

The Use of Social Media in Recruitment  
and its Impact on Diversity in Services  
Companies in Ireland

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## Abstract

Within the last five years there has been an increase in the use of social media for recruitment purposes, with many companies and job hunters embracing it for this purpose. This dissertation aims to investigate the role social media plays in the recruitment process and its impact on workplace diversity in services companies in Ireland. The hypothesis of this dissertation is that social media as a recruitment tool, in comparison to more traditional methods of recruitment e.g. newspaper advertisements, has led to an increase in workplace diversity in services companies in Ireland. This dissertation presents an unbiased literature review depicting the different perspectives put forward by various authors regarding both social media and workplace diversity. The literature review also focuses on the Diversity Iceberg model and how the introduction of social media as a recruitment tool can impact the Diversity Iceberg's waterline of visibility. In order to collect the primary research a quantitative approach is undertaken with the use of two survey/questionnaires. The respondents of the first survey/questionnaires were 120 services companies in Ireland and the respondents of the second survey/questionnaire were 45 students/recent graduates in Ireland. The dissertation analysed the data collected from the survey/questionnaires and provides an in-depth discussion on the results gathered. The main finding of this research is that the hypothesis was proven to be true. The majority of companies surveyed stated that the use of social media as a recruitment tool in comparison to more traditional methods of recruitment, has increased workplace diversity. However, companies also stated that recruitment through social media was not the sole reason for the increase in workplace diversity. This finding is important as it shows that workplace diversity has been influenced by other factors, and will be discussed in-depth in this research.

## 1. Introduction

Purpose: This dissertation aims to research how social media is used during the recruitment process. This dissertation also aims to investigate whether recruitment through social media - in comparison to traditional methods of recruitment - has had an impact on workplace diversity in services companies in Ireland.

Background: The way in which a significant number of companies recruit has changed within the last five to ten years. Before this, the majority of companies placed advertisements for vacant positions in newspapers, on the radio, by word of mouth or outsourced the task to recruitment agencies. While recruitment is still facilitated through these methods today, the introduction and the increase in the number of social media platforms available has in turn, led to an increase in the number of companies now recruiting through social media. "Social media sites are no longer just a place to keep in touch with friends and family. They have entered the work-space and are influencing the way recruiting and hiring is implemented" (Blacksmith and Poeppelman, 2013, p. 70). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn have created a less complicated, more time efficient, cost-saving and interactive method of recruitment (This topic will be discussed in-depth in the literature review on page 9). "In terms of professional work, social media can be said to be relatively easy and inexpensive to introduce. Social media can be especially helpful to human resource management when it comes to facilitating personnel recruitment, promoting learning processes on an individual, team, and organisational level" (Hauptmann and Steger, 2013, p. 29). Social media can be used during the recruitment process to place job advertisements, search for a candidate with a desired skill or education, and also utilised as a method of screening potential candidates. It can be argued that recruitment through social media can allow companies to be much more selective about whom they hire with O'Shea arguing that "the way employers go about filling positions today, is much more selective than was seen in the "war for talent" just a decade ago" (O'Shea, 2012, p. 1). As social media has a great number of users, utilising it during the recruitment process can provide companies with a larger amount of potential employees



to hire than traditional methods of recruitment. Social media can also allow companies to discover a great amount of knowledge about a candidate, without the candidate even being aware of this occurring. “During the pre-employment stage, applicant screening through social media can have an obvious benefit—to discover information about a candidate that would otherwise be impossible to discover” (Lieber, 2011, p. 98). If a candidate shares their information publically on a social media platform, companies can view the candidate’s profile and find out many insightful facts about them, such as what they look like and how they behave outside the workplace through the photos they share; companies can note a candidate’s religious beliefs or political views, ethnic groups the candidate may be a part of and even their relationship status. Therefore, information which can be extracted from one’s social media profile, may have a great influence on whether they get offered a particular job or not.

Workplace diversity is a highly topical subject which is frequently discussed by companies, education providers and legal systems to name but a few. “Workplace diversity encompasses a mosaic of races, ethnic and religious backgrounds, sexual orientation, personality orientations, family situation, age and physical abilities” (Mor-Barak, 2005:127). The concept of workplace diversity refers to “regarding and accepting each other’s individual differences. It involves understanding that each individual is unique, thus creating an environment that is conducive and empowers the potential of the employees” (Andrew Patrick, 2011, p.38). Redman and Wilkinson argue that “the management of diversity first emerged within the business literature towards the end of the 1980s. Therefore, in the history of personnel and HRM more generally, it is a relatively new concept” (Redman and Wilkinson, 2009, p. 324). Consequently, it can be argued that many companies may be still trying to increase their diversity in the workplace, or increase diversity awareness amongst employees. Recruitment through social media can allow companies to become diverse as they have a wide range of possible candidates available to choose from, many of which have diverse qualities. However, it can also cause companies to be more selective and critical about candidates before they even meet them. Companies may choose potential candidates to interview based on how they feel they will fit within the company from the information displayed on a potential candidate’s profile. This can occur before the company has even met with or contacted the candidate for an

interview. Some of the information posted on a candidate's social media profile may also depict what makes them diverse. Therefore, it can be argued that recruitment through social media can have ethical implications. Companies aiming to increase their workplace diversity can specifically use social media to view whether candidates are diverse and then hire them because of their diverse qualities, which can be seen as an unethical and unfair practice and will be discussed further in the literature review.

The literature review featured in this dissertation, will discuss in depth the literature surrounding both the use of social media for recruitment purposes and workplace diversity. The literature review will also examine the Diversity Iceberg Model as discussed by Mujtaba (2007). I plan to adapt this model in order to show the impact that recruitment through social media can have on portraying one's diverse characteristics before they have even met in person with their potential employer, thus, lowering the waterline of visibility on the Iceberg.

## 1.1 Research Questions

This dissertation aims to research the role that social media plays in recruitment today in Ireland. This dissertation also aims to investigate whether recruitment through social media, as opposed to more traditional methods of recruitment, has impacted diversity levels in the services sector in Ireland. The hypothesis of this dissertation is that recruitment through social media, in comparison to more traditional methods of recruitment, *has increased* workplace diversity in the services sector in Ireland. Therefore, the research questions this dissertation aims to answer are:

1. Do services companies and students/recent graduates in Ireland utilise the same social media platforms for recruitment purposes?
2. Do companies screen candidates based on the information available on their social media profile? A sub-question which extends from this is whether social media users are cautious about what they post on social media and whether they consider the impact posting certain things may have on their employability.

3. Do many companies consciously recruit through social media in order to increase diversity in the workplace?
4. Does recruitment through social media lower the waterline of visibility on the Diversity Iceberg?
5. Does recruitment through social media lead to an increase in diversity in the workplace in comparison to more traditional methods of recruitment?

**Approach:** This research will look at factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation for example, as a basis for diversity. This research will use Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn as the social media platforms researched, and examine how recruitment through them have impacted workplace diversity in companies in comparison to that of more traditional methods of recruitment. This research will take a positivist philosophy and both a deductive and inductive approach. In order to collect the primary data, a quantitative approach will be taken with the use of two survey/questionnaires. The first survey/questionnaire will be distributed to services companies in Ireland in order to collect the relevant information regarding the impact that recruitment through social media has had on their diversity levels and investigate how they utilise social media during the recruitment process. The second survey/questionnaire will be sent to students/recent graduates investigating their use of social media as a recruitment tool. It will also question how cautious they are towards posting certain information on their social media profiles due to the impact it may have on their employability.

It is important to acknowledge the existence of other social media platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram and Google+ for example. While these social networking platforms are also popular, Facebook and Twitter were chosen due to their high number of users in Ireland. There are 2,281,680 Facebook users in Ireland (Bluecast Digital.com, 2013) and over 22% of the population owns a Twitter account in Ireland (Bohan, 2012). Similarly, LinkedIn now has over one million users in Ireland (Burke, 2013) but more particularly it was chosen as it was created specifically for professionals to network socially and to facilitate recruitment. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the use of search engines such as Google in the recruitment process. They are used to search for the social network platforms spoken about in this dissertation. However, search engines merely facilitate the

search for social media platforms, and are not social media platforms. Therefore, they are not spoken about in this dissertation. Students/recent graduates were chosen as survey respondents due to their frequent use of social media. Similarly, as many students/recent graduates will be searching for jobs or recently searched for or obtained a job within the last year, they were chosen for this reason. Furthermore, services companies were chosen as they are frequent users of social media during the recruitment process.

I am undertaking this research as social media now plays a relevant role in the recruitment process of companies. Similarly, as workplace diversity is a highly relevant topic in today's corporate world, I thought it would be interesting to research the impact that social media as a tool of recruitment, has had on diversity in the workplace. Another reason I chose this topic is that as a member of Generation Y, I have grown up with the Internet and am an avid user of social media. Also, since studying about diversity in a HR module I found it intriguing to note the different approaches, benefits and challenges of diversity in the workplace. The practical benefits of the research, depending on the findings, would be that companies which have low diversity levels may be encouraged to become more diverse by recruiting through social media. Also, when I am looking for employment in the future, potential employers may take an interest in my research and be impressed by it the findings of it.

As previously stated, this dissertation will examine the impact that recruitment through social media has on diversity levels within services companies in Ireland, compared to that of traditional recruitment methods. Chapter two of this dissertation will look at the relevant literature surrounding both topics of diversity and social media recruitment. Chapter three will then detail the methodology of this research. Chapter four will then focus on the findings of the research and the analysis of the data collected. Chapter five will provide a discussion on the findings of the data analysis. Finally, chapter six will provide a conclusion of the overall dissertation, as well as any recommendations and areas for further research which may arise during the dissertation process.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Literature Theme One- Social Media Recruitment

Recruitment and selection is an important and ongoing event in most companies. “Recruitment is the process of attracting and encouraging potential employees to apply for a position, while selection is the process of making fair and relevant assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of applicants with the intention to hire them” (Sutherland and Wöcke, 2011, p. 23). “Recruitment and selection is a multi-faceted affair with many players, all of whom have an interest in its conduct and outcomes” (Billsbery, 2007, p. 1). One could argue that the company which is hiring; its current employees; the applicants for the job vacancy, and even the company’s main competitors all have a vested interest in its ongoing recruitment and selection activities. The company itself would have the most interest in the recruitment conduct and outcomes, as they would be hoping to hire the most skilled and talented people for the job. Similarly, the current employees would be interested in the recruitment and selection process as they will be working alongside the chosen candidate; the candidate themselves will of course be interested in the recruitment and selection of a company, as they have the chance to be offered a potential job, and finally the company’s competitors would be interested in knowing the types of recruitment methods the company is pursuing, and the type of employees and talent that the company is hiring. In order to maintain a competitive advantage and hire the most talented employees, it is imperative that companies continually ensure that their recruitment methods are as up to date as possible. Traditionally, recruitment has been paper-based, for example the advertisement of job vacancies in newspapers (Holm, 2012, p.243). However, in recent years, since the introduction of social media, the recruitment process for many companies has been transformed. “Social media can be a powerful tool a company can use to its advantage” (Russell, and Stutz, 2014, p. 3). Companies are now utilising social media as a recruitment tool which allows them to advertise job vacancies and search for desired staff. This not only gives companies a greater opportunity to highlight their existence, but it also allows them to access a greater pool of potential candidates, thus ensuring a competitive advantage. However, “the choice of recruitment method is often determined by the nature of the position being advertised and whether the skills required for the job are in short supply or

otherwise” (Gunnigle et al, 2011, p. 120). Therefore, it can be argued that some companies may only use social media to recruit if the required competencies or skills are difficult to obtain locally. The use of social media to recruit allows a job advertisement to be viewed by people much further afield or in a different country from where the company advertising is based, whereas a newspaper advertisement is typically viewed only by those in the local region or country.

Social media platforms can be defined as “information technologies which support interpersonal communication and collaboration using Internet-based platforms” (Kane et al, 2014, p. 275). While a large variety of social media platforms exist, for this research Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are the social media platforms being focused on. Kane et al further state that the three previously mentioned social media sites are used by hundreds of millions of people daily (Kane et al, 2014, p. 275). Facebook is a platform “used primarily to connect, interact and stay in touch with contacts that the user knows personally, such as friends, family and colleagues” (Johnson et al, 2013, p. 201). Companies may post job vacancies on their Facebook profile pages, but this is typically done in an informal manner. While Facebook is not popularly known as a recruitment platform, it may be used in aiding the recruitment process by gaining information about a potential candidate from their profile. This is an unintended purpose of Facebook.

Twitter “is a micro-blogging platform that allows users to share their thoughts, information and links in real time, and to communicate directly, privately or publicly with other Twitter users. Users can tweet about any topic within a 140-character limit” (Johnson et al, 2013, p. 202). Like Facebook, job vacancies can be posted on Twitter through a company’s profile page for their followers to see, or by adding #Jobs to the end of the Tweet. This makes the post available to both those who follow the company’s Twitter page and to Twitter users who search for a variety of job related posts. Searching for “jobs or #jobs” for example, will bring up any Tweets with this featured and relays the available jobs advertised on Twitter. Twitter typically plays a greater role than Facebook in the advertisement of jobs, but in comparison to LinkedIn its role is limited. Like Facebook, the use of Twitter for recruitment is an unintended purpose and not what it was created for.

LinkedIn “is used to manage interactions and relationships of a business nature” (Claybaugh and Haseman, 2013, p. 94). “In spite of the growing popularity of Twitter and Facebook, LinkedIn is the leading social network for recruiters, not least because it was specifically developed for professional purposes” (Chamorro-Premuzic & Steinmetz, 2013, p.1). LinkedIn specifically focuses on building a professional social network and facilitating the recruitment process and therefore, recruitment is its intended purpose. LinkedIn users can display their current occupation, level of education, previous employment history, and skills or talents that they may possess. Similarly, companies can create a LinkedIn profile where they can publicise their existence, strategies, goals or achievements. Companies can also place job vacancies on LinkedIn, or search for members whose profiles feature a certain occupation or skill/talent. “Recruiters and head-hunters can now find ideal candidates in minutes by searching key terms on LinkedIn, which hosts a repository of potential candidate pools” (Blacksmith and Poeppelman, 2013, p. 70). LinkedIn has a participant base of more than 175 million experienced professionals from around the world, with membership from over 200 countries” (Claybaugh and Haseman, 2013, p. 94) and therefore, can provide companies with a larger talent pool of diverse candidates from which to choose. (Please see Appendix One on page 70 for sample job advertisements on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn). Finally, it is also important to acknowledge the existence of websites specifically created to advertise job vacancies on, such as Monster.ie. I would argue that these websites follow the same process as traditional recruitment as they allow companies to post job vacancies online, where they can be viewed by others and applied for by submitting a C.V. through the website. Unlike social media, these websites are much less interactive and do not allow communication between profile users. Therefore, they are not being focused on in this research.

Within recent years many companies have adopted social media as one of their main platforms of recruitment. Roberts argues that “the explosive growth of the Internet in the twenty-first century has made it a widely accepted part of business communication” (Roberts, 2005, p. 35). Many companies now use the Internet daily for various purposes, such as emailing, video calling and researching. Therefore, it is only natural that they would also introduce the Internet, and more specifically social media, into the recruitment process. Redman and Wilkinson believe the main

reasons for the transition to social media as a recruitment tool are “related to issues of cost and speed” (Redman and Wilkerson, 2009, p. 77). Recruitment through social media is usually much less expensive and a faster process than traditional recruitment methods. Since recruitment is typically a continuous and ongoing affair in many companies, utilising social media as a recruitment tool gives companies a competitive advantage over those who do not use it. “Companies that don’t embrace social media as a recruitment tool might risk losing quality candidates to their competition that is focused on such outreach”. (Hunt, 2010, p. 37). Due to the large number of social media users, companies now have greater access to talent pools and desired candidates. Therefore, the number of companies who recruit or advertise vacancies through social media has increased, which demonstrates social media is now an accepted and legitimate form of recruitment in many companies. Parez et al reinforce this fact by arguing that “the trend of recruiting via social media sites is here to stay” (Parez et al, 2013, p. 958). Gale emphasises Parez’s idea that social media recruiting is a permanent fixture, by stating that “social media sites have become such a prevalent part of the recruiting process that most recruiting software providers are integrating social media into their applicant tracking and assessment process. Tools today allow recruiters to automatically post openings on social sites, tap into employees’ social networks to mine candidates, and track which social channels generate the most leads and result in the best hires” (Gale, 2013, p. 8). The introduction of these tools, such as the ability to search for a desired skill or education, make recruiting through social media much easier and more attractive for companies to carry out.

In terms of social media users, “college students are particularly heavy users of social media” (Kyung-Sun Kim et al, 2014, p. 443). Therefore, students/recent graduates were chosen to provide primary data. Sacks and Graves argue that “social media not only serves as a communication tool for students, but shapes the way they construct their social and professional identities” (Sacks and Graves, 2012, p. 80). However, in contrast to this Herbold and Bambi argue that “students tend to prefer not to use social networking sites for job search purposes” (Herbold, and Bambi, 2013, p. 68). Therefore, this research will investigate students/recent graduates’ use of social media for recruitment purposes.



