

SOCIAL RECRUITING: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL
NETWORKING SITES ON DIGITAL NATIVES' OCCUPATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract

“Social Recruiting: Exploring the Impact of Online Social Networking Sites (SNS) on Digital Natives’ Occupational Opportunities” is a study about the rise of the Digital Native market segment in Greece. Relevant to a number of different fields where recruitment is present (i.e. affiliations, employment and university enrolment), next generation digital nativity has radically transformed capacity-building strategies by organisations.

This study on social recruiting explores the impact of social networking sites (SNS) on Greek college graduates’ occupational opportunities and elucidates candidate’s response to SNS strategies as part of the contemporary human resource management (HRM) recruitment models in Greece. It also addresses candidate and HRM professionals’ perceptions in the interest of entrance into the global sphere of employment. SNS integration is becoming vital to the interface of human intelligence in the web-based talent search. Primary data was gathered using both quantitative and qualitative methods, through tripartite research instrumentation. 1) an online survey, distributed on SNS; 2) two focus groups, organised to provide a more in-depth understanding of the responses given on the use of SNS in career development; 3) two semi-structured interviews and one open interview held in Athens with senior level HR managers of multinational organisations located in Greece, for further understanding of this question and to compare student responses.

The thesis’ main argument is that Greek university students and graduates are using SNS either to start their career in the private sector or to develop their own professional opportunities that will lead them to a career anywhere in the world. However, whilst they constantly use SNS, Digital Natives make a clear distinction between social and professional use of SNS. This thesis introduces a new taxonomy of web users in relation to their understanding and use of SNS. The four categories, which define contemporary Digital Natives, are (1) Denials (2) Socialisers (3) Contributors, and (4) Achievers.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Prologue

“We are becoming an information society... instead of masses of people all receiving the same messages, smaller de-massified groups receive and send large amounts of their own imagery to one another. As the entire society shifts toward the Third Wave diversity, the new networks reflect and accelerate the process” (Toffler 1980: 181-183).

When Alvin Toffler (1980) spoke of radical shifts caused by an information society in “The Third Wave,” his thoughts were a mere glimpse of the shadow of things to come: a future global economy connected by way of the worldwide web. Offering an insight into a future of knowledge-sharing and SNS interactivity, Toffler’s seminal thoughts reflected a moment in time when rapid shifts in capital flows, prompted by influxes in technological innovation, led to cultural and labour transformations of such intensity that mass communications praxis disaggregated hegemony in front of his eyes.

Globalisation and its labour forms have permeated organisational management discussions since the 1980s. The pioneering discussion on capitalisation by David Harvey (1989) *The Condition of Post Modernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* first arrived on the intellectual scene as a groundbreaking theoretical proposition that changes in ‘productivity’ would be chasing the rapid shifts in technological transformation and the flow of capital. The information era that would follow introduced Internet communities of knowledge-sharing and business to a virtual network approach. What ensued would be economic forces linked to website presence: the value of an SNS member reduced to number of visitor ‘clicks’. Social media pushed the boundaries of globalisation beyond earlier expectations in marketing, incorporating masses of Internet users into a public and professional matrix of tacit obligation and participation.

The research is greatly inspired by the work of Cann, Dimitriou and Hooley (2011) *Social Media: A Guide for Researchers*. Social recruiting, as the term

is defined in literature, functions as another channel for candidates to get recruited and selected in the business world. Through systematic academic research, this thesis aims to study the way young people in Greece use the online social networking sites to further their occupational opportunities.

Pink (2006) argues that our world is shifting from the traditional, logical and linear economy of the Agricultural Age's farmers (18th century), the Industrial Age's factory workers (19th century) and the Information Age's knowledge workers (20th century). In the 21st century, a new breed of conceptual workers arises in a high demanding conceptual age that is characterised by innovative, creative and alternative business practices. As Pink suggests, "the future belongs to a different kind of person with a different kind of mind: designers, inventors, teachers, storytellers – creative and empathic 'right-brain' thinkers" (Pink 2006, p. 1). Some of the questions explored in the current study examine the ways in which social media is changing the way people do business (Qualman, 2009). Investigation into what types of skills and values are required to succeed in the contemporary and conceptual workplace environment further refine those queries.

The rules of recruitment and job searching have undoubtedly changed, as a new breed of concept workers enters the global workforce. Today, we are witnessing the emergence of a new generation of professionals who have grown up with ubiquitous digital technology. The generational epithet that seems to define Digital Native discourse and practice is identified with Prensky (2001) in his work on iGeneration or Gen Y values. Witness to a major change in behavioural expectations in his school classes, Prensky argues that the majority of young professionals and students who were born after 1984 are largely computer literate; and this impact has been global.

As the challenge of new areas of knowledge exceeds former expectations, Digital Natives are at the forefront of solutions, often the best candidate for information or technological job opportunities. It is in this fast-paced

environment, defined by the Generation X and Y candidates, that the present research engages its subject. Essential for HR managers, and more specifically recruiters, comprehension of not only the dynamics of social recruitment, but also potential drawbacks of integrating a variety of social networking sites into their traditional recruitment practices, is not only strategic, it is vital.

As the Internet now affects almost every field of people's social action, the interactive nature of the virtual environment has radically transformed the area of recruitment (Whittaker 2002). The term e-recruitment, also known as online recruitment, refers to the use of technology that helps to attract candidates and makes the process of recruitment easier, faster and, most importantly, cheaper (Bullen, et.al 2009). Web based applications can be used to publicise vacancies on a company's official website, on job sites and social networking sites.

Applications, emails, resumés, images, recommendations, etc., facilitate the selection of candidates via Internet tools, such as using online tests or screening through the candidates' online profiles on social networking sites to establish a relationship with prospective employees (Galanaki 2002). With Facebook, Google Chat, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Twitter, ideological 'hybridity', as Harvey (1989) suggested, increases the capacity of information.

Undoubtedly, connectivity in SNS is a vital competency in market decision. Recruitment of labour and the attendant force of university training complete the value chain of capital. Here, professional identities can be bought and sold as well. Solicited as a commodity under the rubric of 'talent', SNS profiles tell visitors everything they need to know about a potential candidate for recruitment. Relevant to the contemporary study of sociology, information era methodologies to emerge from SNS reinforce investigations into political economy.

From online marketing and transaction services to outsourcing business processing of offshore systems, the efficacy of Harvey's (1989) thoughts, once applied to partnerships in SNS, serves to ground the current study in material relations. Rather than focus on recruitment in SNS from the perspective of nascent theory, however, this work contributes to a standing lineage of seminal scholarship on 'online social networking sites' in the field of sociology.

Extra-legal territorial distinctions in the SNS environment are reflected in publication of rules to participation. SNS subscribers are bound by legal constraints in use of those sites. The current study assumes ethical implication in the user environment as a cultural fact. One might argue that Harvey's (1989) theoretical insight that 'time-space' compression is largely the result of organisations' seeking profitability and sustainable advantage. Competition also plays an important role in SNS recruitment in a market where lead institutions or firms are attracted to 'particular qualities of the spaces' where capitalisation may be maximised (Harvey 1989, p. 271). How well a candidate performs in SNS space online has great influence on the result.

Integration of virtual social network environments with online business intelligence software applications (ISA) by way of data mining, and marketing to college and HRM recruitment targets, means that the efficiency and effectiveness offered in web based solutions is quite possibly the most important talent-sourcing mechanism to emerge since the rise of HRM as an asset in contemporary institutions. If global change requires a wide variety of social processes, the interface of ISA in online talent searches has certainly 'built a better mousetrap', if not a bridge, between organisational objectives and professional enquiry.

What comes out of ISA user interface with social network website memberships is evidence that the spark of change promoted through

Facebook, Google Chat, LinkedIn, MySpace and Twitter social network participation is real. As Tyler (2002) argues, we use the Internet as a tool to “create a new way of doing old things, rather than being a technology that changes the manner in which people live their lives” (p. 195). Tyler’s contention is vital argument to this study.

Association of an entire generation of students as Digital Natives (Prensky 2001), also labelled as Generation Y and Millennials by the youth marketing sector, places knowledge at the forefront of communications and information system (IS) technology priorities. Setting the pace in knowledge expiation, the introduction of the minds of the Digital Native generation as consumers and purveyors of social change performed a virtual magic trick on a world once taken for granted: expectations about intelligence and trends in education, work, friendship and family took on new meaning in the sphere of electronic relationships (Manafy & Gautschi 2011). Focus groups on recruitment processes privileged a feedback loop model of tapping into young talent. Digital Natives now stood as the source and resource to the future.

Global estimation of digital nativity in the workplace is an estimated 70 million (or 50% of new employees) in developed countries alone, the most rapidly increasing tranche of the new labour market (Harvard Business Review 2012). Add workers from emergent economies and especially BRIC (Brazil, Russia, China and India), countries where high-level IT engineering and information skills are now promoting an entire host of new expectations up for sociological interpretation. Social networking as a global phenomenon in recruiting injected never seen before energy into the recruitment process and prism of work relations (Pink 2006).

According to Prensky (2001), unlike their Digital Immigrant parents, Digital Natives do not seek standardised employment. Rather, they are far more likely to opt to start their own careers as pampered information or technological employees, or as self-employed online entrepreneurs (Manafy & Gautschi 2011). Digital Natives also work ubiquitous hours and in random

locations. Most indicate that freedom from workspace limitations leads to productivity.

The disaggregation mapped by way of office cubicle spatial design at the commencement of globalisation in the 1980s has been quite deliberately transferred via Internet proliferation in the virtual work environment.

Freelance consultants, remote employees and virtual outsource workers are in contact with business partners from the home, the airport, or even from a café, using a laptop and a mobile smart phone. The result: Digital Natives tend to be more independent in aims. Devoting themselves to business pursuits that allow them to blur the lines between work and social life, Millennials engage in professional relationships through meaningful, creative activities, without strict consideration to work schedules (Zur and Zur 2011).

It may be argued that the adoption of online social networking sites in the field of HRM cannot fully replace the traditional processes of recruitment. Yet, market research studies on next generation technologies reveal another perspective from that of a strict recruitment model. Most young professionals and university students cannot recall life without the Internet or mobile devices (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Mobile device apps, interfacing with recruitment representatives, advance the goals of institutions through increased portability and direct communications. Although new marketing strategies are typically coordinated as part of a matrix of more traditional approaches, many new recruits now find the near past process of responding to job advertisements via job application contact forms and emails a waste of time and energy.

In a recent social recruiting survey by TMJ (2012), approximately 29% of job seekers answered affirmative to use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn as their primary sources for job searching. Still, about 50% of job seekers subscribe to traditional job boards in addition to new methods. From an organisational perspective, nearly 45% of companies surveyed indicated that they have an existing plan to invest more resources in social media for talent recruitment, with a vast majority of

companies (92%) currently allocating 10% of their marketing budget on social recruiting.

As Bullen et.al, (2009) point out, the fact that e-recruitment is a core HRM competency today is because companies can forward messages to millions of possibly interested candidates. Constituents in the recruitment search are in receipt of notice immediately upon its being posted. The concept of “social recognition” in hiring suggests that organisations are seeking the best available talent already present in their network. The fact that many job searchers are already connected to those firms via social network membership, ‘join’ functions and e-contact increases the chances that there is a strong match.

In the past decade, online social networking sites (SNS) have evolved to dominate the HRM tool applications. Now employed for recruitment and selection of employees, as argued by Cellan-Jones (2011), next generation technologies assist young professionals. The interface of hundreds of millions of online users in countries throughout the globe with potential employers has fast made online recruitment the preferred method of professional networking. SNS offers nothing short of a more creative and expedient illustration of job applicant skills and credentials. From data objects to video material highlighting specialised skill competencies, potential recruits are vying for professional portfolio solicitation through virtualisation. With the addition of personal website domains (i.e. about.me), the alternative entrepreneurial business savvy reduces if not eliminates entirely the possible gaps in employment (Cellan-Jones, 2011).

The foregoing thesis investigates the impact of SNS on occupational opportunities in Greece. Amidst the productivity associated with SNS recruiting tools are significant external factors related to social, legal and ethical factors pertinent to the discussion. The mixed methodological approach to the research draws upon data from quantitative and qualitative collection of information, questionnaire responses and aggregate analysis of

perspectives from employers, recruiters, senior university students and job seekers in Greece.

This thesis argues that Greek college students are currently involved in use of SNS in career searches. Nevertheless, the present study is made complex by the severity of the current economic downturn in that country. Unemployment rates in Greece are on the increase, making the pursuit of professional interests in Greek society riskier and more uncertain than ever before (OECD 2012). To what extent the political, financial and technological realities of economic devolution have affected the way in which Greek graduates seek a paid position is potentially without sufficient measurable capability. The research acknowledges obstacles in consideration of the significance of SNS both to academic society and to the professional environment in Greece.

1.1 Significance of the Research

The use of new technologies in Human Resource Management (HRM) system processes is allegedly exceptional in reports on recruitment growth per organisational unit in recent years. This is especially the case for HRM professionals, who have some of the most developed job seeking skills drawn from training in selecting, recruiting and retaining the best talent (Anderson 2005). Widespread use of the Internet across the globe means that HR managers can apply cutting-edge HRM processes to recruitment search. Intelligent software tool applications (ISA) and next generation SNS marketing have become central to locating and attracting top professionals. It is critical during a search, to comprehend the importance for an organisation of building SNS strategy into its marketing platform for recruitment along with its HRM planning. The results may greatly influence

the outcome for the selection of an employee from a large volume of potential candidates.

Use of SNS by the vast majority of people in the developed countries, and in particular the Gen X and Gen Y employees (between 21 and 41 years,) who have unlimited and broadband Internet access from a wide variety of computer devices such as a personal computer, a laptop or a smart phone, has further impacted on the search (Bullen et.al. 2009). Furthermore, since the majority of large companies and small-medium enterprises (SMEs) have integrated Internet competency into their talent-recruiting strategies through e-recruitment, the distance between HRM knowledge and practice market leaders and smaller entities is shrinking (CIPD 2009).

SMEs have become more competitive in this scenario. The low cost attainment of high-level skill recruiting through SNS is a boon for companies that have adopted the new Internet based practices to recruiting. Professional knowledge-sharing networks and associations extend this logic, as SMEs have far more chance of attracting top-performing candidates working in other organisations than previously (Qualman 2009).

From a sociological perspective, social media is one of the most convenient social phenomena from which to study – linking organisations to people in ways never experienced before. Global norms are the result. A study by Cisco (2012) showed that two-thirds of all college students surveyed ask about social media policies during their job interviews. In addition, 56% of those respondents claimed to reject a company that bans access to social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

The current thesis addresses the Cisco (2012) research study, and focuses on SNS and their use amongst college graduates and current students from a private university in Greece. The rationale for the research follows Papathanassopoulos and Negrine (2011) tripartite definition of SNS:

“web based services that allow individuals to: (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share connection; and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Papathanassopoulos & Negrine 2011, p. 215).

While the current labour market is rife with challenges to recruiting and retaining talented young employees, many recruiters now recognise that alteration of traditional approaches will create the greatest reach in marketing to Digital Natives. Market researchers point out that SNS increases popularity rate in recruitment review. Job hunters have discovered a method of unique introduction in social networking sites; providing new ways and opportunities to become more influential in the HRM candidate selection process (Golson 2009).

1.1.1 Sample and Methodology

The current study looks at the methods employed in recruitment of a sample population of Digital Natives in Greece. A convenience sample of 228 Greek college graduates served as the basis to the study. While the convenience sample is discretionary, the universality in SNS is highly significant in revision of former theories on HRM practice more generally. The subjects in the study are senior students and graduates of the American College of Greece, Deree College, in Athens. They were ranged between 21 and 25 years old. For this thesis, graduates are defined as people who have received their degree after the successful completion of their studies within the last six months. These graduates were looking for a job at the moment of their participation in the research. Subjects were recruited from a sample of students who received the online invitation to participate on the online survey and who responded positively.

The researcher posted the online survey to his personal accounts, requesting “Facebook friends”, “Twitter Followers” and “LinkedIn Connections” to complete and then to forward it to whomever might be interested. The convenience sample was chosen by students who agreed to be contacted by the researcher in order to participate in the second phase of research, the focus groups. The sample of students was chosen regardless of the participants’ technological literacy. The tripartite research design for obtaining primary data was, in chronological order: 1) Digital Survey Questionnaire; 2) Focus Groups; 3) Interviews with HR managers.

1.1.2 The Starting Point for the Research Question

Working as an Internal Communications Expert in an Integrated Marketing Communications Agency and a part-time adjunct professor of communication and advertising at the American College of Greece, Deree College, my initial question was to discover my generation. With a Master’s Degree from Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, in Organisational Communication, Learning and Design and a genuine interest in the area of HRM, Recruitment and Youth Transitions, which has been cultivated through my doctorate studies at the University of Leicester, I found the most suitable way to explore the differences and similarities among the current and future employees in the workplace.

Many things have been written about Generation Y, in which I belong according to my age. Members of the Generation Y are described as egoists, naive, impatient, and lazy employees. I was always against generalisations and sweeping statements to describe people’s behaviours. Are we actually what they call us? Who decides who we are?

Through my research I wanted to explore this generation of learners, students, job candidates, workers who see the Internet as the context and

not necessarily as the tool to develop their opportunities. Age does not play any role. The new generation of employees is equally confused with all the rest, eager, passionate and willing to contribute at a time that today's workplace seems unable to see their full potentials.

The specific interest in researching the impact of social networking sites on occupational opportunities was fostered by my personal drive to further my understanding on new technologies to explain how Generation Yers communicate online and construct their personal digital identities. As I personally experienced two job loses over the years when this thesis was written, I saw the great opportunities given by my digital profile's exposure on the web. Using a personal example, I received three phone interviews from companies abroad due to the fact that they found me on LinkedIn, although I was not seeking for job.

In addition, due to my teaching position at the American College of Greece, I was in constant discussion with my students who were seeking advice to find a job. Most of the traditional approaches to job searching were simply not working especially in the Greece of crisis. Therefore, many graduates were seeking for alternative ways to get noticed by companies, in Greece and abroad.

Finally, this thesis is my third research to study the Internet's impact on human behaviours. Primarily, as part of an independent study with Dr. Wenshan Jia at the State University of New York at New Paltz, I wrote a paper on Intercultural Communication and Computer Mediated Communication. Then, during my post-graduate studies at Ithaca College I presented a paper titled "Intercultural Communication Meets the Online Business Environment: A Misunderstood Relationship" at the National Communication Association Conference in Boston, 2004.

The aforementioned personal experience and my academic and professional background cultivated my internal drive to start working on this doctorate thesis, aiming to understand my own generation based on our insights and views about social media and occupational opportunities.

1.1.3 Aim of Study

This thesis aims, primarily, to explore a rather new topic in the field of Human Resources Development and Recruitment Methods, as it examines the impact of online social networking sites on young people's occupational opportunities. Secondly, it provides a thorough discussion to understand the views and opinions of both sides in a recruitment process; the recruiter's from the one side and the candidate's from the other. Finally, this thesis aims to offer an initial sketch of the profile of future employees and leaders.

This thesis aims to explore the impact of Social Networking Sites (SNS) on occupational opportunities in Greece. While the current research focuses on Digital Natives' strategies to start their professional careers, the study has implications to future investigation of recruiting practices by way of SNS marketing. This interest in Greek college graduates comes at a time when Greece is facing the most brutal economic pressure in the country's modern history. Indeed, as not much has been written about the Greek Digital Natives and how they plan to develop their careers, the thesis aims to sketch the current profile of those European professionals at a time when Greece suffers from so called "brain drain" or contemporary scientific immigration.

1.1.4 Rationale for Study

The decision to study the topic of college graduate SNS job searches in Greece comes at a time when Greek citizens are attempting to cope with tremendous economic hardships. News stories report that an increasing number of young people are using the Internet to apply for jobs in the European market (Nikolitsas 2007). However, as EU employers and job seekers begin to understand the SNS impact on occupational opportunities in Greece and worldwide, the potential for career success is still viable (Nikolaou 2011). Due to the fact that a large group of potential employees with limited or no online access are part of the demographic of this nation, the converse suggestion may be made that in Greece, access and overall understanding of the potentials of innovation that technology offers is the key to stability.

Within the study of Greek university graduates seeking employment, the use of SNS in the professional world turns up categorically diffused. Comparison to older sociological queries on labour reveals a new world where the lines between personal and professional lives are hard to distinguish. Applicants and recruiters communicate on a one-on-one basis; SNS levels the power and distance between the two. A thorough exploration of the impact and penetration of online social networking sites on HRM practices in such an important period of time in the history of modern Greece provides a great opportunity to reach significant academic conclusions.

1.1.5 The Greek Crisis

The Greek government-debt crisis is considered as one of the many similar economic crises in the Eurozone, which was primarily triggered by the major economic downturn in 2008. Nevertheless, the Greek crisis is considered a

case study for the European Union, as Greece was even discussed by the European leaders to exit the Euro currency zone and return to a greatly devaluated drachma, the previous national currency. The discussion about the country's possibility to exit the Euro zone was widely covered by the world's media as Grexit (Buitter 2012). The case of Greece was greatly covered by the international media such as CNBC (2012) in a story titled "Huge Sense of Doom Among 'Grexit' Predictions", considering the country's bankruptcy as an inconvenient consequence of its high debt obligations, structural deficits, and extreme costs on public accounts.

The Greek crisis did not only affect the country's financial standards and relationships with the global markets, but also it affected the Greek people's trust and confidence to the government, the constitution and the banking sector (Eurostat, 2011). As the country started downgrading in April 2010, receiving no additional loans by the private capital markets, Greece was no longer able to sustain its financial independence. According to Eurostat (2012) on May 2010, the Greek government decided to ask for help by both the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) receiving a €110 billion bailout loan and a second €130 billion bailout loan a year later. The conditions to receive the loans were severe for the Greek people, resulting to tremendous austerity measures, privatisation of public assets, and structural reforms.

At the time this thesis was written in 2011 and 2012, the country's GDP was facing its worst decline with -7.1% a year, having more than 111,000 Greek companies out of business, 27% increased from previous year (Eurostat 2012). According to the Greek Statistics Organization (Hellas Stat) the unemployment rate grew at the record high of 19.9% in November 2011, from the 7,5% in September 2008. In addition, the youth unemployment rates reached from 22% in 2008 to 48,1% in 2011 and 55% in mid 2012, having the sad record of the highest unemployment rate in the Europe Zone (Eurostat 2012).

This thesis took place during the previously described economic environment in Greece, which resulted to millions of job loses, and according to informal reports, more than 120,000 young scientists and university graduates to decide to migrate and build their careers abroad (Tsolakidou, 2013). In this severe reality, the aim of this thesis was to explore the impact of social media and more specifically of the use of social networking sites on Greek graduates' occupational opportunities.

1.1.6 Main Argument

The main argument proffered is that a majority of Greek university students are turning to the Internet and SNS either to start their career in the private sector, or to develop their own professional opportunities that will lead them to a prosperous career anywhere in the world. However, as postulated by Madge, Meek, Wellens and Hooley (2009) in their study about Facebook, social integration, and informal learning at university, this thesis argues that whilst Greek university students regularly use the SNS, in their effort to have "room for friends" (Facebook) and a "space for business" (Linkedin), young Digital Natives make a clear distinction between social and professional use of SNS. The research findings show that although Digital Natives seem to use SNS heavily in their lives, they do not take advantage of the potential it possesses to develop a professional profile in the online world.

This subject is highly topical. At a time that the business world is experiencing turbulence due to the rise of new economies from the East Asia and the Southern America, most companies in Northern America and Europe agree that human capital is becoming a crucial competitive advantage. Therefore, despite the last decade's forecasts that technology itself will offer competitive edge (Papacharissi and & Rubin 2000), it appears that the recruitment and management of talented employees with leadership skills and whole-brain thinking (Pink 2006) will signify business success in

the upcoming years. The aforementioned discussion about the topic's importance and relevance to the academic and professional world leads this thesis to its main research question and sub-questions.

1.2 Research Question

To what extent Social Networking Sites (SNS) impact occupational opportunities in Greece? In support of the main research question, several sub-questions serve to elucidate the foci of the study:

1.2.1 Research Sub-questions

1. How do Greeks promote themselves using online social networking sites (SNS)?
2. How do SNS influence job searching and recruiting practices?
3. To what extent are recruiters using SNS to search for the most appropriate candidate?
4. At a time of harsh economic crisis in Greece, do SNS shape a new reality in terms of enhancing entrepreneurship?
5. What is the link between creating an online social profile and developing a self-promotion strategy to get a job?

1.3 Location of Study

The geographic focus of this study is Greece, one of the member-states of the European Union. This topic aims to contribute valuable research-based evidence in regard to the field of HRM as it researches an essential group of European citizens, Greek university students, who are called to build their

careers during the most turbulent economic challenge that Greek society has ever experienced.

1.4 Justification for the Research

The rapid proliferation of the Internet in the early 90s raised a number of questions in the global business environment, as it was expected to enhance and facilitate considerable knowledge across humanity, businesses, cultures and languages (Stewart, Shields & Dimmick 1998). The first version of the Internet was primarily a non-dynamic representation of information, published by the few users who had access and the recourses to maintain a website (O'Reilly 2007).

The dot-com bubble collapse in 2001 signified the eruption of Web 2.0 as the Internet's more interactive and user-content generated version, which was promising radical changes in the way people use the worldwide web (Chan & Guillet 2011). A more interactive version of the web now offers unlimited access for all; changing new realities in business communications (Joerres 2007, and Qualman 2009). Nevertheless, an interesting academic debate has been raised by those who are opposed to the wider notion of the Internet as the *sine qua non* to human communication.

Amidst rapid transformation to global social processes, the Internet has turned out to be a mixed blessing (Ruben 1992). From one perspective, the Internet functions as an effective channel of communication, which can facilitate compassionate exchanges across cultures and languages. It signifies the birth of alternative occupational opportunities at a time when traditional organisations seem unable to recruit and to maintain the best minds (Jones 2010). On the other hand, the Internet may also amplify cultural differences as to how people seek and apply for jobs. As the influence of traditional recruiting channels will be reduced or even vanish,

the gap between computer literates and computer illiterates will be more obvious than ever before (Cellan-Jones 2011).

Emergence of online social networking sites ushered in a huge shift in the contemporary labour market. HRM models transform the scope of employment relations and have attributed changed to a wide variety of interpersonal, intercultural, organisational and mass communication practices (Joerres 2007). Millions of people are logging into social networking sites every day, making it hard to calculate with precision the total number of users and the average time they spend on the Internet (Qualman 2009).

This study looks at how SNS are shaping a new reality in HRM processes and the experiences of candidates involved in recruitment. Until recently, the process of seeking a job or recruiting the best mind obliged companies either to post their job vacancy on the corporate website or to post an expensive job advert on the newspapers and online job boards (i.e. Monster.com). Newer job posting sites such as Indeed.com and the SimplyHired.com interface with LinkedIn to perform abductive searches of a number of major job boards all around the globe, thereby providing users with an easy, one-stop search.

Traditional recruiting practices will likely continue to decline in terms of global influence as SNS and other forms of online HRM business process services are available (Qualman 2009). That author estimates that the SNS like LinkedIn, Craigslist and Plaxo will play a major role in recruitment, since they offer the platform to connect the potential employee directly with the employer. In the past decade, social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Plus, amongst many others, have grown astonishingly. The most powerful of SNS, Facebook, counted 500 million members; the youngest social platform Twitter had more than 145 million micro-bloggers, while LinkedIn registered more than 100 million professionals in 200 countries worldwide in a variety of industries (Safko and Brake 2009).

Over 80% of LinkedIn's users consider it as a primary tool to find employees, while simultaneously 70% are using SNS platform for job-hunting worldwide (LinkedIn Analytics, 2011). While the numbers above are still not matching the vast numbers of professional resumés posted on job sites, soon SNS will outnumber anything else in the area of recruitment. The reason for their rapid and constant growth is the fact that they are easier to use and, most importantly, they are free of charge (Qualman 2009). What was first designed to provide US college students a space in which to socialise has turned into a major boon for HRM specialists (Safko and Brake 2009).

Social media is even described as the panacea of communication and interactivity among the members in the business world (Wright 2011). Manpower (2012) argues that the year 2013 will be essential for the most popular social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google Plus, to establish a greater impact on the world of business and to manage top talents. The recent change by Facebook to ask users to classify their friends based on occupation and schools, as well as the professional applications of LinkedIn and the growing use of Twitter Job Feeds, shows that competition is high. What started as a social trend is currently shaping the future of business performance. This transformation starts with recruiting the most talented human capital. Companies now look for highly competent recruits in SNS, as career seekers are actively using the social networking sites (SNS).

Academic researchers and social media experts argue that online social networking sites benefit both sides in the recruitment process (Cellan-Jones 2011, Qualman 2009, Joerres 2007, and Garton et al. 1997). Employers no longer need to use the paid services of a HRM firm or staff for the first stage of the recruitment process. Until now, HR managers and recruiters had to read CVs mailed directly to the company's offices or posted online on a job board. Then they would have to screen the information and decide from two/three pages who was to qualify for the next round of the recruiting process. With the use of online social networking sites, the potential

employee has already uploaded his/her personal information online, as well as his/her academic and professional qualification (Tuten 2008). Candidates may in turn submit their response. Professional recommendations offer ready access for HRM or colleague review. In addition, candidates building their online personal and professional profiles can exhibit their “whole” identity where relevant to career pursuits.

Some employers now look for candidates with extended networks of interest. Profiles enriched with their pictures, friends, thoughts, affiliations and group memberships stand to perform better. As Qualman (2009) writes, a person’s online profile on LinkedIn offers information in greater depth about his/her professional qualifications than a static piece of paper, while it offers the recruiter the possibility of assessing the candidate’s social profile in unguarded moments.

However, how does the field of HRM address the need of those career seekers who are not using new online social networking sites to look for their career opportunities? What are the ethical issues raised by the growing need of people to share publicly their personal thoughts, news and highlights? In what way does HRM tackle the emerging need overly to use the Internet and SNS to recruit and select the best candidates for the position?

Academic literature exploring online behaviour in a wide variety of industries and social processes is rich. Little has been said, however, on how young people use the Internet and, more specifically, SNS to start their professional career. This thesis focuses on the policy implications of the emergence of online social networking sites in the field of human relations in Greece. At a time when nearly every week a new social networking site is developed and published online (Snowdon 2011), it is impossible for any researcher to study every social network on the web.

For this reason, this study focuses on the top three social networking sites, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, with the latter being the primary research site online. Even if Google Plus is catching up fast, by the time of the data

collection, it would still not be one of the top sites for professional networking and ultimately for recruiting (Kirkpatrick 2011).

1.4.1 Limitations of the Thesis

This thesis aims to cover a wide range of topics in relation to the HRM discipline. More specifically, this study explores the issue of online recruitment including SNS and the Web 2.0, as the new and more interactive version of the Internet. It would have been impossible and unfocused for any research study to cover every aspect of such widely discussed areas.

In terms of HRM, this thesis covers only what is relevant in regard to traditional and online recruitment. Moreover, it focuses only on people seeking a career, which includes high or higher academic background as opposed to a job that is defined as a low involvement and short-term occupation for an agreed price. Limitations to the study delineated by market segmentation within global SNS recruitment practices is of import, notably changes to the business process outsourcing and relocation of the manufacturing sectors.

