

# Social network site recruitment

Two adaptations of TAM; SNS usage by 'Gen Y' job seekers  
and organizational attractiveness on SNS

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## Introduction

Since their introduction, SNS such as Facebook, Hyves, and LinkedIn have attracted millions of users, many of whom have integrated these sites into their daily lives. Based on boyd and Ellison (2008, p. 211), social networking sites in my study are defined as “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection; and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system”. The popularity of these sites is so great, especially among younger users, that the term “Facebook addict” has been included in the Urban Dictionary (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Facebook reported a staggering 733% increase in its active users from 2007 to 2008 (Mehdizadeh, 2010), with an estimated number of over 500 million users worldwide, among whom 250 million log onto Facebook on any given day (Facebook Press Room, 2010).

Despite of a variety of technological affordances, all SNS support different users’ interests. Most sites support the maintenance of pre-existing social networks, while others help strangers connect based on shared interests. By means of SNS, individuals can post self-relevant information, link to other members, and interact with them (Sundén, 2003). SNS offer users an imagined audience to guide behavioural norms (boyd, 2006). Finally, some scholars point out that the extreme popularity of SNS is due to their provision of a highly controlled environment for self-presentational behaviour, and an ideal setting for impression management (Krämer and Winter, 2008). As Mehdizadech (2010, p. 357) states, SNS “offer a gateway for online identity constructions”.

SNS are used for different purposes of which the most obvious is networking. This can be networking in a private context, but also in a professional context. Owing to the increasing prevalence of SNS in conjunction with the large volume of information available to the viewer, employers have begun using SNS to assist in the selection process for new employees. The findings suggest that about 50% of the employers attending university career fairs use online technologies to screen candidates, especially

SNS (Shea and Wesley, 2006). At the same time, research into characteristics of job seeking behaviour by information holders (potential job candidates) is scarce. SNS offer job seekers several advantages.

Building on arguments above, it can be concluded that SNS may constitute a unique platform for job search: anonymous, global, and highly controlled. While the impact of the Internet on job seeking behaviour has been under investigation for over a decade, most of these studies have focused on anonymous online environments, including for example, chat rooms and bulletin boards (Zhao et al., 2008). Despite the booming success of SNS, peer-reviewed published research evaluating the job-seeking behaviour through SNS is deficient at best. Research into this topic might provide practitioners with new insights that could result in new recruitment strategies.

This study aims to examine SNS-based job-seeking behaviour among members of Generation Y. While researchers group this generation differently, the birth years of this generation fall somewhere in the range of the late 1970s to late 1990s (Wey, Smola and Sutton, 2002; Broadbridge, Maxwell and Ogden, 2010; Kupperschmidt, 2001). Many Gen Y'ers are at the beginning of their career, and therefore they are active in job-seeking behaviour. I depart from the premise that members of Generation Y will use an SNS environment to enhance their job-seeking behaviour. Two adapted versions of the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1986) will be specified to two different scientific approaches of testing both the determinants of social network site usage by job seekers and the organizational attractiveness of organizations present on social network SNS. The key objective of this research is to provide information and new insights to academics and professionals about the relatively new topic of social network site recruitment and to explore this new phenomenon.

## Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the underlying theory to this study. The main theory is that of the technology acceptance model (TAM). This model will form the basis of the research model.

### The Technology Acceptance Model

As information technology develops further and further, it has an increasingly beneficial potential for professional applications, such as online recruitment and subsequently social network site recruitment. There is however often an unwillingness of end-users to use such new technologies in professional contexts (e.g., Alavi, & Henderson, 1981; Nickerson, 1981; Swanson, 1988). The key is to design the new technology in such a way that the end-user is willing to use it (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989). In order to do so it is necessary to understand why end-users resist some technology. If an information technology designer knows what resists or attracts a user it is possible for that designer to predict how this end-user will respond. Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989) compared two models to predict behaviour. These are the theory of reasoned action or TRA (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), and the technology acceptance model or TAM (Davis, 1989). The latter one is of special interest because it concerns the specific explanation of computer usage acceptance behaviour. The TRA is displayed in figure 1 and the TAM is displayed in figure 2.

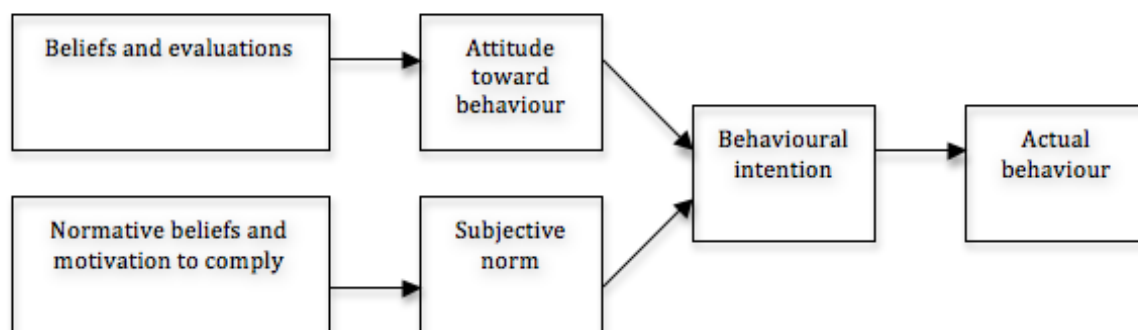


Figure 1: Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980)

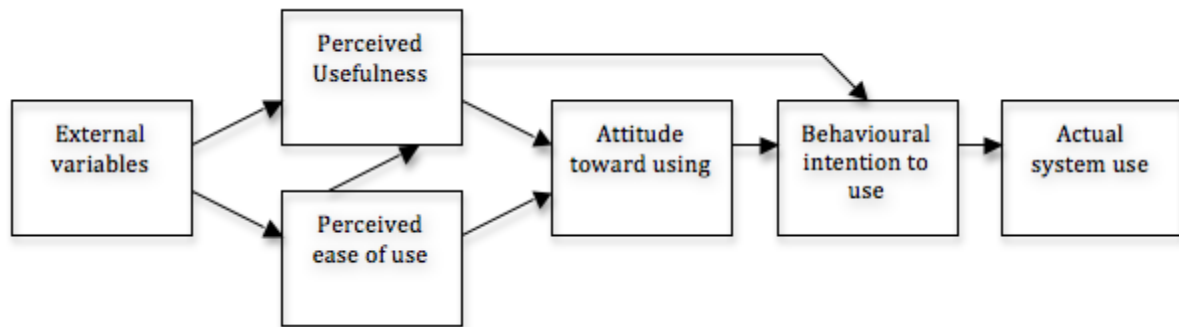


Figure 2: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989)

The theory of reasoned action is a well-known and widely studied model from the social psychology. The model predicts a persons' behaviour by determining the behavioural intention. A persons' behavioural intention is determined by this persons' attitude towards certain behaviour and the subjective norm, which are in turn predicted by beliefs and evaluations and normative beliefs.

TAM is an adaption of TRA specifically designed for the acceptance of information technology systems. The goal of the TAM is to: "provide an explanation of the determinants of computer acceptance that is general capable of explaining user behaviour across a broad range of end-user computing technologies and user populations, while at the same time being both parsimonious and theoretically justified" (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989). In the model two constructs, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are the most important for information technology acceptance behaviour. These two constructs together with behavioural intention will form the base of both the research models in this report. Perceived usefulness is defined as: "...the prospective user's subjective probability that using a specific application system will increase his or her job performance within an organizational context" (Davis, 1989). Perceived ease of use is defined as: "...the degree to which the prospective user expects the target system to be free of effort" (Davis, 1989). Both TRA and TAM go by the principle that behavioural intention determines actual system use, however TAM adds perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as predictors of attitude toward using. In the TAM perceived usefulness predicts behavioural intention to use both directly and indirectly through attitude towards using. Attitude towards using was later omitted from the final TAM because of a weak direct link with perceived usefulness, while perceived usefulness has a strong direct link with intention to use. The TAM excludes

subjective norm “because of its uncertain theoretical and psychometric status” (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989). They state that it is hard to disentangle the direct and indirect effects of subjective norm on Behavioural intentions through attitude toward behaviour. All attitudes, perceptions and behaviours in the model are traced back to external variables that explain why a person might have a certain attitude, perception or behaviour. The generality of TAM makes it applicable to many different situations. However, this is at the same time the weakness of the model, because of its general nature it may lack specific system compliance that is needed for information technology designers to create systems that are broadly accepted. It is therefore, that for one, this study investigates the external variables specifically for the usage of SNS by job seekers. This will create a less general and more specific technology acceptance model for social network site usage by job seekers as will become apparent later on in this paper.

The focus of this research is on the usage of social network sites by job seekers (SNS). This is specified by two more detailed principal themes. The first of which is related to the determinants of SNS usage by job seekers. The second subject matter concerns the job seekers’ perception of organizational attraction through the current representation of organizations on social network sites. Each of the research models related to these principle themes will be based on the core of TAM. Therefore it is possible to combine both principal themes in one single research question:

*To what extent does the Technology Acceptance Model explain the usage of social network sites and organizational attractiveness?*

Both parts of the research question are of explanatory nature, because each part is designed to explain relationships (Babbie, 2007). However, the purpose of this study should not be perceived as entirely explanatory. SNS recruitment is a relatively new field of interest, and therefore this study is partly exploratory as well.

Although the two parts of the research question are very much related, these will be dealt with separately. This report will therefore be divided in two empirical parts with separate research models, methods and subsequently results. Several sections (the methodology, results and the conclusions and recommendations sections) of the report will first attend to the part of the determinants of SNS usage by job seekers, and then to

the part of SNS attraction through current organizational representation on social network sites.