## 2.1.2 Types of Recruitment through Social Media

Recruitment through social media can occur in a number of ways. The first is by companies or recruiters sourcing potential employees themselves, through searching personal profiles of those which have a certain talent, education or skill. This process is typically (but not always) carried out through LinkedIn. Developing this further, it can be stated that during traditional recruitment and selection processes, companies normally select new employees from the candidates who have applied for the vacancy. However, with the introduction of social media as a recruitment tool, companies can now search for and discover desired candidates before even advertising a job vacancy and without those selected as desirable by the company, even being aware of a job vacancy existing. Companies can “engage a candidate in a way you never could with a recruiter because of social media's scalability and the ability to have a two-way dialog” (Hunt, 2010, p. 37).

The second method is by the candidates themselves applying for a job vacancy which has been advertised by companies on social media platforms. Employers “can showcase the company with pictures and videos and give candidates an idea of what it feels like to work there” (Hunt, 2010, p. 37). While many companies advertise vacancies on social media, it is important to note that there still exists companies that only use more traditional methods of recruitment. However, it can be reasoned that organisations which do not use social media to recruit employees, can still make use of social media during the screening process. A company may place job advertisements in newspapers, and then check the social media profiles of those who apply, in order to screen them based on the information that they display on their profiles. This fits with Joos’ argument that “social-media tools and techniques currently used are not a direct replacement for traditional hiring processes, but rather are a supplement to them” (Joos, 2008, p. 58). The use of social media as a platform to screening candidates can be a supplement to traditional recruitment in this case. Using social media to screen employees will be further discussed in this chapter.

“Successful social media recruiting requires a strategy – not just knowledge of how the various sites work” (Hunt, 2010, p. 39). While “creating a social media strategy may not seem clear, it is necessary to be able to measure the success and engagement of the actions a company takes online so that future decisions can be

made” (Berkowitch, 2010, p. 10). While the strategy a company decides on is based on the direction the company is taking, it is important that companies implement their strategy within their social media recruitment processes in order to align all objectives and goals. “Without clear objectives, companies are reluctant to invest resources (mainly time and money) and expect too much too fast in terms of financial returns. These ingredients create a fertile soil for boom-and-bust scenarios in which managers expect too much from a technology that contributes to their disappointment if the technology does not bring the expected results or financial gains” (Verheyden and Goeman, 2013, p. 9).

### 2.1.3 Benefits of Recruitment through Social Media

Recruitment through social media can offer many benefits to companies. In comparison to more traditional methods of recruitment, advertising job vacancies through social media allows companies to access a larger, diverse pool of potential candidates. Similarly, advertising jobs on social media platforms can also allow the post to be seen by a large number of people and therefore, may attract a greater interest in the job itself compared to advertising the vacancy through more traditional forms of recruitment. Gunnigle et al state that “web-based recruitment and early-stage pre-screening of applicants are now common across the world due to the fact online recruitment allows access to a wider range of candidates and is more convenient and considerably cheaper than traditional methods” (Gunnigle et al, 2011, p.121). Unlike traditional forms of recruitment, which typically come with a fee, companies can post job vacancies on Facebook and Twitter free of charge. Facebook “is a simple, free way to communicate” (Facebook, 2014). However, if companies want their profile to be viewed by a great number of Facebook users, they can select a payment plan to “create several adverts targets-based on location, demographics and interests and also to promote posts to engage audiences” (Facebook, 2014). According to Facebook, “Most online advertisements reach only 27% of their intended audiences. Facebook’s average is 91%” (Facebook for Business, 2014). Therefore, job advertisements on Facebook may get more views than advertisements on other social media. Similarly, Twitter is free to sign up for, and like Facebook, users can post job advertisements for free. Like Facebook, if companies want to increase the target audience of their posts they can pay to promote their Tweets or company profile. Doing so “reaches a wider group of users

and can spark engagement from their existing followers” (Support.Twitter.com, 2014). “Promoted Tweets and accounts are clearly labelled as promoted when an advertiser is paying for their placement on Twitter. In every other respect, promoted Tweets act just like regular Tweets and can be retweeted, replied to, favourite and more” (Support.Twitter.com, 2014). Like both Facebook and Twitter, LinkedIn is free to create a profile on. However, unlike Facebook and Twitter and more similar to traditional methods of recruitment, posting job vacancies on LinkedIn incurs a fee. LinkedIn state “the price of the job posting varying by geographical location” with user able to choose from different pricing plans for 30 days or more (Help.linkedin.com, 2014). However, unlike traditional methods of recruitment which offer no certainty that candidates will apply for the job, LinkedIn “guarantees ten applicants” (LinkedIn.com, 2014). This is an important factor which may influence the use of LinkedIn over traditional methods of recruitment.

As previously mentioned on page 9, another factor which benefits companies by recruiting through social media, is the increase in the speed of response and hire times. With traditional methods of recruitment a company may have to wait a number of days until the advertisement is published or released to the public. However, with social media the advertisement of the job vacancy is instantaneous. Recruiting through social media, as opposed to traditional methods, also allows for a much shorter response time for both the candidates applying for a job vacancy and for the company when receiving the applications. Furthermore, another benefit of social media recruitment is that the screening of candidates is made much simpler. Roberts argues that “there are two main methods of screening: those who approach it as a means of screening out and those who approach it as a means of screening in” (Roberts, 2005, p. 101). This can be adapted for recruitment through social media, particularly on LinkedIn, where companies can easily screen candidates through searching for particular desired skills, educations or qualities before even placing a job vacancy advertisement or receiving any CVs. It can also be argued that doing so is both a method of screening in and screening out candidates, as the search results given will only show those desirable, thus screening them in and screening out those lacking the desired skills or qualities. However, if a company were to place a job advertisement on a social media platform and screen all the candidates once their applications had been received, it can be reasoned that due to the large amount of

social media users, the job vacancy would receive more applicants than traditional recruitment methods, and therefore, the screening period would be considerably longer.

A third benefit of recruiting through social media platforms is that doing so allows companies to view aspects of a candidate's personality which can be gleaned from one's digital footprint - their social media profile- which may not be observed from a printed paper CV (Chamorro-Premuzic & Steinmetz, 2013, p.1). By being able to view one's life from the information available on their social media profile, companies can see first-hand what type of person the candidate is, and how they spend their time. "Applicant screening through social media can have an obvious benefit—to discover information about a candidate that would otherwise be impossible to discover" (Lieber, 2011, p. 98). This may be beneficial as people with an average CV may be deemed more suitable or interesting based on their social media portrayal of their lives. However, this is not without its negatives. If a company advertises a job vacancy on LinkedIn, they may be inclined to view candidates' Facebook and Twitter accounts as well to gain extra information about the candidates. "For companies, the temptation of using sites like Facebook to take a peek at what job-seekers say and do when they're off the clock is its accessibility and the sense that it offers a real-life window into someone's unguarded thoughts" (White, 2013, p.1). While it gives companies a more in-depth insight into the candidate, nonetheless, doing so may also have ethical dilemmas, which will be discussed next in this chapter.

Furthermore, the information companies find on a candidate's social media profile may not represent the person they truly are. The information may be picked as it is suitable for prospective employers to view, or to impress them. Rolland and Parmentier argue that internet users do not always wish to see their virtual identity linked to their real identity. Research into social relationships on the internet shows that internet users play with their identities and flag up multiple aspects of themselves (Rolland and Parmentier, 2013, p. 815). Therefore, screening candidates on the information available on their profile may not always be a reliable method.

#### 2.1.4 Ethical Dilemmas of Recruitment through Social Media

The use of social media as a platform for recruitment also poses ethical considerations. "One of the major concerns facing employers who use internet

searches to screen applicants is the potential for a claim of discrimination” (Parez et al, 2013, p. 956). If a potential candidate for a job is made aware that the reason they did not receive a job offer is based on information displayed on their social media profile, they may argue that they were discriminated against depending on the nature of the information displayed. Therefore, companies should be aware of the complications of using the information displayed on a candidate’s social media profile as a basis of recruiting and screening as they may face legal action in extreme cases.

The other ethical concern is invasion of privacy. “Anyone who chooses to create a LinkedIn profile must be aware that this information can and will be looked at by HR professionals, recruiters and any other users” (Parez et al, 2013, p. 956). Therefore, users of LinkedIn and other social media platforms, should consider the impact posting certain things online may have on their career. However, in contrast to this, some research has suggested that younger individuals (e.g., Generation Y) may be less concerned about privacy than prior generations and therefore may not that precautions when posting publically on social media (Davison et al, 2011, p. 155). This may in turn impact their recruitment potential and it can also be a sign of generational change. However, for arguments sake it can be stated that if a Generation Y candidate posts information on social media which can be seen publically, then a Generation X manager may be more shocked by this and decide not to recruit them, compared to if the manager was also Generation Y. Therefore, it could be stated that recruitment techniques of managers from Generation X and Y are very different, which in turn leads to the recruitment of very different types of employee.

Gunnigle et al argue that “the selection process is far more about how people perceive each other and the impressions that are made when they meet each other- and it is this human interaction that often determines the selection decision that is made (Gunnigle et all, 2011, p. 123). Therefore, it could be argued that using social media to choose candidates does not give them the opportunity to portray themselves properly as they are judged on the information they have provided on their social media profile. Doing so does may hinder them from making a lasting impression which they may have made if they had of been able to meet in person.

Similarly, the image one may portray of themselves on social media may be far removed from who they really are.

## 2.2 Literature Theme Two- Diversity

### 2.2.1 What is Workplace Diversity?

“Diversity means difference or variety. So the term diverse workforce refers to a workforce where workers have a variety of different characteristics including but not limited to gender, disability, culture, ethnicity, religion, experience, body size, skills, etc.” (Mujtaba, 2007, p. 5). Within recent years, workplace diversity has become a topical and debatable issue. Workplace diversity has increased considerably within recent years with “modern social and economic trends showing that the demographic composition of the workforce is rapidly changing - population is aging, more women are working in companies, members of different racial and ethnic minorities are moving from country to country and changing the structure of the European labour market” (Senichev, 2012, p. 337). Most companies which possess diverse workforces have obtained them naturally, meaning that the company hired employees who were distinct in some way, based on the need for their skills or education, and not for the qualities which make them different. Similarly, an aging workforce would also be an example of workplace diversity occurring naturally. However, other companies when recruiting, may purposely choose those they feel best fit with company culture, which in turn leaves little room for hiring a diverse workforce. Today in Ireland, the Diversity & Equality Law Division is responsible for the “promotion of greater respect for the person and for diversity, equality and cultural difference, primarily through legislative and administrative mechanisms. It has a particular focus on implementing a policy to combat racism and to promote an inclusive society” (The Department of Justice.ie, 2014). However, it is important to note that companies are not legally required to have a diverse workforce. Legally in Ireland, they must respect diversity and treat all employees as equal (The Department of Justice.ie, 2014).

Companies can also make it their initiative to highlight, increase or manage workplace diversity. According to Harvey and Allard there are “three major approaches to workplace diversity: Affirmative action, valuing diversity and diversity management” (Harvey and Allard, 2005, p 5). Affirmative action refers “to a set of

practices undertaken by employers, university admissions offices, and government agencies to go beyond non-discrimination, with the goal of actively improving the economic status of minorities and women with regard to employment, education, and business ownership and growth” (Holzer and Neumark, 2006, p. 463). With specific focus of the use of affirmative action within the recruitment process, it is the effort of actively hiring employees from different minority groups or employees that are women for example, even if these applicants, given that their credentials along certain dimensions might look weaker than those of the majority (Holzer and Neumark, 2006, p. 463). Companies may choose to hire candidates based solely on what makes them diverse, in order to have a greater diverse workforce, instead of hiring the best talent for the job.

Harvey and Allard describe the act of valuing diversity as focusing on making individuals more aware that a wider range of behaviours and styles can add value to the quality of the work. The intent of doing so is to change the organisational culture often by training, so that the diverse workforce is valued for its ability to see problems from a range of perspectives (Harvey and Allard, 2005, p.5). Mujtaba further emphasises this by stating that “valuing diversity and thereby becoming a diversity champion requires each person to tolerate differences, respect differences, understand differences, and to examine or explore those differences in order to maximise the productivity of the workforce and gain organisational competitiveness. In order to be successful, workers and managers need to become culturally competent” (Mujtaba, 2007, p.17). The method of valuing diversity allows companies and co-workers to embrace each other’s differences and understand how these differences can improve employee performance.

The third and final approaching to workplace diversity according to Harvey and Allard -managing diversity- “requires that diversity efforts link to the strategic mission and goals of the organisation and maximise the contributions of individual workers. It is a process of requiring changes in the organisational culture to enable all workers to achieve their full potential” (Harvey and Allard, 2005, p. 5-6). However, it could be argued that this approach may be the hardest to implement and monitor. To note whether this approach has been a success can be difficult as it can be time-consuming and a personal matter of perspective whether an employee has reached their full potential or not.

In Ireland it would appear that valuing and managing diversity are common in companies. However, there is nothing in the literature or on company websites to suggest affirmative action is common, or legal in Ireland.

### 2.2.2 Why Should Companies Aim to be Diverse?

Embracing diversity presents a number of different benefits to companies. One of the main advantages of having a diverse workforce is that it allows companies to be more competitive when hiring, as it offers them access to a larger pool of differentiated candidates of which to hire from. Today, “many employers have identified the objective of recruiting and selecting a diverse workforce as an important organisational goal. Being perceived as an employer of choice by the most talented individuals in today’s labour force is a critical capability needed to compete successfully in an increasingly competitive marketplace” (Kossek and Lobel (eds), 2000, p. 23). Being publically known as a diverse company also improves company image which is an advantage.

A second advantage to possessing a diverse workforce is that it stops companies from ‘cloning’ employees through the hiring of the same type of people. Companies that aim to be diverse reduce the risk of groupthink occurring through the spread of new ideas and beliefs. “Groupthink is a process of rationalisation that sets in when members of a team or group begin to think alike. It can be fostered by an organization’s culture or managers who do not tolerate dissent” (Sims and Sauser, 2013, p. 79). Groupthink “usually happens in homogeneous teams and groups. Research has shown that homogeneous teams are neither as creative nor as productive as heterogeneous teams when dealing with or solving, complex problems” (Mujtaba, 2007, p. 77). Therefore, a diverse workforce permits the generation and exchange of new concepts amongst co-workers and encourages innovation in the workplace which is another benefit.

Employing a diverse workforce “can also help companies to access a wide range of new customers as consumers of other ethnicities may be more comfortable taking their business there when they see people of a similar background in employment present” (Laroche & Rutherford, 2007, p. 282). This would be an example of positive public relations for a company, as their willingness to embrace diversity may gain



them more customers and make them a more attractive, equal and fair company in the eyes of the public.

Another benefit of workplace diversity is that it can improve the company at a number of different levels. “At the individual level performance can be enhanced when negative diversity-related barriers to productivity are removed. When workgroup diversity is managed effectively, groups will develop processes that can enhance creativity, problem-solving, workgroup cohesiveness, and communication. At the organisational level, performance may improve; marketing may be enhanced, since firms are hopefully able to better mirror and adapt diverse markets; flexibility can be heightened; and improved recruitment of the best new labour force entrants can result” (Kossek and Lobel (eds), 2000, p. 3). Therefore, it can be argued that companies who embrace diversity in the workplace improve not only the employees’ performance but also the overall performance of the organisation, which may in turn give the company a competitive advantage over others.

However, in contrast to these benefits Neault & Mondair argue that “workplace diversity can have some negative effects, including increased conflict between groups, poorer performance, and lower job satisfaction for some due to competition among diverse employees” (Neault & Mondair, 2011, p. 73). However, as the majority of companies strive to become diverse or increase workplace diversity, it can be argued that the benefits of being a diverse company far outweigh the negatives. Mujtaba argues that valuing diversity and each person individually is critical to a company’s survival (Mujtaba, 2007, p. 17). Nonetheless, it is important to note that not all companies may want to increase diversity or be diverse, nor may obtaining a diverse workforce always have positive impacts on a workplace.

### 2.3 Literature Theme Three- How does Recruitment through Social Media Impact Diversity?

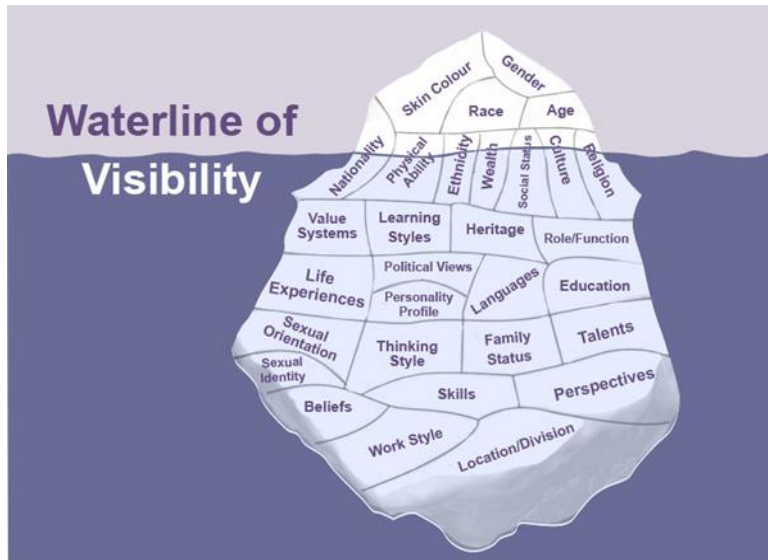
The hypothesis of this research is that recruitment through social media, as opposed to traditional recruitment methods, does increase diversity in the workplace. As previously discussed on page 9, recruiting through social media can allow companies to become more diverse as it provides them access to a wide range of possible candidates. As social media is used globally, at the click of a button

companies can place job advertisements on these platforms which can be seen by many users globally. Therefore, companies can potentially receive applications from candidates from all over the world, many of whom being more diverse than the companies' present workforces.

