaller proportion indicated implementation of policy advocating using networking sites. Previous research has emphasised the implementation of policy (Barker et al., 2012; Clark & Roberts, 2010) due to the incorrect usage of the information available through networking sites such as LinkedIn. The current research has shown that practitioners are using LinkedIn for recruitment and selection which may maintain job relevant information, but they are also using socially orientated networking sites alongside LinkedIn which may maintain job-irrelevant information. Echoing the ideas from Clark and Roberts (2010), organisations and practitioners have a social and ethical responsibility to use information from personal and professional sources in appropriate spheres.

The *Principles for the validation and use of personnel selection procedures* (Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology, 2003) insist that sources used within the hiring procedure should maintain criterion-related validity in order to ensure that the measure used maintains relevance to work. Most organisations would prefer to maintain selection procedures which are predictive, easy to use

and legally defensible; however, certain types of information available may be viewed as an invasion of privacy and inappropriate to use. The New Zealand Pre-Employment Guidelines (Human Rights Commission, 2008), which encompasses Human Rights Act legislation as well as the New Zealand Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Act, maintain strict guidelines for employees and employers alike regarding recruitment and selection. The guidelines highlight many sources of information which may be grounds for discrimination, with many sources freely available through networking platforms.

Van Iddekinge, Lanivich, Roth and Junco (2013) emphasise that practitioners may discover information which is difficult to ignore during the hiring process, e.g., gender, age, substance abuse, etc. Furthermore, as platforms such as LinkedIn are being used more frequently for recruitment and selection, guidelines governing usage should be implemented and refined to moderate issues which can arise in the hiring process such as discrimination and bias. The creation of policy will not only create guidelines for usage but could also aid in clarifying legal boundaries, as some sources report that organisations did not use networking sites for recruitment because they were aware of the predicaments about their legality of use (SHRM, 2008). Satisfying valid and legally defensible procedures are paramount as well as ensuring that legislation in New Zealand such as the Equal Employment Opportunities and Human Rights Acts are observed in the correct manner.

The findings illustrate that LinkedIn was perceived as a professional resource which recruiters and selectors can utilise to gain professional information about individuals. The results showed that LinkedIn displays important professional information and that many benefits exist for practitioners who used LinkedIn. As

defined in chapter one, LinkedIn should be thought of as a professional networking site completely autonomous from the labels of Social networking sites. Although LinkedIn is not without limitations, the professional information can be used by practitioners as relevant information in the recruitment and selection procedures. The most used aspects of LinkedIn indicated was the profile, and jobs and hiring. These aspects maintain professional job-relevant information and can be used as predictors of future job performance. LinkedIn was also shown not to display aspects of an individual's employability according to the R.A.W. model. This is important as practitioners who are using LinkedIn as a recruitment and selection tool may not be able to use information on LinkedIn to determine employability, and therefore LinkedIn may be limited in its usage for practitioners wanting to determine employability.

The research sought to identify influencing aspects on practitioner's decision making during the recruitment and selection phases. The most influencing aspect was professional information, namely, previous experience and qualifications obtained. These aspects could be perceived as job relevant with contextually relevant information. The least influencing aspects on recruitment and selection decisions were perceived sexual orientation and gender, with practitioners indicating them as the least important aspect when making decisions.

Another implication of this research is that Social networking sites are being used alongside LinkedIn when making recruitment and selection decisions, with Facebook being the most commonly used. The research did indicate that participants' value using both professional and social networking platforms during the selection procedure; however, Social networking sites were perceived as displaying no information regarding the level of person-organisation fit. LinkedIn,

however, was perceived to display information which can indicate the level of person-job fit. This is important for practitioners as although they may value using social networking alongside LinkedIn for selection decisions, social networking platforms appear to add no additional information of value.

Lastly, LinkedIn was perceived to have limitations as a result of the user generated, self-reported information. Information accuracy was the most important implication for self-reported data which included lack of credibility for skill endorsements and incomplete profiles. Another implication was that LinkedIn may not be appropriate for certain job roles. This is especially true for roles which require low levels of skill, minimal education and qualifications and are generally low wage work. The implication is that LinkedIn may be limited in its use for many recruitment and selection procedures in which these types of roles are being advertised.

Overview

The research has confirmed that New Zealand recruitment and selection practitioners exhibit similar trends of LinkedIn usage for recruitment and selection as practitioners in other international regions. The value of LinkedIn as a resource for recruitment and selection was also confirmed and although lacking predictive validity, LinkedIn is frequently being used. LinkedIn was confirmed to be a valuable resource, indicating that more organisations could attempt to add LinkedIn to the recruitment and selection procedures.

Strengths

The major strength of this study is that as far as I could determine, it is the first study in New Zealand to research LinkedIn usage for recruitment and

selection. The research has provided a brief indication of the usage trends for LinkedIn in New Zealand, it has identified recruitment and selection preferences and it has provided the first step in studying LinkedIn and its usage in personnel recruitment and selection. Furthermore, the research addressed and researched LinkedIn as a professional networking site, autonomous of the social networking classification. This is important as it provides an accurate view into LinkedIn usage. Professional networking and social networking are two separate platforms and researching them as such provides accurate and relevant information for future research to build on.