The first goal of this study is to develop a technology acceptance model specifically for social network site usage by job seekers. This is accomplished by adapting and stripping the TAM (Davis, 1989) and combining the studies of Davis (1989), Venkatesh, & Davis (2000), and venkatesh (2000) in order to create an extended model for the acceptance of SNS by job seekers for the purpose of finding a job. This model will be tested on a group of job seekers to investigate what determinants are of essence for them in order to use SNS in their search for a job. Figure 3 shows the research model of the first part of this study.

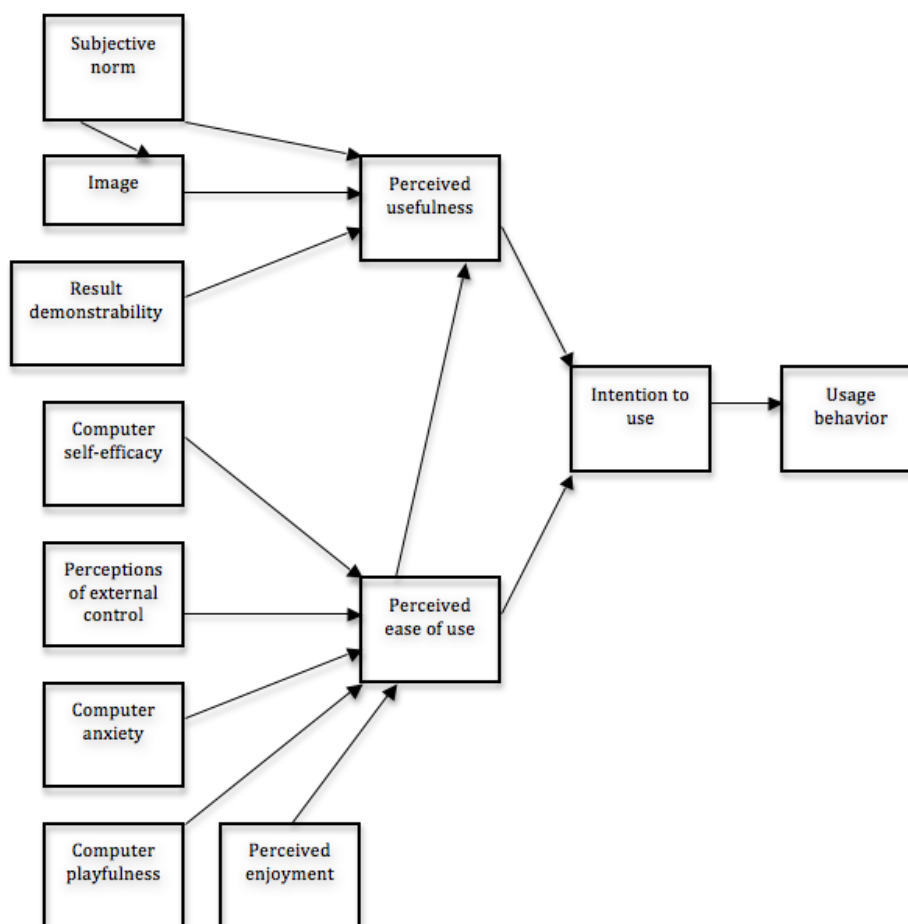


Figure 3: Research model 1: The extended TAM for social network site usage by job seekers

Since the first research model is presented, I will now attend to explaining the hypothesized relationships and the background behind those inferences.



Subjective norm is defined as: “a persons’ perception that most people who are important to him think he should or should not perform the behaviour in question” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). This construct is also included in the theory of reasoned action (TRA), that was presented earlier in this chapter, as the foundation of the TAM. Subjective norm was omitted from the original TAM because Davis (1989) did not find enough significance to include it in his model. However, he failed to mark it as a subject of future research. The effect of subjective norm on perceived usefulness is under influence of a process called internalization, which is a part of the social influence theory (Kelman, 1958). Internalization occurs when an individual is aware of the perceptions of significant others. Then he or she may incorporate this as a perception of one’s own. This does not have a direct effect on the intention to use, but merely a positive effect on perceived usefulness ( $r=.47$ ) of, in this case, an information technology (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Subjective norm is included in research model 1 of this study because it is hypothesized that a job seekers’ perceived usefulness of SNS in finding a job is under influence of significant others who might have previous experience with these sites.

Hypothesis 1: Subjective norm will have a positive direct effect on perceived usefulness of SNS for job seekers.

Voluntariness is defined as: “the extent to which potential adopters perceive the adoption decision to be non-mandatory” (Agarwal & Prasad, 1997; Hartwick & Barki, 1994; Moore & Benbasat, 1991). The effect of subjective norm on intention to use was only significant for respondents in a mandatory setting, but not for those in a voluntary setting (Hartwick & Barki, 1994; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). This effect is referred to as a compliance (kelman, 1958). For the purpose of this study, voluntariness is not included in the extended TAM because all the job seekers are perceived to be free in their choice to use SNS with the purpose of finding a job. However it is possible to hypothesize that subjective norm will not have a significant direct effect on intention to use since they are voluntary users. Venkatesh and Davis (2000) found no similar effect in their study.

Hypothesis 2: Subjective norm will not have a significant direct effect on intention to use SNS for job seekers.

Image is defined as: “the degree to which use of an innovation is perceived to enhance one’s...status in one’s social system” (Moore & Benbasat, 1991). Venkatesh and Davis

(2000) hypothesize, and provide evidence for a positive effect ( $r=.49$ ) of subjective norm on image. It is believed that when an individual acts according to the beliefs of others in their social system, this is favourable for their image in this social system. This process is called identification and is a part of the social influence theory (Kelman, 1958). An increased status in a social system leads to greater influence and power, which may in turn provide a basis for greater productivity (Blau, 1964; Pfeffer, 1981, 1982). Using a certain information technology system may be perceived as being able to raise an individual's status and productivity. This will positively influence an individual perceived usefulness of a system as proved by Venkatesh and Davis (2000). They found a positive relation ( $r=.21$ ) between image and perceived ease of use. Based on these previous findings the following hypotheses for this research are proposed:

Hypothesis 3a: Subjective norm will have a positive effect on a job seekers' image.

Hypothesis 3b: A job seekers' image will have a positive effect on the perceived usefulness of SNS by job seekers.

Result demonstrability is defined as: "the tangibility of the results of using the innovation" (Moore & Benbasat, 1991). Venkatesh and Davis (2000) hypothesise and find support for the inference that result demonstrability has a positive effect ( $r=.28$ ) on perceived usefulness. It is believed that if the results of using an information technology system are apparent, this will increase the perceived usefulness of a system by an individual. However, the opposite is true when the results are not apparent. The same is hypothesised for this study. If an individual is able to clearly identify the positive results of the system, this will increase the perceived usefulness.

Hypothesis 4: Result demonstrability will have a positive effect on perceived usefulness of SNS by job seekers.

Computer self-efficacy is defined as: "an individual difference variable that represents one's belief about her/his ability to perform a specific task/job using a computer" (Venkatesh, 2000). In other words, computer self-efficacy can be described as the awareness of one's computer skills. It is a conceptualization of internal control. Venkatesh (2000) studied the effect of computer self-efficacy of perceived ease of use and found a significant positive relationship ( $r=.42$ ) between these two variables. No direct relationship between computer self-efficacy and behavioural intention was found.

However, perceived ease of use has a mediating role between computer self-efficacy and behavioural intention. This relation is incorporated in research model 1 because it is assumed that when a job seeker has high computer self-efficacy, he or she will perceive the social network site as easier to use than a job seeker who has low computer self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 5: Computer self-efficacy will have a positive effect on perceived ease of use of SNS for job seekers.

Perceptions of external control are characterized by the availability of knowledge, resources, opportunities, and system constraints (Venkatesh, 2000). Where computer self-efficacy conceptualizes internal control, perceptions of external control conceptualizes external control and is determined by for example the availability of computer support staff, the availability of sufficient computer hardware and other resource facilitating conditions. This variable being an anchoring construct, the perceptions of external control are system-independent and based on previous experiences with new computer technology introductions. The research of Venkatesh (2000) shows that ease of use fully mediates the effect of perceptions of external control on behavioural intention. It was proved that perceptions of external control positively influences perceived ease of use ( $r=.45$ ). In research model 1 the perceptions of external control construct is included. It is assumed that job seekers who have a good perception of external control will find a social network site easier to use for their purpose of finding a job. This results in the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 6: Perceptions of external control will have a positive effect on perceived ease of use of SNS for job seekers.

Computer anxiety, also a system-independent anchor, captures the emotional aspect of technology usage (Venkatesh, 2000). It is defined as: an individual's apprehension, or even fear, when she/he is faced with the possibility of using computers" (Simonson et al., 1987). Computer anxiety is a negative emotion towards computers and is therefore hypothesized by Venkatesh (2000) to have a negative effect on the perceived ease of use ( $r=-.30$ ). His study shows that this negative relation is indeed present and that perceived ease of use fully mediates the effect of computer anxiety on behavioural intention. No direct effect of computer anxiety on behavioural intention was found. This relation is

also incorporated in the model of this study. It is hypothesised that when a job seeker is apprehensive to use computer technology, he/she will perceive the social network site less easy to use than a job seeker who is not hesitant to use computers.

Hypothesis 7: Computer anxiety will have a negative effect on perceived ease of use of SNS for job seekers.