As already discussed on page 9, companies which actively want to increase their diversity levels can do so through the use of social media. Social media, unlike traditional recruitment methods – such as placing an advertisement for a job vacancy in a newspaper- allows companies themselves to actively search for a particular person with a specific skill, work history or education. Therefore, companies which aim to increase diversity in the workplace may do so by viewing candidates' social media profiles, and judging from their profile pictures and public information available, whether the candidate is worth hiring and if they display diverse qualities. This can be argued to be a form of positive discrimination. Positive discrimination occurs where there is direct action to give more favourable treatment to the under-represented group by, for example, giving preference to Asian candidates over their white counterparts" (Roberts, 2005, p. 182). Roberts further states that positive discrimination is not legally permissible (Roberts, 2005, p. 182). However, while it cannot be proved, it can be argued that once a CV is submitted, either through social media, or traditional forms of recruitment, companies, or those involved in the recruitment process, can search for candidates' social media profiles and note any factors which make them diverse without the candidates or other employees of the company even being aware of its occurrence. Therefore, social media, although not legally permissible, can be used to facilitate positive discrimination.

The Diversity Iceberg taken from Mujtaba, describes the many unique internal and external qualities and characteristics that make a person similar to or different from others" (Mujtaba. 2007, p. 13). An iceberg is a huge mass of ice, the majority of which is underwater, which means very little of the whole iceberg is seen by those looking at it from above water, and therefore, it may be judged solely on the tip of the iceberg that is visible above the water line. The Diversity Iceberg outlays how one is perceived based on the characteristics that they display when meeting one another in person for the first time. These go above the waterline and include features such as skin colour, hair colour, body size and general appearance. Other important characteristics, such as ethnicity, disability, religion, financial status, political views,

values, cultural background and sexual orientation, may not be apparent based on a first look or a first impression and therefore, go below the waterline (Mujtaba. 2007, p. 13).



(Image of the Diversity

Iceberg taken from Brook Graham, 2014).

Adapting the Diversity Iceberg to fit with my research, it can be argued that recruiting through social media can significantly lower the waterline of visibility. During traditional recruitment methods, companies who receive CVs from applicants can tell very little about the applicants' characteristics and whether they are diverse. Obvious factors such as the candidate's name, address, education and work history are of course available on one's CV and may give a general idea of who the person is, but apart from that very little such as race, religious or sexual orientation is known for definite. However, it can now be argued that when one applies for a job via social media or traditional recruitment methods, companies can search for and view an applicant's social media profile. Similarly, companies who are actively searching for candidates with a particular skill or education, may also view desired candidates' profiles on social media. Depending on the privacy settings and information one chooses to share on their social media profile, companies can make an estimated guess on what race, religion, talents, and even sexual orientation one has based on the photographs and statuses they share for example. While "privacy settings and controls allow users to reduce exposure; however, certain information is typically always publicly available, such as their name, profile picture, and networks. Even with the utmost precautions in making profiles private, social media sites often

provide notice to users that they do not guarantee the privacy of the information” (O’Shea, 2012, p.2). Therefore, it can be argued that social media can lower the waterline of visibility on the Diversity Iceberg as firstly, people do not even need to meet in person now before discovering characteristics of a person which are featured above the waterline of visibility, and secondly, other factors which are below the waterline of visibility are now more obvious to companies due to social media. It is important to note however, that there are exceptions to this. A person may not have a social media profile, and therefore, during traditional recruitment methods companies will not be able to find out more about candidates before meeting with them. Secondly, the information displayed on one’s profile may be private and therefore very little will be garnered from what they do display. Thirdly, as previously mentioned on page 13, the information based on one’s profile may be fake, or incorrect, and therefore, companies may judge candidates based on untrue information. While it cannot be stated for certain, it can be claimed that the lowering of the waterline of visibility may influence companies in the recruitment and screening process. Social media can allow companies to discover more about a candidate’s characteristics before even meeting with them, and therefore, may play a part in deciding whether to hire a person or not. This will be discussed further in the discussion section of this dissertation on page 9.

However, there are also many arguments put forward about how recruitment through social media can lead to a decrease in workplace diversity. As previously mentioned, recruitment through social media can allow companies to be more selective and critical about candidates before they even meet with them. Social media can be used by companies to search for applicants’ profiles and discover information about them which is not displayed on their CV. Doing so, companies may discover information about candidates which they would not have known only for social media, for example, how religious they are, how many children they have and therefore, companies may choose not to hire certain candidates. This in turn can decrease diversity.

Barber argues that recruitment through social media leads to a decrease in diversity in the workplace. Barber states that different races and ethnicities may use different social media platforms than one another and therefore, companies which only use one social media platform to recruit may miss out on other desired candidates

(Barber, 2006, p.12). Similarly, Redman and Wilkinson assert that “Internet recruitment, may not be fully compliant with disability discrimination legislation and there are concerns about accessibility for socially excluded groups, such as the less IT-literate” (Redman and Wilkinson, 2009, p. 78). Therefore, it can be reasoned that those who possess qualities which make them more diverse from others, may not actually utilise social media and therefore, companies that only advertise on social media are missing out on opportunities to hire these diverse people. Redman and Wilkinson also contend that “research has shown that younger people, the better educated and those already in work are more likely to carry out job searches online (Redman and Wilkinson, 2009, p. 78). Gunnigle et al agree with this and further state that “organisations in industries in which both the company and workers tend to be online are more likely to use online recruitment” (Gunnigle et al, 2011, p. 121). Roberts also corresponds with this idea by stating that “the Internet is less novel to younger people and very suitable therefore for graduate recruitment” (Roberts, 2005, p. 104). By combining all these statements, I would argue that from what is stated in the literature, recruitment through social media leads to the exclusion of older people, those with disabilities, an obviously those who do not use social media in general; and therefore, companies may display a lack of diversity of older workers, those with special needs, and also those less fortunate who may not afford to possess the technology needed to access social media. However, it could then be counter-argued that the same can be stated for companies who only use traditional methods of recruitment. Since Roberts argued that the use of social media is a trend amongst younger generations, it can then be reasoned that companies who only advertise vacancies via traditional methods of recruitment, are missing out on hiring younger generations, and thus so, also exclude younger generations from joining the company. Therefore, the company may possess a workforce which is lacking the diversity of younger employees. Hence, in order to obtain the greatest access to potential employees, companies should not just use one form of social media to recruit, instead setting up profiles on a number of different social media platforms, and displaying the same information on each of them. Companies who want to increase diversity even further should use a combination of both traditional methods of recruitment and social media.

## 2.4 Literature Conclusion

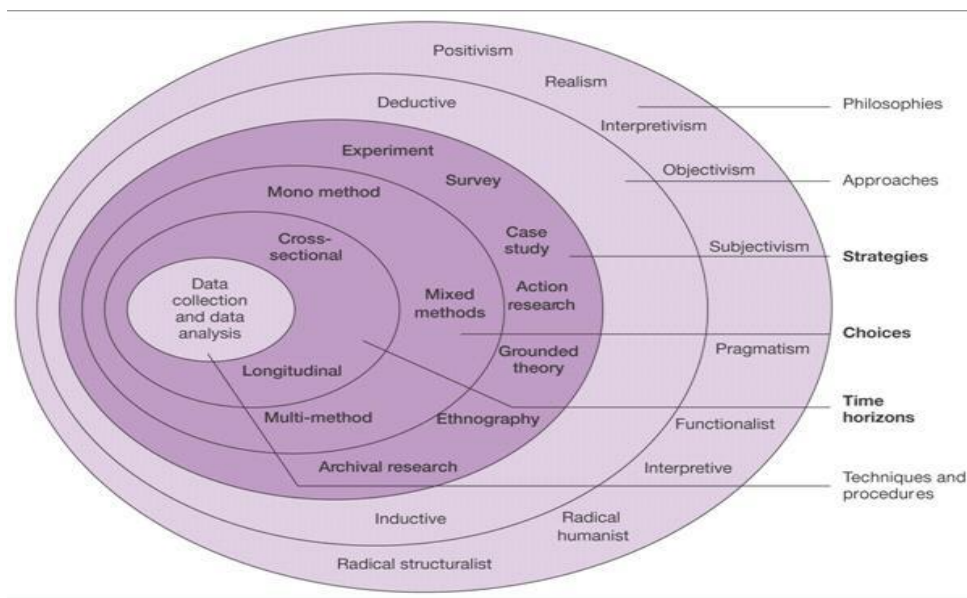
To conclude, the use of social media as a tool for recruitment has become popular in recent years. As a quick and cost-effective method of recruitment, not only does social media allow companies to access a greater pool of candidates to advertise job vacancies to, but it also allows companies themselves to search for certain people with a desired skill, education or quality. As discussed in this chapter, companies can also adapt social media and use it to search and view potential candidates' profiles without the candidates being aware of this occurring. The use of social media to facilitate this poses many ethical dilemmas, such as whether it is an invasion of privacy, or questions if the information is publically displayed on an applicant's social media profile, is the company really invading the privacy of the applicant. Social media can also be used to screen employees, and even companies who do not use social media to advertise job vacancies can use social media to view candidates' profiles and find out more about them.

Being diverse is also seen as a benefit to companies. Workplace diversity is also a topical issue and many companies are keen to highlight their diversity initiatives or the levels of diversity they possess. Having a diverse workforce can improve performance at an individual level and an organisational level also. While recruiting through social media provides companies with a large audience, this literature review also highlighted how recruitment through social media isolates those who do not utilise social media, such as the aged population or those who have certain disabilities. The Diversity Iceberg was also highlighted in this literature review with the impact that social media can have on the waterline of visibility being brought to attention.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Methodology Introduction

The purpose of research methodology is to demonstrate “that the process of conducting the study is justified and fully disclosed in an accurate and detailed description” (Clare and Hamilton, 2003, p. 13). Therefore, this chapter will discuss the methodology used within this dissertation in order to research the role that social media plays in recruitment and its impact on workplace diversity in services companies in Ireland. This chapter will use the Research Onion as a basis of the methodology, taken from Saunders et al (2009, p. 138).



This chapter will use the design of the Onion to discuss the research design of the dissertation through the research philosophy, approach and strategy which have been taken. This chapter will then detail the data collection instruments and the respondents chosen and why. Following this, the methodology will then discuss the research ethics which needed to be adhered to. Finally, this section will discuss what the limitations to the methodology are before finishing with an overall conclusion. The methodology of this dissertation played an important part in the research surrounding the role social media plays in recruitment and the impact it has had on diversity in services companies in Ireland. Therefore, each part of the methodology, such as the research design and data collection methods, were specifically chosen for their suitability in aiding and advancing this research.

## 3.2 Research Design

White defines the research design as “the blueprint or detailed outlined of your whole research and dissertation” (White, 2009, p. 26). The research design features the research philosophy, approach, and strategy; the research respondents and the research ethics chosen for the dissertation. The research design varies from each researcher and the type of research being undertaken. Saunders et al state that “when designing your research method the most important consideration is your research question” (Saunders et al, 2009, p. 109). Therefore, I chose my research design based on its suitability to benefit and further my own research and my research questions.

### 3.2.1 Research Philosophy

Saunders et al argue that the term research philosophy “relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of the knowledge in relation to the research” (Saunders et al, 2009, p. 108). While different authors dispute the number of different research philosophies, Anderson argues that there are two main principles of research typically used which are known as positivist and interpretivist (Anderson, 2004, p.42). I chose the philosophy which I felt was most suitable to my research. Therefore, the research philosophy in this dissertation takes a positivist approach. A positivist approach “bases its account of science on an empiricist epistemology and tends to prefer quantitative data, often using experiments, surveys and statistics” (Bond, 2006 p.23). Anderson argues positivists “use a highly structured research process, collecting facts and then studying the relationship of one set of facts to another” (Anderson, 2004, p.13). Anderson further argues that “the theories formulated can be used to predict future relationships and behaviours” (Anderson, 2004, p.42). For my research I collected literature on both social media and diversity before studying the relationship between them. This is in contrast to using the research philosophy known as the interpretative theory. “Interpretivist principles state that knowledge is constructed by human beings as they make sense of their environment. Interpretivists must be flexible to allow the emphasis of the research to change as the process unfolds and qualitative data is preferred” (Anderson, 2004, p. 42). My research takes a positivist approach as it is objective and the information gathered forms the basis of my research in order to prove my hypothesis and theory. As previously mentioned, the hypothesis that has been formulated for this research is



that recruiting through social media, in comparison to that of other forms of recruitment, does increase workplace diversity in services companies in Ireland. Taking a positivist approach was seen as the most suitable philosophy for this topic as it focuses on testing the hypothesis and the data gathered is quantifiable. This dissertation aims to test the hypothesis through gathering information from students/recent graduates who utilise social media during the recruitment process; and from services companies regarding the impact that recruitment through social media has had on workplace diversity. The information that will be gathered will then be used to prove or disprove the hypothesis. Anderson argues that when undertaking a positivist approach “the data should be collected by dispassionate researchers” (Anderson, 2004, p. 42). This is to make sure the researcher does not let their personal or emotional involvement influence their research. However, as I have no favourable outcome for the findings of my research, I would argue I am a dispassionate researcher.

### 3.2.2 Research Approach

Research can take a deductive or an inductive approach. This research takes both, which is known as a mixed or combined approach. A deductive approach is “a research approach involving the testing of a theoretical proposition by the employment of a research strategy specifically designed for the purpose of its testing” (Saunders et al, 2009, p. 604). A deductive approach involves testing a theory, “and the gathering of data in order to test the hypothesis which was previously formulated. A deductive approach is taken in this dissertation as the research began by first formulating the hypothesis that recruitment through social media does increase diversity in the workplace in services companies in Ireland. The hypothesis will then be tested by the gathering of data relevant to the research in order to prove whether the theory is correct. An inductive approach involves carrying out research in order to form a theory (Saunders et al, 2009, p. 490). This involves researching the role that social media plays in recruitment today and forming conclusions based on the findings. This dissertation aimed to research the role social media plays in the recruitment purpose, of which a theory will be created after the research is carried out, which is inductive.

### 3.2.3 Research Strategy

The research strategy undertaken in this dissertation is following a quantitative approach. Willis argues that “most quantitative research falls into three broad categories: experimental, relationship research and survey research” (Willis, 2008, p. 174). The quantitative strategy of this dissertation will be carried through the use of survey/questionnaires. Owing to the nature of the research questions, survey/questionnaires were deemed as the most suitable choice of research strategy to undertake. “Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity” (Kothari, 2004 p.30). “Quantitative perspectives derive from a positivist epistemology, which holds that there is an objective reality that can be expressed numerically” (Glatthorn and Joyner, 2005, p. 40). The alternative of using a quantitative strategy is using a qualitative strategy. Bond states that a qualitative strategy gathers data which “is in non-numeric form, usually focusing on people’s beliefs, values and meanings” (Bond, 2006, p. 129). A quantitative strategy with the use of survey/questionnaires was chosen for this dissertation to collect the primary data as opposed to a qualitative strategy for a number of reasons.

Firstly, using a quantitative strategy allowed for the use of a greater sample size than in comparison to that of a qualitative strategy. “Surveys attempt to gather information from an entire group or more usually a sample, which can then be used to make inferences, or generate policy or reveal unsuspected facts” (Swetnam, 2005, p. 33). A quantitative strategy enabled me to distribute my survey/questionnaires to a large number of services companies in comparison to that of undertaking a qualitative approach. The use of a qualitative approach would have offered a much more limited amount of replies, as the primary research for this strategy would have been carried out through interviews.

Secondly, owing to the short time frame in which to conduct this research, gathering the information needed through survey/questionnaires was regarded as less time consuming than having to conduct individual interviews with a large number of companies. While formulating the survey/questionnaires and distributing them took four or five days, this was still less time consuming than conducting interviews. Due to the time taken to conduct interviews, it would have only been possible to

conduct five to ten of them. “Interviews are very time-consuming when taking into account the length of the interview, the time taken travelling to and from the interview and transcribing the tapes or notes taken” (White, 2006, p. 29). Similarly, as my research was being carried out over the summer months, finding a time to meet with respondents to interview may have been difficult due to people going on holidays or taking time off work. Therefore, the use of survey/questionnaires allowed the respondents to complete them at their own pace, and put them under no obligation to commit a large amount of time to allow me to collect my data, as the surveys only took less than five minutes to complete. Similarly, if observation had of been used to prove the hypothesis in a specific company by collecting primary data, it is very time-consuming and would have taken longer than the designated research timeframe.

Thirdly, the use of a quantitative strategy was also chosen to be beneficial as the research involved finding out whether recruitment through social media has impacted companies’ workplace diversity levels. Companies, particularly those with low diversity levels, may regard this as a sensitive subject, and may not want to disclose this information, unless they are able to do so anonymously. Therefore, I believed that using survey/questionnaires may have warranted more honest answers from companies than that of a qualitative approach.