As far as I could determine, this study was also the first to delineate recruitment from selection and acknowledge them as separate constructs when researching LinkedIn usage. This enabled the research questionnaire to be tailored to the definition of each construct and also provided data for each construct which was used to understand LinkedIn usage. When interpreting results, the current study has not generalised results to both recruitment and selection and could be understood in terms of either recruitment or selection. Overall, the current research addresses some of the gaps in the recruitment and selection literature as outlined by Breugh and Starke (2000) such as understanding which sources are being used for recruitment and selection procedures and understanding the perceptions practitioners maintain regarding the information available through recruitment and selection sources. The research has also added to the understanding of the usage of LinkedIn for personnel recruitment and selection in New Zealand and has provided some practical implications for future use.

Limitations

One potential limitation is the reliance on self-reported data to assess and understand the research aims. Self-reported questionnaires rely on the assumption that individuals are willing to share their thoughts and feelings openly (Gatewood et al., 2011); however, self-perceptions can be subject to a number of response biases such as central tendency and extreme answer avoidance which could produce unreliable results. Spector (1994) reports that many organisational behaviour studies rely on the usage of such measures and therefore response biases can be expected when utilising this type of measure.

Another limitation was missing data in the data analysis. The data analysis revealed missing data from certain sections and questions, therefore reducing the N for certain research propositions. Missing data was due to participants skipping or not indicating an answer for questions. Future research could maintain forced choice for all questions thus eliminating question skipping; however, this may reduce the number of completed questionnaires.

Areas for future research

The exploratory nature of the current research established many potential directions for future research. Future research could attempt to create a framework for professional and Social networking sites because differences do exist and, as mentioned in chapter one, in order to understand and make constructive advancements in the field I believe it is important to establish the differences between the two.

Van Iddekinge et al., (2013) point out that social media provides incremental validity beyond the traditional organisational predictors. Future research could

attempt to understand how valid LinkedIn may be in recruitment and/or selection procedures and assess whether it may be a valid tool to use. This could be done as a replication of their work and may highlight how recruiters evaluate LinkedIn profiles of individuals applying for jobs. In their study, the authors attempted to understand whether the evaluations of the profiles were related to actual performance and other organisational variables. A replication of this work could see researchers conduct a predictive validation study and review profiles of job seeking applicants prior to gaining formal employment and comparing the initial reviews with reviews conducted after formal employment had been obtained. Also future work could assess the criterion data from applicants who have gained employment with predictor data of job seeking applicants. By using a design such as predictive validation, researchers could answer the question as to whether information on LinkedIn may serve as successful predictors of future performance and thus could provide a better estimate of validity (Gatewood et al., 2011). Reviews could also assess variables such as performance, turnover intentions and aspects of employability. This would indicate whether LinkedIn is a predictor of future performance and could provide an empirical validation of LinkedIn for its usage in recruitment and selection procedures.

Conclusion

LinkedIn has been shown as a tool currently used within recruitment and selection (Caers & Castelyns, 2010; Jobvite, 2014; Kelly Services, 2013; Society for Human Resource Management, 2008); however, little empirical research has demonstrated which features of LinkedIn were being used, how LinkedIn was affecting recruitment and selection decisions, and whether LinkedIn was used alongside other networking sites.

The current research has indicated that LinkedIn was perceived as a resource which could be used in recruitment and selection. Results showed that LinkedIn was being used more for recruitment; in addition, many organisations did not maintain any policy governing LinkedIn usage. Professional information was indicated as the most used feature of LinkedIn; however, it did not appear to display an individual's level of employability. Recruiters and selectors were shown to be using other networking sites alongside LinkedIn, namely, Facebook, but socially orientated networking sites were not indicated to display antecedents of an individual's level of person-organisation fit. In contrast, LinkedIn could be used to make assessments of an individual's level of person-job fit.

The practical implications for this study are that LinkedIn may be most beneficially used for recruitment over selection. Also, appropriate policy guiding the use of LinkedIn could be explored and implemented for organisations planning to use LinkedIn in the future. Additionally, LinkedIn has been shown to be a useful professional resource which maintains job-relevant information and one that recruiters and selectors are using more frequently. Overall, New Zealand recruitment and selection practitioners appear to maintain similar trends in LinkedIn usage and the research confirms the value of LinkedIn as a resource for recruitment and selection.

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APPENDIX A - ONLINE SURVEY FLYER



Calling all *recruitment* and *selection* professionals

My name is Seth Heynes and I am currently completing my Masters of Applied Psychology (Organisational) at the University of Waikato.

I am looking for individuals to participate in my study. My research surrounds LinkedIn and its usage in a New Zealand sample. Some of my research questions seek to identify:

- What portion of a New Zealand sample use LinkedIn
- What parts/features of LinkedIn are being used by recruitment and/or selection professionals
- What are some of the attitudes and perceptions of LinkedIn
- Are recruitment and/or selection professionals being influenced by information on LinkedIn

If this interests you then please proceed further to complete my survey. The survey includes a range of questions surrounding the research ideas and requires some demographic information at the end.

The survey should take approximately 5-15 minutes to complete.

To be eligible to complete this survey, participants need to:

- Perform the job roles of recruitment and/or selection within the organisations they represent
- Must be employed in an organisation within New Zealand
- Can be self-employed but must perform the roles of recruitment and/or selection

If you are a recruitment and/or selection professional who fits the eligibility criteria, please complete the survey whether you use LinkedIn or not.

If you are keen to support the research and complete the questionnaire, please move to the next page.