Computer playfulness is defined as: “the degree of cognitive spontaneity in microcomputer interactions” (Webster & Mortacchio, 1992). This anchor is related to intrinsic motivation that describes perceptions of satisfaction and pleasure generated from certain behaviour (Vallerand, 1997). Deci and Ryan (1987) also describe extrinsic motivation that determines the drive to express certain behaviour in order to achieve a goal or perform a task. However, extrinsic motivation is related to perceived usefulness rather than to perceived ease of use in TAM. Again, this anchor is system-independent. Individuals who are more playful with computer are likely to indulge in the usage of new systems, so a positive relationship is hypothesized and tested by Venkatesh (2000). He proved that this relation ( $r=.20$ ) is present, however weak, and that perceived ease of use fully mediates the effect of computer playfulness on behavioural intention. This construct is included in research model 1 because it is assumed that job seekers with high computer playfulness will perceive the SNS as easier to use.

Hypothesis 8: Computer playfulness will have a positive effect on perceived ease of use of SNS for job seekers.

Perceived enjoyment is a system-dependent conceptualization of intrinsic motivation and one of the adjustment constructs in the model of Venkatesh (2000). It is adapted from Davis et al. (1992). Rosen and Sherman (2006) adopt perceived enjoyment in their acceptance model of SNS, which is of relevance for this research as will become clear later on in this paper. Perceived enjoyment is defined as: “the extent to which the activity of using an specific system is perceived to be enjoyable in it’s own right, aside from any performance consequences resulting from system use” (Davis et al., 1992). Venkatesh (2000) showed that a positive relationship ( $r=.24$ ) exists between perceived enjoyment and perceived ease of use, and that perceived ease of use fully mediates the effect of perceived enjoyment on behavioural intention. This construct is included in research model 1 because it is assumed that job seekers who enjoy using a social

network site will perceive this site as easier to use than job seekers who do not enjoy using a social network site in order to find a job. Therefore perceived enjoyment is hypothesized to have a positive effect on perceived ease of use.

Hypothesis 9: Perceived enjoyment will have a positive effect on perceived ease of use of SNS for job seekers.

The second goal of this study is to test, with the help of TAM, the attractiveness of organizations that are currently represented on social network sites. The research model of Williamson et al. (2003) is adapted to fit the context and method of this study. The research model is presented in figure 4. As can be clearly seen from the model is based primarily on the core of TAM.

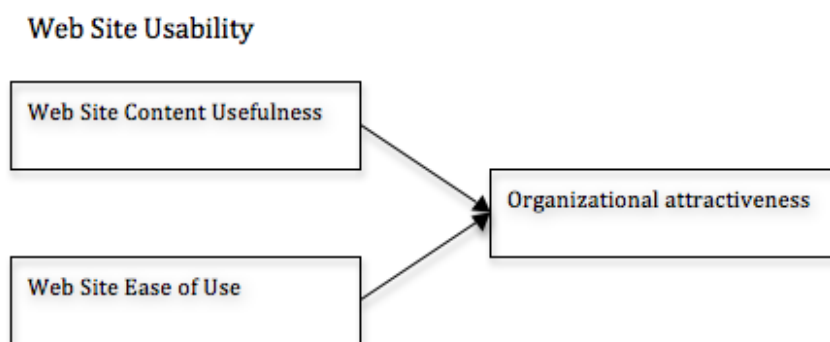


Figure 4: Research model 2: Current representation of organizations on SNS and organizational attractiveness.

Web site usability is defined as: "... individuals' perceptions that a company's recruitment website offers an efficient and effective way to search for employment" (Karat, 1997). As can be seen from figure 10 the research model contains variables that are very similar to the essential TAM of Davis (1989) except for organizational attractiveness, which is replaced in the TAM by behavioural intention. This can be explained by defining organizational attractiveness. Organizational attractiveness is based on two constructs: job pursuit intentions and perceived desirability. Both of these constructs describe a behavioural intention more or less. Website content usefulness is very similar to perceived usefulness. In fact content usefulness is defined as the perceived usefulness of the information provided by the website (Davis et al., 1989; Venkatesh & Davis, 1996). Website ease of use is very similar to perceived ease of use. It refers to the perceived amount of cognitive effort required by an individual to use a

website (Davis et al., 1989; Venkatesh & Davis, 1996). Two hypotheses accompany the research model of the experiment. Both predict a positive relation between each of the previously described variables website content usefulness and website ease of use and organizational attractiveness. This is based on the findings of Williamson et al. (2003) who found a strong positive significant correlation between website content usefulness and organizational attractiveness ( $r=.48$ ) and also between ease of use and organizational attractiveness ( $r=.39$ ). The regression coefficients found in their study were also significant  $\beta=.15$  ( $p<.05$ ) for the effect of ease of use on organizational attractiveness and  $\beta=.41$  ( $p<.05$ ) for the effect of website content usefulness on organizational attractiveness.

Hypothesis 10: Website content usefulness will have a positive effect on organizational attractiveness.

Hypothesis 11: Website ease of use will have a positive effect on organizational attractiveness.

## Methodology

This chapter will include information as to how both the research models are tested. Because the study consists of two parts, this section will be divided in two parts as well. One section describes how the first research model will be tested by means of a questionnaire. Another will illustrate how the second research model will be tested by means of an experiment. To start of the sampling method for both of the studies is clarified in the first section. This section contains the sampling methods of both the studies, because the methods used are very much the same.

### Sampling

Although this study consists of two parts, a sampling technique is used that made it possible to draw on the same core sample for the questionnaire and the experimental study. This core group consists of 15 master students, who are referred to as student researchers for the purpose of this study. They all attended the same HRM course, namely: Managing Human Resource Flows at the University of Twente in the educational year 2010/2011. This course was taught from November 2010 until the end of January 2011. These student researchers benefitted from their work because they were able to use the data for their own assignments.

For the generation of the samples for both parts of the study each student researcher selected 15 respondents or subjects. This sampling technique is called respondent driven snowball sampling, and is used to gather respondents for the questionnaire and subjects for the experiment (Anandarajan, Zaman, Dai & Arinze, 2010). This technique is used when the respondents needed for a specific study cannot be selected at random (Babbie, 2007). In this case the respondents required for both studies were to be members of generation Y. Generation Y is suitable for this study because it is likely that its members will be job seekers in the near future. As mentioned before, in the literature review, generation Y is now gradually entering the work force (Eisner, 2005) now more and more members reach working age. (more information as to why this is the case will be given in the next chapter). Nonprobability sampling is applied. Since the student researchers are members of generation Y themselves, it should not be hard for them to find 15 other members of this generation in their own personal network. This is the main reason that snowball sampling is appropriate in this case. The respondents from

the core group were free to select anyone they wanted as long as they were part of generation Y, regardless of gender, education or other specific attributes. Although this study investigates the behaviour of job seekers, it was not compulsory to select cases that were all without a job. The reasoning is that anyone can place him/herself in the position of a job seeker, either those from generation Y who already have work or those who still have to look for work in the future. For each part of the study there was a sample well over 200. The questionnaire yielded a number of 229 respondents of which 225 questionnaires were usable for data analysis. The experiment was conducted among 249 subjects. These numbers are regarded as large samples for a study such as this, which is good news for the generalizability and statistical validity of the results.

### Research model 1: The questionnaire

Research model 1 (fig. 3) describes the determinants of social networking site usage by job seekers. The model contains a lot of constructs with hypothesized relations. To test these relationships a questionnaire is designed. This questionnaire is not only designed to test the validity of the model, but also to give a lot of background information of social network site usage by job seekers. This information is useful for future research into this relatively new field of science. The arrangement of the questionnaire is as follows:

Section A is referred to as background characteristics. This section contains items regarding age, gender, level of education, profession, accessibility to technical devices needed to participate in SNS and if the respondents are currently searching for a job. This section is called background information because this section is not designed to test the hypotheses, but to put the results in perspective of the sampled group. Section A is found in appendix 2.

The questionnaires were filed as hardcopies (n=229). Of the respondents 55.5% (n=127) are male, and 44.5% (n=102) are female. The mean year of birth of the respondents is 1987, with a standard deviation of 3.6 years. All, but 4 respondents, are member of generation Y. A total of 67.8% (n=154) of the respondents are employed, 22.9% (n=52) more than 25 hours per week. At the moment of completing the questionnaire, 11.8% (n=27) indicated that they are open for job offers and actively searching for a job. An additional 57% (n=130) indicated that they are not actively searching for a job, but are open for job offers. The other 31.1% (n=71) specified that



they are neither actively searching for a job, nor open for job offers. All respondents were asked to specify whether they owned several devices needed to access the different SNS. A total of 52.4% (n=120) of the respondents owns a Smartphone, 4.4% (n=10) owns a tablet, 86.5% (n=198) owns a laptop, notebook or netbook, and 45% (n=103) owns a PC. Taking these figures into account, it can be stated that the majority of the respondents is able to access SNS on different kinds of hard ware devices. In other words, it can be said that hard ware availability is no barrier for social network usage.