The use of surveys as a data collection instrument will be discussed further on page 31.

#### 3.2.4 Selecting Respondents

When selecting respondents “the researcher will have to carefully select those sources that can provide the most relevant information” (Bond, 2006, p. 41). In order to collect the most accurate results possible, the respondents of the first survey of this dissertation are services companies located in Ireland that currently use social media during the recruitment process. Services companies were chosen as they are part of a sector in Ireland which regularly recruits through and embraces social media. Therefore, services companies can provide more precise results regarding recruitment through social media and its impact on diversity than other industries such as manufacturing or agriculture. This sampling method is purposive as it excludes those services companies who do not use social media as a platform of recruitment.

In order to make the findings as unbiased as possible a sample size of 120 was used for the first survey, which was distributed to companies. The participants of this survey, which focuses on services companies, will be HR employees, line managers or those within private sector services companies who are involved in the recruitment process. I emailed the chosen companies explaining my research and provided a link to my online survey which they could then choose to undertake. The sampling frame for this research was companies that have recruited through social media within the last five years. This sampling frame was chosen in order to ensure the information gathered is as up to date as possible. A standardised questionnaire was administered through email to each of the selected services companies, the results of which were interpreted through quantitative analysis. The questions asked, of which there were ten were guided by the research questions and sub questions. (Please see Appendix Two on page 71 for Survey One).

The respondents of the second survey were current students and recent graduates who are active users of social media. Similarly, choosing the respondents of this survey/questionnaire was also purposive, as those who do not utilise social media were not asked to participate. Students and recent graduates were chosen as they are frequent users of social media. This second survey featured 9 questions and was distributed to 45 respondents. This survey was administered to find out extent of how the participants utilise social media for recruitment purposes, their awareness of how their social media profiles can impact their employability and also their thoughts and beliefs on the importance of workplace diversity. (Please see Appendix 2 on page 74 for Survey Two).

### 3.2.5 Research Ethics

Ethics can be defined as the “moral principles and values that govern the way an individual or group conducts its activities” (White, 2009:27). It is imperative that during the whole dissertation period I am constantly aware of the research ethics which must be adhered to. Firstly, “the study should be characterised by honesty and openness. If the study requires deception, the researcher should be sure the results too will warrant deception” (Glatthorn and Joyner, 2005, p. 8). Therefore, my research aims to provide an honest and unbiased insight into the impact that recruitment through social media has had on workplace diversity in services

companies in Ireland. My dissertation features no intentional fraud or deceptions, and all findings will be acknowledged accordingly and not changed or manipulated in order to improve the quality of the study.

The use of others' work without acknowledgement can be referred to as plagiarism and is also an ethical issue during the research process. "Plagiarism has both ethical and legal aspects. Ethical and legal aspects involve copyright issues and a damaged reputation or loss of academic standing and employment" (Clare and Hamilton, 2003, p. 206-207). This dissertation respects the intellectual property of others and at all times acknowledges the work and writings of other researchers and authors.

Bond states that "researchers should be sensitive to issues such as the privacy of the individual and also to the consequences of disclosure to the individual" (Bond, 2006, p. 94). Under the EU Data Protection Act, I have a legal obligation to keep personal information private. White argues that "if anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed, this should always be maintained" (White, 2006, p. 26) However, due to the use of survey/questionnaires to gather primary data, all data received has been collected anonymously, and therefore no personal information such a company's name, or the employee's name who participated in the survey, will be gathered.

Glatthorn and Joyner argue that the "study should not require or result in emotional or physical pain or embarrassment for participants" (Glatthorn and Joyner, 2005, p.8). Since the survey/questionnaires are completed anonymously, it is highly unlikely to cause embarrassment, stress or anxiety to those participating in it. All companies who received a link to the survey/questionnaire, as well as the students who received the second survey, were under no obligation to complete them. However, completed surveys were taken as a sign of implied consent that the information received can be used for research purposes and participants are informed of this within the survey. White argues that "participants should always have enough information about the research to make an informed decision as to whether to take part or not" (White, 2006, p. 26). Therefore, participants were informed before undertaking the survey the nature of the questions and what the information gathered will be used for.

### 3.3 Data Collection Instruments

As previously mentioned surveys/questionnaires were used as the primary data collection instruments. (Please see Appendix Two for the surveys on page 71). Both surveys have been sent to the chosen respondents via the e-mail. The first survey/questionnaire was sent to services companies in Ireland in email format. The second survey/questionnaire, which was sent to students/recent graduates who use social media was sent out through Facebook, as this was deemed as the easiest way for contacting students and thus those who do not use social media could not participate and make the results void.

Survey/questionnaires were chosen over interviews or observations, as I believed that in order to collect the information I required, surveys were the most practical approach. Unlike observing, interviews or case studies, surveys provided my research with a greater amount of responses and therefore, it can be argued that the information gathered is more reliable and valid than in comparison to focusing on one company or conducting several interviews. If I had interviewed companies regarding their diversity levels they may have felt the need to exaggerate how committed they are to increasing diversity, or what the levels of workplace diversity are currently like in their company. White claims that “interviews have problems of bias, reliability and validity. Interviewees may want to please the interviewer and, as a result, may not tell the truth” (White, 2006, p. 30). Interviews can also increase bias or impact the reliability and validity of the information gathered, as the interviewer may unknowingly cause the interviewee to provide certain answers. An interviewer may exhibit certain body language or ask questions with a certain tone of voice, which may influence the interviewee to answer in a certain manner or provide a certain answer. While it can be argued that the information received in survey/questionnaires may also be biased or unreliable and valid, when discussing the topic of workplace diversity, respondents may be more at ease doing so anonymously and answer more honestly. Thyer reasons that “the privacy of completing a survey without talking to a real person reduces some response errors, such as social desirability bias. Because e-mail and Internet surveys are self-administered, there is also little room for interviewees themselves to bias the information” (Thyer, 2010, p.135). Similarly, Khan argues that survey/questionnaires are less likely to receive results affected by the personal bias of the researcher”

(Khan, 2008 p.98). As long as the researcher provides unbiased questions within the survey/questionnaire they are less likely to receive biased, unreliable and invalid responses. Therefore, my surveys featured questions and answers which were unbiased and open-ended when possible.

Similarly, web-based surveys were chosen over mail or telephone survey/questionnaires. Web-based surveys are also seen as more beneficial than the use of telephone or mail survey/questionnaires. "Internet surveys produce more consistent responses over time when compared to telephone surveys, thus making web-based surveys more reliable" (Thyer, 2010, p.135). Thyer further argues that "Internet use is widespread among many populations, such as students and professionals" which makes accessing information and these populations easier (Thyer, 2010, p.135).

Swetnam states that survey/questionnaire questions should "relate to your research question or hypothesis and should be worded with simple, direct and appropriate language to the target population" (Swetnam, 2005, p.60). Similarly, Ballenger maintains that "both loaded and vague questions should be avoided" (Ballenger, 2009, p. 110). Therefore, the questions featured in my survey/questionnaire are worded accordingly in relation to the research questions and hypothesis.

One practical issue that arose through the use of survey/questionnaires was that locating the correct email addresses for the services companies which were used as respondents, was quite time-consuming. Ballenger reasons that "while online survey/questionnaires are remarkably easy to create, the challenge is reaching the people you'd like to survey and getting them to respond" (Ballenger, 2009, p. 112). I found that getting responses from the services companies was another challenge. Due to the low amount of responses I received from my first email, I emailed the companies for a second time, and finally for the third time. In these emails I thanked those who had already participated and asked those who had yet to respond to please do so. After the third round of emailing the companies with my survey, I surpassed the 20% response rate and felt that I could now analyse this data. Glatthorn and Joyner claim that "surveys with responses lower than 50% are valid because there are no differences between responders and non-responders, whereas some surveys with a 90% rate are biased" (Glatthorn and Joyner, 2005, p. 134).

However, when it came to distributing my student survey I found it much easier to receive responses as I knew many of the participants personally and therefore, they were more likely to undertake my survey. In order to receive a maximum amount of replies, I sent out my surveys at the end of May and at the beginning of June, before many people would have went on holidays. However, due to the limited responses from companies the second and third emails issued were sent in July. Finally, I proof-read all emails and surveys before sending them in order to ensure there were no grammar or spelling mistakes, which if featured, have may have deterred respondents from undertaking the survey.

Swetnam argues that surveys can be descriptive -such as how many companies would agree that social media as a recruitment tool has increased workplace diversity - or explanatory- such as what were the companies reasons for using social media to recruit (Swetnam, 2005, p.34). Therefore, the survey/questionnaires I have formulated are both descriptive and explanatory in nature.

For the collection of secondary sources of data, books, journals, websites and newspapers were all used. As this research was undertaking a positivist, deductive and inductive approach, the use of secondary sources were important in order to establish, understand and integrate ideas and theories into my hypothesis and literature review.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

With the use of survey/questionnaires as the means of collecting the desired data, graphs and charts will be used in order to analyse the data received. Using graphs and charts allows the information collected to be interpreted easily and survey answers to be easily noted and analysed. Within this data analysis, the impact of other variables on diversity in the workplace was also considered. It was important that the data collected was unbiased, and also that other variables which had been previously unconsidered by myself are explored, as they may also impact my findings and formulate new areas of research.

### 3.5 Limitations of Methodology

The main limitation of this research was that a low number of companies participated in the survey/questionnaire. Of the 120 surveys sent out to companies, only 32



replies were received. However, as previously mentioned on page 32 a response rate of 20% is acceptable if the information collected is of good quality. The second survey was sent to students and frequent users of social media. 45 surveys were sent out and all 45 were completed.

Secondly, participant error is another limitation which can occur. Participants may make mistakes when providing information in the questionnaires. In order to combat this the questions provided in the questionnaires, were easy to understand and left little room for confusion.

However, another limitation which is more difficult to combat is that participants may provide biased answers. Companies, in particular those which have low diversity levels may not want to admit this fact and answer the questions in a manner which portrays them more favourably. In order to ensure that the participants provided honest answers it was pointed to them that out that as the survey results were being received anonymously, they do not have to pick answers which cast themselves or the company in a favourable light. As previously discussed on page 31, the use of Internet survey/questionnaires is less likely to generate as many biased answers as interviews would. However, no matter how unbiased the questions asked are and how often the fact that the survey is anonymous is stressed, bias or untruthful responses may still occur and thus be a limitation.

Researcher error and bias is also a limitation which can occur. In order to prevent this I made sure my surveys were not poorly formulated, that no key questions were overlooked and that they are consistent with one another. I also ensured that my personal feelings did not get in the way of the data collection and analysis. However, as I had no particular favourable outcome for my research, the chances of researcher bias occurring remain relatively low but not impossible.

A final limitation of this methodology is that diversity in the workplace may also be impacted by variables other than recruitment through social media. In order to ensure these other variables are discovered, I will ask companies within my survey if they consider whether any other variables have had an impact.

### 3.6 Conclusion

To conclude, the methodology plays an important part in this research. This research takes a positivist philosophy, a deductive and inductive approach and follows a quantitative strategy. Survey/questionnaires are used as the primary data collection instrument, with the use of graphs to analyse the data. Secondary sources such as books, journals, and newspapers were also important to this research. At all times of the research, it is important that I remain aware of all the research ethics involved, and also of the limitations of this research.

## 4. Data Analysis/Findings

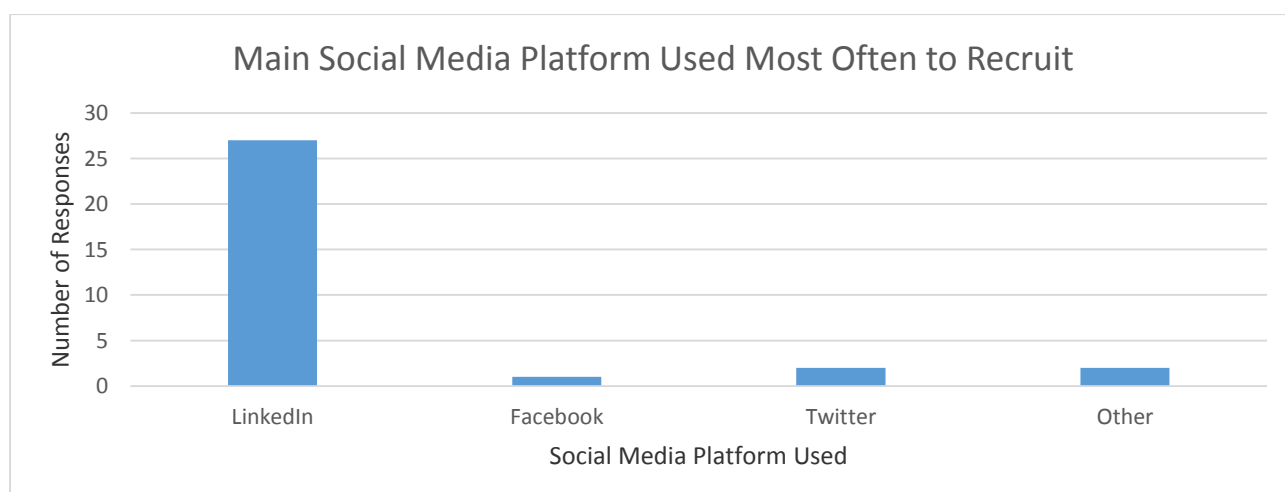
### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse the relevant primary data collected from both of the surveys distributed for this research. The purpose of this chapter is to simply present and illustrate the findings of the surveys descriptively without drawing general conclusions as this will be done within chapter five, which discusses the findings of the surveys. The first section of this chapter will analyse the data collected from the company survey. This survey examined companies' use of social media in the recruitment process and the impact that social media as a recruitment tool has had on their diversity levels in comparison to more traditional methods of recruitment. The second section of this chapter will analyse the data received from the surveys sent to students/recent graduates regarding their use of social media as a recruitment tool and their thoughts on workplace diversity

### 4.2 Data Analysis of Survey One

The information collected from the company survey is important as it forms the basis of the primary research, and will dictate whether the hypothesis that recruitment through social media, in comparison to traditional methods of recruitment, increases workplace diversity in services companies in Ireland.

#### 4.2.1 Data Analysis One



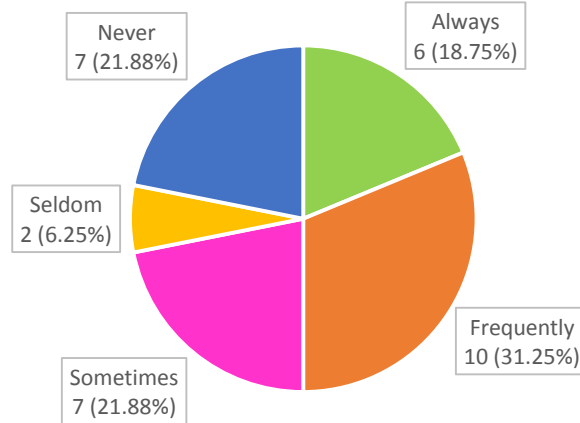
Companies were asked to state which social media platform they used most often to recruit employees. All of the companies surveyed answered the question. Twenty-seven of the companies surveyed (84.38%) stated that they use LinkedIn most

frequently to recruit new employees. Only one company (3.16%) specified that they used Facebook most frequently to recruit new employees and just two of the companies surveyed (6.25%) stated that they used Twitter as their main social media platform of recruitment. A further two companies (6.25%) identified themselves as using other forms of social media, which they were asked to specify. These two responses are examples of respondent error, which was spoken about in the methodology section, as one of the respondents stated that they used none of the mentioned social media platforms but failed to state which social media platforms they did utilise. However, the second respondent stated that they used all of the social media platforms mentioned during the recruitment process. This too is an error as they were asked to choose the one they used most often. From looking at the graph it can be easily noted that LinkedIn is the most popular social media platform for companies' main recruitment purposes, with very little of those surveyed using Facebook and Twitter for this purpose. However, it can be argued that this is to be expected. As previously stated in the literature review on page 8, LinkedIn is a social media platform specifically set up for recruitment purposes. Therefore, it is justifiable that the majority of companies would utilise LinkedIn as their main platform of recruitment through social media.

#### 4.2.2 Data Analysis Two

Within the survey/questionnaire companies were asked whether they ever view potential candidates' social media profiles in order to gain a greater knowledge about the candidate, aside from their education or qualifications. This question was asked to discover whether companies are interested in finding out more about candidates' private and social lives as opposed to what is just featured on a candidate's CV.