***Completion of the questionnaire will be accepted as implied consent to participate**

Ethical Approval for this study has been obtained from the University of Waikato School of Psychology Research and Ethics Committee. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or the Head of Ethics Committee Michael O'Driscoll (psyc0181@waikato.ac.nz) or my supervisors Donald Cable (dcable@waikato.ac.nz) and Maree Roche (mroche@waikato.ac.nz). My contact details are sh203@waikato.ac.nz or on 0276108946

Research Questionnaire

LinkedIn for Recruitment and Selection: A New Zealand Perspective

Information Sheet and Participants' rights

Researcher: Seth J Heynes

E-mail: sh203@students.waikato.ac.nz

Contact Number: 0276108946

Institution: The University of Waikato

Thank you for agreeing to support my research. The main focus of this research surrounds LinkedIn and how it is used as a resource for the purposes of recruitment and selection. With an increase in web applications and social/professional networking sites, global membership of these sites is increasing. This allows access to information on large masses of individuals through professional and social networking sites. As recruitment and selection practitioners, having capabilities such as this in recruitment and selection procedures can be highly advantageous.

If you are not actively engaged in recruitment and/or selection, thank you but please do not complete this research.

My questionnaire attempts to capture information which may answer my research questions around the use of LinkedIn in recruitment and selection. The questionnaire will take approximately 5-15 minutes to complete.

First I would like to draw your attention to your rights as a participant:

- You have the right to decline to participate or withdraw from the research at any time
- You have the right to contact me at any time during the research if you have any questions
- The information provided will be treated as confidential and no personal information will be recorded anywhere
- You have the right to receive a summary of the results of the research

Your responses will be treated with total confidentiality and complete anonymity is assured. All questionnaires will be kept for the duration of the research and will be deleted after its completion.

- It is important that you understand your role as either recruitment or selection practitioners as the questions you will receive are role specific
- Please endeavour to complete all the role relevant questions and sections
- After the completing the questionnaire, a comments section exists for any statements, queries or questions

***Completion of the questionnaire will be accepted as implied consent to participate**

Survey Link:

<http://psychology.waikato.ac.nz/theheyneIndexPreamble.html>

APPENDIX B – RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The Heynes Index

Section 1: The application of LinkedIn for recruitment and selection

practitioners. This section asks questions relating to the usage of LinkedIn for recruitment and selection. **Please indicate your answer by clicking the appropriate box**

Q1 Do you use the professional networking site LinkedIn as a resource for recruitment and/or selection for the organisation you represent?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q2 Does the organisation you represent actively maintain a presence on LinkedIn through a company page?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q3 Do you maintain your own LinkedIn personal profile for the purposes of recruitment and/or selection on behalf of the organisation?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q4 Does the organisation you represent maintain any policies regarding the uses of LinkedIn for recruitment and/or selection?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q5 If no policies are present, do you envision any policies being created in the near future?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q6 Are these policies in favour of LinkedIn use?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q7 Do you actively advertise available jobs within your organisation through LinkedIn?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q8 How frequently do you use LinkedIn?

- ☐ At least once a day (1)
- ☐ At least once a week (2)
- ☐ At least once a month (3)
- ☐ Other (Please State): (4) _____

Q9 **Recruitment.** Recruitment and selection are very distinct practices and are vitally important when hiring new employees.

Recruitment: The major purpose of recruitment is to create an applicant pool of potential employees who maintain the required skills to perform the job. One important aspect of recruitment is to capture a large applicant pool which is more likely to yield successful candidates for the given position. One way of capturing a range of applicants is through using recruitment strategies. The use of LinkedIn is a recruitment strategy and is the focus of this section of the questionnaire. Do you use LinkedIn for the Recruitment of potential applicants?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Section 2: Recruitment. 2.1 Which features of LinkedIn do you use for the purposes of recruitment? This section asks questions regarding the parts and features of a LinkedIn profile and if they used for recruitment. **Please use the scale to indicate to what extent you agree with these statements by clicking the appropriate response**

Q10 Do you actively recruit candidates through LinkedIn Talent Solutions for available positions within the organisation you represent?

- ☐ Yes (1)
☐ No (2)

Q11 Do you actively screen individuals in the applicant pool using information on their LinkedIn profiles?

- ☐ Yes (1)
☐ No (2)

LinkedIn profile of a candidate: For the purposes of recruitment....

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
I take an interest in a candidates profile (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use background information to add to my knowledge of candidates (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use information on education levels to add to my knowledge of candidates' qualifications and educational attainment (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use candidates' past experience information to add to my knowledge of their level of career experience (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use additional information such as languages and interests to add to my knowledge of candidates (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use recommendations and skill endorsement information to add to my knowledge of candidates' knowledge, skills and abilities (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q16 Network of candidate's connections: For the purposes of recruitment....

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
I check candidates' network of connections (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I check which companies candidates follow (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I check which groups candidates are affiliated with or members of (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q17 Interactional services available on LinkedIn: For the purposes recruitment....

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
I use the messaging service to get into contact with candidates (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I post and add comments within groups to advertise the organisation I represent (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q18 LinkedIn Jobs and Talent Solutions: For the purposes of recruitment....