Digital Nativity or Gen Y populations are discretionary segments with market research studies of consumers. One of this study's main arguments is that the Internet and, more specifically, the use of online social networking sites divides the future workforce of young people (ages 18-25) in two groups: Digital Natives, who are fully aware of the new technologies, and Digital Immigrants, those who either refuse to use the Internet for personal reasons or have limited or no online access due to their socio-economical background (Prensky 2001).

Another limitation to the study is technology itself. Potential for obsolescence is high. This research explores Web 2.0 SNS applications and services used by members for recruitment. The notion of the worldwide web includes a wide variety of terms and implications. Moreover, social networking applications include such options as YouTube, Google Plus, Google Adwords, Forums, Blogs and many others that had to be omitted due to time constraints. In addition, this study does not cover in depth the cultural background of its human subjects, which may affect the impact of online social networking sites on occupation opportunities when they occur in a variety of social and cultural contexts.

A possible limitation to the study is that this research was undertaken among young university students who were understandably very uncertain about their professional future and their financial status in Greece. In addition, the researcher's position as a professor in the college where the research was conducted might conceivably be a limiting factor.

Finally, although this research explores a wide number of students seeking a professional career through online social networking sites, it would have been impossible to make sweeping statements and generalisations for all young Greeks. The reason for this is that the geographical scope of this study is limited to Athens, the capital of Greece, which, however, has almost the 50% of the country's population. The Greek labour market and its attendant forms will be the topic of much public discourse in the future. Although the research speaks to a limited set of phenomena related to Greek employment, it is by no means exhaustive in relation to the country's labour picture.

1.5. Format of Thesis

This section provides a brief description of each chapter to show a logical structure from the introduction to conclusions and future implications.

Chapter One introduces the reader to the thesis. It signifies its importance in the overarching academic literature by mainly explaining the political, financial and social complexities under which this research study has been conducted. This chapter presents the research questions and sub-questions, while providing a thorough justification of the research and its limitations.

Chapter Two is a review of the literature in regards to Digital Nativity, the Sociology of the Internet, the Online Social Networking Sites landscape, Social Recruiting and HRM. This chapter is essential, as it provides the theoretical framework in which the current thesis aims to contribute. Although the area of HRM is widely discussed in literature, little has been said in respect to recruitment and SNS. This is more evident in Greek academic literature, as only a few scholars are actively involved in social recruiting research.

Chapter Three primarily identifies key research themes from the academic literature and debates around qualitative and quantitative methods. This chapter discusses the research process and explains the different styles of research that could have been followed. In addition, it explains what methodologies were used to collect primary and secondary research data, both quantitative and qualitative.

Chapter Four presents both the results from analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data, and the key findings emerging from it. This chapter also discusses the data reviews with regard to the current turbulent financial

situation in Greece. Through the use of specific models, dissemination of the research findings is met by: 1) segmentation data from the survey questionnaire; (2) qualitative data from two focus groups with students and graduates, as well as the interviews with three Human Resource Professionals.

The last two chapters suggest strategies for organisations to recruit the representatives of Gen Y. Chapter Five discusses the transition from new entry-level employees to future leaders and makes the claim that the sooner organisations understand and prepare themselves to address these changes, the better for them to recruit, develop and, most importantly, maintain the next leaders in their business environment.

Finally, Chapter Six is a critique of the Internet's impact on professional identity and forecasts the impact of SNS on employers in forthcoming years. It discusses the research's implications to both theory and practice. Lastly, this chapter suggests future implications of the findings from this study and how they can be used to provide the theoretical framework for new studies in the area of social recruiting.

1.6 Conclusions

It is perhaps effectively argued that continuity in the business environment remains one of the key factors affecting the functioning of any organisation. The "people factor" establishes a baseline competency criterion for the health of an entity; and SNS recruitment presentation and response is no exception. Recruitment is a two-way street. HRM professionals acknowledge that in order to attract and retain the most desirable candidates, excellence in organisational performance must be evidenced in marketing. Where compensation and professional benefits to employment are not availed of,

recruitment may fail. Communication of current market offerings in employment is destined to be a foundation to the survival of any business in a turbulent environment.

Unconventional elements in the HRM environment are now at the centre of strategic planning in recruitment campaigns. SNS marketing arrived on the scene during a period of global change in business. Universal cost-effective solutions, afforded by access to SNS Internet based marketing, initiated a more complex, yet vital arena of professional identity for professionals; social media(ted) character is a quality taken for granted in recruitment relations. So much so, in fact, that the HRM sector has affected the current vision of social networking sites (Qualman 2009).

This chapter provided an introduction to the thesis' topic, justifying the reason why such a research is important and unique. The following chapter examines the literature on HRD, provides essential definitions of the terms this thesis uses and considers the use of social networking sites in recruitment, through valid and reliable secondary sources.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This literature review incorporates discussions from: 1) the commercial IT world and market research sphere, as well as 2) academic scholarship on post Gen Y populations and digital recruitment models. The review guides understanding of the researched area and positions the thesis towards making a valuable academic contribution to furthering the knowledge of how online social networking sites impact on occupational opportunities.

The review of relevant literature about the rise of SNS comes from a wide variety of secondary research data (articles, books, webpages, forums, etc.) both in academic scholarship and in professional market research. Business and HRM studies round off the body of thought on the topic of online recruitment. The history of digital nativity is examined and there is reflection on the latest trends and new methodologies to emerge from the Internet communications revolution. Globalisation and consumer market theories preface the research design and offer focus.

2.1 The Digital Natives Discourse

2.1.1 Defining Digital Natives

The appearance of Digital Natives, the generation of Internet users having natural affinity with computers and other electronic devices, establishes the basis to the current study of mediated professional identities in SNS recruitment of job candidates (Tapscott & Williams 2008; Prensky 2001).

The generation gap, seen as an innate factor in the history of labour, is advanced by this theory, as the current generation of online users has a higher level of adaptability to anything new. This is in stark contrast to their parents and grandparents, classified within the genre of social media as Digital Immigrants (Prensky 2001). Digital Immigrants are characterised as online users who, although they manage to catch up with technology easily, are still not considered fully fledged 'members' of the Internet generation. Nevertheless, this study uses both age groups in its research. Since they are skilful enough to use social networking platforms for their benefit, the entire scope of workforce relations is potentially involved, with variance in individual preference and technological competency. Prensky's (2001) replicable model introduces the concept of Digital Native as the foundation to the current study.

When Prensky first cited Digital Natives as a new generation of thought in labour, the application of the concept to a convenience sample of first year college students was much akin to the one under investigation in Greece. Prensky describes Digital Natives as a group of students bearing fundamental distinctions from the classes and generations he had encountered in his academic career. His main argument stems from the observation that these new Digital Natives seem to have "spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age" (Prensky 2001, p. 1).

Digital Natives are especially adept at functioning within a web-based interface. Research on this particular characteristic has been widely conducted within market segment research on Gen Y consumers and products; yet, academic scholarship is less advanced in the topic. Studies of the latter sort are generally investigations into socialisation rather than contributory to research and development strategies meant to generate

profit. In either case, the topic of HRM is tertiary to the broader trends found in the literature.

Gen Y, born after 1980, are children of a digitised world (Prensky, 2001). Change has been rapid; so accelerated, it might be argued, that attendant cognitive stress seen in ADHD and other mental health 'disorders' reflects an everyday life refracted through the competition of mediated identities and their command. As Tapscott and Williams (2008) argue, erasure of an era when such politics were not salient to professional status, gone are the traditional modes of hierarchy where competition is summated in rite of passage from college or university degree programme to career placement. Identity politics subsumes all other 'skill' it would seem, where technological advances, such as the increase of the personal computer market, the Internet evolution, the birth of online social networking sites, the development of laptops, the growth of mobile devices, etc., all serve to outrank candidates in the race to the finish line.

Digital Natives' in business sectors are especially predisposed to this sociological profile. Configured by email communications, Sharepoint project management and virtual meetings, Digital Natives find validation in their professional standing by way of multiple digital accounts, competency in SNS networking and their ability to forge consensus through self-volition in online forums. Digital Natives are first generation bloggers, wikis and leaders on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, Pinterest, Google+, etc. Many of those same Digital Natives might also have a digital *self* (also known as an avatar) that lives in virtual worlds such as the Second Life or in online games like Lineage and World of Warcraft (Qualman 2009).

These Digital Natives are equally eager to experience new technological gadgets when they hit the market. The iPhone series and other smart phone phenomena is evidence of this movement. They listen to music by

downloading MP3-formatted songs from the web. They receive information through video-streaming applications like YouTube and they are commenting on anything they found worth discussing. Finally, they even refer to networks to acquire friends. The transition to the professional world is quite obviously a natural one for a Digital Native - organic connectivity in the making (Tapscott and Williams 2008).

Acknowledgement that the first Digital Natives have grown up, completed their studies and are ready to enter the business world is relevant to interpretation of recruitment practice as a field of knowledge sharing. If labour has become a landscape of ideologues, as Appardurai (1996) suggests, the ideoscape of the information age is largely subject to the scale and speed of innovation. With freedom in enterprise so affordable (i.e. Microsoft Office365), many Digital Natives run web based businesses prior to graduation from university. Taking advantage of the countless opportunities the Internet provides to young entrepreneurs, young professionals make money from unexpected online resources such as Blogs and other content sites, SEO consultancy, as well as standard merchant websites and outsourcing business process networks.

Example of Digital Nativity is seen in Facebook's founder Marc Zuckerberg, or Google's founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin, showing that billionaire status can and will be attained at a very early stage in next generation careers. Simply because they had a great idea, pioneered it online and then managed to bring it to fruition as initial public offerings (IPO) at the right time, Facebook and Google's progenitors are an illustration of the exceptional talent seen in Digital Native programmers now making their living from home through development of iPhone and Android applications for mobile devices. Digital Natives' skills and interests in using computers and other technologically advanced devices since they were children have had a deep impact on cultural forms as well as product segmentation. This generation seems to appreciate diversity and change, which includes different models

of education (Zur and Zur 2011). The concept of lifelong learning is somewhat stimulated by technological inputs in the sphere of Internet knowledge-sharing and professional practice.

The Digital Native also tends to learn best where education is given not linearly but rather flexibly. Matrices of hyperlinks are equitable to traditional textbooks, with far faster facilitation in research incorporation. Experience driven and multitasking savvy, the new workforce is horizontal in efficacy and practice (Prensky 2001, Tapscott 1998). This thesis focuses on how these young people are preparing themselves to make the transition to work. The question that arises in most studies is whether education is equipped enough to fulfil the Digital Natives' expectations or not. In addition, is it only the Digital Natives who use SNS for their professional transitions?

2.1.2 Defining Digital Immigrants

What happens with those who were born before 1980? One might conjecture that such a theory departs from normative models of skill and training. Furthermore, are generations prior to Gen Y computer illiterate merely as a result of age? Some distinction to Prensky's theory on Digital Immigration explains those professionals (i.e. business leaders, professors, teachers and specialists) who were born prior to 1980 but are technologically fluent. The polemic is premised on the idea that "Digital Natives" and "Digital Immigrants" are distinct primarily in educational preparation (Prensky 2001).

If what those Digital Natives know best is to interact and function using the Internet, how do we expect them to use traditional approaches in their transition from pupil to professional? This study examines the cross-generational debate and looks at the recruiter-applicant relationship in relation to the independent variables of age and gap in technological training

within the academic and professional literature. As Prensky points out, the difference between the two terms is shrinking as web based intelligent software and SNS applications are advanced (Prensky 2001). What was once the sole provenance of Digital Native populations has become an entire ecosystem open to incremental change instigated by anyone of any generation.

Indeed, the Digital Immigrants of today are turning to the Internet as their second option to receive information and conduct business. Academic scholars, though, disagree with Prensky's distinction, stating that neither Prensky's nor Tapscott's research studies are based on empirical data (Bullen et al. 2009). Academic scholars debate that the distinction is based on the researchers' personal observations and testing hypothesis. Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) also argue that computer literacy is not consistent across people of the same age group. Hence, it is hard simply to define one group of people as more Digital Native than another (Bennett et al. 2008).

Existential learning is highly appraised by Digital Immigrants, who show quick adaptation skills to new realities. Following Prensky's logic, this thesis explores both populations to the model study, in examination of how online social networking sites are part of strategic professional transition. Although the academic literature has broadly discussed the issue of Digital Natives in regard to their attitude in classroom settings, little has been written about the impact of online social networking sites on their transitions from the university classroom to a paid position in the corporate world. Even fewer studies are available on how the Digital Immigrants are coping with using online social networking sites for their professional benefit.

To what extent online social networking sites serve as a professional bridge between occupational opportunities and job attainment, addressed from the point-of-view of Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants in Greece, is an

exceptionally interesting topic, in the context of the present climate of austerity in which Greece faces sheer devolution of its economy. The number of job losses during the last two years bode ill for the future. As rates of unemployment are increasing, professional exchange in Greek society becomes riskier and more uncertain than ever. This study speaks to the existing literature on the topic, yet argues that the SNS amidst economic crisis may lead to global transformations untold. Greek people of all ages are already thinking of novel ways to become financially independent. Reliance on the Internet has benefits in this regard.

Roles available to Greek citizens outside of Greece in the European Union and abroad offer hope to the numbers of job seekers, as many more make the physical exodus to commence work. At times it seems that the capacity to remain at home in Greece is largely dependent upon prosperous application to virtual employment, much, if not most, marketed via social network sites. In addition to the main terms (i.e. e-recruitment, Internet, Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants and SNS), other factors are introduced in the literature. The ever-expanding lexicon on HRM in online space stands to be augmented by this study. University graduates seeking paid positions online use the word “career” rather than “job” as a method of establishing credibility during search. The next section discusses the differences of the two aforementioned generations.

2.1.3 Critiques on Digital Nativism

As discussed previously on literature, in 2001 Marc Prensky classified a whole generation of learners as Digital Natives, mainly based on their age (those born after 1980). These Digital Natives or members of the Net Generation show a homogeneous set of skills on how they interact with technological tools and how they are defined by their technological

competencies (Tapscott and Williams, 2008). According to Prensky (2001) those who were born in the digital era have a natural inclination towards technology. In addition, Prensky (2001) argued that for those who were born earlier than 1980, technology can be learnt but not on the same level as the Digital Natives. Prensky calls Digital Immigrants those learners of the digital world.

Prensky's terms of Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants have become totemic, offering a new definition to a raising generation of online users (Bennett, et.al, 2008). An academic discourse of studies exploring the characteristics of young students resulted to the same argument that there are distinct differences between generations and especially when it comes to technological literacy. Tapscott (1998) called them "Net Generation", Oblinger (2003) used the modern term Millenials, Rushkoff (1996) mentioned their tendency to watch at screens by calling them "Screenagers", Veen and Vrakking (2006) named those TV oriented teenagers as "Homo Zappiens" and Palfrey and Gasse (2008) wrote a book on Digital Natives titled "Born Digital".

Prensky (2001) mentioned in his study that there will be profound changes on education and business. Critiques on Prensky's concept of the digital nativity argue that there is no concrete evidence to patent a whole generation on their digital literacy, simply because there are many examples and cases of people born before 1980 showing amazing understanding of how technology works. For those critiques, it is risky to characterise a whole generation solely based on age through anecdotal stories and intuitive arguments (Crook and Harrison, 2008).

As discussed in this literature about the Digital Divide and access inequality, young learners do not have equal access to technology. Similarly, young

people differ when it comes to technical education, both formal and informal. As Davies (2013) writes on his blog,

“it doesn’t make sense to put someone who only ever plays Xbox with someone who codes their own apps into the same category; it makes as much sense to say that people born after 1936 when the BBC first began broadcasting are more comfortable with using a TV remote and are more ‘TV savvy’.

Bennett et.al (2008) disagree with Prensky (2001) who supports that Digital Natives demonstrate a homogenous set of skills. They also argue that there is no evidence to prove that Digital Natives are the only people entitled to be multitasking, as this competence can be seen in a number of people all over the world and in any age. Therefore, multitasking is not a new phenomenon, which young people exclusively poses.

Similarly, critiques on Digital Nativism consider the classification Natives vs. Immigrants too simplistic (Jones and Healing, 2012). The way people use and interact with computers, or their understanding towards new technological advancements cannot be explained based on age differences, but on the internal motive of each individual. Vaidhyanathan (2008) claims that there is no digital generation, suggesting that each person in every generation is exposed to several levels of technology competency, from low to high levels.

The academic debate on Digital Nativism generally claims that it is unfair and simplistic to categorise people based on their age, as there are many factors that need to be taken under consideration, such as online access, informal and formal education, family background, etc. (Livingstone, 2009). Although the concept of the Digital Native has greatly impacted academic

scholars, it is hard to classify people on several social scientific claims having no strong evidence to strengthen the argument.

Another critique was made by Selwyn (2011) arguing that the claims on Digital Natives are based on personal observation and anecdotal evidence, having no actual application in the business world. As Selwyn (2011) and Livingstone (2009) argue, the term is alienating people instead of making an effort to find their actual common ground. Both scholars mention that it can be dangerous for teachers to assume that they have to change their teaching style to be able to reach their “Digital Natives” students.

This thesis aims to contribute to this academic debate, claiming what White and Le Cornu (2011) also argue that technological literacy can be developed regardless of people’s age. Through a taxonomy of users, this thesis presents a set of skills and competencies that Greek graduates and students apply when they interact with the digital media. Although, primarily this thesis uncritically used the term Digital Native to define its subjects, through a close investigation on literature it is evident that there are more factors to consider when naming a whole generation of online users. The next section discusses the main factors that shape online users’ digital literacy by examining the Internet’s bigger picture.

2.2 The Sociology of the Internet

Over the last two decades the Internet has impacted the way we communicate, share for information, share and exchange messages (Betances, et.al. 2012). The Internet is not simply a new channel of communication, rather a new environment in which people interact, work, and learn. It has, in fact, affected a wide spectrum of our daily activities.

Hooley (2012) suggests that the Internet is the context and not simply a tool with limitless content. DiMaggio et.al (2001) argue that the Internet has raised a number of social implications and it is critical for sociologists to test theories of technology diffusion and media effects.

Academic research on the Internet's social implications varies on certain domains, which DiMaggio,et.al, 2001 point out as:

- (1) the digital divide (online inequality),
- (2) community relations,
- (3) political participation,
- (4) online access in organisations, and
- (5) cultural participation

The Internet clearly affected almost every aspect of social life. With the use of social media, the lines between personal and public life have been blurred (Betances, et.al. 2012). People seem to be more open to expose their personal moments, having a false interpretation of what type of information is public and what is private. In addition, sociologists examine the notion that the Internet is the most democratic tool of communication, showing evidence of the opposite by addressing the issue of digital divide.

Another change that the Internet brought to people's lives is the way they search for information and share intelligence. The most popular search engine, Google, reveals that almost 2 trillion searches (specifically 1,873,910,000,000) took place in 2012 on global basis (StatisticBrain.com, 2013). The Internet has become ubiquitous. The personal computer or the laptop are not the only devices which allow people to connect online. Users can access the web using mobile devices as well. Soon, new technologies appear such as the Wearable Internet, or the Internet of Things, which

integrate online access with casual devices (glasses, watches) and appliances (fridge, closet, etc.) (Van Manen 2013).

It is also evident to recognize the social change on how people organise their files, using cloud computing services, asking search engines for anything, wondering Who they are, or What to vote, among other personal questions. According to a Pew Internet report (Rainie, Purcell, Smith 2011) on social trust, the level of people's trust towards information they retrieve online constantly increases. People check Wikipedia as an educational tool, check on Yelp for opinions and peer recommendations, go online for medical issues and trust Twitter as more valid source of information than traditional media (Qualman 2009).

People also use the Internet for entertaining purposes. Online games, web based music applications, online purchases, downloads of files are all examples of online social behaviour. With the rapid proliferation of e-commerce, sociologists should start examine the implications the so called online currency, Bitcoin, might bring to actual economy (Forbes 2013). This thesis explored the Internet's impact on social actions, such as recruitment, job hunting and career development. Through a close investigation of secondary and primary data, this thesis contributes to several sociological domains, since it examines the issue of inequality, community relations and access in organizations.

As a new social phenomenon, social recruiting has to be studied both from a sociological as well as business perspective. Currently, the term "social recruiting" has become a buzz term in the business world since online technologies and SNS are offering new opportunities to HR managers and recruiters to get in touch with candidates in niche communities, engage with them, inform them and recruit the best talent (Jacobs 2010).

Reviewing candidates' profiles on social media appears as a useful tool to help the HR manager to hire a candidate. "Nearly Half of Employers Use Social Media to Research Candidates" is the title of an article posted on HR Focus magazine (2009) which reports that first impression counts when reviewing candidates' profiles on SNS. As Peluchette and Katherine (2008) argue, when HR Managers come across a clean profile they tend to positively review the candidate in contrast to those that their profiles demonstrate poor communication skills, or show evidence of misbehavior (talking bad about previous employers, inappropriate images, etc). The following section focus on specific sociological aspects that shape people's online behavior.

2.2.1 Stratified Global Societies and the Digital Divide

"Despite formal accessibility and the rapid expansion of the Internet, much of the world's adult population still does not have any real chance of Internet access due to poverty, poor telecommunications infrastructures, and state censorship" (Dalhberg 2001, p. 15)

The Internet connects people of different cultural groups, both locally and globally (Stewart et al., 1998). Through online discussions, people have the chance to communicate interculturally and to exchange thoughts and experiences. The main question that arises, however, is whether or not the Internet allows everyone to communicate or only those within limited groups with online access.

Mack (2001) uses the term "digital divide" to describe the disparity between those who have access to computer technology and those who do not. In other words, it refers to the lack of people's equal online access based on

their geographical location and their socio-economic status (OECD 2001). The development of the Internet is often seen as integral to the notion of globalisation. While the Internet has a global aspiration and offers a notion of equality, the gap between aspiration and reality in online communication has been huge. Although OECD countries in North America, Western Europe and parts of Eastern Asia lead the way in terms of Internet usage, the spread of computer network communications worldwide is extremely patchy, with less than 0.1 – 0.5 per 1,000 people having Internet access in developing countries (Human Development Report 2010, and Whittaker 2002).

Inequitable online accessibility and distribution of connectivity resources is not only a phenomenon between countries but also inside countries. More precisely, Internet access is not a privilege of countries but a privilege of social classes (Dahlberg 2001). Diffusion of the Internet has overall been uneven within countries, with more concentration in urban areas; and mostly used by young men and persons with higher income (Nanthikesan 2001). From a socio-cultural as well as economic production perspective, the Internet is predominately an *elite public sphere* of the rich, privileged and technologically advanced countries (Dahlberg 2001, p. 43).

Democratic praxis once applied to Internet connectivity has, none the less, proven to be a significant factor for generating public participation. Still, access to connectivity inside a country also depends on that market's reach as consumer society and its proximity to poles defining north and south power centres within the world financial system. Countries with stock exchanges, for example, are more likely to experience a high level of connectivity. Development level, financial and technical resources offer additional insight into the culture of digital labour (Hargittai 1998). Since "computers and the Internet are certainly no panacea for all of society's ills", argues Mack (2001, p.36), these technological resources are not considered as priority for countries with economic disparity (Mack 2001).

The stratification of global power, according to Dahlberg (2001), means that online users coming from an economically dominant country are also in the position to depict their superiority as a market force at the personal level on the web. The significance is loaded in semiotic rendering of “value” at times, and this is a site of much promising research on virtual identity and financial profit well into the future.

An early simile to Internet-based networks was the concept of *global village* (McLuhan 1964, p. 4). McLuhan’s seminal contribution to theory about the transition of modern capital and its labour forms from a primarily national focus to one of global economy is premised on the idea that as technological and trade networks expand, our social world converges. As Choi and Danowski (2002) argue, the global village was based on McLuhan’s assumption that there would significant homogenisation of world cultures. Since then, the metaphor of a *global metropolis* is more fitting to current society on a global scale (Fortner 1993). In fact, the term *global metropolis* is more deliberate in description of class. How the Internet interfaces with everyday lives is in continuity with elite privilege to some extent, with levels of social stratification reproduced via technological access as if they were part of a centrally controlled system (Fortner 1993).

Inequitable distribution of connectivity and access to paid SNS subscriptions deviates from the concept of the global village and its promise of a future world-participatory democracy. The touchstone for global e-business and communications, Internet based technology has indeed afforded a certain level of potential for equality in participation, but with variance in quality as distance is created by both infrastructural and software elements. More than a decade ago, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (1998) reported that a few software companies, mostly from the United States, dominated the world computer marketplace and, consequently, the web (OECD 1998).

From the position of developing country participants, the Internet does not always offer the ideal environment for equal and constructive human interactions. In the past several years, however, the rise of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) countries attests to the realisation of potential in Internet exchange and developer participation in the creation of a new array of business intelligence software products now sold on market to the world. Recruitment from those countries for every aspect of the IT and information sectors is evidence that technological innovation is global market power in labour.

Worries that unbalanced distribution of information from individual national markets are focused on which cultures dominate online. HRM culture is not outside this locus. Consequently, the “ideal” candidate for the job may be one that is derived from new lexical interpretation of work relations and roles. As companies communicate with divisions and candidates across the globe, traditional roles become interfaced with “newbie” opportunities, while professional identities are mythologised in ways never imagined even a single decade ago.

2.2.2 Online Social Networking Sites

Web 2.0 innovation in online social networking sites is widely discussed in advertising, marketing, web development and HRM literature (Latham, 2008). SNS are part of the scope of conversational networks: “web-based applications that make it possible to create and easily transmit content in the form of words, pictures, videos and audios” (Safko and Brake 2009, p.6). Attributing to Internet user experience, “activities, practices, and behaviours among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational networks” is growing (Safko and Brake 2009, p.6).

The narrow concept of online social networking sites covers the more popular Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, but also consists of blogs (online journals), forums, wikis and virtual worlds (Bouman et al. 2008). In wider definition, online social networking sites are developing virtual communities dedicated to the promotion of communication and self-expression (Santonocito 2009). Social media also include the more recent innovation of open source generated content. Open source or Cloud Computing allows for the interface of web based intelligent software applications with business enterprise systems and infrastructure, as well as storage and administration of large repositories of encrypted data in a secure online environment. The concept of web sharing is consistent both to SNS and open source logics, linking online Web 2.0 communities with a platform of much sought after business process services (iCrossing 2007).

Online HRM capabilities affect the way companies promote their products as well. Communication with consumers is part of brand credibility. Potential employees are now oft introduced to a company's value chain of sustainable activities and stakeholder objectives. With SNS, research on companies is streamlined for expedient review of core competencies and recruitment goals. The participatory element of SNS is so powerful that online users are invited to make direct contact and engage with organisations far beyond the former method of simply retrieving company information (Tapscott & Williams 2008).

2.2.3 Online Access for All

What is the performance potential of SNS recruitment practice? Moreover, if one was to benchmark SNS as a mechanism for profit and professional success, are all members and organisations following the same set of rules and norms in order not to violate community' protocols? Murugesan (2007) argues that critical analysis of the integrity of participation is pertinent to the future vitality of social network communities and ongoing capacity to lead

business communication. Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter have popularised online communities, and are set to lead the next phase in HRM recruitment as demand for more effective tools is initiated (Weaver and Morrison 2008).

Table 2.1. The Big Three Social Networking Sites (SNS)

(Source: Weaver and Morrison 2008, p.2)

- Facebook**
- Created in 2003, Facebook is the market leader in the social networking sites with more than one billion registered profiles
 - Designed to connect friends in different schools in the US, it soon became widely known as global SNS membership network
 - The site offers a wide range of features and applications to its users to connect with friends online, find old classmates, join in groups and other networks, post images, videos, hyper-links, thoughts, and personal updates
 - Facebook owes its increase on user developers who constantly develop applications for the other users to share
 - In less than 10 years, Facebook has expanded in such tremendous numbers that no one can be sure where and how this platform will ever stop growing

- LinkedIn**
- Considered the professional alternative to Facebook, users to post their curriculum vitae in profile form online
 - LinkedIn promotes itself as the new way for recruiters to find the best future employee and for employees to keep their eyes open on several job opening and professional opportunities
- Twitter**
- Micro-blogging services are online online social networking sites that allow users to post instantly their thoughts and to share their favourite links
 - The most popular micro-blogging social networking site today, registered users can send short 140-character messages expressing personal thoughts or posting the URL address of interesting articles
 - The site uses the term follower to describe those users who are following other users or organisations

In 2012 Facebook has exceeded the one billion registered users (Kiss, 2012) while Twitter grows faster than all other social networking sites. More and more universities are integrating SNS to both their institutional practice and curricula for communication and promotional purposes (Safko and Brake 2009). Networking refers to connections among strangers while people network with those who know.

Even if someone might claim that people use online social networking sites to communicate with their friends, reality has shown that online social networking sites allow users to interact with each other regardless their level of familiarity. Although academic scholarship has touched upon the impact of online social networking sites on marketing and communication, little has

been written as to how the dual process of SNS marketing contributes to the shape of HRM (Hooley et.al. 2010, Hooley 2012). For this reason, mobilisation of SNS is a universal mechanism both to Digital Native and Digital Immigrant employment searches. The main characteristic of SNS in HRM culture, then, is trans-generational, as professionals seek a renewed sense of community and specialisation that traditional methods of recruitment cannot create.

2.2.4 SNS Stewardship

When American Vice President, Al Gore, announced that the Global Information Infrastructure (GII) had become a “metaphor for democracy itself” in 1995, he spoke of environmental stewardship supported by a worldwide web that would “circle the globe with information superhighways on which all people can travel” (Gore 1995, p.4). His prophecy that “we will derive robust and sustainable economic progress, strong democracies, better solutions to global and local environmental challenges, improved health care, and - ultimately - a greater sense of shared stewardship of our small planet” has basically come true on many fronts as policy concretises the vision (Gore 1995, p.4). One only has to look at new market (i.e. green) segments in lead economies of scale such as construction, to glimpse the genius in such a model of stewardship, the source from which all benefits must flow.

Trends in presentation of professional identity in online profiles reflect the type of model Gore imagines. Distinctions between “job” hunting and “career” interest further acknowledge that the basis to work is not one of alienation on the job but alienation from a coherent identity situated in a *milieu* of new market values. While both a career and a job involve similar responsibilities and benefits, such as compensation and potential for advancement, there are several distinctions between the two terms.

Speaking plainly, a job is task oriented, while a career is measured by progress and the personal achievement of an employee.

Compensation for a job role is limited to that of contract and performance of routines attendant to that agreement (Matton 2009). A career, by comparison, is an occupation that affords long-term progress and strategic, if not progressive, advancement over the course of a professional history. Planetary stewardship may seem a tall order, yet the illustration of highly specialised representation talents in the search is not too far off. Simply put, candidates must not only provide evidence up-to-date skills and experience but, in many cases, a vision of personal performance compatible with idealistic agendas. SNS fits this model of thought, in that a new world of identity creation may meet an equally nascent world of technological and other expectations. Updates to profiles are the first step in ensuring the timeliness and effectiveness of a professional portfolio. Knowledge building and professional style generally follow.

Career trajectories that are job rather than education based serve as a vocational springboard to professional identity where other criteria are not available. The entrance of SNS has created standardisation in portfolio template so to speak – as viewed in LinkedIn’s sectional format, also allowing for unique presentation of objectives and experience. Facebook has been exceptionally effective in accommodating professionals requiring a more free-flowing mechanism in SNS profile presentation. Insertion of additional photo images, data objects and online chat, visible according to selection, enhance the control of professional engagement on the network.