### How often does the Company View Potential Candidates' Social Media Profiles in Order to Gain Greater Knowledge of Them

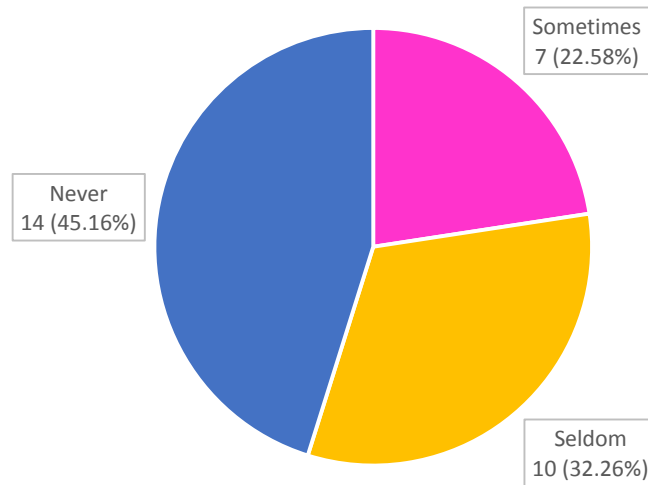


All of the companies surveyed responded to the question. From viewing the pie chart it can be stated that the majority of the companies surveyed have viewed potential candidates' social media profiles in order to gain a greater understanding about the person they are. It is important to note that only seven of the companies surveyed stated that they never view potential candidates' social media profiles. Therefore, it can be argued that the majority of companies utilise social media at some point in time in order to gain more information about a potential employee.

#### 4.2.3 Data Analysis Three

Companies were then asked whether they ever base their decision to hire a candidate or not solely on the information available on the candidate's social media profile. I felt this question was important as it examines the influence that information available publically on one's social media profile can have on their career prospects. While this has previously been discussed in the literature review and will be discussed further in the next chapter, it is important to note that using social media as a way of gaining more knowledge about candidates poses an ethical debate. Social media platforms, aside from LinkedIn, are typically used for non-professional purposes. Therefore, the information shared or displayed on one's social media profile may be unprofessional in nature and therefore, it could be deemed as unethical or unfair of companies to base their decision to hire someone on what is displayed publically on their social media platforms. All of the companies surveyed responded to the question.

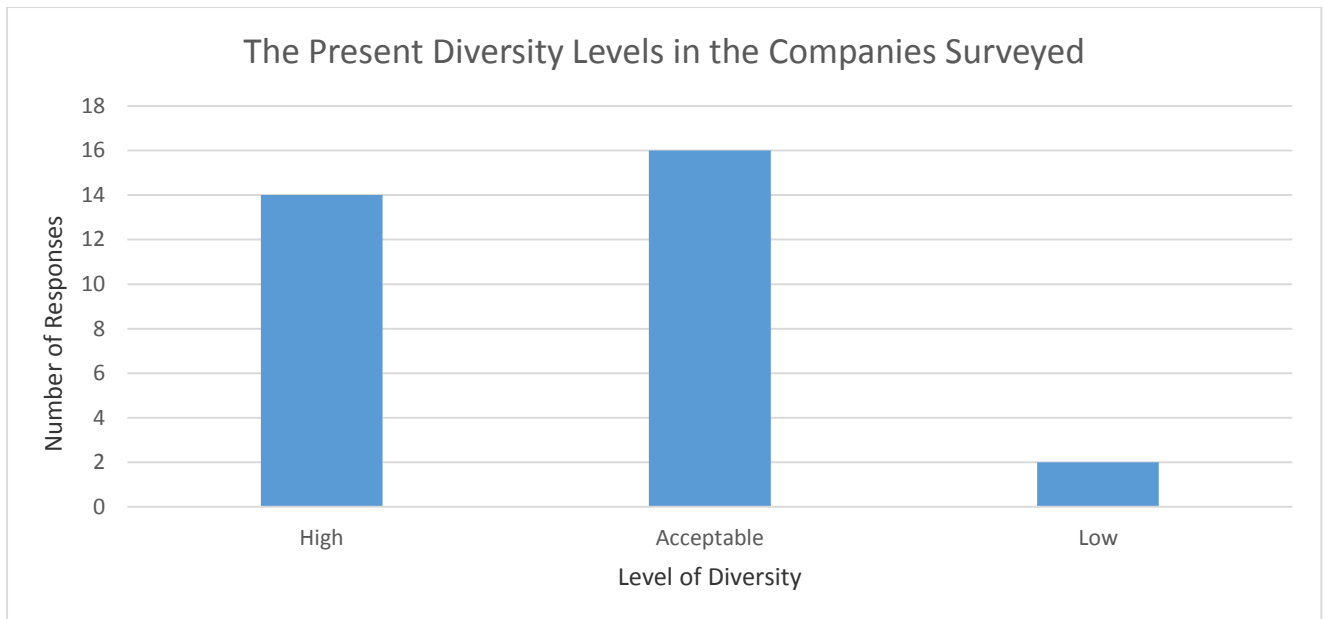
### How often does the Company Decide whether to Hire A Candidate Based Solely on their Social Media Profile Information



From the pie chart it obvious that the majority of companies surveyed stated that they never or seldom decide to hire candidates based solely on the information displayed on their social media profiles. This is in contrast to the seven respondents who stated that they sometimes decided to hire candidates based solely on the information displayed on their social media profiles. None of the respondents stated that they always or frequently base their decision to hire a candidate on the information available on the candidate's social media profile.

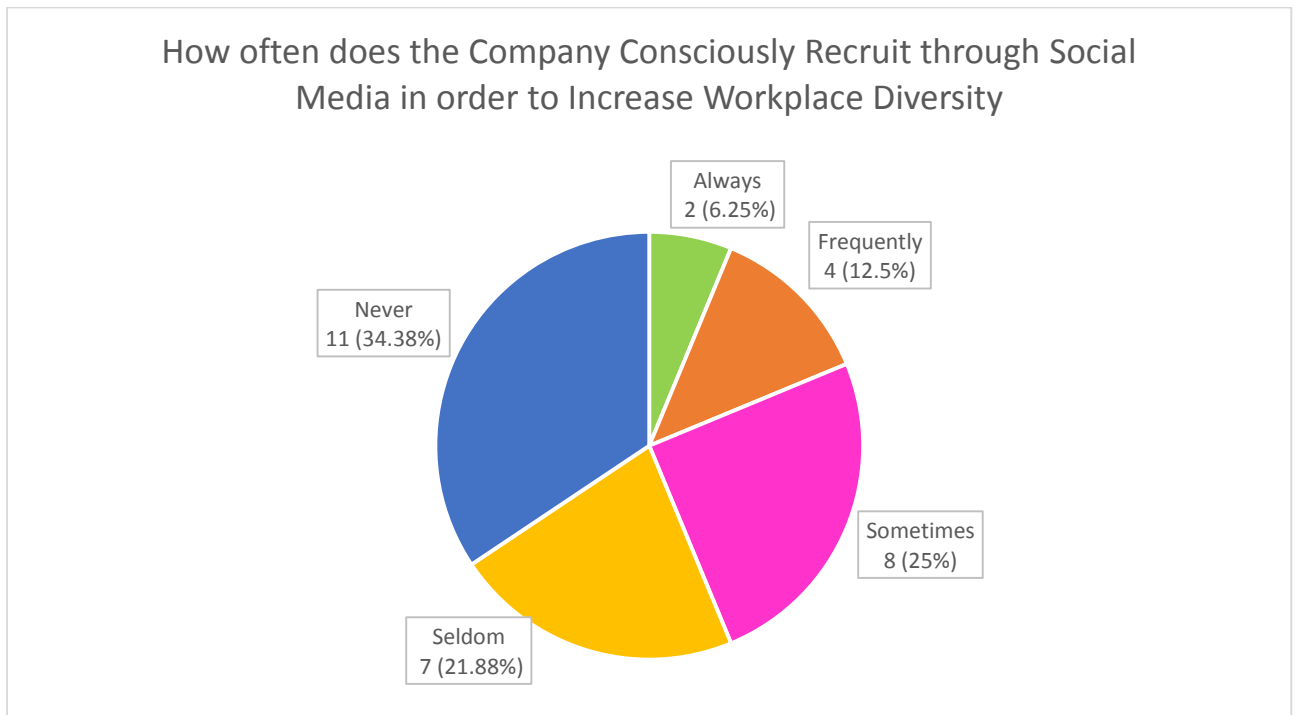
#### 2.2.4 Data Analysis Four

Companies were asked to state their current level of diversity within the workplace. From the graph it can be noted that the majority of companies surveyed believe they have an acceptable or high level of workplace diversity present in their organisations. Fourteen (43.75%) of the companies surveyed felt they had high levels of workplace diversity and sixteen (50%) of the companies surveyed stated there was acceptable levels of workplace diversity present. Only two of the companies surveyed (6.25%) stated that they currently had low levels of workplace diversity.



#### 4.2.5 Data Analysis Five

Companies were further asked to state how often they use social media to consciously recruit diverse employees.

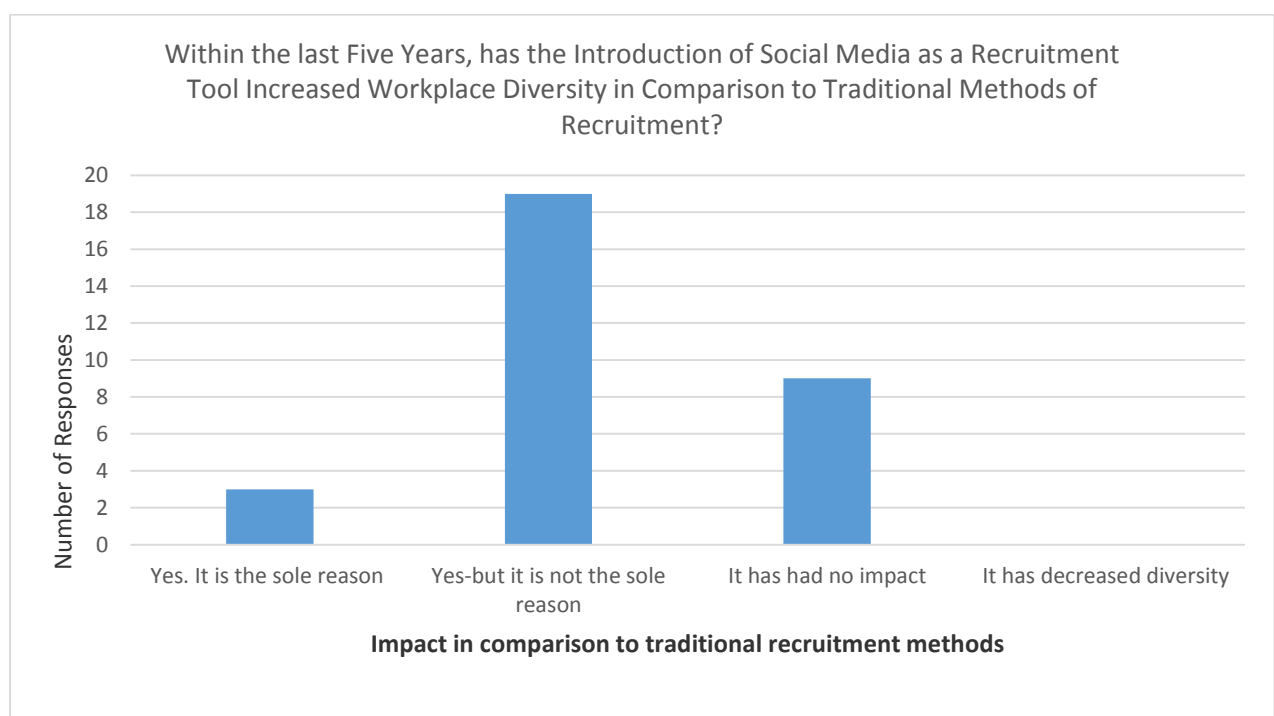


All of the companies surveyed responded to this question. Although eleven (34.38%) of the companies surveyed stated that they never used social media to consciously recruit diverse employees, the other twenty-one companies surveyed stated that they have consciously used social media to recruit diverse employees at one point or another, thus increasing the diversity levels of the company. This information

gathered is important as it demonstrates that companies do utilise social media in order to consciously recruit diverse employees.

### 2.2.6 Data Analysis Six

Companies surveyed were asked to state whether they believed that the use of social media as a recruitment tool in comparison to more traditional methods of recruitment, has increased workplace diversity. This question was highly important in order to prove or disprove the hypothesis of this dissertation that social media as a recruitment tool, in comparison to more traditional methods of recruitment, does increase workplace diversity in services companies in Ireland.



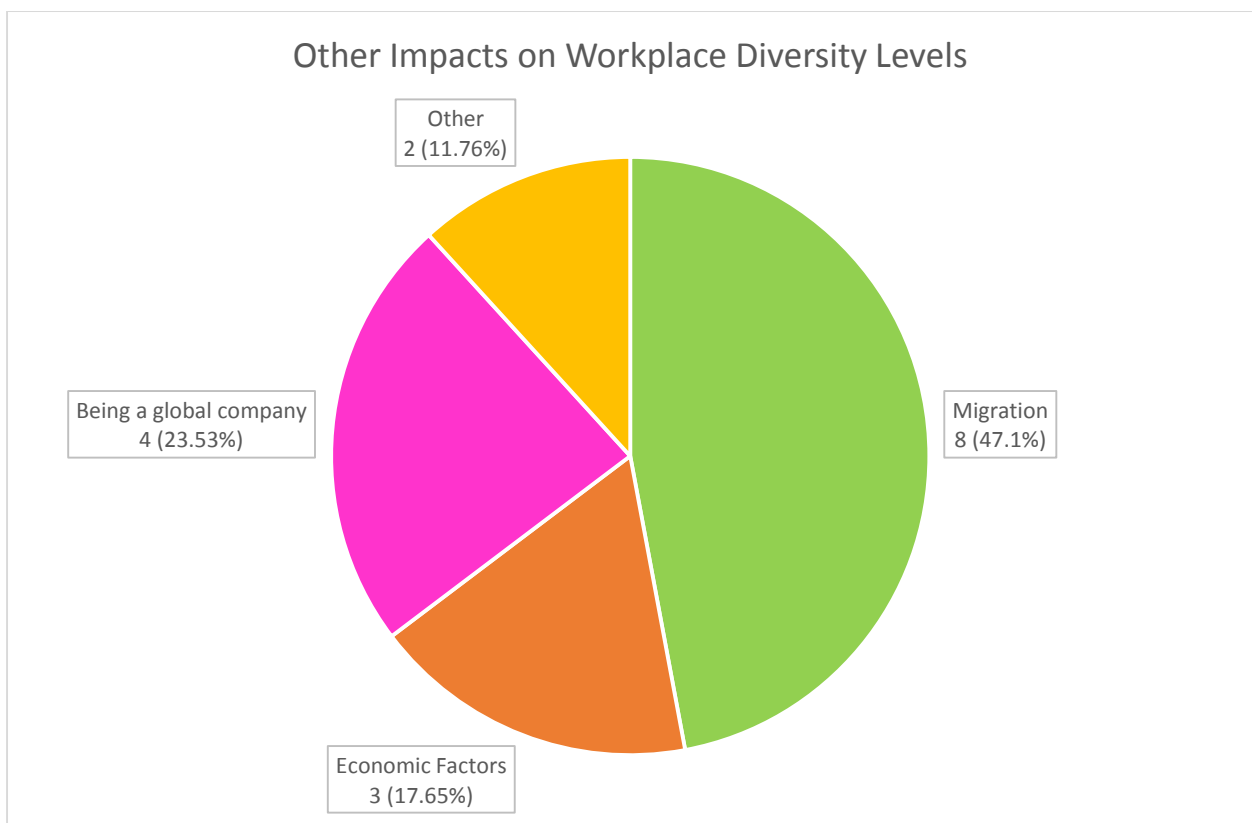
One of the companies surveyed did not answer this question. From looking at the bar chart above it can be noted that nineteen (61.29%) of the companies surveyed stated that recruitment through social media in comparison to more traditional methods of recruitment, has increased workplace diversity. However, these companies also stated that social media as a recruitment tool is not the sole reason for this increase. This information is important as it proves other factors have contributed to an increase in workplace diversity and will be discussed further in this chapter. Three of the companies surveyed (9.68%) stated that social media as a recruitment tool is the sole reason for an increase in workplace diversity in comparison to more traditional methods of recruitment. This is in contrast to the nine



companies (29.03%) that stated that recruitment through social media has had no impact on diversity levels. None of the companies surveyed believed that social media as a recruitment tool had decreased workplace diversity. Overall, from the findings of this survey question, it can be reasoned that social media as a recruitment tool has increased workplace diversity in services companies in Ireland. However, the majority of respondents stated it is not the sole reason for this increase.