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
I use LinkedIn Jobs to post positions which are available within the organisation I represent (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use forums and discussions to advertise job openings within the organisation I represent (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use the job search engine to view similar positions available within other organisations (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use LinkedIn Talent Solutions to find applicants appropriate for positions within the organisation I represent (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall I feel that I could use the information on LinkedIn as a resource (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2.2 How do aspects of LinkedIn influence your recruitment decisions? This section asks questions around the aspects of LinkedIn which can influence recruitment procedures as well as the attitudes of recruitment practitioners. Which of the following personal factors are most important when making recruitment decisions? **Please use the scale to indicate the appropriate answers in order of importance from 1-5 for each factor:** Not important (1), Slightly Important (2), Fairly Important (3), Reasonably Important (4), Very Important (5).

Q21 Recruitment Preferences: Profile Pictures

	Rank from 1-5 for each aspect (1)
Gender (1)	
Age (2)	
Facial Maturity (3)	
Physical Attractiveness (4)	
Ethnicity (5)	
Obesity/ Weight perceptions (6)	
Perceived sexual orientation (7)	

Q22 General and additional information

	Rank from 1-5 for each aspect (1)
Name (1)	
Language(s) spoken (2)	
Personal Interests (3)	
Education provider(s) (4)	

Q23 Professional information

	Rank from 1-5 for each aspect (1)
Qualification(s) (1)	
Experience (2)	
Background information (3)	
Professional recommendation(s) (4)	
Skill endorsement(s) (5)	

Q24 Networks

	Rank from 1-5 for each aspect (1)
Connections/ contacts (1)	
Companies followed (2)	
Groups and affiliations (3)	

2.3 What are your perceptions and attitudes regarding the aspects of LinkedIn?

Please indicate to what extent you agree with these statements

Q27 Verifiability and credibility of the information on a LinkedIn profile

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
I use other methods to verify the information available through an individual's LinkedIn profile (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I perceive the information available on LinkedIn to be accurate (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to the professional nature of LinkedIn, I feel that individuals will convey the truth through their LinkedIn profiles (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The skill list is accurate at communicating an individual's skills (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skills which are endorsed by connections can be assumed as credible (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skill endorsements are accurate indicators that individuals can perform specific skills (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q32 Determinants of employability of candidates

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
LinkedIn profiles are good indicators of an individual's cognitive ability (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LinkedIn profiles are good indicators of an individual's personality characteristics (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommendations and endorsements in LinkedIn profiles of individuals can display whether they are rewarding to deal with (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Previous experience and skill endorsements of an individual in their LinkedIn profile can display whether they are able to do the job (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommendations and previous experience in LinkedIn profiles of individuals can display whether they are willing to work hard (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q33 Self- report nature of the information available on LinkedIn

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
I am aware that the information on LinkedIn is self-reported information (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information on LinkedIn can lack credibility because of self-report (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q36 2.4 General Information: This section asks questions relating to the benefits and limitations of LinkedIn for recruitment. **Please indicate your answers by typing them in or by clicking the appropriate box**

Q37 LinkedIn provides important professional information about candidates which can be useful for recruitment practices

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q38 The information on LinkedIn can determine whether candidates are suitable employees for the job

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q39 I feel that many benefits exist for recruitment practitioners who use LinkedIn

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q40 Overall I feel that LinkedIn may have limitations as a recruitment resource

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q41 List up to three limitations of LinkedIn (if you believe any exist)

Q42 **Selection.** Recruitment and selection are very distinct practices and are vitally important when hiring new employees.

Selection: Once the applicant pool has been created through the recruitment process, selection processes are used to evaluate the applicant pool so that individuals are identified who can successfully perform the job. Selection involves decreasing the applicant pool to find viable job candidates. During the selection process LinkedIn can be used as part of the selection strategies. Do you use LinkedIn for the Selection of candidates?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Section 3: Selection. 3.1 Which features of LinkedIn do you use for the purposes of selection? This section asks questions regarding the parts and features of a LinkedIn profile and if they used for selection. **Please use the scale to indicate to what extent you agree with these statements by clicking the appropriate response**

Q45 LinkedIn profile of a candidate: For the purposes of selection....

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
I take an interest in a candidates profile (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use background information to add to my knowledge of candidates (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use information on education levels to add to my knowledge of candidates' qualifications and educational attainment (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use candidates' past experience information to add to my knowledge of their level of career experience (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use additional information such as languages and interests to add to my knowledge of candidates (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use recommendations and skill endorsement information to add to my knowledge of candidates' knowledge, skills and abilities (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q46 Network of candidate's connections: For the purposes of selection....

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
I check candidates' network of connections (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I check which companies candidates follow (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I check which groups candidates are affiliated with or members of (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q47 Interactional services available on LinkedIn: For the purposes of selection....

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
I use the messaging service to get into contact with candidates (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q48 LinkedIn Jobs and Talent Solutions: For the purposes of recruitment....

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
Overall I feel that I could use the information on LinkedIn as a resource (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q49 3.2 How do aspects of LinkedIn influence your recruitment decisions? This section asks questions around the aspects of LinkedIn which can influence recruitment procedures as well as the attitudes of recruitment practitioners. Which of the following personal factors are most important when making recruitment decisions? **Please use the scale to indicate the appropriate answers in order of importance from 1-5 for each factor.** Not important (1), Slightly Important (2), Fairly Important (3), Reasonably Important (4), Very Important (5).