Section B consists of three tables. The first table is designed to gather information regarding social network site membership. Respondents are asked to indicate with which social network site they are registered and how much time they spend on these sites. The list of SNS comprises 13 pre-determined SNS and one open category. The time spending intervals range from “more than three hours a day” to “rarely” or “never”. The second table concerns information about the reason to go online and visit the SNS. The list of SNS from table I is reproduced in table II. Each respondent is asked to indicate their reasons to visit each of their SNS by grading 7 pre-defined reasons on a scale from 1 to 5. The pre-defined reasons are: (1) “Getting back in touch with old friends/former classmates/former colleagues” (2) “Finding new personal contacts/new friendships” (3) “Keeping updated with existing friends/classmates/colleagues” (4) “Establishing new professional contacts” (5) “Maintaining professional contacts” (6) “Getting information about job opportunities, vacancies” (7) “Getting information about companies, potential employers”. The third table is named SNS: activities. This table gathers information from the respondents about their activities while online at a social network site. Table III also adopts the list of pre-determined SNS from table I. The respondents are asked to what extent they perform pre-determined activities on a scale from 1 to 5. The pre-determined activities are: (1) “Publishing/uploading your profile, personal information” (2) “Updating/editing your profile” (3) “Universal search: Browsing without special purposes” (4) “Specific search for: employer information” (5) “Specific search for: job information” (6) “Specific search for: testimonials” (7) “Initiating/joining discussions”. All the items from the tables are designed for the purpose of this study. These items are not intended to test any hypothesis or relation, but merely to gather information about the topic of social network site usage as background information for this study and to provide a basis for future research. Tables I-III can be found in appendix 3.

Part C has the purpose of testing the hypotheses related to research model 1: the extended TAM for social network site usage by job seekers. This part of the questionnaire contains 49 items. The first 2 items of part C ask the respondents to choose one of their SNS that they would prefer if they were looking for a job and to explain why they would choose this website over others. The other 47 items are divided over 11 constructs that are all validated in earlier research. These constructs are intention to use ( $\alpha=.87$ )(Davis, 1989; Davis et al., 1989), perceived usefulness ( $\alpha=.94$ )(Davis, 1989; Davis et al., 1989), perceived usefulness ( $\alpha=.90$ )(Davis, 1989; Davis et al., 1989), result demonstrability ( $\alpha=.79$ )(Moore and Benbasat, 1991), image ( $\alpha=.79$ )(Moore and Benbasat (1991), computer anxiety ( $\alpha=.78$ )(Brown and Vician, 1997), computer playfulness ( $\alpha=.86$ )(Webster and Martocchio, 1992), perceived enjoyment ( $\alpha=.83$ )(Davis et al., 1992), subjective norm ( $\alpha=.88$ )(Taylor and Todd, 1995), perceptions of external control ( $\alpha=.78$ )(Mathieson, 1991; Taylor and Todd, 1995), and computer self-efficacy ( $\alpha=.94$ )(Compeau and Higgins, 1995a).

All respondents were asked to indicate on a scale from 1 to 5 to which extent they agreed with a certain item, 1, meaning “strongly disagree” and 5, meaning “strongly agree”. Some of the items are adjusted for social network site usage. Part C of the questionnaire can be found in appendix 4.

For the analyses of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables from the model linear regression is applied. This method is appropriate because the hypothesis describe relationships between only two variables. Otherwise, multiple regression analysis would have been better suitable. Although the model contains many more variables, the focus is on the hypotheses.

### Research model 2: The experiment

For the second part of this research, the experiment, another approach is adopted. The goal of the experiment, or in fact quasi-experiment since there is no random assignment of treatments, is to investigate whether the current array of SNS of organizations offer sufficient content usefulness and ease of use for those organizations to be attractive as potential employers to applicants. Research model 2 and the corresponding hypotheses (fig. 4) describe these relationships. In order to study this matter an experiment is designed. The subjects of the experiment had to evaluate a number of corporate SNS on

content usefulness, ease of use and organizational attractiveness. Job search behaviour is used as a control variable. Each subject was asked to view two SNS of two different pre-determined organizations on either Hyves, LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter. These SNS were selected because of their popularity based on the sample of the first part of this research, and their suitability for the subject of social network site recruitment. Each of these SNS offers recruitment possibilities. The corporate SNS were randomly selected and divided between the student researchers who distributed them to the subjects, two corporate SNS each. A list of these corporate SNS is included in appendix 1. The subjects evaluated the corporate SNS under supervision of a student researcher who made photographs of the subject during the evaluation and made notes of their observations. All subjects were given a two-minute time period to do their evaluation after which they had to complete a small questionnaire. The questionnaire of this experiment is attached in appendix 7. As described the experiment starts with a treatment, the viewing of the corporate social network site, followed by an observation. There is no need for an observation before the treatment, since it is not possible to evaluate a corporate social network site that a subject has not seen yet.

The questionnaires that accompany the experiment were also filed as hardcopies ( $n=249$ ) and manually entered into SPSS. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire has 3 items about personal information. The subjects were asked to indicate their gender, year of birth and employment status. A total of 133 (53.4%) subjects are male. The mean year of birth of the subjects is 1986, with a standard deviation of 3.4 years. All, except for 3 subjects, are members of generation Y. From the sample, 66.3% of the subjects indicate that they are currently employed, either part-time or fulltime. The other 32.7% does not have a job at the moment of conducting the experiment. The next three items concerned the kind of SNS they used to review the corporate SNS. These are (either Hyves (14.9%), Facebook (12.9%), LinkedIn (52.6%) or Twitter (19.7%)), the name of the organization of which they were about to review the corporate social network site (Appendix 6) and their familiarity with this organization. The second part of the questionnaire contained the construct items, which were all validated in earlier research. These constructs are content usefulness ( $\alpha=.90$ ), ease of use ( $\alpha=.83$ ), job search behaviour ( $\alpha=.91$ ), job pursuit intentions ( $\alpha=.78$ ), and perceived desirability ( $\alpha=.83$ ).

As described earlier, job search behaviour is used as a control variable. Job pursuit intentions and perceived desirability together determine organizational attractiveness. All subjects were asked to indicate for each item if they agreed with the described statement on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This was not the case for the items related to job search behaviour. This scale ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (very frequently).

## Theoretical Background

This chapter will present the earlier literature that is relevant for this study about social network sites and recruitment. It is divided into separate sections to create a gradual build up in the complexity of the topic. The chapter will start off with literature on recruitment as a general topic. Further on in the chapter the literature will narrow down to SNS recruitment. Since this is a relative new field of research, I will be pioneering into new phenomena, such as professional networking sites. A definition of this evolvement of SNS will be designed in order to distinguish this type of social media from others.

### Recruitment

The literature provides several definitions of recruitment or organizational recruitment. A broadly used definition is: "those practices and activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees"(Barber, 1998). Another widely adopted definition of recruitment is: "the process of seeking out and attempting to attract individuals from the external labor market who are capable of and interested in filling job vacancies" (Heneman, Schwab, Fossum, & Dyer, 1983). The literature distinguishes three phases of recruitment (Barber, 1998), of which the first stage is called 'generating applicants'. This is perceived as the most relevant phase for the purpose of this research. During this phase an organization reaches out to the employment population, or labour force, in order to persuade a portion of this population to become applicants. In this early stage of recruitment, it is important for an organization to communicate information about the job, working conditions, expectations, values, and climate in order to attract and persuade applicants to sign up for the job (Popovich & Wanous, 1982). The second phase, called 'maintaining applicant status', is used by an organization to persuade an applicant to remain interested in the job opportunity until the organization decides to offer the job, or not. The third and last phase is named 'influencing job choice'. In this phase the organization attempts to persuade the applicant to accept the job.

Recruitment tools are designed in order to fulfil at least two main objectives based on previous research (Williamson, King, Lepak & Sarma, 2010). The first objective is capturing the attention of the applicants (Yüce, & Highhouse, 1998). Because these applicants consider multiple job opportunities a firm needs to stand out of the firm pool

in order to persuade the applicant to gather information about a vacancy at that particular organization (Belt, & Paolillo, 1982; Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991). The second objective for a recruitment tool is to provide relevant and sufficient information about job opportunities. Applicants avoid uncertainty and ambiguity in order to minimize risks and maximize rewards (Highhouse, & Hause, 1995; Lievens, & Highhouse, 2003). Poorly described job opportunities are likely to be less attractive to applicants than those that are clearly described and specified (Barber, & Roehling, 1993; Maurer, Howe, & Lee, 1992).

The recruitment efforts of an organization significantly affect the applicant's attitude and behaviour towards the organization (Rynes, Heneman, & Schwab, 1980). Friendly recruiters for example who provide a wide range of information about the organization have been found to influence the applicant favourably. When an organizations' recruiter shows less proactive behaviour by slow communication and is not supplying sufficient information about the organization or the job, this has a significant unfavourable effect on the applicant's attitude and behaviour towards the organization.

Effective recruitment is increasingly important because of several reasons (Dessler, 2003). The first of which is that the ease of recruitment fluctuates with economic climates. Good economic conditions can cause more difficulty in attracting highly skilled employees, because these are pursued by many other organizations as well. In less favourable economic conditions it can be easier to attract highly skilled employees, because the applicant pool is larger due to higher unemployment and less recruiting efforts of other organizations. Another reason why effective recruitment is important is the high turnover rate in some professions, such as the leisure and hospitality industry (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.). This can be reduced by effective recruitment. More selective hiring might for example demand a bigger applicant pool. A limited number of talented applicants, due to other factors other than a bad economic environment, can also create a need for more effective recruitment. "Aggressive recruiting is therefore often the name of the game" (Dessler, 2003).