### 2.2.7 Data Analysis Seven

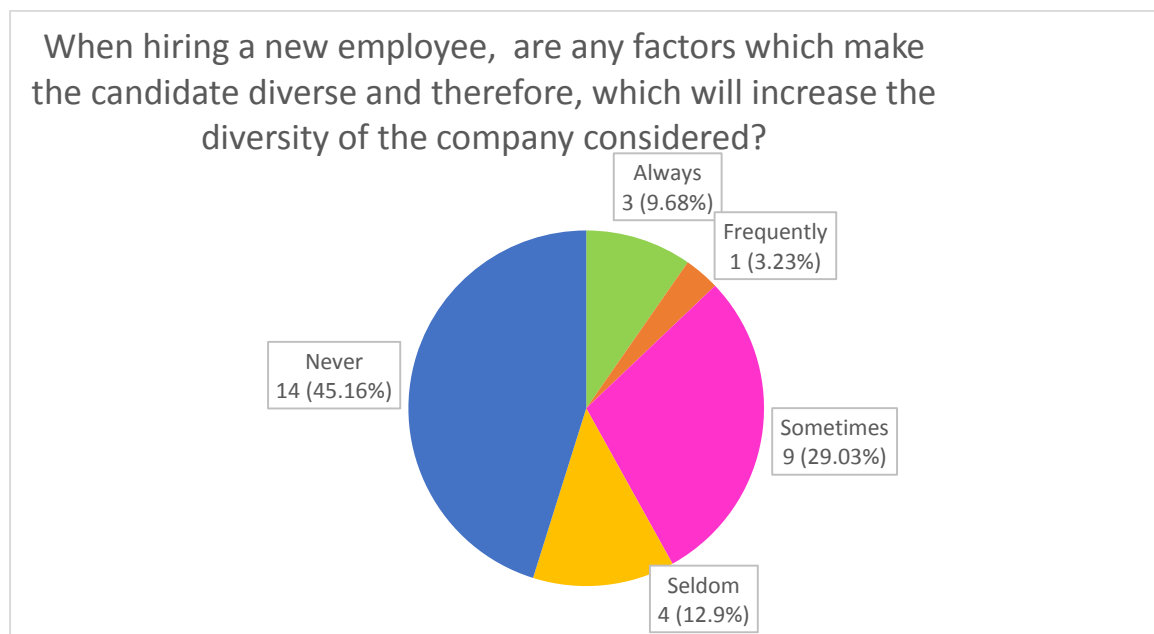
Two companies skipped this question. Twenty companies (66.67%) stated that other factors as well as social media had influenced their diversity levels. They were then asked to explain what these other factors were. These factors were stated independently with no influence from myself. I grouped the responses into categories in order to simplify the analysis. It is important to note that as some of the respondents answered no to the question they are not included in this pie chart. Similarly, three companies answered yes but failed to provide a reason why and therefore, this is a limitation to the data which is also not included in the pie chart.



Eight (47.1%) of the companies surveyed provided migration and the ease of travelling as reasons for an increase in their workplace diversity as well as using social media as a recruitment tool. A further three companies (17.65%) claimed that as well as social media recruitment, economic factors such as the recession and rapid growth in other countries, were contributing factors to their increase in workplace diversity. Four companies (23.53%) stated that being a global company increased their diversity levels as well as social media recruitment. The recruitment of employees from international markets, the use of the company's global hubs to transfer employees to fill areas with limited skills and the greater supply and demand of employees a global company can warrant were all reasons cited by global companies for their increase in diversity levels. Two companies (11.76%) provided other reasons for an increase in workplace diversity. One of them stated that a demand for skilled labour increased their workplace diversity as well as social media recruitment. The other company stated that employee referrals as well as social media recruitment had increased their workplace diversity.

### 2.2.8 Data Analysis Eight

Companies were asked to state whether they take factors which make candidates diverse and which would increase the diversity of the workplace into consideration when hiring a new employee.



One company did not respond to this question. Fourteen (45.16%) of the companies surveyed stated that they never consider factors which make a candidate diverse

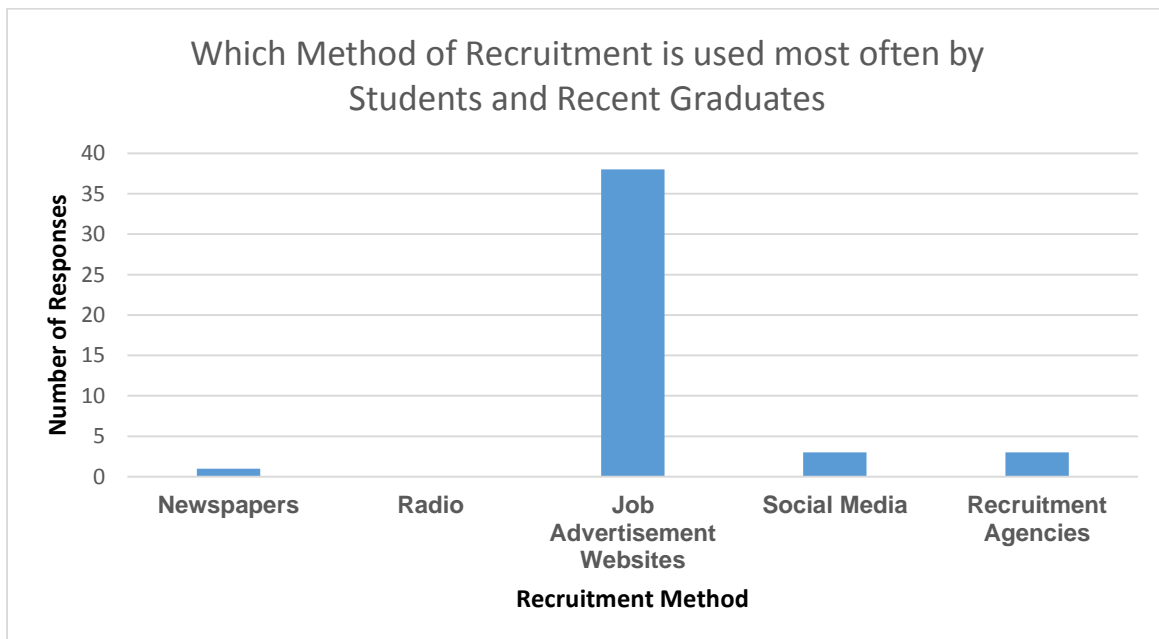
and thus would increase workplace diversity during the recruitment process. Four companies (12.9%) stated they seldom take diverse factors into consideration when hiring a new employee. Nine companies (29.03%) responded that they sometimes took these factors into consideration. One company (3.23%) frequently takes these factors into consideration and a further three companies (9.68%) stated they always take these factors into consideration when hiring new employees. This will be discussed further in the next chapter, but it is important to note that the majority of companies surveyed never or seldom take into consideration any factors which make a candidate diverse, which would in turn increase workplace diversity.

### 4.3 Data Analysis of Survey Two

The information collected from the student and recent graduate survey is important as it shows how these groups utilise social media during the recruitment process. Some of the questions asked within this survey were formulated to compliment and further endorse the questions and responses from survey one which was sent to companies.

#### 4.3.1 Data Analysis One

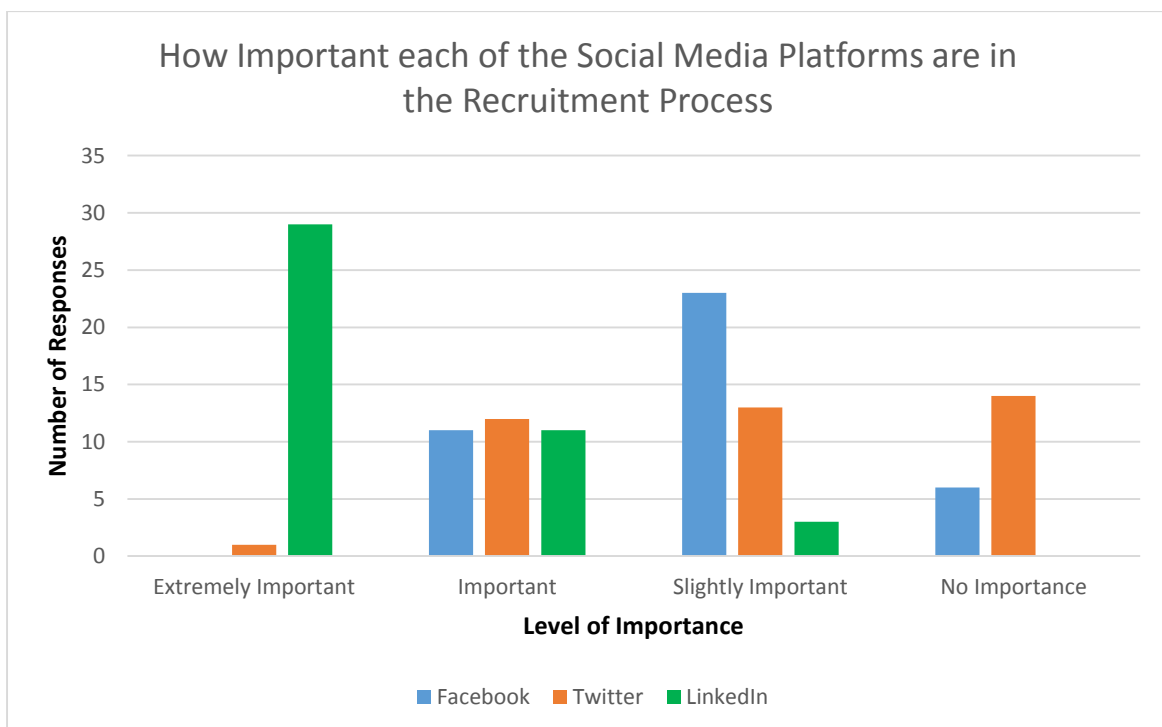
Students were asked which method of recruitment they used most often to search for job vacancies. This was in order to find out if students and recent graduates used social media as their main form of recruitment.



All of the respondents answered this question. From the graph above it is obvious that job advertisement websites are the most frequently used recruitment platform by students/recent graduates with thirty-eight of the respondents (84.44%) stating so. Only three respondents (6.67%) stated that they used social media the most frequently in the recruitment process. A further three respondents (6.67%) stated that they used recruitment agencies most often and only one respondent (2.22%) stated that they used newspapers most frequently to search for jobs. None of the respondents stated they use radio advertisements to find jobs.

### 4.3.2 Data Analysis Two

Students were asked to depict how important they thought Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn each are in the recruitment process. All of the respondents provided an answer for this question.

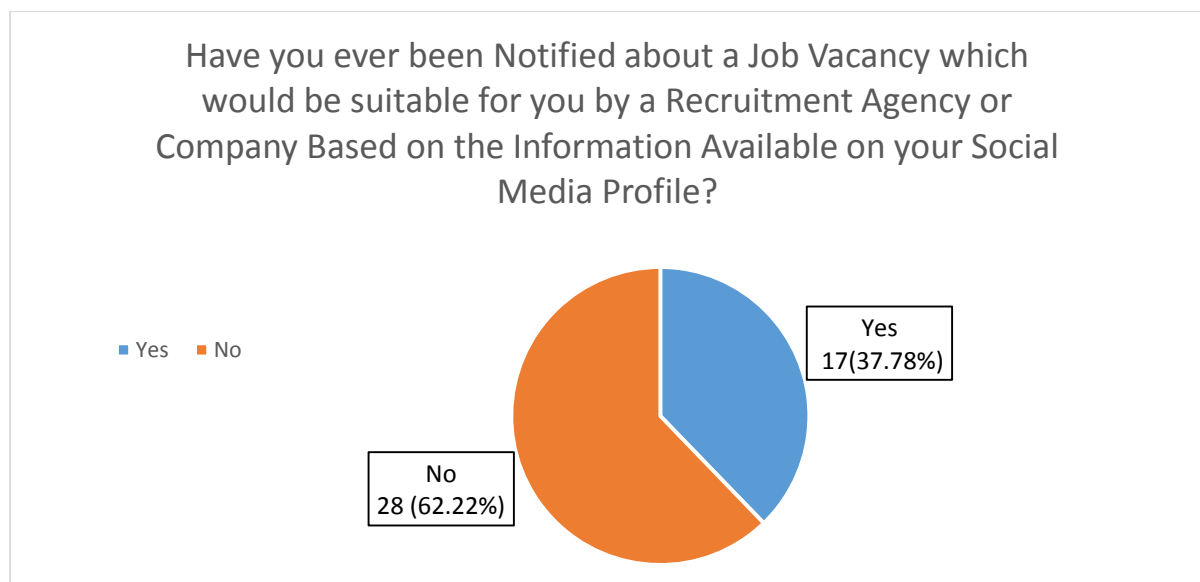


From looking at the graph above it is obvious that LinkedIn is deemed as an extremely important social media platform to utilise during the recruitment process, with twenty-nine of the respondents stating so. None of the respondents stated that Facebook was extremely important in the recruitment process, and only one respondent stated that Twitter was extremely important. From looking at the graph it can be argued that respondents consider Facebook to be more important than

Twitter in the recruitment process. Twelve respondents deemed Twitter to be important in comparison to the eleven respondents who considered Facebook to be important. Twenty-three respondents thought that Facebook was slightly important in the recruitment process in comparison to the thirteen that felt Twitter was. Most critical is that fourteen of the respondents stated that Twitter has no importance in the recruitment process, in comparison to the six respondents who stated Facebook has no importance. Therefore, as more respondents deemed Facebook to have a higher level of importance than Twitter, it can be reasoned that according to students and recent graduates LinkedIn is the most important social media platform to utilise during the recruitment process, with Facebook having some level of importance, and Twitter the least important out of the three platforms.

### 4.3.3 Data Analysis Three

Respondents were asked had they ever been notified by a company or a recruitment agency about a job vacancy which they would be suitable for based on the information displayed on any of their social media profiles. All of the respondents answered the question.

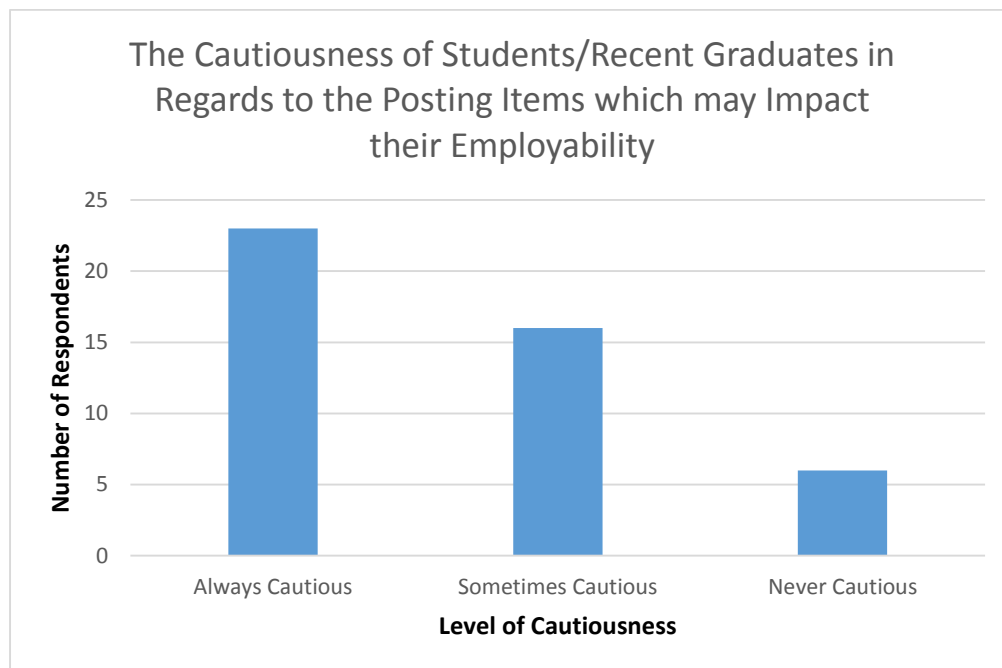


Seventeen of the respondents (37.78%) stated that they had been notified about a job vacancy which they were deemed suitable for based on the information displayed on their social media profile. This is in comparison to twenty-eight respondents (62.22%) who stated that they have never been notified. This question is important as it shows that students or graduates who utilise social media, but possibly not for

recruitment purposes, have still be notified about a job vacancy which is suitable for them owing to the information they present on their social media profiles.

#### 4.3.4 Data Analysis Four

Respondents were asked to state how cautious they are about the information they post on social media with regard to the impact it can have on their employability. All of the respondents provided an answer to the question.



Twenty-three of the respondents (51.1%) stated that they are extremely cautious about what they post publically and the impact certain posts may have on their employability. Sixteen respondents (35.6%) stated that they are sometimes cautious about what they post publically and the impact on their employability and a further six respondents (13.3%) declared that they are never cautious and post whatever they like with no consideration for the impact that it may have on their employability. This will be discussed further in the next chapter, but it is important to note that this question ties in with the questions in survey one regarding companies viewing candidates' social media profiles in order to gain a greater knowledge of them.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter analysed the data received from the two surveys which collected the primary data needed. The aim of this chapter was to provide an analysis of the findings through presenting and illustrating the findings of the surveys

descriptively without drawing general conclusions. From the company survey it can be noted that the majority of companies use LinkedIn as their main platform of social media in the recruitment process. Similarly, students and recent graduates also deemed LinkedIn to be the most important social media platform for recruitment purposes. The majority of companies surveyed also stated that at some stage or another they have checked candidates' social media profiles in order to gain a greater knowledge of the candidates, aside from their qualifications and work experiences. However, the majority of companies also stated that they never solely base their decision to hire a candidate on the information found on their social media profile. In contrast to this, the majority of students and recent graduates surveyed stated that they are extremely cautious of what they post on social media and the implications certain posts may have on their employability. An important finding within this primary data was that the majority of companies surveyed stated that recruitment through social media has led to an increase in workplace diversity, which proves the hypothesis of this dissertation. However, the majority of companies that were surveyed also stated that social media was not the sole reason for this increase, with the other contributing factors discussed in this chapter. The next chapter, which is the discussion, will focus in-depth on the findings of both surveys.