Arguably, a few key elements in professional identity remain the same. Consistent to the traditional separation of “job” from “career” is that the latter focuses on education and professional ambitions rather than functional skills. The education industry, as it is otherwise called, encourages “career” thought in employment strategies so that students still studying in schools

and universities are driven to decision about goals and objectives far into the future. While some flexibility might be in order to fulfil individual career objectives, the role of education is vital and exceedingly necessary in the transition from studies to future employment.

In examining Greek university students seeking employment, the current study distinguishes carefully between the two terms “job” and “career”. Noted impingement upon the search is considered here. Economic crisis affects the decision to take a job not aligned with, and sometimes lesser than, stated career objectives on a candidate’s portfolio. Greece’s tenuous position in global economic politics means that it is important to be cognisant of the superfluous language we use when referring to the two terms. Proportionality of those who *get a job* to those professionals who *build a career* involves more than the process of goal setting and goal meeting.

Moreover, as Zicky and Bidou (2007) argue, age does impact on the outcome of the otherwise plastic world of SNS professional searches. For instance, while retired people are rarely effective in a new career start, they are often very responsive to voluntary job opportunities. The fine line between job and career in this sense may be blurred, as retirees find themselves available for much desired work interactions they previously did not have time for. The majority of new generation workers seeking career offers deviate somewhat from this older time capsule model of “meaningful” work, deeming leverage to build professional character necessary from the outset of their career.

Symbolic significance of professional identity met with adequate employment or alternate contract is now the litmus test for success in work. Enquiry into SNS as a tool is one of viability in shaping a new future reality. Data on how young people are recruited in a turbulent economic environment offers ingenious insight to this question. Gone is the restriction of Marx’s concept of

“alienation” from labour as a result of relations of production, as the recruitment process and its distancing effect between realisation of professional goals and objectives and actual employment supersedes all material instantiation.

Gore’s reference to the information superhighway links major planetary change to the future of democracy and all forces contributory to it. Labour appears quite stodgy compared to the sleek language of Gore’s speech, yet if one considers the real politics of labour with that of the US White House, what emerges is a shared vision of new market democracy “a means to enable U.S. firms to compete and win in the global economy” (National Information Infrastructure 1993). Some criticism is levied, however, as “virtual communities [may] help citizens revitalise democracy, or they could be luring us into an attractively packaged substitute for democratic discourse” (Rheingold 2000, p.276).

Some maintain this perspective, arguing that the Internet, however, has failed to function as a medium of decentralisation and democratisation in our contemporary society. According to Harrison and Falvey (2001), “new information generated by information and communication technologies should, but may not, be distributed widely and equitably, with corresponding positive or negative effects on the nature of democratic practices” (Harrison & Falvey 2001, p. 8). Indeed, intercultural exchange as a prospectus for an ideal future in participation and work does not entirely mitigate the fact that it also has the tendency to create social and cultural barriers where access is not even.

Concerns that democracy as a social and political value is not fully represented on the Internet are voiced in scholarship on the growing gap between dominant and the minority groups online, with prediction of a wider gap in the near future (Stewart, Shields & Sen 1998). Parallel to economist reporting found in data on OECD usage, sociological perspectives on

Internet access point to an ideal democratic society, where all people, no matter what sex, race or religion, should have equal rights to communicate and share opinions. Nevertheless, some suggest that online communication is deserving of censure for having unequal participation among online users, and particularly between men and women (Harrison & Falvey 2001).

In the studies on gender, men seem to be more aggressive and challenging in their online conversations, something that discourages women from participating equally and stating their opinion in public online forums (Baym 1993, Dalhberg 2001, Herring 1993, Kramarae 1985 and Spender 1995). A more radical point of view, voiced by Stratton (1996), argues that the Internet is a medium that underlines the male, white, high-class dominance. Choice to participate, however, reminds us that the Internet offers greater social freedom for opinions to be addressed by a wider community of invested citizens (Hooley et. al. 2010, Hooley 2012, and Light 1995). Action in chat dialogues means that both men and women have become accustomed to participation in self-representation and debate.

While the first version of the Internet (widely called Web 1.0) failed to offer equal access for all, the new Internet generation (Web 2.0) promised major shifts in how people use the Internet. To qualify praxis, this study addresses the topic of young people using Web 2.0 to seek for their occupational opportunities. The intention is to explore whether or not the SNS manages to offer equal access to all potential employees. Globalisation and its impact on the Internet lends theoretical framework to the general argument that Web 2.0 still divides people according to their geographic location and social status.

2.2.5 Globalisation or Westernisation?

The Internet is currently characterised by its Western hegemonic values and ideas. As a result, Gammack makes a prediction that:

“...the easy transglobal communications which enable new business ventures, personal relationships, and access to previously ‘unavailable’ cultural resources, are likely to be governed by an overlay of emergent ‘netiquette’ norms, largely influenced by Western values, and superficial relative to the norms of communication meaningful in other cultures”. (Gammack 2002, p. 7)

Globalisation is one of the most widely discussed terms in contemporary society. This study identifies the complex layers that globalisation brings to human communication on the Internet, in relation to how young people aim to start their professional careers. This project aims to critique the fact that the Internet seems to further the notion of Westernisation, and more specifically of North Americanisation, rather than general theories of globalisation.

In the 1990s, World Systems theorists asserted that globalisation brought the periphery closer to the centre of economic and political power (Waters 1995). Opportunities for other ethnic identities or cultures of the peripheral countries emerged in response to the acceleration of the flow of capital to outposts across the globe in search of less expensive labour. The convergence of global culture with the everyday activities of professionals around the world meant that foray into SNS globalisation in online employment searches aligned supply with demand of qualified candidates in those locations. Information age culture and the proliferation of advertising and marketing collateral from developing countries soon informed the representation of professional selves.

Syncretic to innovation and next generation incorporation of consumer image with new product segments, SNS reframed the professional CV as

specialised talent resources marked by unique professional identities. Proximate to commodities in a marketplace where education and skills may produce a far larger number of qualified candidates in an abductive Internet search, companies seeking an edge in recruitment began to look to other functions offered in SNS communication not otherwise fostered in a more traditional job posting environment. Analysis of new qualities in candidate submission could now serve to inform design-in of HRM system survey content in internal employment submission sites in the West administered by external web software vendors in the East (i.e. Silkroad).

Academic research on the topic recognises computer-mediated communication (CMC) in online recruitment formats promotes positive introduction of the East-West divide without reduction of the regional specificities involved in current capitalist formation (Choi & Danowski 2002, Damarin 1998, Jones 1998 and Waters 1995). Whether considered under the rubric of labour as information, or information as labour, the emphasis on career goals and objectives, as well as experience and skills of each candidate in an employment search, creates the potential for merger between enterprise system and vendor in shared profitability.

A force for diversification, Internet HRM reduces the dominant order of business once characterised by Westernisation (Ang 1996). Certain barriers still exist, however. Language, Nocera writes, is a serious challenge for Internet users entering an online group for the first time, who “will have to absorb the community’s language and culture (both already existing) in order to perform interactions adapted to the settlement’s symbolic reality” (Nocera 2002, p.3). English remains the primary language of Internet communications (Yoshida, 2002). Localisation has assisted greatly in this regard, as search engines and online software now include foreign language translation functions in the most used idioms.

Tierney and Damarin (1998) conducted a cultural comparison study on how technology might be integrated into classrooms. They examined three groups of students having different cultural backgrounds. An unexpected

outcome to the research investigation revealed that students coming from East Asia interpreted knowledge of the software programs by “using the norms and practices of Western networks, technology, and principles” (1998, p.266). The world’s philosophical, religious and cultural traditions collide when intercultural communication occurs on the Internet (Chen et al. 1999). Shiller (1995, p.19) remarks on the “ad hoc adoption of English as the world’s second language, facilitated by the waves of U.S. pop culture that have washed across frontiers” to support the argument that the Internet is imbued with Anglo-American ideas and cultural values, creating some homogenisation of ideas amongst online users.

2.2.6 The Internet and its Impact on Society

This section provides a snapshot of academic scholarship and professional debate on Social Recruitment. The study examines literature on the impact of Internet based SNS on HRM marketing for candidates, and of course, the candidate employment search process. Much of the literature on Web 2.0 embraces the concept that there are assorted types of social mass media and that SNS is the primary vehicle for networking. The current study aims to define the classification of job seekers as Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants, as well as to discuss the difference between the terms ‘careers’ and ‘jobs’. The research stands to contribute to the existing body of literature on recruitment and emergent data on use of SNS by young college graduates.

This literature review seeks to provide a coherent picture of the use of social media in HRM as a contemporary social phenomenon and to forge apt comparisons between the limited academic literature and the broader scope of professional literature. Industry reporting, drawn from HRM statistics and market research on the topic available in industry newspapers, journals and Internet articles, is constituent to the compendium of the latter.

2.2.7 Are SNS the new El Dorado for Job Applicants?

The Internet has radically changed almost every social aspect in human behaviour (Qualman 2009). It is common sense to argue that it has technologically determined human communication in such a tremendous way, from establishing interpersonal relationships to organising masses for a common cause. Nowadays we have “a new (some should say improved) connection that increased participation, creativity and interactivity on the web as a whole” (Creeber & Martin 2009, p. 4). Hence the Internet has had an important impact on recruitment. As web based candidate searches are graduated or enhanced in HRM strategies, companies find that their efforts to reduce costs and work faster are realised. Artificial intelligence interface with human intelligence is simply more efficient and effective.

From the perspective of prowess, the expansion of access to professional information as result of the Internet’s interface with business has greatly affected the connection between professional attitudes and action in everyday practice (Qualman 2009). With the increase in online entrepreneurship and self-employment start-ups, it could be effectively argued that one of the biggest challenges is the recruitment of talented workers who seem to be more inclined towards entrepreneurship (Qualman 2009). In economies where ‘choice’ is a high proportional risk in candidate response to selection, conforming representation of traditional job roles according to flexible labour models has become a vital HRM strategy (Hooley et.al. 2010, Hooley 2012).

Even where national labour economies rank lower in terms of ‘choice’ in employment, SNS rates higher in use as a method of search by both employers and employees. To this end, the global requirements and expectations of all participants in the employment search supports the findings of Cisco’s 2012 survey showing that 2/3 of college students

responded to survey about social media policies during their job interviews and that 56% claimed that they would reject an offer due to social media access restrictions.

If new changes in workplace environment require different approaches to recruitment and selection of employees, the traditional recruitment forum of job ads posted in newspapers and online employment boards rank secondary to network environments. Virtual job fairs, LinkedIn invitations, Facebook recommendation, Twitter jobs and online forum posts are reshaping the landscape of social relations pertinent to the HRM recruitment model. Ultimately, as the use of SNS among young college students grows, the future trust in consensus in HRM seems to be that participatory integration of individual professionals involved in a number of online recruitment networks and virtual work interactions will close the higher order skills gap associated with the current senior generation of workers.

Moreover, graduates are more likely to accept business offers that allow for freedom of expression from the outset in the SNS environment: flexible work relations and remote mobility, rather than the more traditional concerns such as safety, salary and professional potential (Cisco 2012). A critical break with former notions of competitive standing in professional organisations, the perception that direct negotiations in SNS foster a higher potential for independent leverage in future business dealings is perhaps the more occluded cognitive mechanism at work in next generation online recruiting environments.

Underscoring the logic of SNS networks as channels for 'power' and 'benefit', the topic is promising in relation to the study of capitalisation and professional success in the context of global economics and new social formations. How Greek graduates describe and engage in a future business setting has much to do with expectations established in the sphere of social media. The foregoing review of literature investigates this new breed of employees who seek opportunities via SNS recruitment.

2.3 Networking: a Cornerstone of Graduate Job Pursuit

Networking is often defined as “individual deeds managed towards contacting friends, acquaintances, and supplementary people to whom the job seeker has been denoted for the main intention of becoming data, leads or counsel on becoming a job” (Van Hoye et al. 2009, p. 4). In addition, when it comes to online networking, one cannot separate the digital from the physical world. Nevertheless, inside the SNS universe, visibility prefaces performance. Yeung (2009) supports the idea that the quintessential ticket to profit and power in contemporary professional circles provides unlimited and unexplored opportunities for a graduate’s entrance to a tremendous marketplace of career opportunities.

Researchers on digital nativity also acknowledge that the ‘who you know’ theory is as vital as ever when searching for jobs. In addition, young people aim to have wider online networks. Authorship in group membership sections of SNS is little delineated by an originator, allowing for democratic participation to take over after the thread has been posted (Belaen 2010). Although the hidden job marketplace still exists, constraining choice, participation and submission to opportunities not promoted on job boards or daily press, exclusivity is marked by the ability of those HRM professionals to locate the right candidate for the job (Hooley et.al. 2010, Hooley 2012). Where job seekers are concerned, the development of the candidate’s online profile will impact on the labour’s effectiveness in the search.

2.3.1 Rise and Motivation of SNS application online

It is argued that the rise and motivation of SNS application on the Internet has been characterised by a three-fold enterprise:

“1) service interface that permits people to create an area or semi-area profile inside the site’s bounded system; 2) a catalogue of supplementary users to whom the user can allocate connection; 3) functional application of those resources in connection to others inside the system” (Papathanassopoulos & Negrine 2011, p. 215).

A worldwide societal phenomenon consolidated in the day-to-day life of user interface, there are countless SNS available on the Internet. While some target specific demographic segments, the attention to designated clusters and communities is multi-scale and can often vary in response to membership interests. Verhoeven (2009) discriminates between: confidential online web SNS memberships (associations); user-controlled environments that allow for different levels of public observation and participation (Facebook); and representation of professional identity in a more ‘business’ focused setting (LinkedIn). Adding to these distinctions, Tuten (2008) points out,

“disparate kinds of SNS and differentiated the egocentric and object-centric social Network, suitably described by a social web that locale the individual at the core of the web experience as the object-centric web Sites a non-ego agent at the centre of the network” (Tuten 2008, p. 34).

Drivers to user motivation in employment of SNS, then, are subject to preferences within the user network, where object-centric or non-ego agents provide the framework to the interaction. According to the *Workplace Contact Report on Social Networking* (2008), countless aspects can define contemporary SNS, such as multi-site workspace, information communication technology assurances in use and individual values attained in contact established during a social relationship online.

A theoretical proposal to cognitive and other motivators to SNS usage argues that the Technology Agreement Model (TAM) suggests a “user’s

behavioural aim to use a knowledge is altered by its observed usefulness and the observed ease of use of technology” (Skin 2010). The TAM can also be closely correlated with real-time changes in user policies and updates to an SNS site. Trends in user demand affect the TAM, so that the imposition of innovation must find sufficient reception, even where a new SNS product, function or option within an existing system may be partly in use within the online marketplace.

Needs-orientated actions users are noted in a study of conversing via mass media channels and especially Facebook. Incorporation of industrial era ideas about consumer logics in a cognitive framework (i.e. Use and Gratifications (U&G) theory) in the post-industrial moment offers continuity in market analyses of human intelligence and the longevity of Maslowian principles, so that “individuals select mass media and content to fulfil contacted needs or wants” (Papacharissi & Medelson 2011).

Using the infamous Maslow’s paradigm of human needs, candidates can use SNS for six reasons in a pyramid of hierarchical needs: 1) discovering factor; 2) affinity factor; 3) connection factor; 4) creative factor; 5) anticipation factor; 6) company factor (Deragon 2009). In consideration of SNS recruitment in organisations, of the six, the latter three factors of human need are associated with clusters and causes of social action: 4) creative factor - the method using knowledge derived from social use of the web to spread its worth to expert value(s); 5) anticipation factor - the demand found in socio-commercial conceptions of value; 6) company factor - the medium of mature participation that generates exponential opportunities (Deragon 2009).

For professionals, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs edifies the importance of “e-reputation” in establishing a plausible online presence in SNS share environments (Le Monde 2010). In order to keep pace with trends in

professional performance, identity mapping of one's career values and interests by way of multiple SNS memberships means that attention to highlights and other details are of significance to an audience at least partly unknown. If professionals desire affirmative response to submission, competencies and expectations of an HRM profile opportunity must be measured, if not precisely, from an educated standpoint. Foresight in SNS presence is e-reputation. Target marketing of oneself properly in a particular sphere or sector provides significant leverage.

2.3.2 The Evolution of Online Recruitment

Prior to the advent of the Internet, recruitment was a vertical business process, comprising a value chain commencing at point of administration and concluding in hire of a candidate. Today, the HRM recruitment process entails a more passive mode of recruitment; one which involves a wide range of liaisons, including SNS and spin-offs of traditional vehicles such as local press to job post sites. With the wide penetration of social networking sites, the recruiting process is now more engaged from both sides.

From the position of jobseekers, an increased amount of time is spent on SNS, and perhaps less so on alternate mechanisms. A 2010 survey showed an 82% increase in young professional participation in online social networking sites between 2008 and 2009 (Nielson Company 2010). Recruiters in the UK use online social networking sites such as Facebook (18%) and LinkedIn (31%) to search and select their potential employees directly (Wright 2011). LinkedIn, the premier professional networking site, is the leader in online software applications for business (Burns 2008).

Partnership with SimplyHired.com, an intelligent, abductive search source for traditional job posts, increases the volume of opportunities available to

candidates through the site. Membership of LinkedIn puts potential employees or consultants into contact with companies and groups that might lead to contract or hire (Wright, 2011). Requisite profile creation by members at time of joining reduces formerly time-consuming tasks in CV presentation and initiation of connection with others in the network. Add SNS buttons to personal and professional email signatures and other online website sources, and one's professional identity is exposed to an entire panoply of recruitment opportunities waiting to be filled.

Employers have also realised the power of online social networking sites and its penetration of global labour. A survey by Jobvite (2011) on the use of Social Recruiting showed that 89% of companies hiring (or intend to do so) would do so by way of online social networking sites in 2011. The change in the HRM recruitment process has been widely discussed in management scholarship, which posits the benefits and the drawbacks that the practice raises. One issue for recruiters is time capsule control on sites and adequate screening for current availability of candidates who promote themselves via SNS. In a simple search for candidates on LinkedIn, for example, the recruiter might end up finding a large number of well-qualified individuals who meet the criteria but are not currently available.

Varied introduction to applications in SNS also may impact on recruitment evaluation in ways that do not necessarily select candidates with the best matched skill set based on manipulation of site tools. Some candidates are skilful enough to post streaming visual aids alongside curriculum vitae and other standard documentation (Cellan-Jones, 2010). For this reason, those who oppose social recruiting argue that online profiles raise a number of ethical concerns.

Firstly, online profiles cannot be an accurate representation of a candidate's skills and credentials, as many online users can deceive the recruiter with

false information. Secondly, the issue of personal and confidential information raises discussions around security, for the purpose of identity theft. Finally, since SNS have the ability to filter online profiles based on age, race and sex, candidates might feel discriminated against and eventually eliminated from the beginning of the process.

Employers have the ability to use SNS to filter out everyone who does not fit designated “subjective” factors, such as the school they attended or their past professional experience (Nigelwright 2011). It is evident that online social networking sites can potentially harm the recruitment process and therefore a company’s reliability. To avoid such unethical practices, LinkedIn allows its users to lock down or even temporarily disable their online profiles, in case they are not currently seeking any professional opportunities. Nevertheless, only few are actually doing it.

Social recruiting has certainly brought a different kind of labour market debate to the fore. New social network rules on confidential corporate and member information can, at times, be released online. While corporate espionage is more prevalent than ever, the focus on risk management in this area is progressively a standard where vulnerabilities pose peril to profit and employees. Advancement of SNS ethical best practices through a site membership agreement is part of the recent focus in both academic and professional literature on the topic. The need to examine fully both the advantages and disadvantages of global SNS as they present themselves in the recruitment process also emerges in this research.

2.4 New Opportunities for University Graduates

As the current business environment becomes more limited, competitive and demanding, graduates struggle to find a job that is both satisfying and

relevant to their studies. Eccles (2009) addresses the shift in the way employers are using LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter as tools to recruit and select the best talent. In the near future approximately 83% of companies in the United States of America will seek candidates using SNS, and about 46% agree that they have the intention to invest in social recruitment processes (Rappeport 2011).

Scholars in the field of social recruitment underline that “the use of social mass media for recruitment intentions is becoming increasingly accepted because social networking sites enable recruiters to uphold steady connectivity and communication” (Henderson & Bowley 2010, p.34). Access to a virtual marketplace of “passive” and “alert” candidates allows organisations to employ this new method of recruitment as a cost cutting mechanism within HRM budgeting. Social media reduces the number of per diem hours required to locate suitable candidates (Rappeport 2011). The ideal mean time is now narrowed to four hours for each candidate.

Exploitation of SNS by companies such as IT giant Oracle illustrate that up to 99.8% of sector-leader recruitment is met by way of SNS marketing and HRM interface (LinkedIn 2011). Although the majority of business firms seem to be positive in employing SNS in their pursuit for talent recruitment, they seem to be using LinkedIn as a complementary instrument. A study conducted by Madge et al. (2009) among first year undergraduate students at a British university showed that students join online social networking sites like Facebook to make new friends, while keeping in touch with their current friends and family. University students mainly see Facebook as a means to having an active and popular social life, underestimating its potentiality as a tool for recruitment.

Although, SNS does not substitute for all established aspects of recruiting, employers have been responsive to the platform standard of a portfolio and

summary as an introductory solicitation of interest (O'Brien 2010). In contrast, in earlier renditions of HRM website recruitment like Monster.com, candidates appear alongside organisations so that quality control of communications interface in HRM transmission is streamlined to eliminate tiresome steps in the application and review processes.

2.5 Traditional Recruitment and Selection

Guest and Conway (2002) introduce a model that functions as a psychological contract between the organisation and the applicant. In their model, the employee not only has to fulfil the educational and professional qualification criteria, but it is equally important to demonstrate organisational trust; accompanied by high standards of performance. Psychological contracts define the relationship between the recruiter and the applicant in which both parties expect to offer and receive from each other (Sims 1994). If both parties do not violate this set of expectations, the selection process is considered successful and can lead to a trustworthy and beneficial organisational relationship.

Contemporary organisations invest money and other essential resources in recruiting, selecting, training and finally adjusting the new employee to their culture (Martin, 2002). Organisations have come to realise the importance of limiting the possibility of making mistakes in the selection process. Hofstede (1980) discusses six primary dimensions of cultural variations: individualism vs. collectivism, gender, power distance, uncertainty-avoidance and cultural contextualisation. These cultural dimensions affect people's perception of self and of others (Andersen, 1997). For instance, in high context cultures such as China, Japan and Korea only small pieces of information are offered, as dictates to the culture provide for supersession of context, situation and non-verbal cues.

Cornelius' (2001) postulates an 8-step process model to the HRM recruitment response: 1) identification of the need to recruit; 2) analyse the requirements; 3) define the selection criteria; 4) determine the reward; 5) advertise the vacancy; 6) select the right person; 7) induct the new starter; 8) measure, review, evaluate (Cornelius 2001, p.31). If the first steps to the recruitment process are not well determined, the whole undertaking will become unaffordable for the organisation (Marchington and Wilkinson 2005; Martin and Jackson 1997). Selection and induction approaches to new employees, as well as the measurements and evaluations processes followed by the organisation's recruiters, all contribute to the outcome (Cornelius 2001).

Externalities to the recruitment process further complicate the process. Organisations undergoing an employee candidate search often deal with a wide range of legal and business issues. Large-scale, multinational enterprises (MNE) now look to emergent economies offering a labour force with both high-level skills and industrial competency. The information technology sector is a good example, for instance BRIC and quite a few other countries around the globe, as skill accumulation and exposure to the entire scope of computer and device production and software enterprises transforms the employment picture (Foot and Hook, 2008). Specialised, high-level skills are key points of leverage for MNEs looking for the best talent in areas like engineering R&D, as well the entire array of support functions to go along with new product innovation. Service sector employment has also shifted from a unidirectional flow of production to one of global team project management. Talent searches conducted by way of SNS are generally the first step in building the right team.

Some HRM leaders still complain that locating the right talent abroad is a challenge. For that purpose, multinational organisations collaborate with recruitment agencies, which function as the liaison between the company and the rich market of candidate employees (Cascio 1995). Not surprisingly,

the need to develop companies that offer recruitment services has led to the expansion of recruitment agencies using SNS as an executive search tool. An example of the power of SNS in recruitment is cited in reporting from the world's leading agencies in the industry, Manpower, Inc., Adecco SA and Randstad - merged with Vedior in 2008, which generated a total of more than 60 billion Euro that year (Recruiter 2008).

Recent EU legislation targeting rules for recruitment allows for privately owned organisations operating in Europe to select their employees without restrictions. However, organisations can hire whomever they decide, as long as no discrimination takes place in the selection process (Beardwell, Holden & Claydon 2004). Discrimination denotes a bar to employment on the basis of race, sex and disability. Employment acts concerning sex discrimination, race relations, employment protection and trade union membership provide rules to HRM activities in organisations and recruitment agencies. General laws prohibiting harassment of SNS member candidates, as elsewhere, apply; yet there is still some concern that organisations neglect ethical adherence (Russo et al., 1995).

A wide variety of service oriented professions is experiencing new challenges to recruit, select, and maintain the best talent among the vivid and demanding generation of Digital Natives. Yeaton (2008) provided a classification of the characteristics, which best describe Gen Yers in their effort to pursue their career (table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Recruiting Generation Y (Yeaton 2008)

1. Strong sense of morality: Why?	Since Gen Yers often possess a heightened sense of what is moral and what is not, as well as a pride in contribution to the community, they
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search for a career that will be socially significant

A consequent characteristic of this group is always to be asking “Why?” Why is such and such important? Why is that data critical for us to know? Why do we need to carry out these tasks?

To make these individuals their employees, accountancy companies must be clear about the importance of position being offered and how the role fits into the organisation’s goals.

It is critical for the accounting sector that Gen Y understands how vital both accounting information and the attest function are to capital markets performing properly.

2. Goal- and achievement-oriented.

Something that computer games excel at is in creating apparently never-ending challenges; feedback is instantaneous when the player advances to a new level of skill

Computer games have been part of Gen Y’s life since childhood, meaning that it is no stranger to the overarching concept of needing to reach certain targets if one wants to advance

This generation is goal- and achievement-oriented. Gen Yers seek for similar experiences in their workplace as well. They want to see the opportunity to advance in order to stay in an organisation.

2. Digital Natives

Digital Natives view computers as merely a part of life. For them, technology and video games are not only activities for their free time, but

educational materials as well.

The Internet functions as a window to their world. It is constantly open and available. Digital Natives expect a firm web presence in order to evaluate positively a potential employer. They examine an organisation's website as the primary source of information.

4. Value intelligence and innovation

Gen Y does not offer respect merely on account of age or experience, or even the position one holds in a company: what it considers important is intelligence and adding real value to an organisation

To them, innovation and ingenious thinking are qualities much sought after. It is, therefore, critical that applicants see that the creative and productive elements of a job are to the fore

Employers need to highlight challenges as well as opportunities for development, and the ways in which a future staff member can contribute overall to the company

A continuing major hurdle to overcome in recruitment is the very important task of delineating clearly an organisation's reporting structure and how a new recruit might move up the ladder

It is appropriate to expound on what the experience of some within the company tells about the organisation, although the worth of recruiting a good new employee is not to be undervalued

Potential recruits will often perceive the conventional promotion route as slow and pedantic; what works best for them is a culture of collegiality and the right to speak openly

2.6 SNS' Impact on Society

When SNS first appeared online, their primary objective was to strengthen the social bonds among friends. As such, SNS became widely accepted as a channel of interpersonal and group communication. Since inception, SNS has greatly affected the way Internet users are able to communicate with friends, make new friends, get informed and share links with the public (Boyd and Ellison 2008). SNS interface with other forms of virtual communication, such as email or IM (instant messenger) and video call functions, all supply Digital Natives with a vehicle for chat. Twitter posts, Facebook status updates and Skype conversations are now part of everyday life. Shared news about online virtual worlds such as the Second Life, or the widely known online games Lineage and World of Warcraft (WoW), also makes its way into SNS, with millions of users logging in on a daily basis (Qualman 2009). Numbers of friends, connections, followers a person has on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter all contribute to this landscape of personal identity.

How well an online identity is managed, says McQuail (2002), has much to do with a member's understanding of network protocol and gatekeeping in meeting an audience's expectations. Shoemaker (2002) defines the term *gatekeeping* as how specific people within the network's organisations function as filters or blockers of information. Therefore, the sender sends multiple messages to pass them through the networks screening processes.

The notion of gatekeeping becomes important, since modern networks organisations receive news from diverse sources on a daily basis (Shoemaker 2002). Professional networks such as marketing associations appraise full use of SNS tools in representation of member interests. Other professional interests require a great deal of control in performance of public identity online, even limiting the type of SNS used for contact with the public to exclusive LinkedIn executive presence.

2.7 Mass Media and Social Recruitment Media

At a time when people accuse traditional networks of manipulating the news, a discussion on networks influence theories becomes more appropriate than ever. Why do people seem to lose faith in the traditional networks and turn to online social networking sites for their information? McQuail (1992) describes a networks organisational model, which shows three interrelated features: (1) *market structure* (financial factors, market dynamics and constraints that affect the organisation); (2) *conduct* (product strategy, organisational behaviour, advertising and pricing concerns); (3) *performance* (efficiency in the use of resources, progressive and hi-technological productions). McQuail's analysis of networks structure argues that the model of communication in which a sender sends a message through a channel to the receiver seems too simplistic to illustrate how mass communication occurs.

Have online social networking sites changed the way in which people follow the news? Reporting on economics, market exchange and employment may all impact on a recruitment search as members peruse a site. Instead of simply getting the news from a newspaper article, or from a TV story, the new generation of Internet users relies heavily on their friends within their network. Users read their Facebook and Myspace friends' statuses to

comment on a news link. The source of the news is not always a traditional newspaper, but also blogs written by anonymous sources. In addition, many mainstream websites covering the news allow their users to comment on their news stories. That leads to the argument that the control is now on the hands of the Internet users who are gradually becoming the gatekeepers of information (Shoemaker 2002).

As Tuchman (2002) writes, each piece of news is a potential drain upon the network organisations' staff resources. What should the sender know in order to pass through the initial screening process of his/her message? Since gatekeeping requires specific criteria of filtering information, a sender should know that individuals within networks organisations (administrative assistants and journalists) are affected or controlled by communication routines and influences from higher levels (Shoemaker 2002). Therefore, the message that a sender tries to send through a network organisation should match the organisation's point of view. However, what happens with the receivers? At which level does the audience's preferences and beliefs affect the networks organisation's decision-making process?

Consumers are capable and active enough to decide which networks organisation meets their needs (Katz et al. 1974). It is the people's responsibility to choose the networks they want based on how those networks manage to fulfil consumers' expectations. In addition to the uses-and-gratifications model described in Katz et al. seminal theory, people make choices based on their beliefs and attitudes toward specific pieces of information or entertainment.

A feedback loop occurs between theories of networks influence, however. Ball-Rokeach's and DeFleur's (1976) contemporaneous Dependency Theory approach takes the uses-&-gratifications theory one step further; arguing that people become more dependent on specific networks that mostly meet

their needs. Network organisations have a significant influence and power over the individual consumer. The notion of control over the network organisations (uses-and-gratification), then, conflicts with the reality that consumers become trapped in a particular point of view that simply fuels their pre-existing beliefs by way of blocking alternative opinions (Rokeach & DeFleur 1976). It is interesting that both Katz et al. and Rokeach and DeFleur's ideas emerged at a time when globalisation was first observed. As the medium of exchange transformed, so too did the source of information, setting the agenda for truth in economic power relations (McCombs & Shaw 1977). Labour, consequently was reconfigured to meet the shift in capital investment by MNE in new developing markets.