### **Web-based recruitment**

Organizations use recruitment websites as important tools to attract new employees (Cappelli, 2001; Lievens, & harris; 2003). These recruitment websites have some

advantages over more traditional ways of recruiting such as advertisements in newspapers, participating in career fairs or the use of headhunters (Williamson, King, Lepak & Sarma, 2010). The most obvious advantage of recruitment Web sites is the cost aspect. Recruitment Web sites are significantly less expensive (Cober, Brown, Blumenthal, Doverspike & Levy, 2000) and are always accessible, 24 hours a day, for anyone who owns a computer with Internet. "Estimates suggest that it costs only about one-twentieth as much to hire someone on-line as to hire that same person through want ads and other traditional means" (Capelli, 2001). Another very useful advantage of recruitment Web sites over traditional recruitment methods is the possibility to communicate more directly with the applicants (Leong, Huang, & Stanners, 1998; Pavlou, & Steward, 2000), which results in timesaving. Finally, recruitment Web sites offer the possibility to search more specifically for qualified applicants (Allen, Mahto, & Otondo, 2007; Cober, Brown, Keeping, & Levy, 2004; Dineen, Ling, Ash, & Delvecchio, 2007). This is due to several advantages. One of those is that employers using recruitment websites can offer the possibility to applicants to take preliminary capacity tests in order to perform an early evaluation that requires limited time investments from both the employer and the applicant. Another advantage is that there is no limited space to fill for the job information, like there is in print media. Employers can use all the space they need and include all the relevant job information that is necessary to narrow down to qualified applicants exclusively.

Williamson, King, Lepak and Sarma (2010) studied the effect of Recruitment Web site vividness and the amount of company and job attribute information of the recruitment website on applicant attraction. They also studied the moderating effect of the firm employer reputation on these relationships. They found that an applicant's pre-recruitment beliefs influence their response to an organization's recruitment Web site. The vividness of a recruitment Web site of an organization with a poor or weak reputation did not have a significant effect on the applicant attraction. However, the amount of information about the organization and its employment opportunities did have a strong positive effect on the applicant attraction of these organizations. For the organizations with a good reputation the relation between both vividness and attribute information is completely different. They proved to be substitutes instead of complements. If these organizations apply high Web site vividness, and presented a low amount of attribute information this has a positive effect on applicant attraction. This

effect is the same when a high amount of information is presented in combination with low vividness on the recruitment Web site. If an organization with a good reputation chooses to apply both high vividness and a high amount of attribute information, the effect on applicant attraction would be approximately as high as when the organization applies just one of both.

### Social media

In this section of the literature review the term social media is introduced to connect recruitment to SNS. Before this connection can be made, a classification of social media is described in order to distinguish SNS from other types of social media such as blogs or virtual worlds.

The term social media is used as a collective term for web logs, SNS and the newest development in online social networking; virtual worlds in which users control an avatar in a three-dimensional world (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Web 2.0 is the platform for the evolution of social media. Web 2.0 makes it possible for users to upload user generated content onto the social media, within the boundaries of the specific website. User-generated content (UGC) is the mean that people use in order to practice social media. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development UGC has to meet three requirements. First of all it has to be published on a publicly accessible website available to a selected group of people. Secondly, some creative effort needs to be shown, and thirdly, no professional routines and practises have to be applied for the creation of the content. "Social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Figure 5 presents a classification of social media with two variables (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The first variable on the vertical axis is the self-presentation/self-disclosure classification. This refers to the degree that people are able to present themselves and are able to disclose information to others. The second variable on the horizontal axis is the social presence/media richness classification. This refers to the degree that users are able to exchange communication, or the social presence theory (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976) and the amount of information that the media is able to transfer in a given time interval, also called the media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986). The social media category relevant for this study is high on self-presentation/self-disclosure due to their



personal character. SNS have medium social presence/media richness. Virtual worlds score higher on this variable because these require a game-like effort, which is in fact total attention, where SNS can be kept up to date regardless of interruptions.

	Social Presence / Media Richness			
		Low	Medium	High
Self-Presentation/ Self-Disclosure	High	Blogs	Social Network Sites (e.g., facebook)	Virtual social world (e.g., second life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g., wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., youtube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

Figure 5: Classification of social media by social presence/media richness and self-presentation/self-disclosure (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

### Definition of Social Network Sites

SNS belong to the group of social media (Kaplan, & Haenlein, 2010). Murray and Waller (2007) define SNS as a kind of virtual communities that allow users to connect and interact with each other. Another more comprehensive definition of SNS is: “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 a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.” This is an elaborate definition that consists of 3 main parts.

The first part mentions that a profile is constructed within a bounded system. A very important concept for the realisation of this profile construction is Web 2.0 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Web 2.0 makes it possible for users to upload user generated content onto the SNS, within the boundaries of this Web site. This definition of SNS (Boyd & Ellison, 2008) does not include the term USG, which is in my opinion essential for SNS. Therefore I do not view this definition as complete. However, I prefer this definition to others because of its comprehensiveness.

The second part of the definition refers to the publicly displayed connections on the profile of a user. The term for a connection differs from one SNS to another (Boyd, & Ellison, 2008). Some refer to connections as “friends”, others as “contacts”, “fans” or “followers”. Boyd and Ellison (2008) state that they prefer to use the term “SNS” instead

of “social networking site” because the latter implies a networking initiation between strangers. The reality is that users do not necessarily look for new connections, but instead they utilize SNS to display and maintain their existing social network (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). The term “public display of connections” is used as a crucial component of SNS. This reflection of connections in their social network is important to the users and makes it possible for other users to view their social network or even share some of the connections if one recognizes someone familiar. It is possible to connect to strangers, but this is not the primary practice of most SNS users. I will adapt the denomination of Boyd and Ellison (2008) of the term SNS as opposed to social networking site for the purpose of unprofessional use of these websites. Later on in this report I will come back to this distinction between professional and unprofessional use of SNS.

The last part of the definition lists that users of SNS can view each other’s connections. It is possible to connect to a connection of a connection that a particular user may not know that well. Besides the display of connections and the publication of a profile, most SNS also have the possibility to post messages on the profile of a connection. Other features such as a photo album application or other media sharing differ from site to site.

Some examples of the most important SNS among Dutch users are presented in appendix 1.

### **The popularity of Social Network Sites**

The popularity of SNS is dependant on the number of users (Chiu, Cheung & Lee, 2008). Social media and subsequently SNS enjoy an increase in popularity. Forrester research reported that “75% of internet surfers used ‘Social Media’ in the second quarter of 2008 by joining social networks, reading blogs, or contributing reviews to shopping sites; this represents a significant rise from 56% in 2007” (Kaplan, & Haenlein, 2010). Not only generation Y, but also generation X is increasingly using social media. This new trend opens up many new opportunities for advertisers, developers and other interested parties such as employers. “The popularity of Web 2.0 has launched a business revolution that is making the Internet as a platform for information sharing, collaboration and networking” (O’Reilly, 2006)(Notice that O’Reilly (2006) uses the

term networking in a professional context. I will come back to this later.). However, only a few firms know how to act in this environment (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2010). In the past it was easy for an organisation to control the public information about itself. Nowadays with the emergence of social media with its Web 2.0 and UGC, a lot of information about organisations and their products have become available online. The authors state that this is not a surprising development since the Internet started of as a giant bulletin board after all. However, this development is not necessarily positive. Negative reviews about products can in some cases make or break products or organizations.

Chiu, Cheung and Lee (2008) studied what influences the We-intention to use Facebook, a very popular SNS launched early in 2004 ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)). The We-intention is the “commitment of an individual to engage in a joint action and involves an implicit or explicit agreement between the participants to engage in that joint action” (Tuomela, 1995). This We-intention contributes to the popularity of SNS. Social presence (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976) has the greatest influence on the We-intention to use Facebook (Chiu, Cheung & Lee, 2008). In other words; the presence of others (social presence) is one of the most important motivators for users to engage in a social medium such as Facebook. Special features that emphasize the participation and current presence of others, such as chat applications, motivate people to increase their usage of Facebook and this increases its popularity. Another variable, group norm, also has a significant influence on the We-intention of users. If users realize that they have shared values with a group, they will have a higher tendency on the We-intention to use Facebook. This means that shared interests motivate people to use Facebook and especially to join groups that share that interest. They may benefit from these groups by learning new facts about their interest or sharing experiences.

### **The social influence theory**

The social influence theory is an important base for the rise of SNS since it is a social phenomenon. SNS thrive with high numbers of users. In Therefore this theory deserves some attention in this report as an explanation for the success of SNS.

The We-intention is mainly determined by group norm and social presence (Chiu, Cheung & Lee, 2008). Both are directly related to the social influence theory (Kelman, 1958). There are three different processes of social influence. The first one is

compliance. This is when an individual accepts the social influence to receive approval or support from others. In this regard the subjective norm, or the personal view is influenced by the expectations of others in a social context, which can be related to social presence (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976). For example, if others use a SNS an individual feels that these others expect him/her to do the same. The second process of social influence is internalization and it occurs when an individual accepts the social influence because of the similarities of his or her own goals and values with that of others in the social context. A shared agreement over goals and values is referred to as the group norm. The third and last process of social influence is identification. Social identity is: "a part of an individual's self-concept, which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value of emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1978). Identification in the theory of Kelman (1958) occurs when an individual accepts the social influence in order to establish a self-defining relationship with an individual in a social context.

### Generation Y

Generation Y, also called generation Einstein, Echo Boomers, Nexters, Millennials, or the Internet Generation (Eisner, 2005), is the generation that experienced the introduction of SNS first hand. The success of these websites is for a large part due to this generation. They helped build social network sites to what they are today. This is one of the reasons to focus on this generation for the purpose of this study. Another reason to narrow down the focus of the study to this generation is that these young individuals are now gradually entering the work force, making the most of them 'job seekers'. Since a large number of these 'Millennials' are highly educated, they form the target group, or the stakes, of the war on talent. To attract this talent it is useful to understand what drives these individuals to use social network sites for job seeking purposes. This section will sketch the characteristics of this generation and describe how these youngsters contributed to the success of the SNS.