## 5. Discussion

This chapter will provide an in-depth discussion based on the results obtained and analysed in the previous chapter. This chapter will link the results from the previous chapter with earlier literature and theories discussed in the literature review. This chapter will also focus on the research questions and will discuss and provide answers for them through the results collected from both surveys. Again, the research questions are:

1. Do services companies and students/recent graduates in Ireland utilise the same social media platforms for recruitment purposes?
2. Do companies screen candidates based on the information available on their social media profile? A sub-question which extends from this is whether social media users are cautious about what they post on social media and whether they consider the impact posting certain things may have on their employability.
3. Do many companies consciously recruit through social media in order to increase diversity in the workplace?
4. Does recruitment through social media lower the waterline of visibility on the Diversity Iceberg?
5. Does recruitment through social media lead to an increase in diversity in the workplace in comparison to more traditional methods of recruitment?

### 5.1 Discussion One

As previously discussed on page 8, LinkedIn is the most popular social media platform to be used by services companies for recruitment purposes. Similarly, the findings of the student/recent graduate survey show that they too also believe LinkedIn to be the most important social media platform for recruitment purposes. Therefore, the research question focusing on whether services companies and students/recent graduates in Ireland utilise the same social media platforms for recruitment can be answered that yes, both of them utilise the same social media platforms for recruitment. As mentioned earlier in the literature view, LinkedIn is a social media platform specifically set up for professional networking and recruitment purposes. Unlike Facebook or Twitter, LinkedIn has features which specially aid the



recruitment process and make searching for potential candidates or job vacancies much easier. Therefore, the findings from both surveys that companies and students/recent graduates utilise LinkedIn the most often out of the other social media platforms for recruitment purposes is unsurprising. However, when students were asked which method of recruitment they use most often to search for job vacancies, the majority of them stated that it is not social media but specific recruitment websites which they utilise most frequently. This fits with the theory put forward by Herbold and Douma that students tend to prefer not to use social networking sites for job search purposes, instead viewing social media as a communication tool for contacting friends (Herbold and Douma, 2013, p. 68). Although the majority of students surveyed indicated that they use specific recruitment websites as their main platform of recruitment, this does not mean that they never use social media for recruitment purposes, which is important to note. I would argue that students first and foremost associate social media with personal networking and communication purposes, and that its purpose as a recruitment tool is a secondary function to students/recent graduates. The fact that the majority of students identified LinkedIn as the most important social media platform in the recruitment process shows they are aware of social media as a recruitment tool, but they may not utilise it as often in the recruitment process as they would specific recruitment websites. Similarly, since many companies and sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture may not utilise social media, it may be beneficial to students/recent graduate to use both specific recruitment websites and social media platforms when looking for job vacancies in order to find the most suitable job vacancies and provide themselves with broader job searches.

## 5.2 Discussion Two

When asked how often companies utilised social media in order to gain a greater knowledge of applicants, half of the companies surveyed stated that they frequently or always view candidates' social media profiles in order to gain a greater knowledge of the candidate other than that of their work experience or qualifications. This is an important finding as it shows how entwined social media has become in the recruitment process. It also fits with the statement previously mentioned in the literature review that "for companies, the temptation of using sites like Facebook to take a peek at what job-seekers say and do when they're off the clock is its

accessibility and the sense that it offers a real-life window into someone's unguarded thoughts" (White, 2013, p.1). Not only do companies place advertisements for job vacancies on social media and also use it to search for potential candidates, it is now a means to find out more about the candidate without the candidate even being aware. This finding is also important as it can be used to answer the research question regarding whether companies use candidates' social media profiles and the information available publically on their profiles in order to filter and screen candidates during the recruitment process? The answer to the research question is yes, the majority of companies surveyed do view candidates' social media profiles to find out more about the candidate other than what is stated on their CV. While this poses some ethical issues which were discussed in the literature review on page 14, it is important to discuss that none of the companies surveyed stated that they always or frequently hired a candidate based only on the information on their social media profile. This is a significant finding as shows that companies do not always take what they see on a candidate's social media profile into consideration when hiring new employees. Fourteen of the companies stated that they never base their decision to hire someone solely on the information found on their social media profile. A further ten companies said they seldom did this and seven companies said they sometimes based their decision to hire a candidate solely on the information found on their social media profile. Therefore, I would argue that companies may use social media to find out more about a candidate, but do not base their decision on whether to hire the candidate on the information on their social media profile. I would argue that companies may use a balance of sorts, whereby they consider both the candidate's work and education history, combined with the information available on their social media profile in order to choose an employee. Furthermore, I would argue that the main reason so few companies base their decision to hire an employee solely on the information available on the candidate's profile page, is that the information they wanted to find is unavailable. When companies view a candidate's social media profile, they are not guaranteed to find anything which may influence their decision to hire someone. As the findings from the student/recent graduate survey show, the majority of respondents stated they were always cautious about the photos, statuses, videos etc. that they share, due to the impact it may have on their employability. This also answers the sub research question which focuses on whether social media users are cautious about what they post online and whether

they consider the impact posting certain things may have on their employability. The fact that the majority of students/recent graduates stated that they are very cautious about what they post on their social media profile due to the impact it may have on their employability contrasts with Davison's statement which featured in the literature review that Generation Y are "less concerned about privacy than prior generations and therefore may not take precautions when posting publicly on social media" (Davison et al, 2011, p. 155). I would argue that based on the findings of the student/recent graduate survey, the majority of social media profiles belonging to Generation Y are private, or any posts which companies can see, may be carefully chosen due to their suitability or for the good impression they create for future employers. Similarly, I would argue that the theory put forward in the literature review stating that by inspecting one's social media profile "companies can view aspects of a candidate's personality which can be gleaned from one's digital footprint - their social media profile- which may not be observed from a printed paper CV" is incorrect (Chamorro-Premuzic & Steinmetz, 2013, p.1). As the students/recent graduates surveyed stated they were aware of the impact their social media profile can have on their employment, it can be argued that companies who view social media profiles in order to find out more about candidates, or who use it as a method of screening, may be, but not always, basing their decision on unreliable information which is purposely visible or hidden from them. Therefore, this may attribute to the findings from the company survey that none of the companies base their decision to hire someone solely on the information on their social media profile. If a candidate's profile is private the company may be able to see very little, apart from a profile picture if one is displayed. While "privacy settings and controls allow users to reduce exposure; however, certain information is typically always publicly available, such as their name, profile picture, and networks. Even with the utmost precautions in making profiles private, social media sites often provide notice to users that they do not guarantee the privacy of the information" (O'Shea, 2012, p.2). Therefore, the company may be able to see what the candidate looks like depending on the photograph, but they will be unable to properly gain a greater knowledge of what the candidate is like overall. This may also be a reason as to why the majority of students/recent graduates have not been contacted about potential job vacancies based on the information available on their social media profile. As students/recent graduates view social media as a means for communication, they may not build their

profiles around their skills and education. Similarly, due to the fact they are cautious about what they post on social media, which may extend to their LinkedIn profiles, combined with the fact many of them may not yet be fully qualified or have obtained experience in their field, may also contribute to this.

As previously discussed, the majority of companies view candidates' social media profiles but rarely make hiring decisions solely on the information displayed. I would argue that although the majority of companies stated that they never base their decision to hire candidates solely on the information provided on their social media profiles, the fact that they have viewed the candidate's profile can still influence their decision to hire. Companies may unintentionally take any posts they have viewed on a candidate's social media profile, such as their photographs, videos, and statuses shared for example, into consideration when selecting employees. By viewing a candidate's social media profile, companies can still gain knowledge of the candidate, even if the profile is private, as a profile picture or cover photo for example, may still be on display. Therefore, companies may not even be aware, but once they have seen a photo of someone, they may unintentionally base their decision to hire the candidate based on what they can see about the person in the photograph. For argument's sake, if a candidate has the information on their social media profile set to private, but their profile picture is visible, depending on the photograph, the company may be able to make assumptions about the age, race, religion, or family/marital status etc. of the candidate. While the company would not base their decision to hire a candidate solely on this photograph, when screening all the candidates, the company may remember certain attributes from the photograph about the candidate, and thus in turn influence the decision to hire the candidate. For example if there are three applicants for a job vacancy and the company views each of their social media profiles, the company may unintentionally make assumptions about the candidates based on what they can see from each of their social media profiles. If the first candidate's profile picture of himself drinking alcohol in a bar, the second candidate's profile photograph is of a woman with her children, and the third candidate's profile photograph is of themselves wearing traditional African clothing, the company can easily draw assumptions about each of the candidates. Furthermore, positive discrimination, can occur through the use of social media for this purpose, which is quite hard to prove but nonetheless, can happen. While these

assumptions may not always be correct, companies may be intentionally and unintentionally allowing these assumptions to influence their decision on which candidate to hire. I would argue that although the majority of companies surveyed stated that they did not solely base their decision to hire a candidate on the information displayed on the candidate's social media profile, that they may still remember what they can view from a candidate's profile, regardless if it is private or not, into the decision-making or screening process. Therefore, Gunnigle et al's argument that "the selection process is far more about how people perceive each other and the impressions that are made when they meet each other- and it is this human interaction that often determines the selection decision that is made" (Gunnigle et al, 2011, p. 123) can be adapted to include social media into the selection process. Social media has removed the need for human interactions for people to perceive each other during the recruitment process to a certain extent, and it can often determine the selection decision that is made.

It is important to note that this research question and its sub question are not without their limitations. One of the main limitations to the research question is that companies were not asked more in depth about viewing candidates' social media profiles. If I was undertaking this research again I would ask companies what they focus on most when viewing a candidate's profile and whether it is the photographs, videos, statuses etc. the candidate shares that has the most impact their employability. I would also ask companies to provide examples of posts on social media they believe paint the candidate positively, and those that have negative impacts on the candidate's chance to be employed. Similarly, the question in the survey that asked companies how often they solely base their decision to hire a candidate on the information found on their social media profile, is too a limitation. If I was to undertake this research again or develop further research on this topic, I would ask companies the exact extent that the information found on a social media profile can influence a candidate's employability instead of asking them how often they solely base their decision to hire a candidate on the information on the candidate's profile. Furthermore, I would ask students/recent graduates to state which posts they are cautious of sharing on social media and to provide an explanation why. While the lack of these questions did not greatly impact my research, it is important to note them.

### 5.3 Discussion Three

The third research question asked whether many companies consciously use recruitment through social media as a tool to increase diversity in the workplace. From the findings of the survey, the majority of companies stated that they never consciously recruit through social media in order to increase workplace diversity. However, it is important to note that a number of respondents stated that they sometimes, frequently or always use social media to increase workplace diversity. Therefore, although the majority of companies surveyed stated that they never use social media as a recruitment tool to increase diversity, the use of social media by some companies to increase workplace diversity cannot be easily discounted. I would argue that social media's role as a recruitment tool to increase diversity may not be consciously exploited by the majority of companies, but that it is always a viable option for companies who do want to consciously increase diversity. The majority of companies may have responded that they never consciously use social media to increase workplace diversity as they may already have high levels of workplace diversity and therefore, have no need to consciously increase these levels further. The findings of this question do not discount the use of social media as a recruitment tool to increase diversity. Instead, they merely depict that the majority of companies do not consciously use it for this purpose.

In relation to this, it is important to note that the majority of companies surveyed stated that they had acceptable to high levels of workplace diversity. I would argue that the majority of companies who stated this have naturally occurring acceptable or high levels of workplace diversity. I would reason that due to the majority of companies stating they do not consciously use social media as a recruitment tool to increase workplace diversity that these relatively high levels of workplace diversity are therefore, naturally occurring. Similarly, the fact the majority of companies stated in the survey that they have acceptable to high levels of workplace diversity can be viewed as a contributing factor to the majority of companies stating they never consciously use social media as a recruitment tool to increase diversity. Furthermore in relation to the majority of companies stating they have acceptable to high levels of workplace diversity, the majority of companies also stated that they never consider factors which make a candidate diverse and which would in turn increase workplace

diversity when hiring new employees. Therefore, I believe this to be another indication that the majority of companies have naturally occurring acceptable to high levels of workplace diversity as companies stated they never consider hiring candidates solely on factors which make them diverse and in turn which would increase workplace diversity. It could be further argued that the majority of companies do not affirmative action or positive discrimination to increase workplace diversity.

This discussion is also not without its limitations. If I was to carry out this research again I would ask companies what they attribute as influencing factors on their diversity levels, and I would ask those with acceptable or high levels of diversity to indicate how these levels occurred, whether they were consciously increased or increased naturally. Furthermore, I would ask companies who do not use social media to increase diversity if they use any other methods to increase their diversity levels.

#### 5.4 Discussion Four

The Diversity Iceberg was an important model depicting diversity in the literature view. On page 20, it was discussed how recruiting through social media can significantly lower the waterline of visibility on the iceberg. From the findings of the company survey it can be argued that recruitment through social media has indeed lowered the waterline of visibility. As the majority of companies surveyed stated that they always or frequently view a candidate's social media profile in order to find out more information aside from their education or work history, it can be argued that factors that make the candidate diverse can be noted when companies do so. As previously discussed, depending on the level of privacy one sets their social media profile to, it is possible for companies to make assumptions about the diverseness of a candidate. I would argue that when using social media as a recruitment tool the Diversity Iceberg is individualistic. With traditional methods of recruitment, whereby companies receive CVs from applicants, they can tell very little about the applicants' diverse characteristics, aside from factors such as the candidate's name, address, education and work history which give a general idea of who the person is, but apart from that very little such as race, religion or sexual orientation is known for definite and therefore, the Diversity Iceberg is rather standardised for each candidate. However, with social media as a recruitment tool, I would argue that the Diversity

Iceberg is now different for each candidate. From the findings of the student/recent graduate survey, it can be reasoned that as the majority of respondents stated that they were very cautious about what they post on social media due to the impact it may have on their employability, the information companies can find out about their from their social media profile is limited. However, depending on the privacy settings and information one chooses to share on their social media profile, companies can make an estimated guess on what race, religion, talents, and even sexual orientation one has based on the photographs and statuses candidates share for example. Therefore, as each social media profile may have different levels of privacy, the information that companies can receive from looking at one's social media profile depends on the level of privacy and the posts they are able to view. The information gathered about what makes a candidate diverse is individualistic as each candidate can chose to put different information about themselves on social media, unlike traditional methods of recruitment whereby the information provided on CVs is typically the same for each candidate. Therefore, the waterline of visibility is different for each candidate depending on the level of privacy they have on their social media profile, thus making the Diversity Iceberg unique to each person. Furthermore, it can be argued that recruitment through social media has lowered the waterline of visibility on the Diversity Iceberg in comparison to that of traditional methods, regardless of the level of privacy one sets their social media profile to. Viewing a candidate's social media profile as well as their CV offers more information about them in comparison to just viewing their CV regardless whether the profile is private or not.

## 5.5 Discussion Five

The last research question to be answered is whether recruitment through social media has led to an increase in diversity in the workplace in comparison to more traditional methods of recruitment. According to the companies surveyed, in comparison to more traditional methods of recruitment, recruitment through social media has indeed increased diversity levels in services companies in Ireland. However, while the majority of companies stated recruitment through social media has increased diversity, they also stated that other factors contributed to this increase. This finding is important as it proves the hypothesis of this dissertation that recruitment through social media increases workplace diversity in services



companies in Ireland. As previously mentioned in the methodology, in order to follow the appropriate research ethics, I stated I would be honest and acknowledge any other variables which may have been found to increase workplace diversity. Other factors which have also contributed to an increase in workplace diversity were cited as ease of travel, economic factors, being a global company and employee referrals. This fits with Senichev's statement that an increase in workplace diversity can be contributed to the fact that "members of different racial and ethnic minorities are moving from country to country and changing the structure of the European labour market" (Senichev, 2012, p. 337). However, Senichev also stated that factors such as an aging population and more women are working in companies are also contributing factors to an increase in workplace diversity (Senichev, 2012, p. 337). In the survey/questionnaire distributed to companies for this research, none of the respondents cited these factors as reasons for an increase. This does not mean that Senichev is wrong, it merely means these factors are not influencing diversity in the companies surveyed, or that the respondents may have overlooked these factors. The findings of this question are important, as companies who possess low levels of workplace diversity can use social media as a recruitment tool in order to increase their diversity levels. Although the majority of companies stated that they do not consciously use social media as a recruitment tool to increase workplace diversity, the findings of this research may now influence companies with low diversity levels to utilise social media in order to increase their diversity levels. As social media provides companies with a greater target audience than traditional methods of recruitment, recruiting employees through this platform can increase the number of diverse employees hired, but from the findings of the survey it is not the main reason why companies recruit through social media. An increase in diversity is merely a result of hiring through social media, not the purpose of it for many companies.