Once labour and consumption merged as mass mediated commodity in a global network of communications, SNS was the solution to a mass drift in representation of personal and professional identity. In sum, as Shoemaker (2002) argues, online social networking sites became the gatekeepers between product and person. Recruitment and news are the contemporary vehicles for participation in a market moving seemingly at lightning speed (Qualman 2009).

Academic scholarship underscores the emergence of SNS as greatly influencing our society in many important ways. The world is changing rapidly, mainly as to how people communicate and do business. Online recruiting is not only faster and convenient, but it is also cost effective (Gupta 2008; King 2007). Companies that focus primarily on technology to post their vacancies in specific online social networking sites aim to publicise these openings to a highly specialised pool of people who use, for instance, a certain forum to express their thoughts (Galanaki 2002). The scope of this thesis is to further the understanding as to how online social networking sites have impacted the discipline of HRM and more specifically how new forms of communication, such as social networking sites or the blogs, micro-blogs

and the community content platforms, facilitate people's occupational opportunities (Hooley et.al. 2010, Hooley 2012).

Recruiters also argue that SNS have turned passive jobseekers into viable targets for opportunity (Erickson 2007). If consumer advertising practice is reflected in the parable that when one is fishing for business, *fish where the fish are*, then HRM recruitment traffic is quite similar in that SNS supply a virtual ocean of qualified candidates (Bullard 2003). Recruiters that focus solely on Internet applicant searches must make one concession, albeit a small one, limiting the pool of candidates to a population with Internet access.

Blogs, wikis and forums are low-cost advertising and communication platforms that offer recruitment strategists additional tools to reach candidates (Miller & Lammas 2010). Flexibility in SNS recruitment also means that a position can be posted or re-tweeted in areas and websites that the recruiter has no control over (Beardwell & Claydon 2007). Intellectual property and liability concerns form a continuum in SNS recruitment audit of postings, as corporate brands must be subject to rigorous identity management online during the job posting period. Participation remains: online community members have the ability to comment either positively or negatively on the job vacancy or on the company's HRM methods, such as payment, reliability, work conditions and other factors that until now were internal sources of information and to some extent confidential.

2.8 Conclusions

As online online social networking sites become widely known across online users, organisations are shifting their attention to social networking sites and blogs to perform a wide range of business activities (Gupta 2008). Gradually,

organisations start to comprehend the impact of online social networking sites in marketing and HRM. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn have the potentialities to play a significant role in recruiting and selecting employees (Grant 2009).

Mutual access to SNS offers a sense of transparency that was once unavailable to job candidates (Santonocito 2009). Gupta (2008) argues that participation as a model of recruitment eases both sides in the consideration process. As companies conduct personnel searches, potential candidates gain insight into organisational benefits that may be compatible with career goals and employment objectives (Moses 2009).

Dutta (2010) highlights several examples that demonstrate how individual employees and companies benefit from using online social networking sites. In one of those examples, Robert Scoble, a sales support manager at NEC Mobile Solutions, set up a blog providing his customers with feedback. His blog quickly became so useful a point of reference among Internet users that Microsoft offered him a well-paid position as their official blogger. Regardless of Scoble's final decision (in fact he rejected the offer), this story illustrates how individuals who use online social networking sites shape a new reality in consideration of occupational opportunities.

With the rapid growth of social media, the way people communicate and do business has been permanently changed (Qualman 2009). Online social networking sites are forging a new reality in the world of HRM. This study contributes empirical data on the question of explaining how both employers and employees can take advantage of SNS integration in professional recruiting practices. It sheds light both on the opportunities and the threats that social recruiting might create, by examining both sides - the career seekers and the recruiters.

This study on social recruitment examines the area of digital nativity and reflects the latest trends from the web-based communications revolution.

The literature review to the research incorporated discussions from: 1) traditional recruitment processes; 2) academic scholarship on the social impact of SNS; 3) understanding Digital Natives' populations in relation to digital recruitment models. The next chapter discusses the methodology adopted in exploring the impact of social networking sites on Greek graduates' occupational opportunities.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The objectives of this chapter are to examine the wide range of research methods which could have been suitable for the present research study. More specifically, the third chapter discusses the characteristics of each research methodology (advantages and disadvantages) and outlines the chosen research strategy and the reasons why. Also, this chapter presents the range of data collected, along with details on the methods used to collect primary data.

The aim of this research is to explore the impact of Social Networking Sites (SNS) on recruitment. It also intends to interpret how Greek college graduates plan to pursue their careers in a turbulent workplace environment. There are two issues that make the researched topic hard to explore in depth. Primarily, the topic is rather new and there is no sufficient existing literature and research to fully comprehend the implications of social media on recruitment. In addition, as technology advances rapidly and new tools and platforms enter the online world of social media, it becomes difficult to explore one topic in depth, as it becomes quickly outdated. For this reason, this thesis aims to gather and explore perceptions and insights of college students, graduates as well as Human Resource managers at a certain period of time. This qualitative methodology allows the researcher to realistically approach the topic and to contribute valuable evidence, both academically and professionally.

When undertaking an academic research, it is highly essential for the author to provide a rationale of the study's analytical framework and methodology. It is also important to demonstrate an understanding of the main academic debates in research methods literature (Epistemology vs. Ontology;

Qualitative Research vs. Quantitative Research) to explain what methods were adopted by the researcher in this thesis.

Research design and research procedure provides the foundation for data collection and analysis. For this thesis, primary research data was collected from a digital survey questionnaire prepared on Surveymonkey.com, two focus groups and two interviews. The research findings are addressed in the fourth chapter. The next section discusses the different types of academic research to conclude why the author chose to conduct a qualitative research for this type of study.

3.1 Key Types of Research from Literature

Literature identifies three styles of research which are classified according to the objectives and the research data sources; these are, the Explanatory, the Descriptive and the Exploratory (Saunders 2003; Kent 1999; Parasuraman 1986).

The explanatory research aims to reason what causes an effect (Kent 1999). According to Saunders et al (2003), the explanatory research seeks to explain to what extent different variables affect a social phenomenon. This type of study takes a more in-depth approach and aims to examine social behaviour within a framework (context) aiming to reason why people act in certain ways. The exploratory research aims to define contemporary social practice and to examine people's behaviours under a new perspective.

The theoretical proposition to the methodological deployment can be illustrated by Saunders' et. al. (2003) "onion model" (figure 3.1). This model shows the different research decisions as layers in approach to implementation of a methodological design.

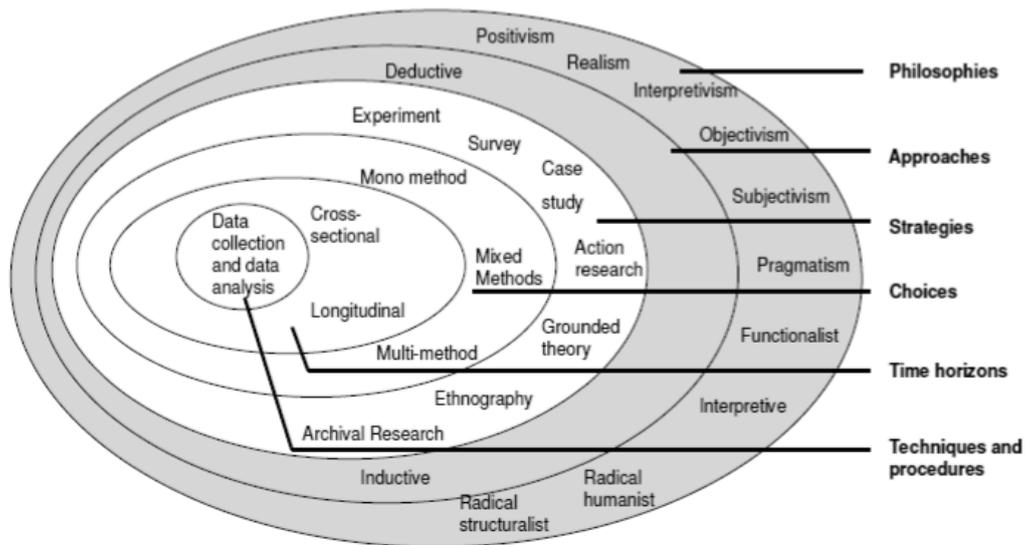


Figure 3.1.

Research Process 'Onion'

(Source: Saunders et al., 2003)

The onion model's first layer functions as the skin, the philosophical framework which surrounds any research methodological decision (Saunders et al. 2003). While Positivist in assumption, the results to the data must be read from an Interpretivist point-of-view, where not strictly delineated by statistical computation.

Saunders et al (2003) onion model's second layer addresses "logic" in the decision making process of the researcher and illustrates the progressive relationship from inductive (i.e. pure inception) of information, to arrival of

deductive (i.e. analysis) in human thought. Application of abductive logics, both in use of the archival repositories in building literature review for the research in preparation for the applied portion of the study and in analysis of the SNS web hosting environments, augments the deductive assumptions in the research with abductive logic only made possible via the artificial intelligence of the search engine functions on Internet sites.

The third layer, according to Saunders et al. (2003) onion model, addresses the data collection strategies. In this case there are quantitative factors derived from the survey outcomes and aggregate industry data HRM and SNS applications, as well as qualitative outcomes from the focus groups and open ended questionnaire responses, and the SNS websites themselves. Realism-based strategies place an emphasis on grounded theory; and the current is a case study of Greek college graduate recruitment in the labour force and their use of SNS to forge a network of professional contacts.

“The choice of the method depends upon the purpose of the study, the resources available and the skills of the researcher” (Kumar 2001, p. 140). Primary research, according to Kent (1999), entails the collections of data specifically for the problem or project in hand. Primary data collection is designed to research this thesis’ questions directly, as it can be shaped in various forms, from a general social observation to interviewing subjects or to spending time with groups of people conducting ethnographic research.

When the researcher originates primary data for the purpose of the investigation, gathering information is used either to examine a claim made in evidence based practice, the testing of a replicable model or to build a case for a claim that does not occur in existing scholarship (Bryman and Bell 2007). Both circumstances substantiate collection of data for analysis and reporting (Hall et al. 1994). For the purpose of this study, the original aims and objectives are intended to contribute to an existing body of scholarship

on HRM recruitment and focus on gaining knowledge on the explanation behind the subject. Statistical analysis representing primary research data supports the target of the study's research questions. Methodological discussion to the project examines choices the researcher made in order to collect primary data.

In contrast secondary research exists in the form of articles and studies, and can be collected by market reports, statistical facts and figures, trend analyses and political and governmental reports, amongst other sources (Hall et al.1997). Secondary data is less costly to collect and generally more convenient to gather than primary data (Parasuraman 1986, and Saunders et al. 1997), as it can be retrieved from library and market research.

Crouch (1984) argues that secondary data may answer any potential research problem; however, it can also be time consuming compared with actual field research. Disadvantages identified by Saunders et al. (2003) point to the fact that the data may have been collected for a purpose which is unrelated to the research's scope. Moreover, secondary data may be costly, inaccurate, and inadequate or influenced (Webb 1994).

Due to the topical nature of the SNS use in HRM, secondary data availability is limited. The present study looks at the LinkedIn business process model to interpret website metric correlation with HRM system processes. Since social recruitment is a rising trend in business and provides an economic solution to recruit and retain top talent, most of the research has been done by professional associations and organisations, not by academics in social science. SNS intelligent software solutions to business process provide a fertile source of enquiry into the shift in labour recruitment online.

The fourth layer represents the time horizon required by any research. All data collection strategies require time. Some research topics are taking a longer period of time (longitudinal) to complete in contrast to other topics which are examine a certain point of time (cross sectional). At the core of the 'onion' model, according to Saunders et al. (2003), are the data collection methods that include sampling, secondary data, observation, interviews and questionnaires.

Although Saunders' et al. (2003) onion model shows the wide range of approaches, academic scholars and professionals can combine approaches that best meet their research objectives. Our world is full of opposing truths and theories (Littlejohn, 2002). Through a close theoretical analysis, a researcher is able to identify what to observe in an unexplored social phenomenon. The researcher is then able to make predictions about the future effects of a particular situation in the world.

The scientific world encourages the diversity of opinions and epistemological assumptions. Littlejohn (2002) makes a clear distinction among the vast number of scientific paradigms by classifying them in two *worldviews*. *Worldview I* is the most epistemological, traditional, and scientific position as it separates reality from people and develops generalizations in life. *Worldview II*, in contrast, is a humanistic position. It adopts a critical point of view towards scientific theories and social phenomena. This view is focused on how things are assembled and considers that the world progressively changes (Littlejohn 2002). In *Worldview II*, scholars attempt to explain the social world and describe the framework in which communication has a vital role.

Ultimately, *Worldview I* embraces the functionalist paradigm (epistemology - quantitative research) whereas *Worldview II* includes the interpretive paradigm and the critical theories (phenomenology - qualitative research).

The next section discusses the two main philosophies Positivism and Interpretivism, which shape the core foundations of a research study. Although both philosophies are being discussed, more emphasis will be given to interpretivism, as it functions as the current thesis' philosophical framework.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Epistemology claims that “there is no *a priori* knowledge of the world” (Potter 2000, p. 32) and every evidence and social phenomenon is valid only after a reliable justification. This section provides a systematic overview of the two extreme of many epistemological positions, positivism and phenomenology (relativism), by focusing on the structure and the limits of knowledge and justification.

3.2.1 Positivism: The Scientist Social Researcher

Positivists believe that social research should aim to concern itself with facts and not with values since objectivity need to be the ultimate goal for each social phenomenon's explanation. Facts are value-free and they are not subjectively distorted or biased (Bryman 2004). On the contrary, positivism argues that values are simply subjective evaluations such as bad, good, wrong, right, but lack of scientific substance and justification.

Positivists seek for standardised ways of measuring or quantifying the social world (Bryman 2004). This can only be achieved through quantitative research which is why positivist researchers disvalue qualitative studies that ground their evidence on other researcher's subjective interpretations. In order to attain validity in their studies, positivist researchers maintain a high

level of detachment between themselves and the researched social phenomenon (Grix 2002).

In a modest way, by identifying both the valid methodologies and limitation of their studies, the positivist researchers might be able to claim some contribution to the general understanding of social reality. For positivists, what people call “common sense” is misleading or pointless without scientific justification (Bryman 2004). This is exactly the point that makes the positivist researcher more like a scientist and less like a detective which is a metaphor that primarily applies to phenomenologists.

3.2.2 Phenomenology: The Detective Social Researcher

Contrary to positivists who argue that people’s beliefs can be measured and used for generalisations, phenomenologists are concerned of interpreting structures of consciousness as experienced from people’s point of views (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Interpretivism aims to understand complicated social issues. Some of the most prominent issues that phenomenology explains is intentionality of human beings within organisations, consciousness, and first-person perspective (Bryman 2004). The evidence that derive from qualitative research and subjective interpretations of the researcher is the extreme opposite of what positivism claims as objective knowledge.

For interpretive researchers, the positivist distinction between “facts” and “values” is a fallacy since it is not possible to repeat an experiment and conclude to same results. For interpretivists, human beings are unlikely to behave in exactly the same way even if all other variables remain the same. For example, interpretivists would make the distinction between social and natural phenomena by claiming that a handshake can be different from

person to person (social action), which can only be observed and interpreted whereas gravity is a natural and measurable phenomenon that happens repeatedly.

Contrary to positivists who maintain a high level of detachment to the research and seek for systematic approaches, phenomenologists establish a high level of attachment to the research process through extensive and substantive qualitative methods. As Biedenbach & Muller (2010, p.4) write, “It will be more unstructured than positivism because it takes more in account individual human perception and way of interpretation, following a ‘What can I understand, and what can I suggest from what I see’”.

One major critique about phenomenology is that since facts cannot be measured in a valid way, researchers are able to interpret their findings and present them in ways which support their preconceived hypothesis. As Anderson (2004, p.142) states that “researchers cannot be wholly dispassionate as they are involved and will influence situations to various degrees (often unintentionally)”. As a personal user of social media, the thesis’ author is highly involved in technology, running the possibility to influence the research findings.

This thesis’ researcher aims to collect the point of view and the feelings of young students and graduates in a Greek university about the use of SNS during the recruitment process. Therefore, the researcher as being himself one of the Digital Natives who uses SNS for personal and professional purposes, he might be personally influenced towards one or the other side. Nevertheless, the same criticism could be made of positivism about manipulating statistical figures and numbers to provide a more suitable for the researcher answer. The next chapter provides a more in-depth discussion as to how qualitative and quantitative research can be combined in a social sciences study.

3.3 Common Ground Between Positivism and Interpretivism

In the section above, the two extreme epistemological positions were explained by focusing on their research methodologies and theoretical approaches to explain social reality. This section discusses the circumstances that need to take place in order to combine both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to spherically explain social phenomena.

Bryman (2004) argues that both qualitative and quantitative principles can be used in a social sciences study, using the method of triangulation. Realism, though, rather than being informed by debates concerning what constitutes “valid knowledge” is primarily informed by an ontological question: “what exists in social reality”? (Potter 2000) Thus, ontology argues that no matter what we do, our actions are based around a certain view of what the world is like.

The method of triangulation is by no means a time consuming research process. The analysis of results can be significantly difficult since the researcher seeks to classify the differences that are found by using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The difficult issue of triangulation, as Bryman (2004) argues, demonstrates that the more a social researcher considers several methodological approaches, the more the research analysis becomes complex.

This thesis examines a rather new social topic, one that is predicated upon the use of next generation SNS technologies by a convenience sample of Greek college graduates seeking jobs. Although the term social media is a buzzword in both the business world and in academia, the term “social

recruitment” is not widely discussed or researched. As discussed previously, exploratory studies are valuable for grounded theory, as they seek new insights, pose questions and investigate social acts in a new light (Saunders et al 2003).

An online search of Google Scholar, on 13 July 2012, for “social recruitment” resulted in only 978 relevant entries, while the key phrase “social media” brought 175,000 results. This research does not aim to test a hypothesis for its validity; yet sufficient reliability in methodology applied in the study’s survey instrument based on traditional replicable models in research on recruitment offers adequate basis to support some generalisation about a rather new topic with limited literature.

Given the fact that there is limited academic investigation into this topic, this research study adopts an exploratory approach in order to comprehend a new social practice as to how people plan to start entering the business world. Through the exploratory approach, this research aims to form a basis for further investigation of social recruitment. How Greek college graduates plan to pursue their careers in a turbulent economic environment makes the study somewhat unique, yet certainly referential to the dissemination of a number of projects on labour post the global financial crisis of 2008.

The next section discusses in detail the research approach this thesis adopted to investigate the impact of social networking sites on Greek Digital Natives occupational opportunities.

3.4 Research Process

Primarily, this study wanted to conduct a content analysis to examine the recruitment of Greek graduate candidates on the job market by companies via SNS and corporate websites. Using as benchmark Selden's and Orenstein's (2011) study on government e-recruiting web sites, the initial research process which was aspirational, required qualitative content analysis to reveal how the researched population responded when visiting corporate websites and LinkedIn company pages.

This aspirational research aimed at examining the interaction of Greek graduate candidates with the job market via SNS websites. The areas the researcher wanted to explore were: (1) Site based elements (i.e. companies, profiles, news, groups) and (2) External elements (i.e. traffic, existing surveys on site use etc.). Linkage of institutional websites to SNS company profiles exhibits the systemic use of web based, intelligent software applications in organisational recruitment of employees. Standard interface on the social networking sites wanted to be explored via a system of categories to the individual homepages of those institutions. Much like SEO compatibility, which shows how well an organisation illustrates its values and requirements, a company profile on SNS would have to communicate its effectiveness on attracting and recruiting the best candidates.

Although the initial thought to conduct content analysis is feasible using quantitative research methods to illustrate portrayals of new professionals in SNS, the research findings would have never answered the main research question which is the impact of SNS on Greek graduates' occupational opportunities. Using content analysis, the thesis would have gone on a different research direction. A study like that would have been valuable for companies and web designers whose goal is to develop effective and usable websites and mobile applications. Clearly, this was not the purpose of this

thesis, and the author had to abandon the content analysis study. For that reason, a different research process was selected.

A three stage research process was followed to collect primary data using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The next section discusses the stages separately.

3.4.1 The Online Survey

The research started with a survey (see appendix 1), which was distributed online. An online questionnaire designed on SurveyMonkey.com and distributed solely through the Internet functioned as a tool to recruit participants for the focus groups (see appendix 1). The researcher posted the online survey on his personal accounts, kindly asking his “Facebook friends”, “Twitter Followers” and “LinkedIn Connections” to complete the survey and then to forward it to whoever might have been interested in that subject.

This snowball effect with the use of SNS assisted the survey to collect 228 responses in less than a month. Nevertheless, the number of the responses to the online survey do not consist of any significant number to draw conclusions about the overall population. Nine questions were asked by the online survey to review the following areas: (1) the use of social media for personal vs. professional reasons; (2) their current employment status; (3) ways of personal promotion to get a job and (4) channels of information for available positions.

The collection of responses from the online survey was used to provide basic information to build on in the two focus groups with the students and in the interviews with the HR professionals. For that reason, the data from the online survey were not cross-tabulated. The researcher decided not to run a cross-tabulation test as it was not of the thesis benefit to determine if there is a relationship between two variables (i.e. gender and social media usage).

Although the most common variables to use in a cross-tabulations are demographics (Bryman 2004), the aim of this research was to collect qualitative data from the focus groups and then discuss the student participants' results with the HR Professionals. Regardless the fact that several variables such as age, gender, education, etc. could have been cross-tabulated to offer some statistical proof of which types of people would use social media for personal or professional reasons, such an insight would shift the qualitative focus of the research.

3.4.2 The Focus Groups

Once the online survey's questionnaires were collected and analysed using simple descriptive statistics, the researcher organised two focus groups which were held in the American College of Greece. Subjects were recruited from a random sample of students who had received the online invitation to participate on the online survey and had done so. Then, a convenience sample was chosen amongst students who agreed to be contacted by the researcher in order to participate in the research's second phase, the focus groups. The sample of students has been chosen regardless the participants' technology literacy. Both focus groups were video recorded in mini DVDs.

As previously mentioned, the online survey's results were used to initiate discussions among both focus groups participants. The main reason why focus groups were chosen as the most sufficient way to collect responses was because the researcher wanted to bring young people together, listen each other and join in a discussion about occupational opportunities and social media.

After the completion of the first focus group the researcher transcribed the discussions of the 9 participants. He then used the data of both the online survey and the first focus group to generate topics of discussions among the

eight participants of the second focus group. The main areas both focus groups explored were: (1) factors that affect their transition into their labour market; (2) challenges they face to get a job; (3) their attitude towards the use of Internet to search for job; (4) the use of social media for job searching purposes; (5) their tendency to start their own business using social media. Once the second focus group was over, the researcher transcribed the conversations and was able to identify patterns and themes to be discussed with Human Resources professionals in the third stage of the followed research process.

3.4.3 The Interviews

Two semi structured 60-80 minute interviews with HR Managers were organized by the researcher to discuss the responses collected from the two focus groups with students and graduates. The interviews took place in HR professionals' offices and were not video recorded due to the interviewees' request. Following a grounded theory approach, the researcher kept interviewing them in order to reach to several satisfying results. For that reason, a third open interview took place to compare and contrast student behaviours online vs. business expectations.

Through this research's three-stage investigation by collecting responses using an online survey, two focus groups with students, and three interviews with HR professionals, the researcher aimed at discovering what exists in social reality (Potter 2000) and at identifying themes to understand young people's expectations and behaviours when using the SNS. This research process allowed the researcher to collect sufficient data to sketch the profiles of Digital Natives in Greece. Given the fact that there is limited academic investigation into this topic, this research study adopts an exploratory approach in order to comprehend a rather new social practice as to how people plan to enter the business world.

Portrayals of new professionals in SNS, once put into correspondence with

organisational identities, provides us with a landscape of opportunities and partnerships perhaps not before imagined. Respondents to the interviews, focus groups and survey questionnaire to the study contribute to this wider discourse about the ways in which SNS impacts successful match and recruitment of career seekers.

3.4.4 Research Ethics

This study adheres to human subject research protocol recommendations made by the University of Leicester, UK, the Council of European Social Science (CESSDA) and UNESCO. UNESCO provides for a Code of Conduct for Social Science Research and Ethical Guidelines for International Comparative Social Science Research in the Framework of M.O.S.T. (Management of Social Transformation). The European Union outlines ethical guidelines to European socio-economic research in the RESPECT code of socio-economic research practice (n/a Respectproject.org 2012).

3.4.5 Research Protocol of Data Gathering

The following section provides a brief description of the protocol to collection of primary data on Greek college graduates' use the SNS to start their professional careers.

- 1. Research Question:** To what extent can social networking sites be an effective method of graduate job recruitment?
- 2. General Information:** The research study was conducted in the American College of Greece, Deree College, 6 Gravias St. Aghia Paraskevi, Greece. The

data was collected in two stages. First, an online survey was distributed through the three most well known SNS, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. 228 responses were received (see appendix 4). Second, two focus groups were held in March 2012 asking groups of 9 and 8 students respectively for their opinions on the issue (see appendix 3). Third, in-depth interviews with three HR managers in multinational organisations located in Athens were conducted, after the collection and the analysis of the focus group's responses, to discuss contemporary issues of recruitment and selection.

- 3. Risks/Ethics:** The risks associated with the subjects' participation were minimal and are not in excess of the encountered in normal daily living. The topic did not deal with any sensitive issue and subjects were not expected to feel embarrassed at any time during the study. In line with ethical procedures all respondents were told the purpose of the research. It was explained that they could opt out or withdraw at any point. In addition all respondents were provided with a focus group facilitation guide and a consent form to sign (see appendix 2). Similar process was followed during the interviews with the two Human Resource professionals (see appendix 5).
- 4. Subjects:** The subjects were senior students and graduates of the above college, all ranged between 21 and 25 years of age. In this thesis, graduates are defined as people who have received their degree within the last six months and who were looking for a job at the moment of their participation to the research. Students were currently enrolled at the American College of Greece, Deree College.
- 5. Anonymity:** names or other demographic characteristics were not required, ensuring anonymity.

The subjects were also asked not to supply any identifying information on the questionnaires they were to complete. Subjects completed the digital questionnaire in SurveyMonkey.com.

3.4.6 Digital Survey Questionnaire: Candidates

An online survey was designed to collect primary data about the way Greek college graduates use SNS to start their professional careers. In order to initiate the subjects to the topic, the survey was distributed via the Internet to students (see appendix 1). The goal of this digital survey questionnaire was to prepare the ground for an open discussion with whoever volunteered to participate in the focus groups. The digital research instrument consisted of 9 questions plus one which was asking whether the respondents would like to get contacted by the researcher for a follow up focus group in the near future.

The sample population of male and female students were undergoing completion of the final year of their degree programme at the American College of Greece, Deree College. Mature learners, all of them having at least three years of experience at a higher education institution, made them good candidates for the study. Confirmation of participant agreement for research participation, and further contact for potential continuance as respondents in focus group participation in the next phase in the research, was initiated in the questionnaire (see appendix 3).

The questionnaires were distributed through the three key online social media channels. The students were asked to complete the questionnaires, submit them online via a software tool for online surveys and share the questionnaire to their social media friends and contacts. Survey Monkey

(www.surveymonkey.com), the chosen software tool, provided SSL encryption to ensure anonymity and data integrity online (see appendix 4).

Scaling to both the interview and survey questionnaire design created a seamless transition from preliminary interview to digital survey implementation. The Likert-scale survey includes five items – 5 strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 neutral, 2 disagree, 1 strongly disagree – for ordinal coding and computation of answers. The initial stage survey focused on the following areas: 1) demographic characteristics; 2) factors that affect their transition into the labour market; 3) challenges they currently face to get a job; 4) their attitude towards the use of the Internet to search for a job; 5) the use of social media for job searching purposes; 6) their tendency to start their own business using social media.

3.4.7 Justification for Choosing Questionnaire Methodology

A strength of this research is that the population was largely homogeneous. A questionnaire is a valid and much used tool for collecting large amounts of data at a single sitting. A potential weakness in this method of gathering data, though, is the potential for respondents to speak about the matter severally or in a larger group setting, which might influence what information each person would provide and the overall slant to their answers.

A degree of discussion is perhaps inevitable, although it is argued that it is likely to have occurred only in a reasonably 'matter of fact' setting, not being an issue that was an imposition on their time or one they would rather not have to be bothered with. Moreover, given the ease of access to the questionnaire, it being relatively short and capable of being completed at a time that suited them (within reason), and 'digital' running through their veins, an online questionnaire was a highly appropriate research instrument

for ensuring a good response to a subject of genuine interest and relevance to them.

In illustration of the latter claim, one respondent informed the author that he had completed the questionnaire using a smart phone while on military duty at night time! The issue being addressed, and a good distribution of answers, albeit none with any comments added, can only have had a positive effect on the overall integrity and reliability of the study. The author is satisfied, too, that little or no collaboration amongst respondents took place. The decision to use an online questionnaire is validated by the high volume of responses, well over 200, all completed fully when there was no obligation to do so or technical interface that would have made it impossible to leave any answer blank.

3.4.8 Focus Groups: Student Participants

During the second stage of the research, two focus groups, comprised of 8 and 9 senior-level students respectively, were selected from the participants in the online survey (see appendix 1). The focus groups were aiming to collect the subjects' perceptions and insights on the use of social media in their professional transition from college to work. Each focus group lasted approximately 60 minutes. Both were organised in university classrooms, during the college activity hour (13.40 – 14.40) and videotaped using a digital handheld camera and stored in two DVD-Rom mini discs. During the activity hour there are no scheduled classes, so that faculty and students can organize and participate in common college and student life activities.

The purpose of the focus groups was to obtain the students' point of view on SNS use and, in particular, whether they viewed the new media as social or professional tools. Subjects were chosen using a stratified random sample of

people from a list of those who had already agreed to be contacted by the researcher. There was no guarantee that the people in the focus groups would be strangers, although this was not considered a major factor that would affect the research methodology or credibility.

During the focus groups sessions, participants were made welcome and the basic concepts of the study explained. The researcher's questions and comments were extremely careful, in order not to express any offensive, discriminating or minimising comment on how people use the SNS or whether they were employed or unemployed. The intention was to generate an honest and open discussion so that nobody felt embarrassed. After the researcher had distributed a consent form (see appendix 2), he explained the general expectations of being honest, willing to discuss the topic openly with the group, not to reveal any information they thought would be too personal, not to violate the confidentiality of any group member and finally to respect each other's views and differences. Finally, the researcher assured the participants that participation in this focus group was voluntary and that anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed.

The focus groups were semi-structured, asking the participants primarily to describe SNS by using three words that could later be coded where repeated (see appendix 3). Then the researcher asked for their primary reason for using SNS, as well as their favourite online platform, to initiate them into the topic gradually. The students were then asked about their opinion on whether they viewed or even used SNS professionally, seeking their understanding of the new media's potentialities to do business. The vast majority of the conversation focused around recruitment and entrepreneurship.