Q50 Selection Preferences: Profile Pictures

	Rank from 1-5 for each aspect (1)
Gender (1)	
Age (2)	
Facial Maturity (3)	
Physical Attractiveness (4)	
Ethnicity (5)	
Obesity/ Weight perceptions (6)	
Perceived sexual orientation (7)	

Q51 General and additional information

	Rank from 1-5 for each aspect (1)
Name (1)	
Language(s) spoken (2)	
Personal Interests (3)	
Education provider(s) (4)	

Q52 Professional information

	Rank from 1-5 for each aspect (1)
Qualification(s) (1)	
Experience (2)	
Background information (3)	
Professional recommendation(s) (4)	
Skill endorsement(s) (5)	

Q53 Networks

	Rank from 1-5 for each aspect (1)
Connections/ contacts (1)	
Companies followed (2)	
Groups and affiliations (3)	

Q54 3.3 What are your perceptions and attitudes regarding the aspects of LinkedIn? **Please indicate to what extent you agree with these statements**

Q55 Verifiability and credibility of the information available on an individual's LinkedIn profile

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
I use LinkedIn to verify information received through an individual's CV and vice versa (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use LinkedIn to verify information received through structured/unstructured interviews and vice versa (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use other methods to verify the information available through an individual's LinkedIn profile (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I perceive the information available on LinkedIn to be accurate (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to the professional nature of LinkedIn, I feel that individuals will convey the truth through their LinkedIn profiles (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The skill list is accurate at communicating an individual's skills (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skills which are endorsed by connections can be assumed as credible (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skill endorsements are accurate indicators that individuals can perform specific skills (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q56 Determinants of employability of candidates

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
LinkedIn profiles are good indicators of an individual's cognitive ability (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LinkedIn profiles are good indicators of an individual's personality characteristics (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommendations and endorsements in LinkedIn profiles of individuals can display whether they are rewarding to deal with (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Previous experience and skill endorsements of an	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

individual in their LinkedIn profile can display whether they are able to do the job (4)					
Recommendations and previous experience in LinkedIn profiles of individuals can display whether they are willing to work hard (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q57 Self- report nature of the information available on LinkedIn

	Completely Disagree (1)	Partially Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Partially Agree (4)	Completely Agree (5)
I am aware that the information on LinkedIn is self-reported information (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information on LinkedIn can lack credibility because of self-report (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q48 3.4 General Information: This section asks questions relating to other methods used for selection as well as the benefits and limitations of LinkedIn.
Please indicate your answers by typing them in or by clicking the appropriate box

Q49 If cannot obtain information about an individual via LinkedIn, I may use other social networking sites

- ☐ Yes (1)
☐ No (2)

Q50 Which other networking sites do you use alongside LinkedIn during the process of selection? (Tick all which apply)

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Sometimes (3)
Facebook (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Twitter (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Myspace (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please State) (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q51 Other networking sites such as Facebook which maintain a social aspects rather than a professional aspect, also provide important information about candidates

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Sometimes (3)

Q53 Social networking sites such as Facebook can provide implicit information about candidates which cannot be acquired about through formal processes such as interviews

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Sometimes (3)

Q54 Social networking sites such as Facebook can display information which can show whether candidates maintain similar ideal to the organisation

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Sometimes (3)

Q55 I values using the combination of social networking sites and professional networking sites as a resource for selection practices

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Sometimes (3)
- ☐ Not Applicable (4)

Q56 I feel that by using other social networking sites I can gain all round perspectives of candidates

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Sometimes (3)
- ☐ Not Applicable (4)

Q57 LinkedIn provides important professional information about candidates which can be useful for selection practices

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q58 The information on LinkedIn can determine whether candidates are suitable employees for the job

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q59 I feel that many benefits exist for selection practitioners who use LinkedIn

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q60 Overall I feel that LinkedIn may have limitations as a selection resource

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q61 List up to three limitations of LinkedIn (if you believe any exist)

Section 4: Don't use LinkedIn.

This section asks questions relating to the perceptions around LinkedIn and recruitment and/or selection. **Please indicate your answers by clicking the appropriate boxes (Multiple answers can be made)**

Q63 Why do you not use LinkedIn?

- ☐ Lack of access (1)
- ☐ Company policy (2)
- ☐ Unfamiliar with LinkedIn (3)
- ☐ I use traditional recruitment and selection methods (4)
- ☐ LinkedIn information is inaccurate (5)
- ☐ Other (Please state) (6) _____

Q64 What alternatives do you use for recruitment and/or selection?

- ☐ Electronic job boards (1)
- ☐ Social networking sites (2)
- ☐ Word of mouth (3)
- ☐ Other professional networking sites (4)
- ☐ Internal recruitment (5)
- ☐ Other (Please state) (6) _____

Q65 Does your organisation have any future intentions of using LinkedIn in the future?

- ☐ Yes, LinkedIn will be added to recruitment and/or selection procedures (1)
- ☐ There are possibilities of adding LinkedIn to recruitment and/or selection procedures (2)
- ☐ There are no possibilities of using LinkedIn for recruitment and/or selection procedures (3)
- ☐ Other (Please state) (4) _____

Q66 Do you maintain any perceived limitations of LinkedIn?

- ☐ LinkedIn is not easy to use (1)
- ☐ The information provided on LinkedIn may not be accurate to use (2)
- ☐ LinkedIn limits its membership to individuals with access to a computer (3)
- ☐ The applicants needed for your employment sector may not be available on LinkedIn (4)
- ☐ Selection bias issues exist (5)
- ☐ Other (Please state) (6) _____

Q67 Do you use any form of social or professional networking sites as recruitment and/or selection resources?