A generation is defined as: "an identifiable group that shares birth years, age location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages, divided by five-seven years into the first wave, core group, and last wave" (Kupperschmidt, 2000). There are two generations who currently compose the majority of the work force. These are the Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) and generation X (born between 1965 and

1979)(Smola & Sutton, 2002; Hewlett, Sherbin & Sumberg, 2009). Generation Y (born between 1979 and 1994) has twice the size of the previous generation, generation X, and is now gradually entering the work force. These 'Millennials' are the first to be born in a 'wired' world (Ryan, 2000). They are connected 24 hours a day and are socially very active. They grew up in a society that was characterized by prosperity and growth (Eisner, 2005). It is also called generation Einstein because they are highly educated and have good technical skills (Allen, 2004). Another characteristic of this generation is that they are very goal and achievement oriented (Yeaton, 2008). This is said to be the result of playing computer games that continuously set goals to achieve. Generation Y members are great at multitasking, and are used to work in a group setting (Yeaton, 2008). Yeaton (2008) proposes to apply innovative recruitment methods to attract generation Y. Employers must understand this generation and they should use this understanding to find ways to employ these clever young individuals. Using SNS for the professional recruitment of this highly educated and potent group of increasingly young professionals seems therefore very appropriate.

### Professional networking sites

"A professional network service (or, in an internet context, simply professional network) is a type of social network service that is focused solely on interactions and relationships of a business nature rather than including personal, nonbusiness interactions" (Vascellaro, 2007). Increasingly more professional network sites such as LinkedIn and Jobster are launched. Users exchange job details and contact information, often for recruitment/application purposes (Vascellaro, 2007). Professional networking sites did not blossom as quickly as SNS because of several reasons. Professionals are more hesitant about revealing potential harmful information about themselves or their organization. In addition, professionals spend less time on updating their professional networking sites. They will spend more time if they are convinced it will produce a beneficial result (Vascellaro, 2007).

Most of these sites exist by making money through advertising (Vascellaro, 2007; Stone, 2010). LinkedIn, a professional networking site with approximately 76 million users and an annual turnover of 228 million in 2010, also makes money by licensing its product, LinkedIn Recruiter (Stone, 2010). This enables recruiters to post specified job vacancies online and provides recruiters with a list of users who qualify for a job. A product license

makes it possible for recruiters to approach possible job candidates, a privileged feature that is not available to non-paying users.

For the benefit of this study a definition of the term professional networking site will be developed. Boyd and Ellison (2008) state that in the case of SNS users generally have no intention to make new contacts, but instead make a public display of their existing network of connections. However, in case of professional networking sites this is a point of discussion. For the development of a definition of professional networking sites I assume that professionals do aim at making new business contacts for the creation of new business- or job opportunities, hence the term professional networking sites. O'Reilly (2006) emphasises that the emerging popularity of Web 2.0 and UGC increases the role of the Internet as: "a platform for information sharing, collaboration and networking" (O'Reilly, 2006). In my view, this is exactly what professional networking sites are designed for. For this study I define a professional networking site as:

*A kind of online social network site for professional purposes, such as the creation of business- or career opportunities, through the expansion of one's existing network.*

Professional networking sites are classified as social network sites in the social media classification (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). I see it as a sub-category of social network sites that evolved from the success of these sites.

## Results

This chapter describes how the collected data was processed and analysed. Since there are two research models to investigate, there are two data sets as well. Therefore this section is divided into two parts. One part for testing the first research model with the questionnaire, the other part for testing the second research model related to the experiment.

### Research model 1: The questionnaire

Table 1 describes the registrations with the different SNS of the questionnaire sample group. Facebook is the most popular social network site, closely followed by the Dutch social network site Hyves. The top 4 of the most popular SNS among the respondents is completed with the additions of LinkedIn and Twitter. A description of these 4 SNS is given in appendix 1. Other SNS are by far not as popular throughout the sample, so these are not further taken into account.

Social network site	n	%	Social network site	n	%
Facebook	158	69	Hyves	156	68.1
LinkedIn	86	37.6	Twitter	78	34.1
Myspace	23	10	Netlog	8	3.5
Orkut	2	0.9	Badoo	1	0.4
Renren	1	0.4	Xing	3	1.3
Other	8	3.5			

Table 1: Social network site registrations of the questionnaire sample group

Respondents who use Facebook are the most active on SNS with 72.6% of the users spending between 1 minute and 3 hours a day on Facebook against respectively 62.8% (LinkedIn), 58.1% (Hyves), and 57.1% (Twitter).

Before the hypotheses from research model 1 are dealt with, the actual usage behaviour is analyzed. The questionnaire includes no validated items that check for usage behaviour. No hypotheses have been proposed with regard to usage behaviour. However, the questionnaire does contain some items from which inferences about usage behaviour can be made. Table II and III from section B of the questionnaire incorporate

six items related to professional social network site usage. In this context professional refers to 'job-oriented'. From these data the following inferences can be made.

Table II and III together pose 6 questions related to professional use of SNS. These data can be analyzed in order to conclude what social network site is predominantly used for professional purposes. For this analysis I will focus on the most popular network sites; Hyves, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn because these are by far the most popular, and to avoid complexity. After adding all values for the professional use questions per social network site, the descriptive statistics present a clear picture (Table 2).

	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
LinkedIn	83	3.476	.907
Facebook	149	1.836	.800
Hyves	150	1.541	.639
Twitter	71	1.967	.888

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the professional usage of SNS

The number of respondents that completed the items about professional usage per social network site roughly coincides with the number of users per social network site as presented in table 1. Some respondents did not complete the entire questionnaire, which causes the difference between these numbers. The means from Facebook and Twitter are almost equal, but low. This indicates a low motivation of the users of these SNS for professional usage of these sites. Hyves scores an even lower mean. Not very surprising is the high mean for LinkedIn. As described in appendix 1 this is a social network site that is specifically designed for professional usage, and it may even be referred to as a professional network site. To investigate if the mean score of linkedIn is significantly higher than those of the other three SNS paired-samples t-tests are performed. These tests prove that the respondents significantly prefer LinkedIn for professional usage over Facebook (paired-sample t-test=11.948, df=62,  $p<.0001$ ), Hyves (paired-sample t-test=11.463, df=48,  $p<.0001$ ), and Twitter (paired-sample t-test=9.377, df=44,  $p<.0001$ ).

Now moving on to the hypotheses from research model 1. The descriptive statistics such as the means, standard deviations, reliability scores of the constructs and the correlation matrix are displayed in table 3. Most reliability scores are acceptable, with an alpha



score of around  $\alpha=0.7$ , except for those of perceptions of external control ( $\alpha=.580$ ) and computer anxiety ( $\alpha=.483$ ). After removing the items with the most deviating mean for both of the constructs, the reliability improved significantly for both perceptions of external control ( $\alpha=.703$ ) and computer anxiety ( $\alpha=.73$ ).

The correlation coefficients (Table 3) are necessary for the regression analysis that will test the hypotheses. There are a lot of significant correlations at the  $p<0.01$  level. For regression analysis to be valid, there need to be significant correlations between the independent and dependent variables. All correlations, except for the correlation between computer self-efficacy and perceived ease of use, are significant. Therefore this variable, computer self-efficacy will be excluded from the final model, even before regression analysis. There is no significant correlation, thus hypothesis 5 is rejected. Based on the data retrieved from the sample there is not enough evidence to conclude that computer self-efficacy has a positive effect on perceived ease of use of SNS for job seekers.

All the other variables do have significant correlations at a  $p<0.01$  level with their dependent variables, as can be concluded from table 3. Perceived usefulness is the first to be analysed as a dependent variable, before perceived ease of use and behavioural intention. The independent variables in this relationship are subjective norm, image, and result demonstrability, as can be seen in the model (fig. 3). Subjective norm explains only 8.6% of the variance in perceived usefulness ( $R^2=.086$ )(appendix 5). Image on the other hand scores much higher. This variable explains 31.4% of the variance in perceived usefulness ( $R^2=.314$ ). Result demonstrability scores the lowest on explained variance with a value of 8.3% ( $R^2=.083$ ). From these data it can be concluded that image is the main predictor of perceived usefulness. Subjective norm and result demonstrability are almost equally weak predictors of perceived usefulness. The simple linear regression analyses show that subjective norm ( $b_1=.263$ ,  $t(227)=4.458$ ,  $p<.0001$ ), image ( $b_1=.654$ ,  $t(227)=9.872$ ,  $p<.0001$ )(appendix 5), and result demonstrability ( $b_1=.377$ ,  $t(227)=4.376$ ,  $p<.0001$ ) (appendix 5) are significantly related to perceived usefulness. Therefore, it is safe to state that based on the data retrieved from the sample there is enough evidence to conclude that subjective norm, result demonstrability, and image have a positive effect on perceived usefulness. This means that hypothesis 1, 4, and 3b are provisionally accepted.

It is also hypothesized that subjective norm positively effects image. Simple linear regression analysis shows that subjective norm significantly ( $b_1=.315$ ,  $t(227)=6.490$ ,  $p<.0001$ ) predicts image ( $R^2=.164$ ). Based on this analysis it is possible to provisionally accept hypothesis 3a: Subjective norm has a positive effect on a job seekers' image.

Hypothesis 2 is rejected. Subjective norm does have a significant direct effect on behavioural intention. Linear regression shows a significant effect ( $b_1=.332$ ,  $t(227)=5.657$ ,  $p<.0001$ ) (appendix 5) and the subjective norm explains 12.8% of the variance in behavioural intention ( $R^2=.128$ ).