Although most of the questions were already planned, students seemed to be more open when the researcher was using examples and stories of

others to open comment. The storytelling technique seemed more appropriate to further discussions and allowed people to express their thoughts freely (Pink 2006). For example, participants seemed to be less aware of the fact that studies shown that recruiters make use of SNS to screen and select their candidates for work. When the researcher explained that this is a common practice in many organisations, students seemed to be more enthusiastic about answering and contributing to the discussion.

3.4.9 Interview Survey: HR Professionals

The semi-structured interview component with two well-known HR professionals was by no means exhaustive in terms of insights, nor generalisable in claims to validity. Both HR professionals were asked to sign a consent form (see appendix 5). Content from the preliminary interviews with HR professionals using SNS media in their recruitment strategies, however, was informative to objectives of the research, as well as the development of the digital survey questionnaire. The researcher discussed the comments by students made during the focus groups and asked the HR professionals to express their point of view.

While the goal of this study is to gain understanding of the transmission of global HRM culture via SNS systems of recruitment, dialectic to changes in organisational approaches to candidate attraction and retention during the course of the consideration and thereafter was equally critical to interpretation of the iterative economic exchange in process. Candidates had voiced parallel interest in designating key career priorities in participation and networking with companies. The constructivist elements to the study's research design, interview, digital survey and focus group are furthered by secondary data supplied by market and academic scholarship on virtual professional communities.

Both professionals requested the maintenance of anonymity and confidentiality, which resulted to their refusal to have the interviews tape recorded. The researcher took notes in Greek and translated the conversations in English only for the text of this thesis. In addition, as the thesis was written, the researcher discussed with a third HR manager explaining the topic of his doctorate research. Although the discussion did not follow the same structure as the other two interviews, the content of what was discussed brought up interesting insights. Upon special request by the researcher, the third HR professional accepted to be included in the research, as an ad hoc interview, making sure that his name and his company's name would not be mentioned or recognized in the thesis.

3.5 Issues and Reliability

The primary dataset was that obtained from the Digital Survey Questionnaire, the data being coded for aggregate analysis; some sections of interviews with two HR managers were also transcribed in full. These notes help the clarification of key concepts emerging from the questionnaire returns. Each participant, having provided demographic data, was allocated a number for the study and made aware that they were entitled to examine all data and information being used. The venue for the two HRM interviews was each respondent's workplace. The two focus groups were conducted at the college, in a regular classroom, during the college's activity hour, in which students and faculty are encouraged to participate in academic and extracurricular activities. The semi-structured interviews and survey questions provided some open-ended questions for random data compilation. The interviews ranged in length from 60 to 80 minutes.

Included in the interview were questions concerning company profile and a separate SNS survey that focused on strategies for recruitment. Interviewees were also given the opportunity to volunteer any additional

information on their present marketing strategy for HRM recruitment, as well as commenting on interfacing with SNS professional networks for identifying and following up on potential candidates, and how their careers might develop. HRM respondent “expertise” in recognising the connection between a core skills base and the professional path a future employee would travel along created a critical insight into what role a candidate might follow. The procedure for collection of the survey data compiled on Greek graduate professional job searches in SNS clarified the politics of community identity in global web environments.

As answers to the interviews, survey and focus groups are referenced for norms (i.e. control); evaluation of occurrence of redundancies was measured. Digital interface with the SurveyMonkey.com analysis function assisted in the process. A relatively coherent picture of Greek “professionals” appears, yet due to the limitations of the convenience sample, dependent variables (i.e. skill development) are in no way representative of a significant national or global sample of young professionals in terms of effect size.

Significance is more generally found in the range of insights contributed by those participating in the study. Data indicating Greek graduate professional orientation in the sample demonstrates variation yet good reliability. The next chapter discusses the analysis of the data systematically gathered for this study and the key findings that emerge.

3.6 Coding

An open-coding method used to extrapolate distinct categories of meaning from the data references both: 1) given categories in secondary research data on SNS content and semi-structured survey questionnaire outcomes; 2) endorsed coding offered by respondents in interview, survey and focus group responses. This model supports accountability to volitional participation in the study.

Professionalism and other identity codes pertinent to “power” and “status” of Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants involved in job searches assisted in classification of codes for Greek college graduates seeking transition from academic degree programmes to careers. Young professional identities are articulated in great length in qualitative descriptions. This impacts on interpretation of the research data, as attitudes and perceptions of Greek young professionals forged in cyberspace.

3.6.1 Coding: Primary Data

Trends that became clear, both during the gathering and analysis of the data, established themselves as the criteria on which a study of out-of-work Greek graduates was based. Open-coding methods in preparation of the data for analysis include self-reflexive respondent decision. Throughout the research, the grounded theory method was adopted so that categories of Internet users (Digital Natives) emerged from the data and were not imposed beforehand. Instead, respondents articulated their own responses to the semi-structured interview and survey instruments, so that the data would serve as a basis to analysis.

3.6.2 Coding: Secondary Research

A taxonomy of coding with web user categories (Feeney 2010, Toledo 2007) as cited in Zur & Zur (2011) was used in this study to assist the research introduce a new taxonomy with a focus on career seekers and social recruiting. Category assignment of a person's relationship to technology was taken from secondary research investigation into Internet user interface with SNS websites. The web user taxonomy (Feeney 2010, Toledo 2007) provides six categories cited in differentiation of people according to age (i.e. Digital Native or Digital Immigrant) in relation to comprehension, understanding and comfort with SNS technology environments (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 A taxonomy of coding, web user categories

(Source: Feeney 2010, and Toledo 2007) in Zur & Zur (2011).

“Category Name	Category Description
1. Avoider	They are true avoiders of modern technologies. The Avoiders use landlines and avoid email and the Internet. The newspapers they like to read arrive via snail mail carrier, not via Internet server. Some of these ultimate avoiders are simply old Digital Immigrants who cannot relate to modern technology, and others are Digital Natives who some may call the "Neo-Luddites" who philosophically oppose the use of the Internet and other modern online technologies.
2. Minimalist	Members of this group use technology reluctantly. They may be Digital Immigrant reluctant adopters or Digital Native minimalists. Minimalists have an email account and probably a Facebook profile (hard to avoid these days) but do not check them regularly. They have a cell phone, but do not need or desire to

be online via the phone. No smart phones are necessary or wanted by this group. Like the avoiders, this group reads the newspaper in paper form.

3. Tourists
These are the people who feel like visitors in the digital world. They pay attention to the 'local' or 'native' digital culture, learn its language, observe its rituals, and comprehend its complexities. This group keeps internal distance from technology even though they tend to use it appropriately and effectively, as needed, but not extensively. This group stays internally non-digital in regard to preferences and values.
4. Enthusiastic or Eager Adopter
This group has fun with technology! They enjoy the latest iPhone and talk about its features; the iPad is fascinating even if they do not have one. This group - if they do not own a new product themselves - is ready and excited to try out the product of a friend and enjoy the process. They participate in online discussions via Facebook, news sites, blogs or online education. They may write online content (a column, a blog) themselves. Members of this group check email and are online throughout the day, find technology interesting, have a smart phone, and are on Facebook. They get their news online, not via print.
5. Innovator
Members of this group are not only enthusiastic. They work with technology to improve it. These are game developers, programmers, engineers, technology writers, professors, and (gasp) hackers. While hackers do not improve technology for the rest of us, they are affecting it, not just using it.

Innovators build websites, create applications and perform other online creation functions for their fellow innovators.

6. Over-User or Addict
- As the name indicates, digital addicts are heavily dependent on technology to occupy their time. Millions of young people all over the world are in this group - many of them gamers. When Digital Immigrants are in this group, it is usually for gaming or porn, though it can be for social networking also. Members of this group are extremely protective of their "right" to be online, and will become upset, irate and even violent if technology is not available. This group is what many parents, educators and managers accuse average Digital Natives of being, but this is a mistake. Addicts include those whose physical, mental, emotional, educational, or occupational aspects of their lives are significantly, negatively affected by their excessive use of digital technologies. Examples of people in this group are gamers who play for 18 hours a day, missing school, work and home life. Other members of this group include porn addicts who do not have sex with their spouses in favour of indulging this online addiction."

As Feeney (2010) and Toledo (2007) argue, age is not the only factor defining the Digital Natives from the Digital Immigrants. Attitudes expressed in the interviews, focus groups and surveys suggest a comprehensive picture of IT literate Greek graduate professionals. What is important, according to Zur & Zur (2011), is to focus on people's behaviours online in order to classify them and give them a valid definition. This thesis discusses the aforementioned taxonomy of coding web user categories with its subjects and finally contributes a new taxonomy of four categories that characterise web users and career seekers in Greece.

3.7 Summary of Data Coding

Definition of distinct categories of meaning from the interviews, survey questionnaire and focus groups attribute direction on the topic. Quantitative coding was supplied in statistical reporting to the SurveyMonkey.com questionnaire. Qualitative outcomes to the study are discussed here in the analysis, as well as in chapters five and six. The open-coding method ensured a grounded approach to self-reflexive responses to the interviews, survey questionnaire and two focus groups. In the semi-structured interview, those answers that covered more than the question to hand were extracted in adherence to the classification of data that was appropriate at the analytical stage. By labelling new themes, coded into a preliminary set of categories, any amendments to the current index of classification were agreed and tightened up.

The findings to the study augment traditional theories on the meaning of recruitment and professional search in Greece. Socio-economic priorities reflected the general national society and job marketplace, and reinforced a limited set of ideas about descriptive labelling of “self-hood” during the employment search. Despite the common stereotype mentioned by some respondents, a range of ideas about “professionalism” occurred. Secondary to the study of SNS recruitment of Greek college graduates in the global labour market is the mention of community, family and spiritual reinforcement in the search for work.

Where Greek cultural attitudes are present, they are noted in the findings to the survey. The aims of the analysis were to create a post-industrial representation of labour through grounded theory in: 1) self-reported data provided by Greek college graduates and students, for 2) explanation of the

processes by which those young professionals forge connections with companies, 3) via SNS professional group associations and other networks of personal interest. Social media investment by companies, in turn, now outperforms other vehicles for solicitation of job candidates. To this end, the coding constructs used in this research investigation are empirical data applicable to future study of professional identity politics in the global market. Excel statistical analysis performed quantitative evaluation of content not computed in the SurveyMonkey.com questionnaire (see Appendix 4). Ethnic coding was not included, as Greek representation was not be accounted for due to lack of intercoder agreement.

3.8 Limitations

This work is designed to add to the body of knowledge on the importance of SNS in the burgeoning area of recruitment practices amongst young Greek graduates. It also contributes to scholarship in the study of business and commerce, HRM and how companies cope with change. Other subjects that are relevant include sociology and new media studies. How gender affect the sample is a variable of some autonomy, thereby indicating that economic distribution may display some variation.

The reliability of student responses was an important aspect to allow the researcher draw valid conclusions. In a qualitative study there is the issue of respondents' subjectivity that comes from their almost exclusive social use of SNS at the moment they were asked by the researcher. Nevertheless, due to the fact the present topic is of high and immediate interest for the respondents' professional lives, it is expected that the reliability of their responses ought to be rather high.

In addition, the online questionnaire received 228 responses, although the survey was available online for only 30 days, a modest enough period of time. The high response rate reveals the increased interest of the respondents in participating in an exercise of this kind, adding more validity to the overall research. The responses given by the subjects during the focus groups in regard to the implications of SNS on recruitment were of great depth and quality. Nevertheless, due to the nature of this topic, the way people approach SNS is rapidly changing, making it almost impossible to generalise the findings for a long period of time. For this reason, this research focuses on a certain period of time in the Greek society, examining the use of SNS by young graduates who are looking to get a job during a turbulent workplace environment, due to the severe Greek economic recession.

Another factor that limits the possibility of generalising the whole population of Digital Natives in Greece is the study's focus on one private college in Athens, regardless of its position as one of the most well-known and most popular private universities in that country. The research aims to take a careful and in-depth snapshot of how young college Digital Natives viewed and used professionally SNS for recruitment purposes at a specific period of time. Additional studies focusing on similar age and social groups at different time frames in Greece and beyond are highly recommended and valuable for more accurate explanations.

3.9 Conclusions

The objective of this study is to explore the impact of social networking sites (SNS) on Greek college graduates' occupational opportunities and to elucidate candidate response to SNS strategies as part of the contemporary human resource management (HRM) recruitment models in Greece. In

addition, a number of sub-questions were asked to further understanding on the topic. The following questions were prepared:

1. How Greeks promote themselves using online social networking sites?
2. How SNS influence job searching and recruiting practices?
3. To what extent are recruiters using online social networking sites to search for the most appropriate candidate?
4. At a time of harsh economic crisis in Greece, do online social networking sites shape a new reality in terms of enhancing entrepreneurship?
5. What is the link between creating an online social profile and developing a self-promotion strategy to get a job?

In conclusion to this chapter, this study addresses candidate and HRM professionals' perceptions of marketing of company and professional identities in the interest of entrance into the global sphere of employment. Primary data was gathered using both quantitative and qualitative methods, through tripartite research instrumentation. 1) an online survey, distributed on SNS, that collected a large response from a variety of age groups in the largest private university in Greece; 2) two focus groups, organised to provide a more in-depth understanding of the responses given on the use of SNS in career development; 3) two semi-structured interviews and one open interview held in Athens with senior level HR managers of multinational organisations located in Greece, for further understanding of this question and to compare student responses.

The following chapter analyses the findings of both quantitative and qualitative data sets, aiming to classify and analyse the Greek Digital Natives' DNA.

Chapter Four

Analysis and Findings

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses analysis of data, gathered to explore the current impact of online social recruitment in Greece. Coding of the data from quantitative primary research (online survey) sets the picture. Also discussed are the findings of evidence collected using qualitative methods to explore the views of the survey's respondents, both students, graduates and Human Resource professionals, towards the use of Social Networking Sites for recruitment purposes.

Investigating the ways in which Greek Digital Natives go about identifying career options is an issue of increasing relevance in the context of entry into the job market of a large number of university graduates for whom a world without the Internet is unthinkable. This new population, amongst whom is counted the author, often attracts the moniker the 'Digital Natives', 'Millennials' or 'Generation Y' and, ostensibly, views things from a different perspective to other generations.

Technology being part and parcel of its upbringing from an early age, it is evident that Gen Y treats all facets of the digital age, including gaining skills and earning a living, in a way that others would not recognise. In addition, how they feel at work bears no resemblance to their parents' generation. From birth, Gen Y has largely been spoilt through hobbies and general interests aplenty. That cohort wants its own space and to be able to put its time to activities that are rewarding and add value.

Of primary consideration to them is a good balance between work and personal life, and a flexible job that they find interesting. In a race to recruit the most talented individuals of a computer-literate generation, business cannot afford to overlook what that constituency wants and considers

important. To do so, the challenge is to modify both processes and norms: company culture, the workplace itself, how HRM recruits workers and what tasks they are expected to undertake.

Budden and Budden (2009) discuss the impact of SNS on recruitment by mentioning that Internet users remain cautious as far as the issues of privacy and reliability are concerned. The authors argue that:

“Employers and especially human resource managers are increasingly looking to the Internet to conduct background checks on potential employees. The ability of human resource managers to access information on applicants has never been easier. At the speed of the Internet, information is often available that may make or break an application. Students looking for employment need to be aware of the potential impact of their social website postings by employers” (Budden and Budden 2009, p.12).

It is argued that the key to discovering the right job nowadays is not only comprehending how to hold employers to the career seekers, but mainly how job hunters are aiming to contact the employer directly (Crompton and Sautter 2011). As the users are able to construct their profile using the undeniable power of SNS, they can expand their visibility and business contacts to countries and companies that seemed unreachable some years ago. Examining this from the organisational point of view, Crompton and Sautter (2011) argue that the use of social media is a distant, very innovative, highly targeted and creative method of alerting and engaging both active and passive career seekers.

Web 2.0 has greatly impacted recruitment by bestowing career openings for two-way assurance, confidential replies to questions and opportunities to expand connections amid candidates and recruiters (Grant 2009). As

analysts like Crompton and Sautter (2011) suggest, SNS is considered among the three most vital business contact vehicles for professionals to start their career. Mass media and professional journals offer additional insight in concurrent reporting. LinkedIn and other professional-orientated SNS sites publish information concerning how candidates were hired or fired, and the details to the “profile” involved in the decision.

4.1 Online Survey Analysis

The survey’s first stage involved an online survey created on SurveyMonkey.com and distributed by the researcher via his personal accounts on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Google+. As the researcher asked the respondents to forward the survey to whoever might have been interested in participating in the research, it is possible to claim that the survey gathered responses from a random sample of online users.

The online survey collected 228 responses from a random sample of online users and was available online for one month. All answers were relevant to the topic and no response was excluded from the analysis. Of a total of 228 responses, 59% were female and 41% were male (Graph 4.1.1) (see Appendix 4).

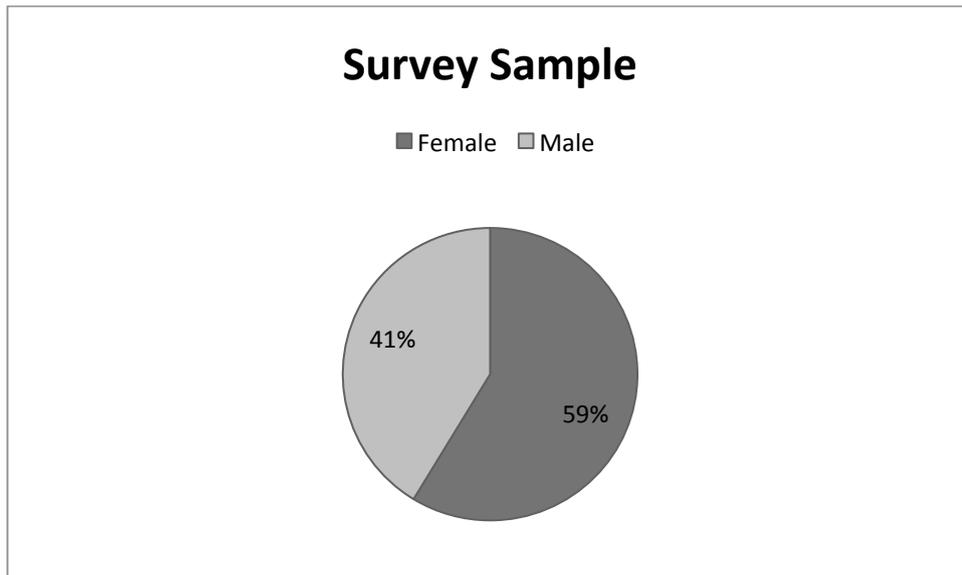


Figure 4.1

Sample according to gender

The dominant age group among the survey's respondents was 21 to 25. The second most dominant age group was that around 20. Those findings are logical, as the initial survey was primarily sent to college students who heavily represent the aforementioned age groups. The rest of the age groups either did not receive the survey or felt that it did not appeal to their needs. Nevertheless, as shown in Graph 4.1.2, two age groups (26-30) and (40+) seem to be more open to answer an online questionnaire that deals with social media and career development.

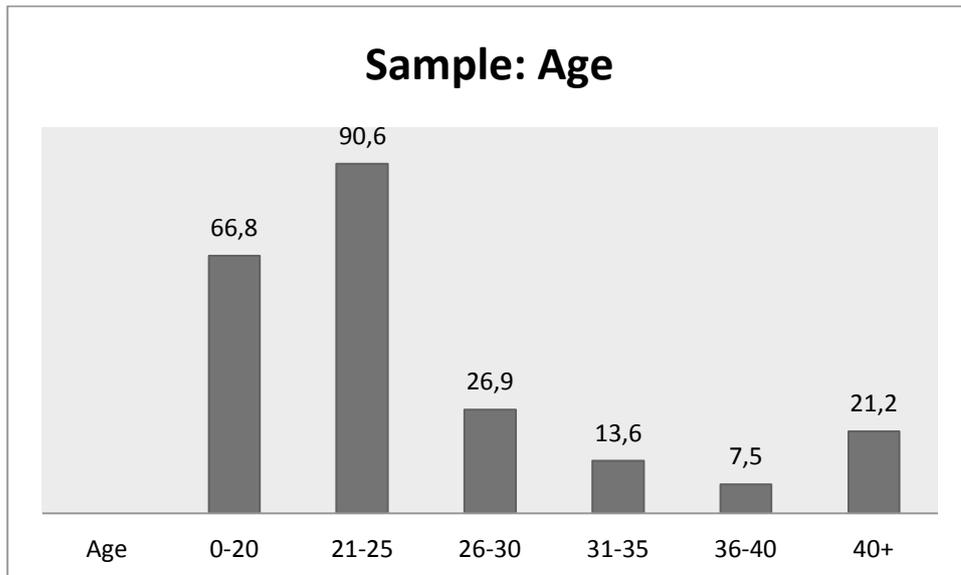


Figure 4.2

Sample according to age

4.2 Use of the Social Networking Sites

Which social media do you use for personal reasons? The first question wanted to review the general use of every possible feature that can be classified as Social Media. As shown the response summary (see Appendix 4), social networking sites are heavily used by the respondents (100%) for social and personal reasons. Respondents seem to also use Video Sharing sites such as YouTube or Vimeo for 89.3% and Livecasting applications (Skype, IM, MSN, UStream) for 64.3%. A closer exploration as to which specific SNS do they use for personal reasons was not of the thesis interest. However, the first question helps the survey to compare the findings with the second question, which clearly seeks to what extent the subjects use SNS for professional reasons.

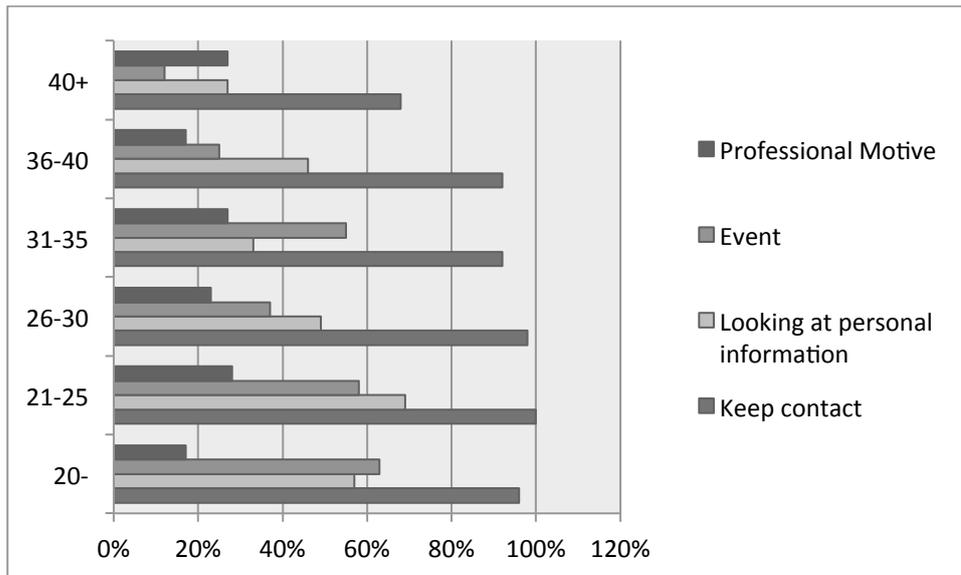


Figure 4.3

Responses based on age in relation to the use of SNS

The responses to the online survey point out that the subjects use the Internet to socialise, communicate and keep in touch with friends and family (Graph 4.2). Both HR managers who were later interviewed provided a definition of social media as a vehicle for all people to share information and keep in touch with family, work and friends. The survey's first question clearly confirms the argument that SNS is mainly for socialising and personal communication. In addition, the interview with one of the HR managers showed that the business world is accepting SNS as a great opportunity to expand their horizons and search abroad for the right person. The male HR manager commented:

"We see SNS as a tool to network. It's not only what is being communicated among friends. We seek for the right person who is able to network with people in his/her field and to offer valuable contributions. Some candidates feel that what is being said online is only for personal use. But, ethically or not, we have to use any available tool we have to recruit the most appropriate employee. So, yes, I understand the personal and ethical aspect, but I have to treat SNS as more than a personal communication vehicle". (HR1)

4.3 Career Development through SNS

Which social media do you use to find a job? Question #2 asks to what extent respondents use SNS when looking for a job. The responses to the online survey revealed that 74.1% uses SNS and 22.2% uses Microblogging for job seeking. Just over half of the responses (51.9%) seem to prefer the traditional online job boards like Kariera.gr to seek for career openings. Nevertheless, during the focus groups the majority of the participants said that this question made them think of the potential created by the use of SNS to develop their career. Participant #4A from the first focus group said, *“I knew that LinkedIn is for that stuff but I do not know why Facebook has to be used to find a job”*. Participant #6A from the same group agreed: *“Facebook and Twitter are for fun, for friends. I cannot use them to look serious. I enjoy being myself over there. I can be more serious on LinkedIn”*.

All other responses to Question #2 were not certified during the focus groups. Participant #1B said that he “had no idea how to use YouTube, Digg or Wiki to find a job”. In contrast, the female HR manager seemed impressed by the graduates’ ignorance of how they can take advantage of the potentials of such tools. She quoted that,

“so many people abroad are uploading their personal videos to seek for job. I think it is great to see the candidate selling himself or herself online. It’s very positive to see people coming up with alternative ways to approach us”.
(HR2)

The online survey revealed, however, a tendency towards online recruitment (46.4%). Respondents seemed to prefer the Internet as a tool to seek for a job instead of traditional media, such as daily press. During the focus groups, the participants were open to use only the Internet for their future

work. As participant #5A claimed, *“it will be a waste of time and energy to buy a newspaper and apply to whatever is there”*. Participant #7B extended that and said, *“I believe that most of those jobs posted in a regular newspaper are fake. Also, why bother calling a company that seems to be so outdated?”*

In contrast to the online survey results with 57.1% of respondent answering that they still read the newspapers to find a job, both HR managers argued that posting a job vacancy in a regular newspaper is *“a waste of time and money”*. Although they understand that they might lose an audience that still reads the daily press, they feel that the online job boards have greatly evolved to become trustworthy tools for recruitment. The male HR manager said:

“Sites like Kariera.gr offer great statistics and such a fast penetration to those people that we are looking for. Few years ago, for a single position we would receive 50 resumés in 5 days of exposure. Now, we receive thousands of applications for job in a couple of hours, due to the financial crisis and people’s unemployment”. (HR1)

The last statement is a crucial finding of this thesis, as it clearly shows that due to the economic downturn, Greek HR managers receive a multiplied number of CVs. Therefore, the Internet for them functions as a tool for sorting out the resumés and brings them only what is selected by the online system. A good balance between job boards and SNS is essential to identify the most suitable person for an open position. The above is reflected in the female HR managers’ words:

“We are moving fast from simply posting a job on a newspaper or a job board to actually searching ourselves for the best candidate using SNS and especially LinkedIn”. (HR2)

SNS is seen as supplementary tool to professional recruitment, especially when it comes to career seekers. The HR managers see social recruitment

in an introductory stage, which offers them the possibility to review the person and less the professional. On the contrary, graduates appear not yet to have fully comprehended this change in perception coming from the business environment.

4.4 Job Searching and Online Personal Branding

Question #3 asks whether they believed they will be employed upon graduation. A strong majority, 69.2%, answered negatively. During the focus groups, many respondents expressed their concern that working in Greece upon graduation sounds unrealistic. Greek students sounded pessimistic that the uncertain business and political environment will not positively change in the next years. They fear that things will get even worse: a girl from the first focus group said,

“there is no way we can find a job in our field. Nobody hires anymore. Our future is only abroad. First, we need to apply for a master’s degree and then look for job anywhere else but Greece” (Participant #7A).

In fact, many participants agreed with the aforementioned statement, showing that the tendency is to leave Greece for countries with a much more healthy business environment and career opportunities.

Of those who work in Greece, though, as it is asked in question #4, a large group of people (66.7%) answered that they found their current work through referrals from family and friends. When asked during the focus groups whether they see any difference between actual referrals and online referrals on SNS such as LinkedIn or Twitter, one student said,

“I’ve never thought that one can recommend me online. It sounds good although not real. Everybody will try to be nice anyway”. (Participant #1B)

Another student from the same group replied,

“Yes but recommendations are not to be trusted anyway. At least online other people can also read what we write when we are asked to recommend a colleague. It is more reliable this way. I would definitely use the online referrals to find a job” (Participant #4B).

The issues of reliability and trustworthiness were heavily discussed during the focus groups. The students were more open to accepting a LinkedIn profile than a printed resume.

“It’s like the discussion about Wikipedia’s validity. Is it valid that one person with no official position writes about a certain topic? I believe yes, because so many others can check and assure its value. The same applies with online resumés. I cannot fake that I worked somewhere knowing that the owner of this company might see that. It is much easier to do it on paper, believing that my future employer will not bother to check”. (Participant #9A)

Question #5 asks the subjects how they promote themselves on the Internet. The term ‘promote’ makes them think whether they use SNS for social or professional purposes. The majority of respondents answered that they use Facebook (70.4%) for that reason. LinkedIn is used for professional purposes (promoting themselves) by 37% and Twitter is used by 33.3%. Several participants conceded that they do not think they promote themselves online at all. Instead, they simply use SNS to communicate. A 21-year-old male student (respondent #6A) said, *“I avoid using Facebook to promote myself. Facebook is for friends”*; while a 23-year-old female student replied,

“We all promote ourselves no matter what. From the moment we sign up on Facebook, using our real name, we promote a part of ourselves. Not necessarily for business, but definitely we want to be liked by others”. (Respondent #3A)

Qualman (2009) argues that SNS success is based on personal vanity. People want to be admired by friends, followers or connections. During the interviews with the HR managers, both agreed that they become more positive when a candidate is active on SNS. The female HR manager quoted this example:

“One time we had to screen a candidate not only on her excellent professional skills, but also on a personal level. During her interview she did not perform well. She seemed quite stressed. Her profile on the Internet, however, really helped her to get the job. A simple Google search of her name and a visit to her Facebook and LinkedIn page revealed so many things about her. All positive I have to say. This person was outgoing, extroverted and popular”.
(HR2)

How much value do you consider SNS can bring to your job application? Question #6 seeks to find whether respondents understand the value of using SNS as a tool for their job searching. Half of the respondents recognise some value (50%) having integrated SNS use into their search for a career opening, while 10.7% sees no value and 39.3% great value. This question became much clearer during the focus groups.

All respondents, in both focus groups, recognise the value SNS can offer to their application. A 24-year-old male student said,

“I believe that social media is a great tool to show who you are. Resumés are not enough. I think it is a competitive advantage to have a good online profile”. (Respondent #4B)

Although they still believe that Facebook is a private tool and is unethical to be used for professional purposes, they all understand that an inappropriate online behaviour, such as posting naked images or drunken pictures of themselves, can harm them. For that reason, as a 24-year-old female graduate supported,

“I will de-activate my account for as long as I will be applying for graduate studies and then I will re-activate it in the future. I do not want to risk my application, but I refuse to delete images of me with my friends”.

(Respondent #1B)

Question #7 addresses the respondents' tendency to look at job advertisements. 67.9% responded that they check for job ads once in a while. There is only 21.4% that looks for a job every day and a surprising 10.7% that does not look for a job at all. Four participants said that they were not looking for job ads, because they were planning to pursue for graduate studies abroad. All of them argue that LinkedIn will be useful to them as soon as they actually seek paid work.

Twitter is being used more and more by a variety of businesses as a communication tool, whether it is for helpdesk support, announcements, updates or public relations (Manafy & Gautschi 2011). While Twitter is considered one of the most dynamic SNS on the web, it is not used by Greek companies and job seekers for recruitment purposes. None of the participants knew that they can use Twitter to look for jobs. For recruiters or recruiting organisations, Twitter can be used to announce job vacancies and to reach niche audiences by establishing a two-way communication between the brand and the potential candidates.