- ☐ Yes (Please state) (1) _____
- ☐ No (2)

Section 5: General Information

Click the boxes which apply to you

Q69 Are you?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)

Q70 What is your age?

- ☐ 20-30 (1)
- ☐ 31-40 (2)
- ☐ 41-50 (3)
- ☐ 51+ (4)

Q71 What is your highest qualification?

- ☐ Some high school (1)
- ☐ High school graduate (2)
- ☐ Certificate/diploma (3)
- ☐ Some university/college (4)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree (5)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree with honours or post graduate diploma (6)
- ☐ Master's degree (7)
- ☐ PhD/ Doctorate (8)
- ☐ Other (Please state) (9) _____

Q72 What industry are you currently employed in?

Q78 Which region in New Zealand do you perform your role as a recruitment and/or selection practitioner?

- ☐ Auckland (1)
- ☐ Bay of Plenty (2)
- ☐ Wellington (3)
- ☐ Canterbury (4)
- ☐ Otago (5)
- ☐ Southland (6)
- ☐ Waikato (7)
- ☐ Northland (8)
- ☐ Taranaki (9)
- ☐ Hawke's Bay (10)
- ☐ Nelson (11)

Q73 What is the size of your organisation? (Full time employees)

- ☐ 0-5 FTEs (Very Small) (1)
- ☐ 6-49 FTEs (Small) (2)
- ☐ 50-99 FTEs (Medium) (3)
- ☐ 100+ FTEs (Large) (4)

Q75 Comments

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you are interested in receiving information regarding the results of the research, please send an email with results in the subject line to the email address below and a summary will be returned once the research has been completed.

sh203@students.waikato.ac.nz

APPENDIX C – LETTER TO PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS



To whom it may concern

My name is Seth Heynes and I am a Masters of Applied Psychology Student at the University of Waikato. I am currently completing my thesis in Organisational Psychology with a specific focus on recruitment and selection.

My thesis focusses on the usage of professional networking sites such as LinkedIn for personnel recruitment and/or selection. Some of the major research points are the prevalence of LinkedIn users within New Zealand, how LinkedIn is being used by recruitment and/or selection practitioners and what the main influences of LinkedIn are during the recruitment and/or selection procedures.

I will attempt to answer these questions through a self-constructed questionnaire and conducting the pre-requisite prior research. However I require a purposive sample that works within the sectors of recruitment and/or selection. If this applies to you or any individuals within your organisation then you might be eligible to complete the questionnaire. Eligibility criteria is expressed further in the questionnaire flyer and the research preamble which is available in the link below.

The purpose of this letter is to find out if your organisation would be willing to support my research.

I am working under the supervision of Dr Donald Cable (dcable@waikato.ac.nz) and Dr Maree Roche (mroche@waikato.ac.nz) and I have received ethical approval from the Psychology Research and Ethics Committee.

If your organisation would be willing to support my research please contact me via e-mail or if you maintain any other questions regarding the research please do not hesitate to contact me.

Questionnaire link:

<http://psychology.waikato.ac.nz/theheyneIndexPreamble.html>

Kind Regards

Seth J. Heynes

(sh203@students.waikato.ac.nz)

APPENDIX D - BREAKDOWN OF RESEARCH AIMS, RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS AND SURVEY QUESTIONS

<i>Research Aims</i>	<i>Research Propositions</i>	<i>Survey Questions</i>
<i>Research Aim 1</i>	1,2,3	Section 1: 1-8 Section 2: 9-11, 27, 32-37 Section 3: 50, 66-73, 90
<i>Research Aim 2</i>	4	Section 2: 12- 26 Section 3: 51- 61
<i>Research Aim 3</i>	5, 6, 7	Section 2: 28-31, 38-42, 45 Section 3: 62-65, 74-78, 83, 84, 88
<i>Research Aim 4</i>	8, 9, 10	Section 2: 46 Section 3: 81, 82, 85-87 89
<i>Research Aim 5</i>	11	Section 2: 43, 44, 47, 48, 49 Section 3: 79, 78, 90, 91, 92

<i>Research Proposition</i>	<i>Survey Questions</i>
<i>Proposition 5</i>	Section 3: 83, 84
<i>Proposition 6</i>	Section 2: 38- 42 Section 3: 74- 78
<i>Proposition 1</i>	Section 2: 27, 32-37, 45 Section 3: 66-73, 90
<i>Proposition 2</i>	Section 2: 9-11 Section 3: 50
<i>Proposition 3</i>	Section 1: 4-6
<i>Proposition 8</i>	Section 3: 81, 82, 86, 87
<i>Proposition 11</i>	Section 2: 43, 44 Section 3: 79, 78
<i>Proposition 7</i>	Section 2: 28-31 Section 3: 62-65
<i>Proposition 9</i>	Section 3: 85
<i>Proposition 10</i>	Section 3: 88, 89
<i>Proposition 4</i>	Section 2: 12- 26 Section 3: 51- 61

APPENDIX E - TABLES OF RESULTS

Proposition four:

Recruitment

LinkedIn profile of a candidate. For the purposes of recruitment....