The other dependent variable from research model 1, perceived ease of use, is related to perceptions of external control, computer anxiety, computer playfulness, and perceived enjoyment. As discussed earlier, computer self-efficacy is removed from the model since there is no significant correlation with perceived ease of use. All four variables correlate strongly with perceived ease of use (table 3). Perceived enjoyment ( $R^2=.497$ ) and perceptions of external control ( $R^2=.330$ ) are the main predictors of perceived ease of use. Nevertheless, computer playfulness ( $R^2=.144$ ) and computer anxiety ( $R^2=.139$ ) are important predictors as well. Simple linear regression analyses support these inferences. All variables, perceptions of external control ( $b_1=.566$ ,  $t(227)=10.287$ ,  $p<.0001$ ), perceived enjoyment ( $b_1=.561$ ,  $t(227)=14.561$ ,  $p<.0001$ ) (appendix 5), computer anxiety ( $b_1=.409$ ,  $t(227)=5.903$ ,  $p<.0001$ ), and computer playfulness ( $b_1=.422$ ,  $t(227)=5.976$ ,  $p<.0001$ ) (appendix 5) are significantly related to perceived ease of use. Multiple regression shows that, when taken together, perceptions of external control, computer anxiety, computer playfulness and perceived enjoyment explain 63% ( $R^2=.63$ ) of the variance in perceived ease of use.

Based on the data retrieved from the sample there is enough evidence to conclude that perceptions of external control, computer playfulness and perceived enjoyment have a positive effect on the perceived ease of use of SNS for job seekers. In addition it is concluded that computer anxiety has a negative influence on the perceived ease of use of SNS for job seekers. Hypotheses 6, 7, 8 and 9 are provisionally accepted.

## Descriptive statistics &amp; correlations

	Descriptive Statistics			Correlations										
	Mean	SD	Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Behavioural Intention (BI)	Perceived Usefulness (U)	Perceived Ease of Use (EOU)	Result Demonstrability (RD)	Perceptions of External Control (PEC)	Computer Self-Efficacy (CSE)	Image (IMG)	Subjective Norm (SN)	Perceived Enjoyment (ENJ)	Computer Playfulness (PLA)	Computer Anxiety (ANX)
BI	3.5759	.99260	.809	-										
U	2.4389	.93604	.873	.262**	-									
EOU	3.7270	.67016	.674	.433**	.051	-								
RD	3.3642	.71484	.663	.375**	.288**	.538**	-							
PEC	4.1622	.68900	.703	.331**	.121*	.574**	.391**	-						
CSE	2.5181	.91108	.900	.014	.151*	-.032	-.034	-.161**	-					
IMG	2.6167	.81402	.650	.301**	.560**	.189**	.312**	.155*	.092	-				
SN	2.7466	1.07198	.843	.357**	.293**	.185**	.310**	.065	.129*	.405**	-			
ENJ	3.4307	.83967	.806	.575**	.122*	.705**	.463**	.331**	.052	.240**	.373**	-		
PLA	3.5461	.59649	.753	.152*	-.012	.380**	.278**	.293**	-.019	.036	.130*	.293**	-	
ANX	4.4686	.60926	.730	.164**	-.055	.373**	.235**	.611**	-.204**	-.059	.009	.188**	.319**	-

N=229

\* p&lt;.05

\*\* p&lt;.01

Table 3: Descriptive statistics, reliability scores, and correlations of the questionnaire data

Besides checking for the determinants of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, it is also possible to check if the original TAM will remain valid in the case of social network site acceptance. There are no hypotheses in this report that predict relationships. For the sake of this section we adapt the findings from a previous study on this subject (Davis, 1989). Both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use should positively affect behavioral intention. In addition perceived ease of use should positively affect perceived usefulness. Simple linear regression analysis indicates that both perceived usefulness ( $b_1=.273$ ,  $t(227)=3.982$ ,  $p<.0001$ ) (appendix 5) and perceived ease of use ( $b_1=.638$ ,  $t(227)=7.048$ ,  $p<.0001$ ) (appendix 5) are significantly related to behavioral intention, similar to earlier studies. However, contrary to the findings of Davis (1989), perceived ease of use ( $R^2=.188$ ) is a better predictor of behavioral intention than perceived usefulness ( $R^2=.069$ ). Although perceived usefulness is a significant predictor of behavioral intention, it explains only 6.9% of its variance, against 18.8% explained variance by perceived ease of use. In addition, unlike in the original TAM (Davis, 1989) perceived ease of use ( $b_1=.071$ ,  $t(227)=.742$ ,  $p=.459$ ) (appendix 5) is no significant predictor of perceived usefulness, with only 0.3% ( $R^2=.003$ ) explained variance of perceived usefulness.

### Research model 2: The experiment

The descriptive statistics of the variables related to research model 2 are displayed in table 4. Perceived desirability and job pursuit intentions are combined to compute the organizational attractiveness variable. However, in the table these three constructs are all included. The reliability levels of the constructs were all acceptable with values well over the critical level  $\alpha=0.7$ .

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
Content Usefulness	2.813	.939	.887
Perceived Ease of Use	3.699	.749	.882
Job Search Behaviour	1.912	.663	.890
Job Pursuit Intentions	2.294	1.004	.894
Perceived Desirability	3.199	.7225	.843
Organizational Attractiveness (PD+JPI)	2.746	.739	.869

Table 4: Descriptive statistics research model 2.

The correlations coefficients related to research model 2 are displayed in table 5. Job pursuit intentions and perceived desirability are not included in the correlation matrix because together they compute organizational attractiveness. These separate variables are therefore not incorporated in the model, thus there is no need for correlation coefficients. Job search behaviour is added as a control variable. Partial correlation analysis (appendix 5) reveals that job search behaviour shows a significant correlation with employment status ( $r=-.156$ ,  $p=.016$ ) (appendix 5). However, this correlation is regarded as weak in social sciences. Therefore it is concluded that there is no threat for the internal validity (spuriousness).

<b>Correlation Matrix</b>	Content Usefulness	Ease of Use	Organizational Attractiveness
Content Usefulness	-	.506**	.251**
Ease of Use	.506**	-	.252**
Organizational Attractiveness	.251**	.252**	-

N=249

\*  $p<.05$ \*\*  $p<.01$ 

Table 5: Correlation coefficients of the experiment variables

Simple linear regression analysis indicates significant relation between content usefulness and organizational attractiveness ( $b_1=.197$ ,  $t(247)=4.072$ ,  $p<.0001$ ) (appendix 5), as well as between ease of use and organizational attractiveness ( $b_1=.249$ ,  $t(247)=4.088$ ,  $p<.0001$ ) (appendix 5), both with an explained variance of 6.3% ( $R^2=.063$ ). This indicates that these variables are not very strong predictors of organizational attractiveness. However, based on the data retrieved from the sample, there is enough evidence to conclude that both content usefulness and perceived ease of use have a positive effect on organizational attractiveness. Therefore hypotheses 10 and 11 are provisionally accepted.

## Discussion

This chapter contains the interpretations of the statistical results that are reported in the previous chapter. The results are put into the light of the theory that was presented earlier. Again this chapter will be divided into two different sections, one for research model 1 and another for research model 2.

### Research model 1: The questionnaire

The first obvious conclusion that can be drawn from the data is that there are four SNS that clearly enjoy the highest popularity. These are, by order of popularity, Facebook, Hyves, LinkedIn, and Twitter. The other ten SNS that were included in the questionnaire were by far not as popular as these four. Clearly LinkedIn is the designated social network site by the respondents for professional usage. So the first recommendation to professionals and academics would be to focus on LinkedIn for social network site recruitment practices and studies.

One of the most important findings of the study is that perceived ease of use ( $R=.433$ ) has a stronger correlation with behavioural intention than perceived usefulness ( $R=.262$ ). This contradicts with the findings of Davis (1989) that perceived usefulness has a greater influence on behavioural intention than perceived ease of use in the TAM. This might be due to the nature of SNS. SNS are designed for voluntary usage. The stimulus for usage is therefore not an employer who determines the usage of an information system. Another stimulus must be found for voluntary usage; in the case of SNS this is the fun factor. In other literature, that was not introduced before in this paper, SNS are described as hedonic information systems (Rosen & Sherman, 2006), and in order to experience fun (perceived enjoyment), the user must find a system easy to use. This postulates that SNS are designed to be easy in use, and that as a result of this; the users experience the SNS as such. Since perceived ease of use appears to be a very strong determinant of behavioural intention, it is essential to know that perceived enjoyment plays such an important role in determining ease of use. Therefore, another major finding of this study is that perceived enjoyment positively influences perceived ease of use. It shows the strongest correlation coefficient ( $R=.705$ ) and highest explained variance ( $R^2=.497$ ) with perceived ease of use while in the study of Rosen and Sherman

(2006) this correlation was only weak ( $r=.24$ ). To give more insight into these findings the study of Rosen and Sherman (2006) should be given some more attention.

The study by Rosen and Sherman (2006) proposes a model for the acceptance of social network sites. This model is presented in figure 6. Rosen and Sherman (2006) differentiate SNS, as they refer to it, from other information systems. They state that SNS do not have any productive value and serve merely as a hedonic system. The value of such a hedonic system is the fun experienced by the user (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1992; van der Heijden, 2004). In my own definition of professional networking sites as a sub-category of SNS I disagree with this statement. It is therefore that this model is not regarded as representative for professional networking sites. However, the proposed model contains some interesting thoughts with regard to this research. As described, in TAM, perceived ease of use and the perceived usefulness of information systems determine the behavioural intentions of its users (Davis, 1986). Rosen and Sherman (2006) perceive SNS to not have any productive value. Therefore, in their view, TAM does not seem appropriate to investigate the acceptance of this category of social media. Rosen and Sherman (2006) propose that in order to study the acceptance of SNS the perceived usefulness should be replaced by the degree to which a user experiences fun, or in other words; perceived enjoyment. Research model 1 of this study does not include perceived enjoyment as a directly related to intention to use. Nonetheless, perceived enjoyment shows the strongest correlation with behavioural intention ( $r=.575$ ). This supports this theory of Rosen and Sherman (2006). Then again, if SNS are used for recruitment purposes, perceived usefulness cannot be excluded from the model.