Question #8 asks how respondents are informed of job offers. The vast majority claim that they visit a corporate website, as *“it looks much more reliable than anything else”* as respondent #8B commented. There is still a great trust in newspapers, as 57.1% answered that they would use a newspaper to look for job offers. Nevertheless, as became apparent when the researcher asked the participants specifically, there was a clear distinction between reading the newspapers for temporary jobs – yes, career openings - no.

The results from the online survey also showed a significant inclination - by 50% of respondents - to take a look at SNS friends' posts. When a user posts a job online, automatically the post becomes of high interest among the social circle of a user's friend.

“Anything a good friend posts is worth reading. Whether this is a funny story, an image, or a job ad, I would like to check it and comment on it”. In addition, the female HRM professional stated that “the moment we upload a job opening online, we see great interaction coming directly from Facebook through various people sharing the link”. (Respondent #6A)

Question #9 asks respondents how they think they will find their next job. The only answer which received low responses was that a head hunter would call them (7.1%). All other options received a good proportion of responses: in a job fair (32.1%); through job boards (32.1%); through social media (46.4%); a friend will notify me an offer (39.3%); I will go the corporate website of my dream company (42.9%). This question shows that when it comes to job hunting, SNS is not the only solution. Respondent #3B in the second group observed, *“my job searching strategy is to ask my parents or relatives whether they know somebody to give me a job”*. Greeks rely heavily on their family connections, either to work in the family business or to seek parental guidance to their job hunting strategy.

The purpose of this research is to identify the patterns of the core values among the students and graduates participating in the two focus groups. The next section categorises participants' responses and identifies certain themes and commonalities in their reaction towards the use of social media for seeking occupational opportunities.

4.5 Themes and Profiles of Career Seekers

Respondents from both focus groups were asked to openly express their views about SNS. The researcher had initially prepared a set of questions to initiate discussion, but did not try to direct the conversation (see appendix 3). Respondents received a consent form along with a focus group facilitation guide (see appendix 2) to introduce the upcoming discussion. Both focus groups were video recorded and transcribed.

Initially, respondents were asked to name three words that first come to their mind about social media, in order to set the discussion's framework and to define what social media is. Then, the discussion focused on the use of social media to discover what was their favourite SNS. Once all respondents were able to express their first views about social media, the researcher moved to ask them whether they used or were considering to use SNS professionally to seek for a job.

Finally, the researcher discussed several stories about recruiters admitting that a profile on Facebook could influence their final decision to select a candidate. Participants to the focus groups were able to openly express their opinions on these stories. In many cases, participants wanted to discuss their own or their friends' stories. All responses were transcribed to allow the researcher identify themes and commonalities in the subjects' responses. The categories identified by this thesis from both focus groups according to common themes were (1) Denials (2) Socialisers (3) Contributors (4) Achievers.

4.5.1 The Denials

The denials are those students and graduates who expressed their disappointment about the current economic situation in Greece. For them, any discussion about seeking for jobs is pointless due to the high unemployment rates and the lack of job openings.

“I feel I am wasting my time. Even if I am looking for a job I am still wasting my time. So I don’t know what to do it anymore,” (Respondent #4A)

Similar to the aforementioned response, one student expressed a pessimistic view saying that,

“it’s really terrifying. I would imagine that for every job opening there has to be hundreds of other candidates with same or even better qualifications than mine.” (Respondent #5A)

The denials are also users of the social media. They simply express their negative views as to the usefulness of any recruiting tool when the job market is terribly shrunk.

In regards to unemployment, the denials sounded sceptical.

“I am scared. Just thinking about the unemployment rates we have in Greece it scares me. Looking for a job is the same either by using a newspaper or the social media. The disappointment is still the same. They don’t even reply to me anymore.” (Respondent #2B)

The Greek crisis is a topic that affects everyone in some level. One of the graduates said,

“The current economic situation of the country does not allow any young person to work in any field. Any job. I would work anywhere as long as they pay me at least the basic salary.” (Respondent #3B)

On the same aspect of denial and disappointment, a two year unemployed graduate said,

“I really need to open up my horizons. With my degree I have huge doubts that I will ever manage to find a job. I think I need to do a masters in business, but is it worth it anymore?” (Respondent #4A)

When the discussion in the first focus group went to the general tendency of young scientists leaving the country, respondent #9A honestly expressed his view by saying *“I don’t have high hopes to find something here. So I am probably going to leave Greece as soon as I graduate and get a job in another country”*.

Denials seemed to agree that a discussion about using social media to find a job does not pose the right question.

“It’s very hard for a young person to find a job. The general feeling is not optimistic. Stress, insecurity, anxiety are what we all feel when looking for a job. We have lost too many jobs and everything shows that they are not coming back over the next 4-5 years. That means that we are losing our skills in what we have studied as we are waiting for things get better”.
(Respondent #5A)

This theme of respondents expressed a feeling of anxiety for the next day. They feel that actual work based on the skills they acquired in college is hard to find in Greece.

“it is much easier to find a temporary job as part-time in cafeterias, restaurants and bars. But how many years can you do it? What happens to all these years of studies?” (Respondent #2B)

Similarly, another participant continued by arguing that,

“I don't think you need a social media strategy to find a job when there are no jobs out there. I can only consider it when I will finally decide to leave the country”. (Respondent #3B)

One of the graduates argued that temporary jobs is what if being offered at the moment.

“I had all kinds of jobs in different fields, from being a waitress to being promoter of a butter brand in a super market. Some other friends are doing occasional jobs for only few hours per day just to earn 20 euro”. (Respondent #4A)

From the same focus group, the most silent member said,

“The truth is that I feel disappointed by the fact that I studied all these years and I still have to ask from my family to support me. All these dreams we made for having a good job and a family are still dreams. I don't think that using social media will take me somewhere, but I might try”. (Respondent #9A)

The last comment by respondent #9A shows that despite denials' pessimistic views of the future, they understand the power of social media of its impact on society. Most of them expressed their job searching fatigue, as *“the rejections are way too many”* as respondent #4A said. Based on their responses, what denials would like to see is a glimpse of hope that things will get better. Only then, the denials will treat social media professionally. The other identified category, based on both focus groups' responses is those who use social media only for social purposes. The researcher calls them socialisers.

4.5.2 The Socialisers

Socialisers use SNS to socialise with friends, family, and associates. They mainly use Facebook and they do not want to use it professionally.

“I use Facebook all the time. Mostly from my cell phone where I can check in who else is close to me and my friends’ status updates. I never thought I will use it to get a job. I rarely follow brands. I am interested in participating in contests”. (Respondent #1A)

Similarly, respondent #2A agreed that “Social media is like going to a party. Yes we can discuss about a lot of stuff. Jobs, studies, sports, etc. But we will never try to do business there”.

This category of web users understands the power of social media, but only to network people according to their friends, relatives, or interests. They comprehend the professional aspect of social media, but they do not want to mix their personal with their professional life.

“I believe that the least experienced with Facebook, the so called newbies, are only posting about school and other fun activities. Only when they feel secure and comfortable using it they start posting personal thoughts and things they mostly care”. (Respondent #7B)

Most of them are quite new to social media, not feeling completely comfortable with this modern channel of communication.

“I don’t consider myself an experienced social media user. I only have a Facebook account. Mainly I write about my studies and I upload few pictures for my friends to see”. (Respondent #1B)

Socialisers use social media only for fun. They are young, enthusiastic, and impulsive web users. They seek variety in their social life, savoring the modern, abstract, and the risky. Socialisers can be avid consumers. They follow brands and participate in social media contests. They are in constant pursue of what is considered cool and trendy. Another respondent expressed a commonly accepted view,

“Social media is all about entertainment. I play games online, I chat with my friends and we generally keep in touch. I don’t know how to use LinkedIn, therefore I am not into the job seeking through social media yet”
(Respondent #5B)

For Digital Natives, participated in the focus groups, a reason to use social media is to stalk others. As one argued,

“I am on Facebook and Twitter. I like to observe, but I hesitate to post anything online. I am curious to know what my friends are doing or what my ex-boyfriends are posting. It’s better to maintain some mystery about yourself”. (Respondent #2A)

Another characteristic that defines Socialisers is their insecurity with anything that looks “serious” and “business” online.

“Greek companies are very insecure. They do not post anything online. They feel that if they post a job online the market will see it negatively. Oh they just fired a person or they are bad employers and now they are seeking for a new guy. Many times I see job ads of a multinational company looking to hire but they do not reveal the company’s name. I wonder why...”.
(Respondent #3A)

Regarding the use of Twitter, most socialisers seem to neglect its importance as they only use Facebook to stay connected with their friends and acquaintances.

“I have a Twitter account and I like to follow real people and not RSS feeds. I use it as a news aggregator, but not as a tool to follow companies hoping that one day they will post an opening my dream job. These things will never happen in Greece”. (Respondent #8B)

Socialisers seek for excitement. They want real experiences and they expect to communicate. They have no strategy in place and they feel social media is a place to hang out. They do not want to contribute. They just want to play games and check on others' profiles. A perfect example of a socialiser is who said,

“I follow people with interesting insights. Not boring Press Releases and Announcements. Some blogs I read are much more interesting than well known online news papers. They are more independent and it is important to support those voices to be heard. I might become a blogger one day, but it takes so much time”. (Respondent #2A)

In contrast to the socialisers who only use social media for entertainment, the other category of web users is more active in blogging and microblogging. Their aim is not only to read and chat. They want to contribute and to be heard. This category of web users is called contributors.

4.5.3 The Contributors

Contributors define communication differently. They feel that social media is not only to socialise, but also a channel to express their thoughts. Contributors value creativity high. They feel that by expressing their thoughts online, other people with similar interests will get connected to them.

“social media is not only for fun. It's about expressing your interests. I have too many thoughts to express about politics, sports, society. That's why I have a blog. To have my own channel. Unfortunately I can't write it on my

resume because this is too personal and I don't want recruiters judge me based on my views. I want them to check my skills to decide". (Respondent #6A)

Contributors seem to be better educated, driven by ideals as they seek out information. They are mature users of social media, unsatisfied with mediocrity, comfortable with their social face, and reflective to what happens in their life. This group of web users feels more experienced with the use of technology and social media. Many times they mentioned that they were using social media for at least five years. A good example of the aforementioned description is expressed by the following argument.

"I definitely judge a company by its website. If I see a crapy page I get discouraged and I don't apply. This happens when I don't know anything about the company. Even nowadays that everyone talks about unemployment, I believe it's better to wait and choose the right company than begging for work". (Respondent #6B)

They do not blog to get a job. In some cases, actually, they said that they would not link themselves to their blogs "for the resume to look better" as respondent #6B argued. The same person explained,

"It started for fun. We were three friends discussing about music and suddenly we started posting our comments on our blog. Now it is quite successful and we make some money, not much, from Google Ads. Unfortunately what I have studied is not relevant to music, therefore I am not sure whether this blog will help me or harm me in the long run. Recruiters might consider that I spend too much time on the blog that I will not be focused on my job. Who knows?" (respondent #6B)

Another contributors' characteristic is their high expectations in regards to the company's image. As they are familiar with communicating and adding

content online, they expect from the companies to post detailed information. One of the students relevantly said,

“although I haven’t started seeking for a job, I would expect to get a deeper insight into the company. It would have been great if I had the opportunity to connect directly with the HR manager or the owner to show what I am capable for”. (Respondent #7A)

Contributors expect a more straightforward communication with their future employers. They feel almost as entrepreneurs and small business owners. For that reason, they can become more critical than other types of web users.

“I expect to read a clear job description. Most of the times the jobs listings are way too vague or deceiving. You read that a PR company is hiring and you go there it turns out to be a promotional company asking us to sell contracts for a mobile telecommunication provider. This is not PR. This is hard selling and in some cases it’s unethical”. (Respondent #6A)

In contrast to the denials and the socialisers, who are sceptical to use the Internet for professional purposes, a contributor sounded more understanding about the situation.

*“this is my second year of searching online for a job. In most cases the application is too complicated that I don’t bother. I like when companies used to reply even to tell me that they are not interested. Now, they don’t even do it. I can imagine how many CVs they receive everyday”
(Respondent #6B)*

It is clear that contributors are high self-esteemed, sophisticated web users who want to take-charge and lead people. Contributors have many similarities with the last identified category of web users, the achievers, with the difference that the latter group is contributing and socializing online to

develop a professional profile and to ultimately take advantage of the social media penetration to the business world.

4.5.4 The Achievers

Achievers demonstrated more interest to the topic than anyone else in the focus groups. They are goal-oriented people with a deep commitment to career. They value stability over risk as they set objectives to achieve. Developing and maintaining a public face (personal image) is highly important to achievers. For them, social media offers a great opportunity to demonstrate their skills and qualifications in order to get recruited by big companies and prestigious organisations.

“this is not the first time I discuss about job searching strategies. I have participated in other professional seminars on how to write my CV and my motivation letter. I think social media is the future in everything”.
(Respondent #8A)

Achievers are driven by objectives. They treat social media as a tool and not as a second place to socialise. They see no reason to distinct the treat social media differently.

“from the moment everyone uses social media, I don’t understand the distinction we make between personal, social or professional use. It’s all the same. It starts from the user and end to the user”. (Respondent #4B)

As contributors value image over functionality, achievers have also high expectations.

“between two companies, I would pick the one with great social media profile. That simple. This company will look modern and open minded. I want to work with those who look to the future” and continued “when I follow

companies I do it for one reason. To get them see me. I retweet them or I write on them mentioning something that might be of their interest. I don't get discouraged if they don't pick me. I like this game.” (Respondent #8A)

One of the participants, who seemed to adopt the contributors' characteristics, shared an interesting story to agree that social recruiting can offer opportunities for job hires.

“I know a person who got a job at an insurance company because he was very active in a forum. He was answering any possible technical question and one day he got an email from the company telling him they wanted to meet him. Now he is the company's head of technical support”.
(Respondent #7A)

The majority of participants in both focus groups agreed that social media can be used for professional purposes. One of the achievers expressed the following thought,

“social media is a learning network. Every day I read posts that are very interesting. I like the way people express themselves on Twitter. I think it is the most sophisticated of the three. Short, catchy phrases that tell too many things. Facebook is for the mass. It is only to read what other write. LinkedIn is nice only when you join groups. I get links about topics of my interest every day”. (Respondent #4B)

The same person revealed that she owns a blog which intends to use not only to connect with her readers, but also to demonstrate her skills to her future employer.

“Not only I have a blog, but I purposely use it to develop a professional profile. I write about technology and mobile applications, hoping one day to get a call from Google, Microsoft, Dell, Apple, etc. I think this is only way to be seen”. (Respondent #4B)

In regards to what people should post online, both achievers and contributors agreed that social media users should be generally cautious as to what they post and whether they need to reveal their name online.

“of course we have to be careful with what we post online. Recruiters might see my profile and it has to be perfect. I have a LinkedIn account, Facebook and Twitter. I am not a blogger though. In all accounts I try to maintain a professional look. I post only things about my studies and business interest”.
(Respondent #6A)

Achievers are the complete opposite of denials. The current economic recession does not put them down. On the contrary, they believe that social media is one of the few ways to help them make a living.

“I don’t get disappointed by the situation. At least social media offers a way to look for a job anywhere in the world. I will definitely leave not because of the situation, but because I would love to stay and work in the States. This is my dream and social media is a tool to help me do it”. (Respondent #8A)

Achievers applaud any new feature added to help them develop their online profile. They treat LinkedIn with more respect as they understand that this is the main SNS for them.

“Blogs, LinkedIn, Twitter allow me to stay connected with the business, even if I am not working at the moment. There are interesting posts about different topics and if you are careful you get to read posts from people you would like to work with. Then it is easier to follow them and at some point to tweet them something. This is my strategy at least”. (Respondent #4B)

All types of web users, denials, socialisers, contributors, and achievers recognise the newness in the topic and its impact to shape the future work environment. They are all using social media for different reasons. The next

section aims to provide a brief summary of the study's most important findings and to compare those findings with the interviews from selected HR professionals.

4.6 Conclusions

Overall, Greek university students (Denials, Socialisers, and a number of Contributors) do not see the direct connection between social media and professional recruitment. For them, Facebook is for social networking, *"like a post card"*, as a 23-year-old male student (respondent #2A) commented: *"You write your story and everyone can read it"*. For the participants in this study, SNS is to *"keep in touch with friends and minimise distances"*. They stated several times during the focus groups that

"Facebook is a place to virtually hang out with friends and it is not a place for promotional activities and business" (respondent #1A). In addition, Facebook's professional application, called Branchout, is considered unnecessary by the majority of the Greek college students. A 24-year-old male (respondent #6A) argues, "I do not see the purpose of activating Branchout. I find it stupid. If I want to have business connections, I will go to LinkedIn". (Respondent #3A)

Although the general notion coming from students and graduates is that SNS is primarily for social and secondly for professional purposes, the male HR manager gave a broader explanation of SNS in relation to recruitment.

"Human beings need to belong to groups and to feel connected. This is a basic and fundamental human need to live and to be appreciated, admired, and close to those you care. Although web users express the need to be networked and to openly communicate, we as recruiters use SNS both professionally and personally, seeing no distortion in this relationship". (HR1)

In regards to Twitter, students recognise this SNS as a tool to follow interesting people and interesting brands. They completely failed to see Twitter as a tool for job hunting.

“For me, Twitter expresses freedom of speech and endless connectivity. I am not sure, however, how can I use Twitter to get a job”. (Respondent #6B)

As for the ethical aspect of HR managers claiming that they check online either on Google or SNS to review the applicants, one student considered it

“creepy and unethical, knowing that some recruiters and strangers can check our profile and choose whether we are suitable for work based on our comments, pictures and friends” (Respondent #5A).

For HR managers, a graduate’s job hunting strategy is necessary to show who really wants to work. Indeed, as pointed out by the male HR Manager during the interview:

“the typical recruitment tools are simply not enough anymore. We are seeking not only the talented candidates but also the expensive ones, who are able to demonstrate leadership and accountability. Who is better than a responsible blogger, or a social media enthusiast?” (HR1)

It is clear that SNS and social recruiting are still in a stage of growth. HR Managers recognise the potential impact in their discipline. As SNS in recruitment becomes more mainstream, career seekers will fully integrate SNS methods into their job seeking strategies.

The female HR professional who was interviewed, expressed a more conservative opinion about the use of social media in recruitment.

“First we had to post an opening in a traditional newspaper with a simple title and a short description. Now, we follow the same process, with the difference that the applicants request for more. They have become more active seeking for referrals, following us on LinkedIn or Twitter, asking us

questions, and generally doing things to get noted. I am still not sure whether this is fair for those equally talented and skilful who are not that active on social media". (HR2)

The same HR professional argued that it is admirable for those who apply such an intense strategy to get noted as "it shows they try to become part of our brand's culture". Finally, she stated that a complementary tool, such

"as a phygital recruiting platform, both physical and digital would facilitate richer workforce diversity as we would manage to recruit people with different profiles. Unfortunately, on SNS most people seem to have adopted the same type". (HR2)

For focus groups' participants, LinkedIn is only used for work. Most responded that they plan to activate it as soon as they officially graduate and look for a career opportunity. Participant #3A said that she will activate her LinkedIn account as soon as she graduates and finishes her college life, as for now, she has nothing important to share. Participant #5B from the second focus group asked the rest: *"Since I am not looking for job at the moment, why should I have it? I don't even know what to write. That I am a student at Deree"?*

On the contrary, both HRM professionals replied that LinkedIn is not to be seen as a tool for job hunting, rather as a mechanism for developing your professional network. The male HR manager commented:

"LinkedIn has completely debunked the myth of posting your CV only to find a job. Not anymore. Millions of LinkedIn users are simply developing their professional profile online, by adding more connections and participating in more business related discussion groups. Almost every day I read a professional discussion on LinkedIn. I keep myself up to date and sometimes

I post my personal point of view. When I see students asking questions and participating in our group discussions, I get really excited. These people are taking their careers seriously". (HR1)

In regards to ethics, both HR managers agreed that they see no problem using any available tool to review an applicant's profile.

"We used to call others and ask for recommendations when we had to select a candidate. Now we do it online. We gain a valuable insight about a person and whether this person is able to fit in our corporate culture. If we see something wrong, we save ourselves and the candidate's valuable time and resources by cutting the unnecessary interviews". (HR1)

Despite the fact that most students expressed their concerns as to how SNS can be used professionally, the male HR manager believed that social media offers candidates an opportunity to identify what exactly they want and to ask for professional advice, by participating in business online discussions in forums and groups. He argued that SNS is a tool for people to "grow a network of other professionals and to help and be helped in a new online and supportive environment".

In contrast, however, the female HR manager recognised that social recruiting might raise ethical and legal issues, mainly because they can use personal information posted online to decide and judge a candidate's application.

"It all comes to education. In the future students and candidates will be able to treat SNS cautiously as they will understand that what they post online is public, therefore, accessible by anyone" (HR2)

Finally, both HR managers agreed that social media in recruitment is neither a temporary trend nor a fad. The male HR manager expressed his view of the future

“I am not sure we still know how the future in recruitment will be. What we can predict is that social media will play an important role in our work. Even if the current SNS might fade away due to people’s fatigue, another site will be there to replace the old ones”. (HR1)

A third open interview was held with a HRM professional on 17 January 2013, as the thesis was close to final submission. This engagement could be classified as an “open interview”, at the request of the respondent, on the basis on insufficient time to look at questions in advance. Although this discussion the author had with this HRM practitioner, about the topic of social recruitment, was relatively informal and did not follow the same structure as the other two formal interviews, he gave permission for it to form part of the primary research for this dissertation.

The only stipulation made was that neither his name nor that of his company would be revealed. The content of that discussion, which lasted just over 30 minutes, brought out strongly the intention of recruiters to check applicants’ online profiles. That and other feedback elicited during this interview justifies its inclusion as part of a qualitative research insight.

The interviewee, a senior, male HR manager, observed that he employs SNS - mainly Facebook – in his selection process. “I use Facebook to check shortlisted candidates’ online profiles. Mainly, I am interested in checking their social behaviour through images of them. I know it is not right, but images can tell so many things about a person’s character”. He added that Facebook does indeed help him make a judgement about someone’s character, as he is interested in recruiting and selecting people who can fit seamlessly into the company's culture.

“It definitely tells me something about one’s character, when I see the way they treat their profile on Facebook. It is like an outfit. They decide what to

wear and what looks good on them. The same thing happens online. From their profile image, their cover, their likes and sometimes their posts, you obtain a first impression about a person". (HR3)

Another important piece of evidence obtained of this interview was the insight a senior HR manager can obtain into a person from what they write, and how Digital Natives should be somewhat careful in expressing their thoughts freely online. In this context, the respondent commented:

"One time, I noticed that a person who had applied to us was writing bad things about his previous company. Regardless of whether he was right or wrong, how could we trust this person who becomes so aggressive online and exposes another company? What if he does the same to us in the future? That's why we decided to reject him". (HR3)

Undoubtedly, recruiters are using any available tool to sketch a candidate's profile, as they feel "there is no time to spend on a bad decision when there are so many people out there looking for a job", to quote the interviewee.

Similarly to the other two HRM professionals whose views contributed to this study, the third interviewee agreed that LinkedIn was

"a great tool for hiring business-orientated people... For a company like us, which looks to hire skilful and experienced sales people, LinkedIn is by far the most appropriate tool. It brings us better resumés than what we receive from a job board". (HR3)

Finally, he commented:

"Recruiting people through social media sounds great, but I can't say I am actually doing it right now. I feel it is too early to decide solely on a digital profile. But, it surely helps me decide, should I see a person who is active and willing to contribute. Especially these days, we need leaders and not only followers". (HR3)

Using SNS for recruitment purposes is not just about job hunting. It is mainly about career development. Although the focus groups' participants are considered Digital Natives based on their age, not all of them were extremely knowledgeable of the potential offered by the use of SNS. They seem to make a clear distinction between social and professional use of SNS. Nevertheless, the HR managers evidently use SNS for both purposes simultaneously and sometimes complementarily. For the business professionals, services such as LinkedIn, Glassdoor, etc., are adding more value to their talent search, making the process more enjoyable and interesting than ever before.

Both students and professionals firmly believe that the Internet is the future. There were at least three participants in the focus groups who would love to start their own business online.

“Especially now, this is a goal for many of us as we realise that the Greek market is shrinking, when open funds and clever business people are seeking to sponsor great ideas coming from young people like us”.

(Participant #8A)

The Internet appears as a way out to offer their services from home (low expenses) to a much larger market (the world) than Greece.

Graduates understand that their profiles will be seen by future recruiters. Some of them do not mind having their personal activities posted online. Some would de-activate their profile to get a job and then re-activate it again. They find it unethical to be reviewed for their personal habits and beliefs. Nevertheless, they would do the same if they had to choose their professional partners. The term Digital Natives needs a new definition (new category). It needs to be more accurate in delineating the new breed of employee who is seeking not only opening but the next great idea to start their own business.

The challenge for businesses is not only to recruit and select the top talents, but also to maintain them for years. As Digital Natives are taking risks and

easily leave their positions to become entrepreneurs, this study explores the needs and wants of this audience, which will be the labour force of the future. The next section provides a more in depth discussion of this study's qualitative findings.

Chapter Five

Discussion

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the impact of SNS on Digital Native occupational opportunities and their transition from new entry-level employees to future leaders. Having Yeaton's (2008) work as a general guideline, it describes the characteristics of Greek Digital Natives that can be used to understand them better upon their recruitment. This chapter also suggests that the sooner organisations understand and prepare themselves to address these changes, the better for them to recruit, develop and, most importantly, maintain the next leaders in their business environment.

One of the research findings, as discussed in the previous chapter, states that although graduates use SNS heavily for personal reasons, they fail to see the potential in using it for professional purposes. Nevertheless, graduates seem to understand the power of SNS in getting a job. The knowledge of SNS professional use is still limited, but there is great intention to learn and to use it accordingly. This notion becomes even more evident when it comes to self-employment. Graduates who believe that the Internet will help them develop their own business are more eager to learn the business potential offered by SNS to expand their business contacts and potential client base.

In most cases, the students who were about to graduate were more concerned with their next step in life, which is either to pursue a master's degree or to search for a job in the labour market. Although the sample was selected from people studying in Athens only, we need to take into consideration that the vast majority of the Greek population (11 million) lives in the Greek capital, a city of 6 million people. The participants' age profiles varied between 23 and 28. Additionally, the entire sample will not

necessarily be Greek citizens, since there is a great possibility that other than Greek citizens participated in the research study.

The online survey results, along with the focus group responses, illustrate a good understanding of the connections between SNS usage and career development. By the end of the focus groups, students were eager to expand their knowledge and take extra courses on how they can develop their professional profile online. Although there is limited professional use of social media by students, the topic of career development through social networking sites has become one of their top priorities. The increasing popularity of SNS illustrates the need to alter our social and personal behaviours online to protect our reputation for future employment opportunities.

This study has shown that, at least currently, students and graduates do not consider exclusively SNS for job hunting. Nevertheless, as technology will be constantly changing, Digital Natives/Generation Y will increase its use of SNS for recruitment and career-seeking purposes. The present research underlines that Digital Natives in Greece are not yet ready to use SNS solely for professional reasons, as they still use other methods of job hunting such as family referrals and corporate websites.

On the other side of the interview table, HR managers are quickly replacing traditional way of recruitment, due to their intention to cut costs they deem unnecessary and to speed up the recruiting processes. From the interviews with HR managers, it has been mentioned that SNS is definitely a place to look for the best minds. The area of HRM needs to understand Gen Y better, as it is the new and upcoming labour force, characterised by a tendency to blur the lines between social and professional life. This generation is ready to comment online and share with their friends, followers, connections and circles just about anything they like or dislike.

A few years ago, a dissatisfied employee would have a small social and family circle to discuss their work. Nowadays, with the increasing penetration of SNS, Digital Natives consider the web a place to discuss openly anything that concerns them. Social recruiting will be a trend in the future, shaping a new business environment in the field of human resources. The use of SNS for recruitment purposes cannot be seen only as a way to cut costs, rather as a method to attract and maintain the most talented employees. Those organisations that plan to integrate SNS effectively into their business activities (recruitment, internal communication, external communication and marketing) will be able to develop a competitive advantage in the future labour market.

Therefore, the current and emerging ways of recruitment (e-recruitment and social recruitment) will ultimately replace the old-fashioned and traditional way of job seeking and selecting the most appropriate applicants. This thesis shows that students and graduates still have a high consideration for writing CVs and cover letters. As LinkedIn gradually becomes the dominant tool in the business SNS environment, the traditional formats of CVs, personal statements, recommendation letters, etc.. will be replaced by new cutting-edge technologies, aiming to customise people's search not only on typical credentials (education, work experience), but also on other people's endorsements, business connections, SNS activity, or even physical characteristics (through image search and face recognition).

The expanded use of SNS in HRM is characterised both by opportunities and concerns. From the one side, young people who apply SNS to their intention of building their professional profile online are able to seek for their future job anywhere in the world. These Digital Natives are becoming skilful career seekers who are able to compare and contrast companies, based on the inside information they can retrieve. The integration of SNS in job hunting allows people to see vividly the vast options they have for employment, and they do not limit themselves to one city, country or region.

It becomes clearer, this thesis argues, that the future of employment will be fundamentally shaped by the use of SNS.

Digital Natives with the intention to develop their personal online branding are creating strong and large networks of friends, connections and followers. This notion of popularity, most likely, puts a sense of power into the hands of Digital Natives, who do not make a clear distinction between social and professional use of SNS. People with high popularity and visibility can take advantage of this power, but what happens with those candidates who do not use SNS?

It was stated by the male HR manager, “We had an occasion of a person who was not selected and started accusing us of being unfair to him. He almost threatened us that he would harm our brand to his 5,000 subscribers to his blogs”. People with such SNS power might feel more important than their competitors, due to the fact that they have access to thousands of friends and followers online. This perceived risk is generated by the expanding use of SNS in recruitment and career seeking.

An additional risk by the professional use of SNS is the tendency of HR managers to recruit and select people by taking into consideration a candidate’s social life. As both HR managers confirmed, checking on a person’s Facebook page is becoming an unofficial common practice, always in order “to protect the company and the brand from possible unprofessional behaviours”, as the female HR manager stated.

There is also the need to understand better the new generation of employees who are using SNS for both personal and professional purposes. As social recruiting is gradually growing, companies, recruiters, HR managers and applicants will have to understand fully and respect new

trends in the business world. As the topic is still new and unexplored, the integration of SNS into a Digital Native's career development will need guidelines and a good knowledge of the new breed of employees, soon to become the majority of labour force in the upcoming years.

5.1 Digital Nativity and Occupational Opportunities

The data corresponds well with scholarly and market research studies into Gen Y consumer conduct. The general premise of those investigations suggests that while any person within a generation may do things their own way, overall the group's common experiences cascade a number of behaviours, norms and viewpoints throughout that class. To illustrate this, politics, commerce and social and cultural life are amongst the more influential countrywide 'pressures' that bear heavily on the creation and reinforcing of a group's outlook, including its prejudices. With technology and the digital world advancing at a rate of knots, aspiring professionals can have their attitudes refined and remoulded, with SNS, in particular, having an enormous role to play in that context.