	Completely Disagree	Partially Disagree	Neutral	Partially Agree	Completely Agree
I take an interest in a candidates profile		1.6% (N=1)	3.1% (N=2)	45.3 (N=29)	50% (N=32)
I use background information to add to my knowledge of candidates		1.6% (N=1)	12.5% (N=8)	39.1% (N=25)	46.9% (N=30)
I use information on education levels to add to my knowledge of candidates' qualifications and educational attainment		6.3% (N=4)	10.9% (N=7)	51.6% (N=33)	31.3% (N=20)
I use candidates' past experience information to add to my knowledge of their level of career experience		1.6% (N=1)	3.2% (N=2)	39.7% (N=25)	55.6% (N=35)
I use additional information such as languages and interests to add to my knowledge of candidates	1.6% (N=1)	14.1% (N=9)	34.4% (N=22)	34.4% (N=22)	15.6% (N=10)
I use recommendations and skill endorsement information to add to my knowledge of candidates' knowledge, skills and abilities	19% (N=12)	17.5% (N=11)	19% (N=12)	34.9% (N=22)	9.5% (N=6)

Network of candidate's connections. For the purposes of recruitment....

	Completely Disagree	Partially Disagree	Neutral	Partially Agree	Completely Agree
I check candidates' network of connections	6.3% (N=4)	21.9% (N=14)	18.8% (N=12)	37.5% (N=24)	15.6% (N=10)
I check which companies candidates follow	14.1% (N=9)	23.4% (N=15)	28.1% (N=18)	28.1% (N=18)	6.3% (N=4)
I check which groups candidates are affiliated with or members of	7.8% (N=5)	23.4% (N=15)	17.2% (N=11)	42.2% (N=27)	9.4% (N=6)

Interactional services available on LinkedIn. For the purposes of recruitment....

	Completely Disagree	Partially Disagree	Neutral	Partially Agree	Completely Agree
I use the messaging service to get into contact with candidates	7.8% (N=5)	6.3% (N=4)	7.8% (N=5)	35.9% (N=23)	42.2% (N=27)
I post and add comments within groups to advertise the organisation I represent	12.5% (N=8)	17.2% (N=11)	18.8% (N=12)	29.7% (N=19)	21.9% (N=14)

LinkedIn Jobs and Talent Solutions. For the purposes of recruitment....

	Completely Disagree	Partially Disagree	Neutral	Partially Agree	Completely Agree
I use LinkedIn Jobs to post positions which are available within the organisation I represent	9.5% (N= 6)	4.8% (N=3)	7.9% (N=5)	31.7% (N=20)	46% (N=29)
I use forums and discussions to advertise job openings within the organisation I represent	17.2% (N=11)	20.3% (N=13)	18.8% (N=12)	28.1% (N=18)	15.6% (N=10)
I use the job search engine to view similar positions available within other organisations	15.6% (N=10)	10.9% (N=7)	28.1% (N=18)	29.7% (N=19)	15.6% (N=10)
I use LinkedIn Talent Solutions to find applicants appropriate for positions within the organisation I represent	28.1% (N=18)	9.4% (N=6)	17.2% (N=11)	28.1% (N=18)	17.2% (N=11)

Selection

LinkedIn profile of a candidate. For the purposes of selection....

	Completely Disagree	Partially Disagree	Neutral	Partially Agree	Completely Agree
I take an interest in a candidates profile				37.5% (N=12)	62.5% (N=20)
I use background information to add to my knowledge of candidates				40.6% (N=13)	59.4% (N=19)
I use information on education levels to add to my knowledge of candidates' qualifications and educational attainment			9.7% (N=3)	58.1% (N=18)	32.3% (N=10)
I use candidates' past experience information to add to my knowledge of their level of career experience			3.2% (N=1)	54.8% (N=17)	41.9% (N=13)
I use additional information such as languages and interests to add to my knowledge of candidates	3.1% (N=1)	6.3% (N=2)	43.8% (N=14)	40.6% (N=13)	6.3% (N=2)
I use recommendations and skill endorsement information to add to my knowledge of candidates' knowledge, skills and abilities	21.9% (N=7)	25% (N=8)	28.1% (N=9)	18.8% (N=6)	6.3% (N=2)

Network of candidate's connections. For the purposes of selection....

	Completely Disagree	Partially Disagree	Neutral	Partially Agree	Completely Agree
I check candidates' network of connections	6.3% (N=2)	18.8% (N=6)	31.3% (N=10)	28.1% (N=9)	15.6% (N=5)
I check which companies candidates follow	21.9% (N=7)	15.6% (N=5)	31.3% (N=10)	31.3% (N=10)	
I check which groups candidates are affiliated with or members of	15.6% (N=5)	12.5% (N=4)	25% (N=8)	43.8% (N=14)	3.1% (N=1)

Interactional services available on LinkedIn. For the purposes of selection....