## 5.6 Discussion Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter discussed the findings of the survey/questionnaires in relation to the research questions and the literature review. The key finding of this chapter was that companies do attribute the use of social media as a recruitment tool to an increase in workplace diversity. This is important as it proves the hypothesis of this research to be true. However, social media is not the sole reason for the increase, with being a global company, economic factors, and the ease of migration

stated as other factors which have also contributed to an increase in workplace diversity. Furthermore, this chapter also answered the other research questions and expressed the extent of how companies utilise and base their hiring decisions on social media. This chapter found that the majority of companies and students/recent graduates utilise LinkedIn the most often out of all social media platforms, which is important as it shows companies and students/recent graduates both understand the important and benefit of LinkedIn in the recruitment process. Additionally, this chapter discussed that companies rarely base their decision to hire a candidate solely on the information on the candidate's social media profile. Furthermore, this chapter discussed how the majority of companies view a candidate's social media profile in order to find out more about the candidate aside from their work or education history. However, the majority of students/recent graduates surveyed stated that they were very cautious about what they shared on social media due to the impact it may have on their employability, the implications of which were also discussed in this chapter. This chapter also focused on the impact that recruitment through social media has had on the Diversity Iceberg in comparison to traditional methods of recruitment. Furthermore, this chapter depicted the limitations of the research questions in order to provide an unbiased and honest discussion.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

To conclude, the aim of this dissertation was to research how social media is utilised in the recruitment process. It also examined whether social media as a recruitment tool had increased workplace diversity in services companies in Ireland in comparison to that of more traditional methods of recruitment. This dissertation provided the reader with a clear set of objectives and research questions of which it would aim to answer and achieve. This dissertation aimed to provide a balanced literature review with varying perspectives on both the use of social media as a recruitment tool and the impact that it can have on workplace diversity, as well the benefits and implications of both social media as a recruitment tool and workplace diversity. This dissertation then aimed to provide the reader with the methodology surrounding the research, through the use of the Research Onion.

### 6.1 Summary of the Findings

The main findings of this research were that:

- Companies do attribute the use of social media as a recruitment tool to an increase in workplace diversity. This is important as it proves the hypothesis of this research to be true. However, social media is not the sole reason for this increase, with being a global company, economic factors, and the ease of migration stated as other factors which have also contributed to an increase in workplace diversity. This finding may influence companies with low diversity levels to utilise social media in the recruitment process in order to increase diversity. As social media provides companies with a greater target audience than traditional methods of recruitment, recruiting employees through this platform can contribute to the increase in the number of diverse employees hired. However, the majority of companies surveyed stated that they never or seldom consciously recruited through social media to increase workplace diversity. Therefore, it can be argued that the increase in workplace diversity is an effect of companies using social media in the recruitment process, but in the majority of cases it is not the reason for companies recruiting through social media. A limitation to this is that companies were not asked if they used any other methods to increase their diversity other than recruitment through social media.

- Recruitment through social media has lowered the waterline of visibility on the Diversity Iceberg. The majority of companies surveyed stated that they always or frequently view a candidate's social media profile in order to find out more information aside from their education or work history. Therefore, it can be argued that factors that make the candidate diverse can be noted when companies do this, thus lowering the waterline of visibility for candidates before they have had a chance to even meet in person with those hiring. Therefore, companies may choose to interview candidates specifically due to the diverse qualities they display on their social media. This poses a debate whether doing so is ethical or fair to candidates. However, the waterline of disability may not always be lowered. If a candidate's profile is completely private or does not include any personal details about themselves the waterline of visibility will be the same as it is during traditional methods of recruitment.
- The majority of companies stated they do view candidates' social media profiles in order to find out more about them. However, the majority of students/recent graduates surveyed stated that they were very cautious about what they shared on social media due to the impact it may have on their employability. Furthermore, the majority of companies stated that they never base their decision to hire a candidate solely on the information available on a candidate's profile. Using social media as a method of screening may not be very reliable as the desired information may not be posted publicly or may have been chosen specifically by the candidate for its suitability, thus the true image of the candidate is not exposed publicly. A limitation to this question is that companies were not asked what they believe paint the candidate positively, and what has negative impacts on the candidate's chance to be employed based on the information available publicly on their social media profile. Similarly, another limitation to this discussion is that students/recent graduates were not asked to state which posts they are cautious of sharing on social media and to provide an explanation why.

## 6.2 Limitations

Aside from the limitations previously mentioned regarding the questions asked in the survey, the main limitation to this research was the lack of survey/questionnaire responses received from services companies. This was previously discussed in the methodology of this dissertation. However, while the number of responses from companies was relatively low, the quality of the responses was very good, and therefore, still made a great contribution to the research in this dissertation.

Another limitation to this research is that it does not include social media users who are not students/recent graduates and therefore, the information gathered in the second survey may have differed if a different group of social media users had been picked.

## 6.3 Area for Future Research:

For future research I would like to focus on implementing social media as a recruitment tool into a company which does not already use it to recruit, and then observe the impact that it has on their diversity levels. Additionally, I believe it would be beneficial to further research what exactly companies focus on or what they are looking for when they view a candidate's profile. As previously mentioned in the discussion chapter of this dissertation, I would also like to ask companies to provide examples of posts on social media they believe paint the candidate positively, and those that have negative impacts on the candidate's chance to be employed.

Furthermore, If I was to undertake this research again or develop further research on this topic, I would ask companies the exact extent that the information found on a social media profile can influence a candidate's employability instead of asking them how often they solely base their decision to hire a candidate on the information on the candidate's profile. In addition, I would ask students/recent graduates to state which posts they are cautious of sharing on social media and to provide an explanation why. While the lack of these questions did not greatly impact my research, it is important to note them.

## 6.4 Recommendations

- Based on the findings of this research, I would recommend that companies who have low levels of workplace diversity and want to increase them should introduce or increase their use of social media for recruitment purposes.
- Secondly, based on the results of this research, I would also recommend social media users to be cautious of the items that they post on social media due to the impact it can have on their employability and the fact many employers have now included this practice into the recruitment process.
- Thirdly, I would recommend that social media users, particularly those on LinkedIn, make sure their profile is as up to date as possible in order to increase their employment prospects. As many employers now search for candidates with a certain skill or education, it is beneficial to social media users to have their profile featuring all their achievements in order to increase their chance of being found in the search process.

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## 7.4 Images

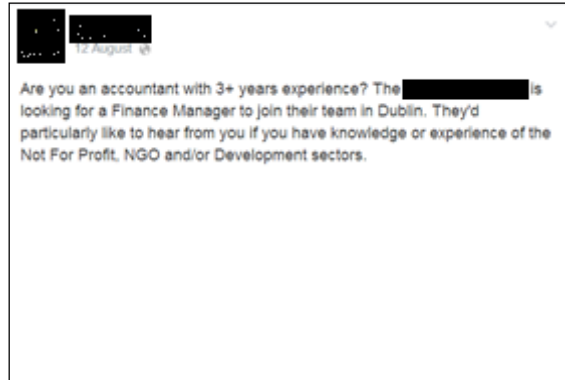
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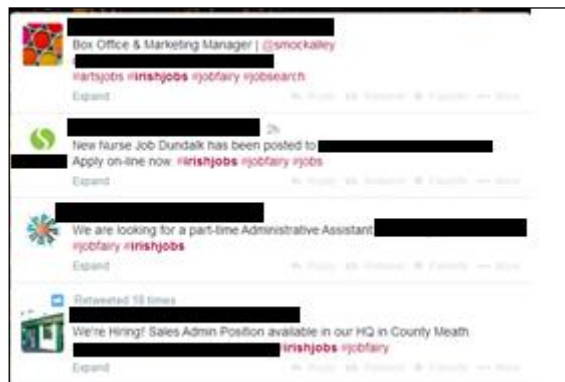
## 8. Appendix

### 8.1 Appendix One – Sample Job Advertisements on Social Media

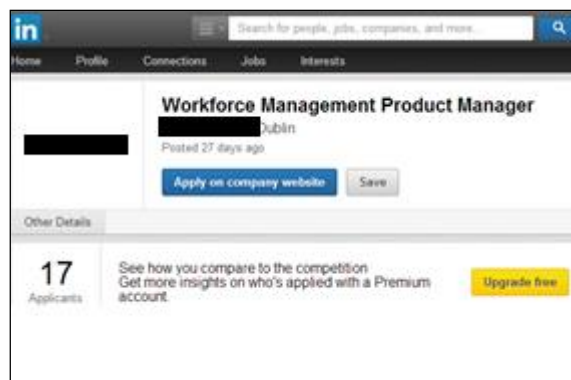
#### 8.1.1 Example of a Job Advertisement on Facebook



#### 8.1.2 Example of Job Advertisements on Twitter



#### 8.1.3 Example of a Job Advertisement on LinkedIn



### 8.1.4 Example of an E-mail from a Recruiter on LinkedIn which was sent to the Recipient because of their Education and Skills displayed on their LinkedIn Profile



## 8.2 Appendix Two - Surveys

### 8.2.1 Company Survey

#### The Impact That Social Media for Recruitment Has On Workplace Diversity

This survey aims to establish whether recruitment through social media affects the diversity of a company. In this survey, social media refers to LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

Similarly in this survey the term diversity is used. Diversity can be defined as what makes everyone different, such as experiences, backgrounds, attitudes, gender, race and sexual orientation.

All information obtained in this survey will be gathered anonymously so please answer as honestly and accurately as possible.

Thank you for taking the time to carry out this survey. I appreciate your input greatly.

#### Survey Questions

Q1. Within the last five years, which of the following does the company you represent use as its MAIN platform of recruitment? (Please select one)

- Newspapers
- Recruiters
- Radio Advertisements
- Specific recruitment websites such as Monster.ie or GradIreland
- Social Media websites such as LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter
- Other (please specify)

Q2. With a specific focus on social media, which social media website does the company you represent use most often to recruit?

- LinkedIn
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Other (please specify)

Q3. Does the company you represent ever view potential candidates' social media profiles in order to gain greater knowledge of them (aside from their education or qualifications)?

- Always
- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

Q4. Does the company you represent ever decide whether to hire a candidate or not based solely on their social media profile information, such as the photos or statuses they share publically for example?

- Always
- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

Q5. Does the company you represent merely use social media websites to advertise vacant positions, or to actively search for potential employees using social media websites and where possible make suitable candidates aware of any job vacancies?

- The company actively searches for those with a needed quality, skill or education and makes the desired candidate aware of the job vacancy but never advertises vacant positions on social media
- The company actively searches for those with a needed quality, skill or education and makes the desired candidate aware of the job vacancy. However, the company also uses social media to advertise upcoming positions
- The company sometimes searches for those with a needed quality, skill or education and makes the desired candidate aware of the job vacancy. However, the company also uses social media to advertise upcoming positions
- The company never actively sources potential employees through social media and only uses social media websites to post job vacancies

Q6. How would you describe the diversity levels within the company you represent?

- A high level of workforce diversity exists
- An acceptable level of workforce diversity exists
- A low level of workforce diversity exists

Q7. Does the company you represent consciously recruit through social media websites in order to increase diversity levels in the workplace?

- Always
- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

Q8. Would you attribute that the introduction of social media websites as a tool for recruitment have led to an increase in diversity levels in the workplace in comparison to more traditional forms of recruitment (e.g. newspapers, radio advertisements)?

- Yes – Recruitment through social media is the sole reason diversity in the workplace has increased in the last five years.
- Yes - Recruitment through social media has led to the increase in diversity in the workplace, but it is not the sole reason for this increase.
- No - Recruitment through social media has not impacted diversity levels in the workplace at all.
- No - Recruitment through social media has led to a decrease in diversity levels in the workplace.

Q9. Within the last five years, do you believe that there any other factors aside from social media websites which have influenced diversity levels in the company you represent?

- Yes - Please state below
- No

If answered yes, please state here the factor or factors you believe to have impacted diversity

Q10. When hiring a new employee, does the company you represent take into consideration factors which make the candidate diverse and therefore which will increase the diversity of the workplace (Gender, ethnicity, disabilities etc.)?

- Always
- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never



Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, your input is greatly appreciated. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me on the contact details provided in the email.

### 8.2.2 Student/Recent Graduate Survey

This survey aims to establish how students/recent graduates utilise social media in the recruitment process. Furthermore, it aims to investigate how students/recent graduates perceive workplace diversity.

All information provided in this survey will be collected anonymously and information received will be treated with confidentiality. Please answer as honestly as possible. Diversity in the context of this survey implies dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.

Q1. Which of the following have you used/do you use most often to source potential jobs? (Pick one)

- Newspapers
- Radio advertisements
- Job advertisement websites (e.g. Monster.ie)
- Social media websites
- Recruitment agencies

Q2. In your opinion, how great of a role do each of the following social media platforms have in the recruitment process?

	Extremely Important	Important	Slightly Important	No Importance
Facebook				
Twitter				
LinkedIn				

Q3. Have you used any of the following social media sites to source potential jobs?  
(Choose more than one if necessary)

- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Facebook
- None of the above

Q4. Based on the information displayed on your social media profile (e.g. your level of education or skills), have you ever been notified about a job vacancy which would be suitable for you by a recruitment agent or company?

- Yes
- No

Q5. Are you cautious about the photos you post, statuses you share or other personal information available on your social media profile in case potential employers see them?

- Yes. I am very cautious about what I post publically
- Sometimes. I consider the impact posting certain items may have on my employability
- Never. I post whatever I like with no consideration on the impact it may have on my employability

Q6. Please state what you believe to be a benefit of recruiting through social media.

Q7. Please state what you believe to be a negative of recruiting through social media.

Q8. Do you believe that recruitment through social media can increase diversity in the workplace compared to other recruitment methods (such as newspaper advertisements etc.)?

- Always
- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Seldom

- Never

Q9. Do you believe it is important to have a diverse workforce? Please state a reason for your answer.

## 8.3 Appendix Three- Reflective Journal

### 8.3.1 Reflection on Learning Style

Doing an MBA has not only increased my knowledge in general and within business related topics, but it has also provided me with an opportunity to gain and improve many skills. While all of my modules provided me with academic information which was of course vital to the dissertation process, one of my modules in particular, which focused on how to develop both personally and professionally, was very important in helping to understand the significance of developing and improving certain skills. This module also encouraged us to find out our learning styles and how they can be beneficial to us during the whole MBA experience. In this class in October 2013, I undertook the Learning Styles Questionnaire by Honey and Mumford, which revealed my learning style to be that of an activist. Throughout my whole MBA I have noticed my activist traits are very strong. I learn best by “having a go” no matter what it is I am doing, and I am both optimistic and flexible in regards to getting coursework completed. Reflecting on the dissertation process, my learning style was very much activist in its approach. I remained enthusiastic about the whole process overall, and faced any challenges with much optimism. While I created a weekly schedule of my objectives for the week, if I did not finish a certain piece -such as my literature review - within the scheduled timeframe, I did not get upset about it, instead taking a flexible approach and tweaking my schedule for the following week, allowing extra time to complete it.

### 8.3.2 Challenges

While the taught modules, particularly Research Methods, had prepared me for the dissertation process and had led to the formulation of my research proposal, I found that commencing the dissertation itself was not without its challenges. The main challenge I encountered was a lack of motivation to begin the process. At the beginning of my dissertation I felt like I was in a limbo of sorts. There was so much work which needed to be carried out that I was unsure where to start and I found it hard to motivate myself to begin. In order to increase my motivation I realised I

worked best from my desk at home and that from 10 am until 5.30 pm were my most productive hours. I downloaded an app to my phone which counted down the days until my dissertation was due and I also kept a countdown on my whiteboard which was above my desk. In response to this my motivation increased greatly and my activist traits began to show. I took a head-on approach to my dissertation and increased my productivity greatly. Reflecting on this, I believe a contributing factor to my poor motivation may have been due to a lack of confidence in myself. I had never worked independently on such a large research project before, and therefore, I felt unsure of my ability to write a high-quality dissertation. However, when I took the steps to motivate myself and after receiving my exam results and meeting with my supervisor, my confidence in my ability to carry out my dissertation greatly increased. Reflecting now, I believe my increase in confidence was also a contributing factor to an increase in my motivation. While I class myself as a confident person overall, when faced with new challenges it is easy to become unsure of one's own abilities. In the future if I am faced with new challenges, which I'm sure I will be, I will reflect on these previous times when I felt unsure of myself, and focus on how I overcame this feeling and managed to achieve my goals.

Another challenge I faced during my dissertation was the lack of survey responses I received from companies. Although I had been warned previously of this occurring in my research methods class, it was still very frustrating. The process of sending reminders to companies was time-consuming but in reflection it allowed me to improve my interpersonal and persuasion skills.

### 8.3.3 Reflection on the Learning Process

Reflecting on and evaluating my learning across the whole MBA course, I believe that while the process was challenging, it was also highly beneficial. It allowed me to increase my academic knowledge, improve my independent learning, advance my research skills and expand my overall knowledge surrounding diversity and social media as a recruitment tool. The MBA experience as a whole has improved my organisational, communication and interpersonal skills. These factors combined with my enhanced ability to self-motivate, and manage my time efficiently, have increased my confidence in researching and writing, and as a person overall. Pursuing an MBA has provided me with the valuable knowledge and skills needed to pursue a career

in human resources and it has also greatly improved many transferable skills, such as my communication and organisational skills, which will be advantageous to me in the future, in both my career and personal life.

#### 8.3.4 Future Ambitions in Regards to Research

I believe my research will be beneficial to both companies who want to increase their diversity, and to myself as it is an interesting topic to talk about with prospective employers. Furthermore, reflecting on how far I have come in the last three months as both a person and a researcher, I feel it would be a shame to waste the skills I have learned. I would like to continue my research in the future on the topic of social media and diversity. However, I believe the best way for me to gain greater knowledge on the subject of workplace diversity is to get a job and observe first-hand the benefits, challenges, and initiatives surrounding workplace diversity. I would also like to research the utilisation of social media as a recruitment tool in five years' time, and note how social media has evolved, and whether its role in recruitment has increased or decreased in comparison to the findings of my current dissertation.