When the term Generation Y was first used to describe individuals born between approximately 1979 and 1994, those consumers then ranged between the age 14 and 29 years. This current wave of aspiring employees is more numerous than the one that came before it; in fact, it rivals the so-called 'baby-boom' generation of years gone past. A characteristic of Gen Yers is a well-defined sense of rectitude and civic duty (Yeaton, 2008). Ethnically and socially, its membership is diverse in comparison with what was the case in the past: for instance, over 30% have been brought up in homes where a sole parent was head of the family. Very comfortable indeed with technology, and a personal computer being an indispensable 'toy' from an early age, the citizens of Gen Y are often termed "Digital Natives".

Trained to think in terms of rapid processing, Gen Y are multi-taskers and inclined to be at ease when working with several or more people in one or more teams. As discussed in literature review, Digital Natives tend to be more independent, devoting themselves to business pursuits (Zur and Zur 2011). What the research revealed is that Millennials engage in professional relationships through meaningful, creative activities, such as blogging, creating online profiles, contributing on social media, without strict consideration to work schedules.

What Millennials consider valuable is being intelligent and a person who has received a good education; hence they possess a high value of their own abilities and no lack of confidence. Although Gen Yers are focused on achieving their goals and making waves, it is characteristic of that generation that its desire to have a life outside work means that it does not display any notable fealty towards employers.

5.1.1 How best to recruit Generation Y?

Knowledge of the typical behaviours of Gen Y obliges companies to bring a different outlook to bear when initiating the recruitment process for that category of employees. Innovation is the buzz-word in applying recruiting strategies to take account of new twists in the cultural landscape. As competition to recruit for the very best candidates remains strong, those companies that fail to adapt to changing social trends will not be seen as a particularly attractive place to work in the mid to longer term. Certainly that was the message that emerged loud and clear from the Gen Y population that contributed substantially to this study. This thesis describes a brief outline of personality traits in the convenience sample of Greek college graduated candidates on the market, which reflect the four core Gen Y

values for recruitment of new hires as originally described by Yeaton (2008) (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. Personality traits of Greek Digital Natives

1. Strong sense of morality: Why?

Greek Digital Natives express their concern of the current economic situation in the country. They do not want to give up and not pursue a satisfying career pathway. The current situation made them more mature and re-defined what is important and what is unnecessary.

What these Digital Natives seek from their future employers is honesty, vision, and stability. They appreciate hard work and not they are more cautious than ever not to make the same mistakes their parents' generations did.

2. Goal- and achievement-oriented.

Greek generation Yers seek for new challenges and they are not afraid of changing careers and jobs if their needs and ambitions are not satisfied.

They dream to start their own startup company using the Internet's power to make a living by doing what they really like. They are goal oriented and they want to achieve in their lives, in Greece or anywhere in the world. They see no boundaries in order to pursue their professional career.

2. Digital Natives

They use computers and mobile phones all the time. The lines between personal and professional lives are blurred. They started by playing games and they want to experience any new technology and trend that they are aware of.

The current economic situation is not seen as a problem, but rather as an opportunity for online entrepreneurship. As noted in the literature review, unlike their parents, Digital Natives do not seek standardised employment (Prensky 2001). Rather, they are far more likely to opt to start their own careers as pampered information or technological employees, or as self-employed online entrepreneurs (Manafy & Gautschi 2011). Digital Natives also work ubiquitous hours and in random locations. Most indicate that freedom from workspace limitations lends to productivity.

4. Value intelligence and innovation

Greek Digital Natives want to become the leaders of change in their country. Despite their disappointment that Greece does not offer the opportunities to pursue a successful career, the Generation Yers seek for employers who are open to new experiences.

The current business model in Greece is changing, moving from family-owned companies to multinational corporations and small start-ups, which offer more opportunities for personal development. As noted in literature, “the future belongs to a different kind of person with a different kind of mind: designers, inventors, teachers, storytellers – creative and empathic

‘right-brain’ thinkers” (Pink 2006, p. 1).

Greek Digital Natives aim for intelligence and innovation in their workplace. They can work from home as they feel that a typical office might be quite restricting to develop their creative side.

5.1.2 New Recruits becoming Leaders: Pathways

Multiple virtues and skills are to be found in Gen Y. Of a questioning disposition intellectually, they rarely take the status quo at face value, preferring to query current norms and seeking a better way of doing things, if such can be found. Something that this generation regards as a plus is a style of management that seeks their views. Gen Yers seek out approaches that will slim down project complexity and improve it. They possess technological nous in abundance in order to make modern trends and advances in technology a valuable part of how accounting departments or industries operate. Gen Y is a hard-working generation. If employers provide the correct motivational tools and rewards, then Gen Y’s role will be as professional leaders that provide significant assistance to accounting as it moves forward in meaningful way.

5.1.3 Digital Immigrants vs. Digital Natives

Let us not lose sight, though, of this fact: Digital Immigrants and Digital Natives are not all created equal. The divide amongst either classification is generational; one is either born in the digital era or not (Rosen 2010, Zur & Zur 2011). The present study elaborates on this fact and expands to introduce a new taxonomy that best characterises the web users of 2013. Coding provided for the secondary data covers attributes that may or may

not characterise the population of Greek college graduate candidates involved in SNS recruitment searches: 1) Denials; 2) Socialisers; 3) Contributors; 4) Achievers.

It is true that the majority of Digital Natives are clued into technology by virtue of it being part of their life almost since birth; on the other hand, some of that class are less adept at working with information technology and may not feel the need to become more proficient in that field. It is evident, too, that Digital Immigrants illustrate a high degree of diversity in their views on and their capabilities in digital technology. Yet they are a group that was not studied much, unless involved in the more limited number of HRM interviews focused on SNS in HRM, which provided foundation to the remainder of the study.

This study found that Greek Digital Natives fall into the following four suggested categories as shown on Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: A taxonomy of Greek Digital Natives web users

1. Denials

Even though they were born into a digital generation, a number of skilled young people does not gravitate comfortably towards the technology of the digital age. Moreover, by comparison with a majority of their fellow Gen Yers, they are not in love with Facebook, the ubiquitous use of texting or mobile devices. This small segment of Digital Natives has a mobile phone, an email address and most probably an account on Facebook, but not on Twitter. In fact, it is possible that this cohort may not have access to the Internet from home. Their mobile phone is likely to be an older model and is not used for texting.

This category understands that technology is here to stay and attempts to use it to the lowest possible degree, primarily when

they understand that they have little choice but to do so. A manifestation of this is using Google to unearth some data on a particular site before venturing to it. Owning an account on Facebook is possible, although it's one they may not access on a daily basis. Moreover, instead of finding the location of a particular place on, for instance, Google maps, minimalists are the sort of people that ask directions to it. If they must, they will go on Skype or employ a GPS system, but with little enthusiasm.

2. Socialisers

This category comprises the bulk of the Digital Native population in Greece. Enjoying and thriving on technology and its multifarious gadgets, this group almost lives on Facebook; some of them use Twitter mainly from their mobile devices; they keep watching videos on YouTube, instead of watching the mainstream to them TV programmes or films. When information is needed - no matter what kind it is - their first port of call is always Google. It is more difficult to make these young people answer their phone than it is to get a message to them through an online medium or by sending a text. They live for immediate, fluid communication and typically own a portable digital device that provides 24/7 web connectivity.

In this grouping, its young element normally has a preference for sending a text over an email and might be a little less than its seniors willing to compose written material in a coherent way. What this can lead to is the possibility of a digital divide, with disagreement, be it in one's house, workplace or indeed anywhere else, where Digital Immigrants play by their rules. Socialisers, as being passionate contributors, number in their ranks players of online games and those people at the head of the queue to purchase the latest i[product]. For them,

technology is enjoyable and its latest developments are of great interest.

3. Contributors

This category of web users feels that technology is what defines them. They are experienced social media users who started from early on and now they have evolved into active bloggers. They see the Internet as a tool to make a living. They are in constant search of the next best idea that will bring them money and glory. Contributors are driven by ideals. They believe in free circulation of ideas and they want to openly express their opinion.

They believe Facebook is too childish and boring. Contributors, in contrast, see Twitter as the most interesting SNS they can use. For them, Twitter is clever, immediate, democratic, and fun. It functions both as their RSS reader to keep themselves informed, but also it is a tool to follow people with interesting thoughts and ideas. Contributors recognize the importance of social media on providing occupational opportunities, but they do not want to use it to promote their social online profile. Nevertheless, they are positive when their company allows free access on social media.

4. Achievers

This category of web users sees technology as a tool to develop their career. They are goal oriented, which makes them careful with what they post and where. The achievers show a strong primary motivation and they use any possible means to achieve their objectives. They treat social media mainly professionally and they maintain a serious profile.

They mainly use LinkedIn to contribute to the social media community. They participate in LinkedIn groups and they try to

post content only relevant to their field of interest. They also like Twitter, but they treat with the same careful approach as with LinkedIn. Achievers like to sign up to new SNS as long as they see the potential to add them extra value to their overall profile. They will most probably rate their social influence on Klout or they will participate in an academic discussion on Quora if they recognise its importance to their digital image.

Achievers are also keen on mobile technologies. They own a smartphone and they use it as an icon of status and prestige. They set up strategies and they keep their CVs up-to-date for any available occupational opportunity. Whether they work or not, achievers are in constant search to take on a new professional experience. They are not loyal to one company as they are able to see other available positions in order to compare and contrast for their own benefit. Just as contributors, achievers request full social media access from the companies they work for.

Additional information on the topic of age in the study of Greek employment was sought in the focus groups, where Digital Immigrants were discussed by the participants in both focus groups and interviews, resulting in association of older generations in three main groups as shown on Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: A taxonomy of Greek Digital Immigrants web users

1. Avoiders

A numerous group within the Digital Immigrant constituency, avoiders have a preference for little or no engagement with technology. This means having a landline telephone but no mobile phone or using email. Twitter and Facebook have long been strangers to them; and a fact very characteristic of this category is having only modest regard for those everyday

activities. In Greece, these attitudes prevail unless the person's work cannot be carried out without Internet access.

2. Reluctant adopters

This category understands that the modern world includes using technology. They, therefore, make an attempt to do so, although it doesn't come naturally to them and they have no great affinity with it. Very diverse in its composition, reluctant adopters is likely to include a majority of Digital Immigrants. They tend to own a primitive enough mobile phone but only send texts if they can't avoid doing so. While Google use is not unknown, they have no account on Facebook, keep up with emails only now and again. One notable advance they sometimes adopt is online banking. What defines this grouping is a hesitant and wary attitude towards the digital world rather than the extent to which it bites the bullet and uses technology of this nature.

3. Enthusiastic adopters

The interviews conducted with HR managers made the point, quite strongly, that this group can potentially give the natives a good run for their money. Its members demonstrated a relaxed manner and capability with technology, as well as an interest in how it.

Representatives of this group might include high-tech managers, computer programmers, people involved in commerce and many others who accept new technology and are very comfortable swimming in the Internet world. This grouping recognises that technology is valuable and makes a very good effort to take advantage of it. A few very individuals are capable of leaving an indelible mark on the world of technology, even though they may be categorised as Digital Immigrants. This group uses Skype and maintains a regular presence on Facebook.

One reason for the latter is an acceptance that it is amongst the best means of interacting with their family members in a platform that is popular, as well as its use in reconnecting with old friends. They can be relied upon to be contacted easily by email, and new devices and advances in technology are a highlight for them. Maintaining a blog is not unknown, while those in the world of commerce will have a dedicated website.

The divide between native and immigrant is of importance in Greece, as a way of understanding some difficulties between parents and offspring, teachers and pupils, and senior figures and ordinary workers in the business world. Prensky (2001) and Rosen (2010) illustrate the main differences between the two groups' view of the workplace, what makes them happy and how they go about relationships and working with other people, as well as how they absorb and process information.

It is often the case that styles, norms and everyday practices create misconceptions and some conflict, and can lead to communications stalling. Differences between the two groups were highlighted by this study, in order that each may come to a better understanding of themselves and the other group. This should enhance the efficacy of communications and lead to a more harmonious home life, increase both job satisfaction and output at work, and improve the quality of what is learnt, in an atmosphere where mutual respect prevails, in the sphere of education.

From childhood, a Digital Native's existence is one of unmissable stimuli: the television screen, computer games where speed is of the essence, and the mobile phone. As many Digital Immigrants may well have observed, that group's brains skip from topic to topic much more rapidly than is the case with people of greater maturity. Two factors are responsible for this: a youthful age - younger members of society generally are quicker to respond - and the generation they belong to - growing up from childhood into a society where the ability to move from one fad to another is conventional.

Digital Immigrants may roll their eyes as they see Digital Natives send text after text while doing their homework, in between flicking through video clips; however, even that category is able to accept that a not too difficult multitasking exercise, as opposed to skipping from topic to topic, is capable of leading to enhancement of performance. This salient fact is something that business is aware of, leading firms to recruit on the basis of performance, not sentiment.

As is the case in many other parts of the world, the extremely involved and multi-faceted way in which Greece's Gen Y engages in online networking is to some an intriguing phenomenon of unusual fascination. Worries that Digital Immigrants possess over young people being stuck by themselves in their bedrooms may, conceivably, be the result of a lack of real understanding. Digital Natives often send a text instead of chatting on their mobile phone.

Moreover, instead of hanging around a pub, street corner or the town centre, they would much rather use their state-of-the-art phone to be active on one of the main social networking sites or to play a game with several online partners. Amongst the more quarrelsome stages for manifesting the gap between the generations is the digital divide. Unfortunately, a tendency amongst some in the Digital Immigrant constituency to bicker and issue warnings around a perceived overuse of digital devices serves only to exacerbate an often delicate relationship.

As companies move toward deeper integration of intelligent software system applications online in recruitment strategies, SNS will be at the forefront of professional decision. How well Greek professionals are able to mobilise and perform in the virtual environment will have important effects. As older professionals find new ways of integrating their existing skillset into SNS applications, so too, will they compete beyond former expectations.

Of course, there are always two sides to any argument. The methods society adopts to glean data and obtain new information have been transformed utterly thanks to digital technology and the Internet. From the comfort of the home, Internet access opens the door to a myriad of online documents, running to billions. Few arcane sources remain under lock and key: any student who is online can review the Edict of Cyrus the Great (c. 600 BC) with the same facility as he or she can read Marx's *Das Capital* (1867). It's no longer the case that books and the lecture theatre are the primary means of imparting learning and knowledge.

In the workplace, those in positions of authority are encountering issues of a similar nature around younger Digital Native members of staff. The latter are relaxed about sending texts and posting updates to their social networking profiles, and may not shy from watching YouTube, for instance, or – in the worst case scenario - a pornographic video. This reinforces the point that the attitude of natives towards figures in authority is not the same as those of the immigrant constituency. The Internet may be functioning as the *Great Equaliser* after all. If communication in recruitment is a democratic opportunity, where candidates are sight unseen, there is certainly some equity in use of blogs, and other popular SNS. As a result, the generational clash is often observed around issues such as Digital Natives refuse to accept certain hierarchical or typical modes in the workplace.

The power the Internet possesses as a means of spreading information widely and of enabling a population to make plans and coordinate action in ways unheard of before is perhaps illustrated best through the so-called "Twitter revolution" in Egypt in early 2011. The salient points here are that 'Tweets' show up instantly and that any person with an Internet connection can read them. The organising potential of microblogging such as Twitter is incredible, and continues to be a mechanism in power brokering future action. The recent economic crisis in Greece has seen replication of this model of activism; the right to speak out and mobilise against government

imposed sanctions and other cuts to employment and finance. How this will impact college graduate job seekers as they use Facebook or Twitter is anyone's guess. Although LinkedIn's professional focus serves as a more reliable SNS platform for advancing the thesis in the present study, there is still the possibility that financial and political events in the news will also interfere.

What are the impressions of Greek college graduate candidates involved in SNS employment searches in the EU and other countries outside the national labour market? This study provides points of departure for investigating such topics further; however, the voices and survey responses of the participants are direct insights into the current status of a Greek graduates and their hopes of success promoted by way of online SNS recruitment.

Meeting Greece's young workforce on their own turf was strategic for inducing conversation on the effectiveness of SNS applications in global labour. Those who contributed to the research made recommendations for change. These included: tweaking procedures for engaging with management; amending training programmes, to embrace the playing of computer games and simulation; relaxing the rules about timekeeping and location; and a greater tolerance for how that population goes about its work. Should it be the case for a majority of Digital Natives that is asking too much of them to work quietly and give their focus to their duties during an eight-hour day, then will their high level skills find accommodation amidst economic devolution of jobs in that nation?

The odds are that a workforce that is content is also the one with the greatest output and stability. Graduates of Greek universities can only hope for the best, as performance-minded companies stand ready to undertake an exodus from the region. Businesses will also be looking for top candidates to

control risk as well, and this is perhaps the optimum situation for many candidates who wish to be successful and thrive.

Alternatives to standard employment in company roles are also seen in job auction website memberships (i.e. Freelancer.com, Guru.com, Odesk.com). Connectivity of those sites with SNS membership means that candidates can reach the most opportunities for work in the least amount of time. Alerts to jobs created by email or Facebook.com, for example, are posted to all personal login memberships simultaneously, so that constant login is not required. From this standpoint, the future of virtual recruitment appears limitless.

5.2 Conclusions

In summary, as shown on a relevant infographic designed by the author (see Appendix 6), this thesis' main contribution is a New Taxonomy of a new generation of employees and learners that the author calls Gen XYZ. This new taxonomy was based on people's insights and views about social media and occupational opportunities. In short, the following groups were identified:

Denials

- They might feel trapped, scared, negative towards SNS.
- They accept its existence but they seem less willing to get involved unless it is necessary.

Socialisers

- They love to use social media to get in touch with friends.
- They see only the social aspect of SNS.
- For them the Internet is a **room** for friends and probably a **place** for business.

Contributors

- They feel more confident than anyone else using SNS.

- They blur the lines between personal and professional use of social media.
- For them, using SNS is something normal and a way to freely express their views.

Achievers

- They are very careful with what they write online.
- They are organized and aim high.
- They measure what they post to whom and when.
- They are more aware of their public image, showing more emphasis on SNS such as LinkedIn and Twitter.
- They tend to avoid using Facebook for personal posts.

Through a qualitative study using an online survey, two focus groups and three interviews, this thesis highlighted the following findings:

- Young people do not make a clear distinction between social, personal, and professional use of SNS.
- Graduates use SNS for personal reasons and they do not see them as tools to search for work.
- They see however the potentiality to use the internet to start their own business.
- They are not ready yet to use it, but they are eager to learn.
- They are not currently using SNS for job hunting, but they understand its potential for recruitment and career-seeking purposes.
- They are not ready yet to use it for job searching, as they use other methods, such as family referrals and corporate websites.
- HR Managers are positive using solely the social media to recruit.
- The true need to explore social and virtual recruitment appears limitless, especially when Digital Natives are keen on more flexible labour markets (Hooley, 2012).
- There is an evident need for companies to embrace this new way of

communication as internal business practice.

- For them, everything can turn into a game with instant rewards for achieving their objectives.
- There is a need to research through new areas such as Gamification and Internal Communication Practices and Training.

This thesis aims to most accurately explain the modern Digital Native's profile. For SNS users, money is not the only criterion when seeking for a job. They also seek for the company's stability which functions as a driver for the achievers decision to apply. Young people require social media access, flexible work hours, without bothering working during weekends or at nights. Young professionals (i.e. Digital Natives) vs. older workers (i.e. Digital Immigrants) have mobilised SNS and other technologies to exceed the prior generation's gains. Greek college graduate recruits are included in this phenomenon. With the current economic crisis in Greece imposing multi-scale constraints to finance and labour, it is likely that young professionals will work abroad online, or physically immigrate. It becomes evident that as the economic situation in Greece will continue to impact the outcome to those professional searches, SNS will function as a window of opportunity in a situation where serious limitations are clouding the job picture.

Young Digital Natives focus on their potential employer's technological environment. According to Jobvite (2012) 40% of the students surveyed log in to Facebook at least ten times a day and 38% of them check their laptop, smart phone at least once every 10 minutes. This shows that Digital Natives are almost constantly connected either to discuss (SMS, chat, Facebook messenger), to play online games or to study. The same research showed that most of the students prefer texting a message than calling a friend. This tells us that young interns can receive corporate information, not only by reading induction or operations manuals, but also by using social intranets and other online platforms of internal communication and electronic learning.

As also pointed by Hooley (2012), this thesis showed that Digital Natives are keen on more flexible labour models. They can work from home, or from anywhere in the world, as long as they have Internet access. They receive information quickly from a wide range of multimedia sources. They are generally multitasking and they prefer parallel learning using both online and offline means of communication. For them, the workplace environment is phygital, both physical and digital.

As Prensky (2001) noted, Digital Natives read texts in short bursts, being more inclined to read non linearly. For them, everything can turn into a game with instant rewards for achieving their objectives. They view the workplace as a place to express themselves and not only to work. They can work 7 days a week, from home or office and make short breaks to play games and socialize. For them there is no "end" to the day or week, as long as they feel creative and motivated by the environment. They are able to synthesize and get the big picture, as mentioned in literature by Budden and Budden (2009).

Digital Natives can easily switch workplaces and careers during their professional lifetime. They can change jobs to develop new skills and to become more aware of alternative areas of interest. Although they currently seek for stability in their career, they keep an eye on their LinkedIn profiles to be ready for their next adventure, as Qualman (2009) also noted. For Digital Natives, social media is not another way to do business. As Tyler (2002) argues, they use the Internet as a tool to simply develop what people used to do in their lives. For Digital Natives, the Internet can be the new Eldorado of social and online entrepreneurship, as it was discussed in literature by Qualman (2009).

Digital Natives see the Internet as a new digital culture, having its own language, etiquette, and rituals. It is not another world, rather it supplements their experiences. Certainly this thesis answers Gammack's (2002) question

whether the Internet is an escape route or a trap for young people seeking for career opportunities. For Digital Natives the Internet is seen as a tool to help them achieve their dreams. In the current economic recession, young Greeks view the Internet as a window to the world, where they can rely to develop their career.

Digital Natives are accustomed to posting personal information SNS. They want to reach out to their friends and relatives. Developing their profiles on professional SNS such as LinkedIn is the next natural step to expose more of themselves online to achieve their career objectives. Having a well structured LinkedIn profile does not mean they seek for work. SNS profiles for career search are a natural extension to this process. This includes personal videos on YouTube.

For Digital Natives training to acquire a new skill should be “fun” and sharing knowledge and experience tips is a priori for a learning organization. Learning occurs at any time at any place, through various activities, such as teambuilding activities, games, online platforms, even Facebook. Digital Natives can rely on friends for everything. They can ask for help using their Facebook wall, having no problem revealing publicly that they need peer assistance for their work.

As people become more and more dependent to their smartphones, laptops, or tablets, they also become distracted from doing one task at a time. This might lead to an increase of possible errors. Digital Natives view errors as normal and not “fatal”, as they can learn from them. The online interface draws people together from a variety of local and global cultural groups, as Mack (2001) argues that the Internet furthers a stratified global society. Companies worldwide need to take advantage of the great opportunity to apply social media-based practices to enhance learning and exchange of messages around the globe.

Those companies that prohibit access on social media run the risk of not attracting the next generation of employees. Social media policies to help establishing a common approach to using the social media are necessary to help people understand the lines between personal and professional information. Companies should also renew their policies to include several safety concerns such as spamming colleagues, posting inappropriate pictures online, stalking other on Facebook, or bullying online.

Finally, in regards to using SNS to screen out candidates, as Nigelwright (2011) argues, companies should establish ways to respect personal information. New online applications can be developed to offer the necessary information to review an applicant without allowing the HR manager checking into candidates' social profiles. As in any relationship, trust should be gained from both sides, the company and the employee (Guest and Conway 2002) to provide new opportunities for people to mutually collaborate on the Internet, as also mentioned by Henderson and Bowley (2010).

This chapter provided a contemporary taxonomy of Greek Digital Natives and Immigrants in relation to their use of SNS for personal and professional reasons. The next and final chapter discusses how the findings from this study should be important in future and suggests studies in the field of social recruiting.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

6.0 Critiques and Implications

This chapter offers a critique of the Internet's impact on society and on professional identity. In addition, it discusses the implications of this research for theory and for practice. Future implications of the findings from this study are suggested and how they can be used to provide the theoretical framework for new studies in the area of social recruiting. The next section offers a critique on the Internet's impact on professional identity.

6.1 Implications of the Research for Theory

With the growth of online connectivity and popularity worldwide, the Internet provides an exceptional opportunity for the exploration and development of new forms of global communication (Gammack 2002). To this end, it has evolved into a powerful business tool with great potential (Chaffey et al. 2000). Contemporary professionals in a wide variety of fields have addressed the importance of Internet adoption in their everyday work (Papacharissi & Rubin 2000). Globalisation has led to an aggregation of national economies via capital and labour. No country can function in isolation. Survival is dependent upon day-to-day transmission of finance, information and labour in a system of mass exchange (Yoshida 2002).

A survey by Buck Consultants revealed that eight out of ten employers acknowledge that technology significantly alters the types of business relationships with their employees (Hansen 2002). Business processes are the most cited element of technological inputs in the company value chain, as employees communicate and conduct activities by way of Internet platforms and databases on a daily basis (Segal 2000).

Connectivity is individualized firm by firm, yet most companies today seek deeper integration in web based intelligence to expedite and improve business processes. HRM virtualisation is one of the key transformations underway in business enterprise systems integration with the Internet. Many, if not most, corporations and small businesses now seek virtual assistance in SNS and other centralised networks in order to recruit new employees and to fulfil job openings faster and more efficiently (Segal 2000).

From a broader perspective, the impact of business globalisation and virtualisation of processes extends beyond the profit-focused interests of MNE. Even SMEs posit that Internet integration and, especially, social media marketing and professional networks, increase value and equity in business decision. Strategic investment in more efficient and effective methods of improving performance of organisations might be suggested in both unique and standard IT solutions as legacy systems supporting business processes disappear; yet the popularity of web-based, open-source member networks such as LinkedIn is advancing the profitability and visibility of companies and their employees.

This substantiates Harvey's (1989) claim that there is much force behind those people who view the Internet's ascension as the primary locus for capital transformations. If the goal of early globalisation of MNE was to reduce capital spending, the result of time-space compression of labour follows this proposition. On a continuum of value, labour appears as an instantaneous result and *raison d'être* to the shape of global production, marketing and sale and service of goods (Hamilton & Scandura 2003, Easley, Devaraj & Crant, 2003 and Hansen 2002).

As mentioned by Erickson (2007), modern organisations using technology to induce more benefit from this circumstance emerge as leaders amongst a wide myriad of potential competitors across the globe. Internet recruitment

processes that reduce time are the first of potentially many business intelligence decisions leading to cost cutting from point of hire and training an employee, to activation of role.

6.1.1 Critiques for Theory

Standardisation in SNS profile format has also contributed value to interface with HRM systems in ways unseen at first glance. Review of candidate information and references prior to submission can assist in mitigating ethical or legal issues that may arise in blind solicitation. Analysis of HRM data can also be conducted more readily. Key words may be coded and placed in an ordinal decision model so that rank orders appear. Statistical rendering of a large volume of candidates takes some of the headache out of the search, as names are supplied with enumeration for double blind analysis. Brief anonymity for selection is the result. Until the rise of SNS, finding a well-matched position to one's credentials and qualifications required a search of appropriate job advertisements, newspapers or visiting an employment office, and hard copy curriculum vitae submission potentially by mail. Hence, the concept of a mathematically driven decision on an employee candidate was virtually unheard of.

With SNS, the possibility of a level playing field has come much closer to a statistical rank order. Firms are able to locate a host of candidates that fulfil a role and then focus on priorities pertinent to a decision, without placing as much concern on subjective criteria (Cellan-Jones 2011). For those HR managers still seeking "personality" as skill in a role, YouTube offers an alternate platform from which to draw upon. Quite a few prospective job candidates now advertise their value by way of a personal video profile.

For Achievers this is good news. The Gen Y job seekers respond with natural inclination toward technology, suggests Prensky, as the format allows for direct interaction with potential employers, literally omitting traditional employment agencies and other recruitment experts from the process (Prensky 2001). Indeed, there has been much change to the recruiter-applicant relationship since the 1980s. The two generations has been debated in this thesis and is underscored in the existing academic and professional literature on the topic.

If what Digital Natives know best is to interact and function using the Internet, there is some criticism of the fact that they will not be able to manage traditional approaches still in use in the actual workplace. Will they fail in their transition to work? Although it can be argued that Digital Natives excel in technological aptitude in classroom settings, yet a similar symbiosis with traditional norms in learning and working is markedly absent. Hence the impact of online social networking sites on their transitions from the university classroom to a paid position in the corporate world, marking the commencement of a lifelong career, is an important point of departure for examination.

This research is intended to show, from several perspectives, how young people use the Internet to enter the corporate world. From the one side, past literature has shown great support and enthusiasm in regard to the Internet's role as the medium that offers equal and unlimited access to all users (Safko and Brake 2009). Social media eliminate the middlemen and put candidates into direct communication with a potential employer. Critics argue that the new medium, however, is inherently discriminatory, maintaining that SNS and other online recruitment processes digitally divide people, placing great distance between online and offline applicants. Such an argument deconstructs earlier globalisation arguments like Harvey's (1989), illustrating stratification of societies based on their online accessibility.

Global participation in joint ventures with international companies is more likely with SNS. Open solicitation of candidates for employment in social media format encourages job seekers to outperform online. Mutual interest in member participation means that connections are easier to make. The top destinations for marketing recruitment in the world of SNS are host to a number of key features for building professional success through networks. Inexpensive to use, intelligent software applications help to define career goals. Incentives for use by companies as part of HRM systems and strategies means that candidates are attracted to SNS profile membership.

SNS is an open-source recruitment tool used across national borders. For instance, the main target in derivation of web metric data, LinkedIn, is a global, one-stop resource for review of competitive companies. Innovation and Initial Public Offering investment (i.e. Facebook) mean that SNS networks will continue to flourish in the current job marketplace. Presence of global MNE and SMEs translates into the best possible overview of industry incentives and stimulus.

6.1.2 Drawbacks and Threats

Amidst the progression toward SNS in HRM recruitment, there are still some drawbacks: 1) access to Internet connection and knowledge of user features in management of candidate profiles is critical to member participation; 2) ethical controls are difficult to employ where not part of the standard platform interface; 3) limits to user features means that some data objects and other elements of a portfolio may not be included for full exhibit of work; 4) where high numbers of candidates submit applications for a job opportunity, it is difficult to differentiate between them when many job seekers have the same or similar skills and qualifications; 5) exposure to overseas job markets might lead to false expectations from candidates.

From the macroeconomic perspective, centralised control of HRM assets is a threat to organisational competition. The inclusion of image based

professional identity may also be a threat to older workers. This point is yet to be proven. HRM competencies must be in place for companies reliant upon SNS as primary source of candidates to be effective. Rising labour costs reduce equitable consideration for employment.

Perhaps most suggestive is the study of Gen Y or "iGeneration" and their borne instincts, seemingly supplanted with "digital DNA". Stratification, then, is not merely that of national economies but one of generation. This study of Digital Natives in Greece has ascertained that its new wave of soon-to-be workplace professionals fits seamlessly into and enjoys the communication small talk and Internet culture they have known since birth.