	Completely Disagree	Partially Disagree	Neutral	Partially Agree	Completely Agree
I use the messaging service to get into contact with candidate	9.4% (N=3)	9.4% (N=3)	12.5% (N=4)	28.1% (N=9)	40.6% (N=13)

Proposition six:

Determinants of employability of candidates for recruitment

	Completely Disagree	Partially Disagree	Neutral	Partially Agree	Completely Agree
LinkedIn profiles are good indicators of an individual's cognitive ability	20% (n=11)	30.9% (n=17)	34.5% (n=19)	14.5% (n=8)	
LinkedIn profiles are good indicators of an individual's personality characteristics	23.6% (n=13)	18.2% (n=10)	40% (n=22)	18.2% (n=10)	
Recommendations and endorsements in LinkedIn profiles of individuals can display whether they are rewarding to deal with	20.4% (n=11)	24.1% (n=13)	33.3% (n=18)	20.4% (n=11)	1.9% (n=1)
Previous experience and skill endorsements of an individual in their LinkedIn profile can display whether they are able to do the job	14.5% (n=8)	29.1% (n=16)	23.6% (n=13)	29.1% (n=16)	3.6% (n=2)
Recommendations and previous experience in LinkedIn profiles of individuals can display whether they are willing to work hard	23.6% (n=13)	23.6% (n=13)	34.5% (n=19)	16.4% (n=9)	1.8% (n=1)

	Completely Disagree	Partially Disagree	Neutral	Partially Agree	Completely Agree
LinkedIn profiles are good indicators of an individual's cognitive ability	9.7% (n=3)	38.7% (n=12)	29% (n=9)	19.4% (n=6)	3.2% (n=1)
LinkedIn profiles are good indicators of an individual's personality characteristics	22.6% (n=7)	19.4% (n=6)	35.5% (n=11)	19.4% (n=6)	3.2% (n=1)
Recommendations and endorsements in LinkedIn profiles of individuals can display whether they are rewarding to deal with	12.9% (n=4)	38.7% (n=12)	22.6% (n=7)	25.8% (n=8)	
Previous experience and skill endorsements of an individual in their LinkedIn profile can display whether they are able to do the job	9.7% (n=3)	32.3% (n=10)	22.6% (n=7)	32.3% (n=10)	3.2% (n=1)
Recommendations and previous experience in LinkedIn profiles of individuals can display whether they are willing to work hard	16.7% (n=5)	26.7% (n=8)	33.3% (n=10)	23.3% (n=7)	

Determinants of employability of candidates for selection

Proposition seven:

Recruitment preferences

Profile Pictures	Not important	Slightly Important	Fairly Important	Reasonably Important	Very Important
Gender	75%	13.3	5%	5%	
Age	43.3%	40%	10%	5%	
Facial Maturity	76.7%	10%	6.7%	5%	
Physical Attractiveness	70%	20%	5%	3.3%	
Ethnicity	71.7%	18.3%	5%	3.3%	
Obesity/ Weight perceptions	73.3%	20%		5%	
Perceived sexual orientation	89.8%	6.8%		1.7%	

General and additional information	Not important	Slightly Important	Fairly Important	Reasonably Important	Very Important
Name	76.7%	11.7%	3.3%	5%	1.7%
Language(s) spoken	26.7%	26.7%	18.3%	15%	11.7%
Personal interests	45%	30%	16.7%	5%	1.7%
Education provider(s)	21.7%	23.3%	25%	16.7%	13.3%

Professional Information	Not important	Slightly Important	Fairly Important	Reasonably Important	Very Important
Qualification(s)		3.3%	20%	43.4%	33.3%
Experience			5%	21.7%	73.3%
Background information	1.7%	6.7%	31.7%	41.7%	18.3%
Professional recommendation(s)	16.7%	28.3%	31.7%	13.3%	10%
Skill endorsement(s)	40%	31.7%	11.7%	11.7%	3.3%

Networks	Not important	Slightly Important	Fairly Important	Reasonably Important	Very Important
Connections/ contacts	33.3%	36.7%	21.7%	3.3%	3.3%
Companies followed	40%	41.7%	13.3%	1.7%	1.7%
Groups and affiliations	33.3%	40%	18.3%	5%	1.7%

Selection preferences

Profile Pictures	Not important	Slightly Important	Fairly Important	Reasonably Important	Very Important
Gender	81.3%	15.6%	3.1%		
Age	53.1%	37.5%	9.4%		
Facial Maturity	62.5%	25%	6.3%	6.3%	
Physical Attractiveness	68.8%	25%		6.3%	
Ethnicity	78.1%	21.9%			
Obesity/ Weight perceptions	65.6%	28.1%	6.3%		
Perceived sexual orientation	93.8%	6.3%			

General and additional information	Not important	Slightly Important	Fairly Important	Reasonably Important	Very Important
Name	78.1%	9.4%	6.3%	3.1%	3.1%
Language(s) spoken	31.3%	31.3%	15.6%	12.5%	9.4%
Personal interests	43.8%	34.4%	9.4%	12.5%	
Education provider(s)	15.6%	43.8%	6.3%	21.9%	12.5%

Professional Information	Not important	Slightly Important	Fairly Important	Reasonably Important	Very Important
Qualification(s)		9.4%	21.9%	34.4%	34.4%
Experience		3.1%		31.3%	65.6%
Background information		6.3%	15.6%	43.8%	34.4%
Professional recommendation(s)	12.5%	43.8%	18.8%	18.8%	6.3%
Skill endorsement(s)	56.3%	18.8%	12.5%	12.5%	

Networks	Not important	Slightly Important	Fairly Important	Reasonably Important	Very Important
Connections/ contacts	34.4%	34.4%	21.9%	9.4%	
Companies followed	43.8%	46.9%	6.3%	3.1%	
Groups and affiliations	40.6%	43.8%	9.4%	6.3%	