The fact that Gen Y has been raised in a digitised world and relies on knowledge sharing to perform work is evidence that innovation in business process capabilities has advanced extensively by way of web based applications and enterprise systems integration. The same can be said for security, as Gen Y is more likely than older workers to hack systems infrastructures and designated logins. Armed with a mind-boggling array of portable communication gadgets, very few members of Generation Y are "offline" anywhere for more than a short period of time. Attached to the idea that technology is first, they live in the fast lane of commodity education rather than scruples.

Ever-decreasing product life-cycles mean that technology and applications become obsolete within weeks. Value is in breaking the rules rather than maintaining tradition. When companies match job candidate proficiencies in technology and related information fields they are looking for candidates that cannot only keep up with innovation, but that can literally breach systems to the end that security capabilities are thoroughly tested.

Technological competency is also a professional danger, in that Gen Y characteristics are overinflated and stereotypical prejudices disassociated. Much of the academic and market research referenced in this study

foregrounds discussion of Digital Natives as cognitively similar, rather than by distinct individual personality. The generation is often characterised as getting “bored” easier as a result of deep influence by the speed of digital media and other interactive technologies. So, too, they are correlated with certain expectations related to repetitive tasks.

Is there evidence to show that undertaking mundane duties is not one of Gen Y’s strengths? To keep them motivated and enhance their commitment to the company would be a challenge if that were the case. However, their advanced knowledge of and affinity with new communication devices, it is argued, makes them perfect candidates to accept and fit into change when it occurs. Expertise in reading and interpreting swiftly the state of play in the fluid and fast-changing world of social media equips Gen Y superbly for the intellectual tasks that lie ahead in the workplace. When it comes to learning quickly, Gen Y is a tried and tested generation. Of course, tarring a whole generation with one brush would neither be correct nor fair.

There are vast economic, geographic and demographic disparities to counter such generalisations of an entire generation, employed ostensibly in a number of industries, all which may lead to a dead end with the next generational turn. Myths and stereotypes about generations discounted, corporate culture also plays a role in this, and consumer segmentation of Gen Y is a key source for marketing products to customers.

Companies are often the first to determine the direction of consumer segments; and since future revenues, from goods and services provided worldwide, are closely dependent on that key business decision, activities undertaken in an effort to “recruit”, exploit and keep such highly prized clients is a critical endeavour for companies and attests to the rank those new entrants into the workplace hold in the eyes of their suitors.

While Digital Immigrants may never be as technologically natural as those who grew up with it – there is still much commonality in Greece. One of the main factors is clearly the distinction in Greek business practices, and discretionary language use. One of the most mentioned recommendations to SNS environments was the potential for an ideal multicultural online experience. Such an environment would applaud the merging of a culturally sensitive organisational environment for democratic participation of all Internet users (Casmir 1993 and Shutter 1993). The next section discusses this thesis' recommendations to companies willing to apply social recruiting methods in their HR processes.

6.2 Implications of the Research for Practice

What is the next phase in SNS relations? It may be conjectured that once SNS profiles become substitute for “legal identity”, the fine line between unique personal attributes or skills and self-sabotage is blurred. Ethical queries into legal identity and virtual identity are critical both to companies and job candidates as members in SNS networks participate. Deviating too far from ethical norms can be perilous.

What is customary is by and large what is legal in Internet relations, unless national laws in one jurisdiction where a correspondent member is engaged are stipulated in legislative policy or statutory rules on computer misuse. HRM professionals using SNS are involved in determining ethical and legal factors for internal policy. For job candidate members, following guidelines is a key for predicting future trends in professional success.

A white paper published by Microsoft reveals that of the 79% of occupation managers surveyed on social media use in online searches for job candidates, 70% reported candidates were culled in this manner purely for

the reason that they had been found online (Microsoft 2010). The present study follows Microsoft's insights as reliable if not progressive HRM business process and takes into account the virtualisation of recruitment as part of the analysis.

The time is now for SNS as a catalyst to global labour transitions and social change. Still, as Kushan (2010) suggests, without adequate research on the confidential strategies applied to SNS recruitment processes, we only have marketing as the possibility and outcome. What is ineffective or harmful during the decision is entirely unrecorded. Ethical use of SNS in HRM recruitment schema is recommended, as the inability to control for high-risk liabilities to a firm during the process may be costly (Dickinson Occupation 2010).

Graduates who have established their career development strategy online now demand the clarity, standardisation and performance of SNS in their job searches. Upholding the belief that networking is the primary vehicle for professional success, Digital Native candidates in Greece, as elsewhere, seek to carry the torch of earlier workers as they mobilise SNS effectually to their advantage. This is positive reinforcement for software engineering firms and developers involved in deepening the value of SNS as a point of leverage for companies invested in optimising the HRM process. More personally, the image based economy of SNS has allowed professionals to sell their capabilities as "identity"; one in a marketplace of competitor and brand identity exchange.

e-Reputation emerges as the last resort. Acknowledgement that confidentiality and expert management of the recruiting process is both an ethical and legal one is fostered in each e-contact decision. This is especially so in email contact interactions to follow mining of recruits, and correspondence by those candidates. Each step in the communication

process must adhere to ethical guidelines. To ensure integrity in decision, SNS policy updates stand to create consistency between individuals and protections.

6.2.1 Recommendations to Organizations

Experience-based collaboration, networking and online connectivity creates more new ways for interaction to take place, and not all of those methods are dictated by hard and fast rules of communication (Gallagher & O'Leary 2007). As a result, use of SNS in HRM recruitment strategies is vital to wider global change management protocol and policy. If a different mentality and patterns of communication are to apply, equally it is axiomatic that both corporate culture and communication procedures and protocols must adapt to this change, if a company wants to have a better experience of recruiting 'Digital Natives', inculcating them with the company spirit and ensuring they remain with the company for a reasonable period of time.

Companies might also do more work in the area of interfacing human intelligence with artificial intelligence, so that creativity turns to profit. The next generation will seek to enhance the work-life balance. Corporate integration of SNS into HRM and other core functions within the business process value chain allows better initiation of entrepreneurial spirit, and individuated control over their time and activities, as they operate within a network of choices.

The author argues for a professional-orientated social media policy, so that restrictions are lifted in the interest of equity in communications: if staff are forbidden to access the likes of Facebook when at work, the ready admission that they would do via mobile communication devices can come

as no surprise. The future workplace is a manifesto for production. What goes into post-industrial communications is far beyond what Marx or even Harvey may have imagined. With SNS we are freer, more informed and less controlled. In Greece, where tensions are high, this is especially so. Economic equilibrium depends on the elimination of alienation from the communications picture. Without it, Digital Natives are likely to backlash against traditional restrictions whilst subjecting older generations to technological struggles in the workplace.

As business worries increase over security and loss of productivity associated with social media access, this thesis argues that the best way forward for employers is to accept this immutable 'law': rather than something that distracts them from their daily work, the use of social networking is a lifestyle, and occasionally a life-saver, for younger members of staff. This was the case with the subjects in the current study. Greek graduates on their way to professional careers are just as likely to carve a new future in virtualisation as their counterparts in Japan or the United States. For companies, HRM systemisation with virtual SNS processes and applications offers one of the most inexpensive and effective solutions to attracting and hiring talent.

6.2.2 What Effect will SNS have on Employers in the Future?

The ease of access to the Internet, including many social networking sites, it is argued, acts as a very strong lever in determining how people act at work, what becomes acceptable and how they view their manager or their company. Exposure to SNS professional networks and other social media forms has become so important to workers, as seen in the current study, that job candidates and employees may choose to eliminate a potential or existing employer from long-term consideration. This evidence is preliminary,

and possibly overstated, yet the social reinforcement of the value of SNS is undeniable.

One major challenge this study identifies for young Greek graduates about to engage in their professional search is the ever-increasing expectation of web based work activity. For many candidates, emphasis on IT and information systems must be there for them to consider future employers. Without this assurance, those candidates may be very reticent about walking through the door of an organisation as a full-time employee. Another factor to consider is a trend for younger workers desiring the opportunity of having their creativity and ability to deliver upon it put to trial, although with much more autonomy than would be the case in a normal hierarchy.

Gen Y has grown up “anti-authority”, questioning parents, teachers and even the media they adore. The likelihood of the same attitude towards superiors is high. Hence, the conventional ‘power’ culture, with management firmly in control, may be one in which stress will develop. Constant feedback, regular and clear statements mirroring IT support sessions are the expectation. For this reason, social media integration as a communication and HRM tool exhibits how organisations are expanding their concept as a partner in business through open-source recruitment measures (i.e. virtual job fairs), and models of tracking employees and other stakeholders for SNS member network recognition.

The subject of generational tension goes deeper than one might perceive on the surface, due to one’s inability to function without multiple devices to hand and an increase in incidents attributable to differences in culture. Firms will have no option but to re-evaluate how they go about bringing new staff into the workplace, which is highly likely to involve novel, creative ways of recruitment. The idea that Gen Y workers’ expectations about work are not

entirely grounded in reality is not without foundation, however. Overinflated sense of worth and faith in technological skill is an ability gone liability, and this leads to unrealistically high expectations of professional advancement on the job.

There is imminent danger that Gen Y will continue to undermine the credibility of older generations on the job if the sole basis of decision is technological aptitude. A tendency to use technological know-how as the basis for judging others means that Generation Yers might fail to afford other workers sufficient respect. That could apply in particular to managers, who are often older and sometimes lack the technical wizardry of youth. On the other hand, it is possible for the tables to be turned: more experienced staff can be in a comparatively strong position when faced with new colleagues all at sea if company culture does not permit 24/7 access to instant messaging or social networking. The best HRM strategies are attentive to this problem.

6.3 Future Research

Undeniably, SNS is a new phenomenon in the field of recruitment and HRD. A wide variety of possible research studies can be suggested to shed light and take a more in-depth look at this social phenomenon. The Internet and therefore the use of SNS in recruitment are shaping a new reality in the business world. As the Internet and its features are dramatically changing, new societal needs will require further exploration.

As this study reveals, further research needs to be conducted on exploring the HR manager's point of view as to the criteria to be used in order to recruit future employees. One aspect that has not been adequately explored

is whether popular candidates on social media, scoring high on friends, followers and connections, have higher possibilities of getting selected by the recruiters as most suitable for the position.

Does online popularity matter? For instance, as this thesis was being written, a new social media application called Klout appeared on the Internet. According to the original site, Klout measures people's social influence. Users are eligible to set a Klout account and link every SNS account they have with Klout. Then, Klout offers an index, scaling from 0 – 100, which shows every user's social influence. A tool like this might offer an alternative option for recruiters to take into consideration. For that reason, further study might be useful to explore such possibilities.

Another interesting line of study that can be explored in future is the remarkable growth of LinkedIn as the most dominant tool for career development and job searching. As LinkedIn becomes increasingly popular, the suggested structure seems to be adopted by a number of professionals in their original resumes. As LinkedIn introduces new terms in users' profiles, such as quick endorsements, group participation, profile complement, etc., further study can shed light on a number of applications, such as SEO and Resume writing, Career Development and Group Influence, or even LinkedIn Endorsements, as a replacement for letters of recommendation.

To illustrate the topic character of this thesis, as the last lines of this study were written, Facebook introduced a new type of search, called Facebook Search Graph, as an alternative to traditional search engines. Rather than showing results based on matched keywords, Facebook Search Graph was able to provide users with specific answers to certain queries. For example, one can search for other people or companies that use bicycles to go to work. One can imagine the great impact this new type of search can have in

recruitment, as both recruiters and applicants can use this tool for highly detailed searches, based on behavioural and habitual activities.

In addition, a study to explore the risks associated with the non-use of SNS in job hunting could be of great value. With the increasing tendency to use SNS to search for a career opening, a study to look back and explore the traditional methods could reveal essential findings in the area of youth transitions for both individuals and organisations. The topic of social recruitment will always be of high interest due to the dynamics generated by the need of people to work.

As SNS radically grow, Internet users and companies are becoming more and more connected through the well known social networking sites. It is expected, companies and recruiting firms to turn more on social recruiting and develop new recruiting strategies through SNS. According to Bullhorn Reach (2012, p.17) “recruiters could quadruple the size of their Twitter networks by the end of 2012 and potentially add approximately 1,000 connections to their LinkedIn networks”. In contrast, as the present thesis also discussed, although Facebook is considered the most popular SNS, it is not treated by users as a tool for recruiting purposes (Bullhorn Reach, 2012) but mainly as a tool to review an applicant’s social activity.

What can we expect in the future? Social networking sites might be used both as recruiting tools and employee referral programs. As job seekers become more familiar with the use of SNS, social recruiting is expected to be adopted as a standard process to select potential candidates in the corporate world (Bullhorn Reach, 2012). Especially if those candidates have social referrals from current employees or past employers. With the increase of tools such as Twitter Business Pages, Google Plus Pages, Facebook Social Graph and LinkedIn Company Profiles, online social networking sites are expected to increase their efforts to shape a more professional character

and gain users with certain demographic and psychographic characteristics. However, no one knows whether these certain SNS will shape the future of HRM, as technology constantly changes.

No academic scholar can predict the future. The relationship between technology and people is self-sustained. It is still undefined whether the rapid changes in technology provide valuable assistance to people, or they overcomplicate their lives, both in personal and professional level. As the emblematic founder of Apple Computers Steve Jobs said in the May 25, 1998, issue of Business Week., “A lot of times, people don't know what they want until you show it to them”.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Online Survey - Questionnaire

Questionnaire for the use of Social Media by young career seekers in Greece.

My name is Stavros Papakonstantinidis and as part of my doctoral thesis for the University of Leicester (Centre for Labour Market Studies), I am using this questionnaire to find out your opinions about the way you use social media on your effort to start your professional career. The key aim of the questionnaire is to gain a better understanding of how college graduates use and manage social media to attract their potential employers.

You should feel free to leave any questions blank and/or to stop filling out this questionnaire at any time. Your participation should take no more than 10 minutes. Do not write your name, your ID number, or any other identifying information anywhere on this questionnaire. Please do not fill out this questionnaire if you are not at least 18 years old. Only if you feel you would like to participate in one of the upcoming focus groups, please tick the appropriate box at the end of this questionnaire.

All the information you answer will remain strictly confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. For multiple choice questions, please circle all categories that apply. When the "Other" option is available, please add some more details in the free text box provided.

When you have completed the questionnaire, please email it to my university email account sp263@le.ac.uk.

Sincerely,

Stavros Papakonstantinidis

The impact of social media on college graduates'
occupational opportunities

1. What social media tools do you use for personal reasons? Tick all that apply.

Blogs (Wordpress, Blogger, etc.)

Microblogging (i.e. Twitter)

Social Networking (i.e. Bebo, Facebook, LinkedIn)

Social Network Aggregation (i.e. FriendFeed)

Wikis (i.e. Wikipedia, internal wikis)

Social Bookmarking/Tagging (i.e. Delicious, Tumblr, GoogleReader)

Social News (i.e. Digg)

Photo Sharing (i.e. Flickr)

Video Sharing (i.e. YouTube)

Livecasting (i.e. Ustream.tv, Skype)

Audio and Music Sharing (i.e. Last.fm)

Product Reviews (i.e. eopinions.com, TripAdvisor)

Community Q&A (i.e. Yahoo!Answers)

Virtual Worlds (i.e. SecondLife)

Employment websites (i.e. Monster.com)

€ Other (please specify)_____

2. What social media tools would you use to find a job? Tick all that apply.

Blogs (Wordpress, Blogger, etc.)

Microblogging (i.e. Twitter)

Social Networking (i.e. Bebo, Facebook, LinkedIn)

Social Network Aggregation (i.e. FriendFeed)

Wikis (i.e. Wikipedia, internal wikis)

Social Bookmarking/Tagging (i.e. Delicious, Tumblr, GoogleReader)

Social News (i.e. Digg)

Photo Sharing (i.e. Flickr)

Video Sharing (i.e. YouTube)

Livecasting (i.e. Ustream.tv, Skype)

Audio and Music Sharing (i.e. Last.fm)

Product Reviews (i.e. eopinions.com, TripAdvisor)

Community Q&A (i.e. Yahoo!Answers)

Virtual Worlds (i.e. SecondLife)

Employment websites (i.e. Monster.com)

- Other (please specify) _____

3. Are you currently employed?

- YES
- NO

4. If YES, how did you get your current job ?

Newspapers (Job Ads)

Corporate Websites (Job Ads)

Recruitment Agencies

Online Online social networking sites

Please Specify which one: _____

Blogs and micro-blogging

Job boards

Friend's or relative's referral

5. How do you promote yourself on the Internet ?

- Personal Website
- Personal Blog
- Online resume on a Job Board (monster, jobsintown, cariera, etc.)
- Through Facebook
- Through LinkedIn
- Through Twitter
- Through other social media platforms

6. How much do you consider social media can bring value to your job application ?

- No Value
- Some Value
- Great Value

7. Are you looking at job adverts?

- Never
- Once in a while
- Everyday

8. Where are you informed of interesting job offers ?

- Twitter
- Newspapers
- Blogs

- Corporate Websites
- Head Hunters
- Friends sharing on online social networking sites
- Job board alerts

9. How do you think you will find your next job ?

- A head hunter will call me
- In a job fair
- Through job boards
- Through social media
- A friend will notify me an offer
- I will go to the corporate website of my dream company

10. Identification of Survey Respondent

- Please tick the box and fill out the following if you wish to participate in the upcoming focus groups.

Name: _____ University/College: _____

Major: _____ Year of expected graduation: _____

Age _____ Email address: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

If you require further support or information, please contact me at sp263@le.ac.uk

Appendix 2: Focus Group Facilitation Guide

Topic: The impact of social media on college graduates' occupational opportunities in Greece.

Welcome Statement

Thank you for coming today. My name is Stavros Papakonstantinidis, I am a doctoral student from University of Leicester and I will be your moderator. My assistant, will take notes as well as audio tape the conversations we will be having. You are going to participate in a focus group discussion about your thoughts with regard to social media and recruitment. The information you share with us will help shaping a better understanding over how young people like you are going to use the new technologies to look for a career opening in the business world.

A focus group is a group discussion. My role is to guide the discussion, but YOU are the 'experts' on the topic. There are no 'right' answers or comments and you are all encouraged to voice your honest opinion. Please be respectful to other people's opinions, just as they will be respectful to yours. It is perfectly acceptable to disagree. The session will last for one hour.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may leave at any time should you wish to do so. You do not have to give an explanation, it will not affect your relationship to me or the University of Leicester.

The information you share with us today will be kept confidential. We also as that you respect the privacy of the other participants in this group and not disclose any personal information that is disclosed during our discussion. To prevent violations of your own privacy you may choose not to talk about experiences that you feel are too personal or revealing.

You will have the opportunity to go by a pseudonym you have chosen for yourself. This is entirely voluntary. We are recording the discussion because we don't want to miss any of your comments. Recruitment information containing your name, address, and all other personal information will be destroyed after the completion of the focus groups, as will the audio tapes. The only remaining information will be the transcription of the discussion.

Please feel free to help yourselves to food. Let's begin.

The purpose of the study

This study is being carried as part of a dissertation conducted by me for the University of Leicester Centre for Labour Market Studies.

Selection of subjects

Subjects are chosen using a stratified random sample of people from the American College of Greece, Deree College.

Three random classes will be selected from which every third person or group will be approached asking to participate in a focus group. When more than one person in a group agrees we will put them in different focus groups in case personal relationships may inhibit their honesty and how much information they may be willing to give. However, there is no guarantee that the people in the focus groups will be strangers, so this is not a major issue that will affect our research methodology. The only criteria for participation are that the subjects are over 18 years old.

Expectations for subjects

- Be honest
- Be willing to discuss the topic openly with the group
- Not reveal any information they think is too personal
- Do not violate the confidentiality of any group member
- Respect other's views and differences

Confidentiality, anonymity, and withdrawal issues

Participation in this focus group is voluntary. Subjects' names and phone numbers are only kept for communication purposes in case there is a change of venue or time for the focus group they have agreed to participate in. This information is kept confidential and locked up in a secure location, and will be destroyed when the focus group is finished. The only remaining information will be the transcription of the discussion.

The subjects will have the opportunity to go by a pseudonym they have chosen for themselves. This is entirely voluntary. The focus group facilitators will not ask any questions that can identify the subjects' identities, and the subjects are entitled to refuse to answer any question, and also leave the focus group, without any repercussions whatsoever.

The results of this study will be included in my dissertation, and may be published, however with no reference to information that may jeopardise the absolute anonymity of the focus group participants.

Audio taping and note taking provisions

All discussions are audio taped for the sole purpose of capturing everything that is said. Transcripts will be made of these tapes, and all (if any) personal information that may identify any of the participants or non-public persons will not be included. The tapes will be kept locked in a safe location and destroyed two months after the completion of the study.

Notes will be taken throughout the focus groups. This is to aid the research, and may include comments on participants' non-verbal behaviours that will not be captured by audio taping, and other ideas and suggestions the researcher or moderator may find useful. No personal information that may identify the participants will be written down. The notes will be kept locked in a safe location and destroyed two months after the completion of the study.

How to handle reticent and domineering subjects

In the event of reticent participants the moderator should try to encourage participation by directing questions in a non-confrontational manner to avoid putting the person on the spot and make him/her embarrassed. For example, after listening to participant A the moderator may turn to the quieter participant B and ask questions like “Do you agree with A?” or “What do you think, B?” and then give this person recognition for his/her contribution by using his/her comments as a springboard for further discussion.

In the event of domineering subjects it is important to try to play down his/her dominating behaviour without being confrontational. It is perfectly ok to say, for example, “Well, thank you for all of your comments, C! Now, there are others who haven’t said too much yet, and I am interested in hearing from them: D, what do YOU think?” This will make the domineering C aware that he/she has said a lot, and that it is now other people’s turn.

Informed Consent Form – Focus Groups

Purpose:

This study is being carried as part of a dissertation conducted by me for the University of Leicester Centre for Labour Market Studies.

Procedure:

For this study I will gather several kinds of data during a month period. I will collect my primary data through two focus groups with students and graduates from Deree College. I will ask for your permission to video record our discussion.

Risks and Benefits:

The risks associated with your participation are minimal and are not in excess of the encountered in normal daily living. Since I will not require for your names, or other demographic characteristics, anonymity is guaranteed. After I complete my collection of data, it will not be possible for anyone to determine which statements belong to whom. Benefits to you include being able to obtain a first-hand experience in communication research.

Confidentiality:

During the focus group process no one else than the group members will be participating. I will not ask any questions that can lead you to disclose any personal information. You are not forced to answer the questions I am going to ask you if you feel uncomfortable.

You should be aware that participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time of the interview process without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you have any concerns or you are unclear about your rights as a subject of this study, please contact me at +30 6945 103757.

Consent: I have read the above statements and have been fully advised of the procedures to be used in this project. I volunteer to participate.

Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant_____

Date_____

Appendix 3: Focus Groups Questions

- 1. Name three words that first come to your mind about social media...**
 - a. How do you define social media?
 - b. Do you think social media is useful?

- 2. What is the primary reason to use social media?**
 - a. Fun
 - b. Communicating with friends
 - c. Flirting
 - d. Networking
 - e. Professional

- 3. What is your favourite social media platform?**
 - a. Is it the only one you use?
 - b. When did you start using it?
 - c. How active do you think you are online?

- 4. What is important to you when you look for a job?**
 - a. The company's name
 - b. The position's salary
 - c. The company's location
 - d. The company's reputation

- 5. A vast majority of recruiters admits that they are influenced by one's online social profile when they have to decide on an applicant. What do you think about it?**
 - a. Is it unethical?
 - b. Does it make sense?
 - c. Does this shock you?
 - i. Why/why not?
 - d. Does this make you more aware about what you post online?

- 6. Have you posted anything online that you feel it might harm a possible job application in the future?**
 - a. Will you try to delete it in the future?
 - b. Have you ever thought of de-activating your accounts in order to have a clean profile in the future?

- 7. Have you ever thought of using the social media to start your own business?**
 - a. What do you need it takes to have your own start-up?
 - b. Are you aware of any person who started making money out from the web?

- 8. Closing thoughts?**

Appendix 4: Online Survey Results

Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 228

Total Finished Survey: 228 (100%)

1. What social media tools do you use for personal reasons? Tick all that apply

Blogs (Wordpress, Blogger, etc.)	50.0%
Microblogging (i.e. Twitter)	53.6%
Social Networking (i.e. Bebo, Facebook, LinkedIn)	100.0%
Social Network Aggregation (i.e. FriendFeed)	3.6%
Wikis (i.e. Wikipedia, internal wikis)	64.3%
Social Bookmarking/Tagging (i.e. Delicious, Tumblr, GoogleReader)	17.9%
Social News (i.e. Digg)	14.3%
Photo Sharing (i.e. Flickr)	21.4%
Video Sharing (i.e. YouTube)	89.3%
Livecasting (i.e.	64.3%

Ustream.tv, Skype)	
Audio and Music Sharing (i.e. Last.fm)	17.9%
Product Reviews (i.e. eopinions.com, TripAdvisor)	17.9%
Community Q&A (i.e. Yahoo!Answers)	17.9%
Virtual Worlds (i.e. SecondLife)	0.0%
Employment websites (i.e. Monster.com)	21.4%
Other (please specify)	
9gag.com 2/17/2012 12:25 AMView Responses	3.6%

2. What social media tools would you use to find a job? Tick all that apply.

Blogs (Wordpress, Blogger, etc.)	18.5%
Microblogging (i.e. Twitter)	22.2%
Social Networking (i.e.	74.1%

Bebo, Facebook, LinkedIn)	
Social Network Aggregation (i.e. FriendFeed)	0.0%
Wikis (i.e. Wikipedia, internal wikis)	14.8%
Social Bookmarking/Tagging (i.e. Delicious, Tumblr, GoogleReader)	7.4%
Social News (i.e. Digg)	14.8%
Photo Sharing (i.e. Flickr)	0.0%
Video Sharing (i.e. YouTube)	11.1%
Livecasting (i.e. Ustream.tv, Skype)	11.1%
Audio and Music Sharing (i.e. Last.fm)	0.0%
Product Reviews (i.e. eopinions.com, TripAdvisor)	11.1%
Community Q&A (i.e. Yahoo!Answers)	14.8%
Virtual Worlds (i.e. SecondLife)	0.0%
Employment websites (i.e.	51.9%

Monster.com)	
Other (please specify)	7.4%
Show Responses	
3. Will you be employed full-time upon graduation?	
Yes	30.8%
No	69.2%
4. If YES, how did you get your current job?	
Newspapers (Job Ads)	11.1%
Corporate Websites (Job Ads)	11.1%
Recruitment Agencies	11.1%
Blogs and micro- blogging	0.0%
Job boards	11.1%
Friend's or relative's referral	66.7%
Online Online social	0.0%

3. Will you be employed full-time upon graduation?

**networking
sites (please
specify)**

5. How do you promote yourself on the Internet?

Personal Website	0.0%
Personal Blog	14.8%
Online resume on a Job Board (monster, jobsintown, cariera, etc.)	29.6%
Through Facebook	70.4%
Through LinkedIn	37.0%
Through Twitter	33.3%
Through another social media platform (please specify)	
Show Responses	
usually i avoid promoting myself	7.4%
2/18/2012 2:17 PMView Responses	
Google+	
2/17/2012 11:12 AMView Responses	

5. How do you promote yourself on the Internet?

6. How much do you consider social media can bring value to your job application ?

No Value	10.7%
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Some Value	50.0%
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Great Value	39.3%
--------------------	-------

7. Are you looking at job adverts?

Never	10.7%
--------------	-------

Once in a while	67.9%
------------------------	--------------

Every day	21.4%
------------------	-------

8. Where are you informed of interesting job offers ?

Twitter	21.4%
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Newspapers	57.1%
-------------------	-------

Blogs	10.7%
--------------	-------

Corporate Websites	82.1%
---------------------------	--------------

Head Hunters	21.4%
---------------------	-------

7. Are you looking at job adverts?	
Friends sharing on online social networking sites	50.0%
Jobboards alerts	35.7%
9. How do you think you will find your next job ?	
A head hunter will call me	7.1%
In a job fair	32.1%
Through jobboards	32.1%
Through social media	46.4%
A friend will notify me an offer	39.3%
I will go the corporate website of my dream company	42.9%

Retrieved from [SurveyMonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com)

Appendix 5: Informed Consent Form - Interviews

Purpose:

This study is being carried as part of a dissertation conducted by me for the University of Leicester Centre for Labour Market Studies.

Procedure:

For this study I will gather several kinds of data during a month period. I will collect my primary data through two interviews with Human Resource professionals.

Risks and Benefits:

The risks associated with your participation are minimal and are not in excess of the encountered in normal daily living. Since I will not require for your names, or other demographic characteristics, anonymity is guaranteed. After I complete my collection of data, it will not be possible for anyone to determine which statements belong to whom. Benefits to you include being able to obtain a first-hand experience in communication research.

Confidentiality:

During the interview process no one else will be participating. I will not ask any questions that can lead you to disclose any personal or professional information about your position and the company you work. You are not forced to answer the questions I am going to ask you if you feel uncomfortable.

You should be aware that participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time of the interview process without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you have any concerns or you are unclear about your rights as a subject of this study, please contact me at +30 6945 103757.

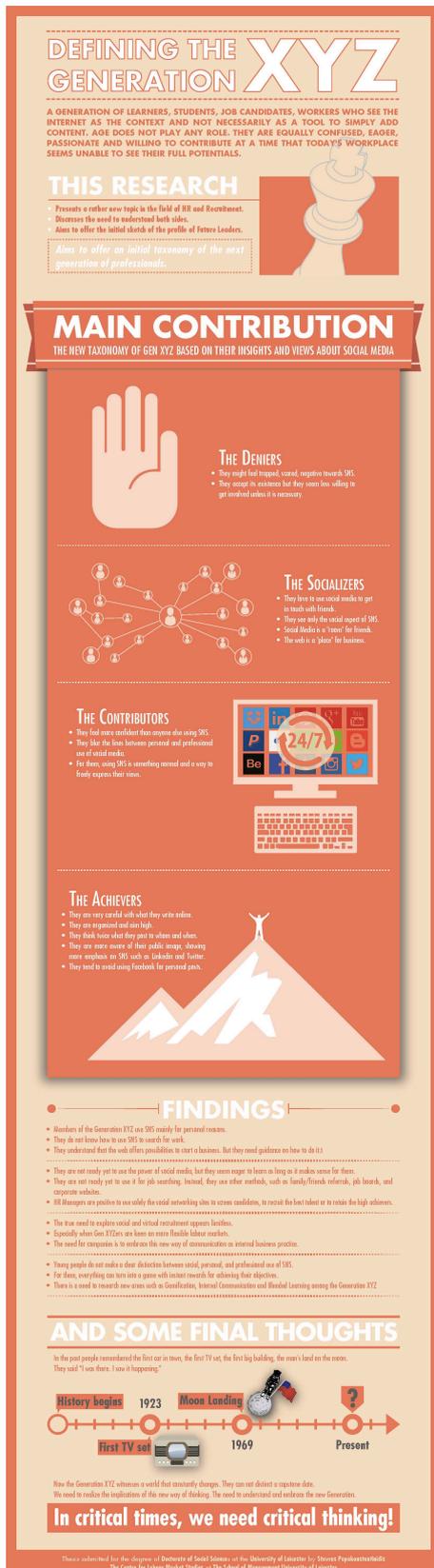
Consent: I have read the above statements and have been fully advised of the procedures to be used in this project. I volunteer to participate.

Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant_____

Date_____

Appendix 6: Infographic



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