The authors also take into account a construct similar to the social presence as used by Chiu, Cheung and Lee (2008) in their model, although in another formulation. They call it perceived number of users and describe a similar relation. This is not included in research model 1 because it is expected that subjective norm is a much more comprehensive construct that covers the effect of perceived number of users. Subjective norm will be elaborated on in the next paragraph. Two other constructs Rosen and Sherman (2006) include in their model are computer playfulness and flow. Computer playfulness is included in research model 1. For the sake of their research the authors linked computer playfulness positively to perceived enjoyment, because an earlier research by Webster and Martocchio (1992) showed that playfulness is associated with

a good mood, and thus with perceived enjoyment. This relation is not included in research model 1 because computer playfulness is categorized as a system-independent anchoring construct and perceived enjoyment as a system-dependent adjustment construct (Venkatesh, 2000). These constructs or determinants are both expected to have a direct effect on perceived ease of use. Interrelationships between separate determinants are not taken into account in research model 1 in order to avoid unnecessary complexity of the model. The last construct added to the model of Rosen and Sherman (2006) is flow. Flow is defined as: “a state of mind sometimes experienced by people who are totally involved in some activity” (Hsu & Lu, 2004). This is not incorporated as a determinant in research model 1. The reason for not including this variable was that Rosen and Sherman (2006) predict no significant relation between flow and perceived enjoyment. This can be explained by the fact that actions on a SNS consist mostly of asynchronous communication, which is not suitable to reach a state of mind described by the definition of flow.

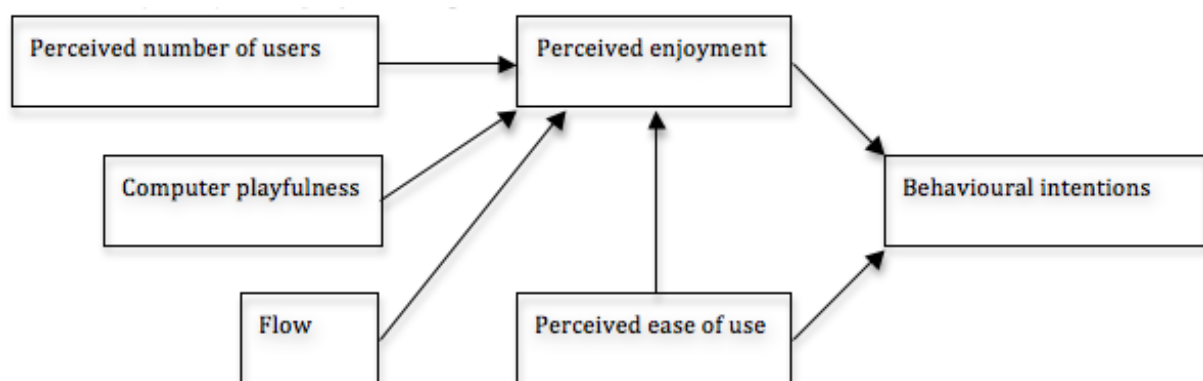


Figure 6: The research model of the acceptance of SNS (Rosen and Sherman, 2006)

The authors predicted significant positive relations between all constructs, except for the relation between flow and perceived enjoyment. They predicted no significant relation in any direction between these variables. Their qualitative research confirmed their predictions on the positive relationships and indicated a possible negative relation between flow and perceived enjoyment. A quantitative research has yet to be performed. The findings of Rosen and Sherman (2006) support the major findings of this research that perceived ease of use is a more important determinant of behavioural intention than perceived usefulness and that perceived enjoyment has a strong direct relation to behavioural intention. However, for the purpose of finding a job, social



network site usage has some usefulness. Therefore it is not possible to completely disregard perceived usefulness as a valid determinant.

To continue with the other findings of this research only two of the nine hypotheses linked to research model 1 were rejected. These are hypothesis 2 and 5. Hypotheses 2 postulates that subjective norm will not have a significant direct effect on behavioural intention. However, the findings of this study do not support this inference. It seems that subjective norm does have a positive direct effect on behavioural intention. This means that if an individual believes that people who are important to him/her think that they should perform certain behaviour, his/her behavioural intention is influenced. They are then more likely to perform such behaviour. Hypothesis 5 states that computer self-efficacy has a positive effect on perceived ease of use of SNS by job seekers. However, due to an insignificant correlation coefficient, this hypothesis was rejected even before the regression analysis. This awareness of ones computer skills does not have any significant effect on perceived ease of use of SNS. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that the computer skills needed to perform the essential actions of social network site usage are very basic. Therefore no highly developed computer skills are needed, which makes these sites very accessible.

The other seven hypotheses are provisionally accepted. The theoretical grounds for these relations are given the chapter about the theoretical framework. There is no need to elaborate on these relationships again in this chapter. Therefore these relationships will be described briefly.

Subjective norm has a positive effect on perceived usefulness. It is believed that if people who are perceived by an individual to be important think that he or she should use SNS when looking for a job, this individuals' perceived usefulness of SNS in finding a job will increase. Individuals are sensitive to someone else's perceptions of usefulness of SNS and might adapt this perception as his/her own. This means that the process of internalization (Kelman, 1958) is at work. Subjective norm does have a positive effect on a job seekers' image, as described by hypothesis 3a. This refers to the process of identification (Kelman, 1958). When an individual complies with the beliefs of others, in this case the belief that using SNS will help in finding a job, his/her image benefits from this behaviour. In addition subjective norm has a positive effect on the perceived usefulness of SNS in finding a job. A good image is associated with more influence,

power, and productivity (Blau, 1964; Pfeffer, 1981, 1982). The last determinant of perceived usefulness is result demonstrability. This determinant has a positive effect on perceived usefulness. A tangible result of using the social network site in order to find a job will increase a persons' perception of the usefulness of SNS.

The data shows that perceptions of external control positively influence the perceived ease of use of SNS in finding a job as described by hypothesis 6. When a person believes that there is availability of hardware, support, or other resource facilitating conditions, his/her perception of the easiness of use of the social network site increases. Computer anxiety has a negative effect on perceived ease of use as was proposed by hypothesis 7. It is not difficult to imagine that a person who is reluctant to use computers, because he/she is anxious of computer usage, perceived SNS as uneasy to use in finding a job. Computer playfulness has a positive effect on the perceived ease of use. People who are playful with computer perceive SNS as easy to use.

### Research model 2: The experiment

Both hypotheses related to research model 2 are accepted. This implies that both content usefulness and ease of use positively relate to organizational attractiveness. When research model 2 is compared to the original TAM, as was discussed earlier in the theoretical framework chapter, these findings are comparable to the earlier findings of Davis (1989) and my own findings from research model 1 that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use positively relate to behavioural intention.

However, regardless of the similarities between the findings from the models, there are striking differences. The correlation coefficient in research model 2 between ease of use and organizational attractiveness ( $R=.252$ ) is very similar to the correlation coefficient between content usefulness and organizational attractiveness ( $R=.251$ ). This is yet another conclusion than those yielded from the original TAM or research model 1. In the original TAM perceived usefulness was a more important determinant than perceived ease of use. Research model 1 from this study resulted in an opposite conclusion and now research model 2 shows two almost similar correlation coefficients. Williamson et al. (2003) found a higher correlation between content usefulness and organizational attractiveness ( $R=.48$ ) than between ease of use and organizational attractiveness ( $R=.39$ ), which is in better support for the findings of Davis (1989). Based on my

findings it is possible to state that in determining the attractiveness of organizations that are represented on SNS, both ease of use and content usefulness are more or less equally important. However in determining the usage behaviour of SNS job seekers ease of use is more important than usefulness. Presumably the difference lies in the subject to be evaluated. In the case of organizations as the subject of evaluation, job seekers attach equally as much value on the information provided by the medium as the ease of use of the medium, in this case the social network site. In the case of the medium, the social network site, as the subject of evaluation, job seekers attach more value to the ease of use of the medium. This is reflected by the relative increased correlation coefficient between ease of use and organizational attractiveness of research model 2 compared with the results of Williamson et al. (2003). Although the absolute figures are much lower, the relative difference between the correlation coefficients disappears. This could be caused by the choice of the medium, SNS instead of corporate recruitment websites. However this is a subject for future research. It is not possible to state that this is a solid conclusion. Nevertheless, the results point in this direction.

Social network sites are a relatively new phenomenon. Its research area is progressing from the literature of social media and subsequently social network sites as becomes clear from the literature review. The scientific relevance of this study is that the results will add new literature to the relatively unexplored field of social network sites. In addition it adds to the existing literature of social media and recruitment. To conclude this section, I will review the most important findings of this study. The first is the model that is developed in the first part of the study: The extended TAM for social network site usage by job seekers. Most of the hypothesized relations are significant. The model gives a good impression of what determines social network site usage by job seekers. This is useful not only for future research, but also for practitioners. The results of this study have implications for the real world. The social relevance of this study contains of the information it gives to practitioners in the field of recruitment and social network sites. Social network sites designers can use the results of this study to design their websites in such a way that it is attractive for an increasing amount of job seekers. For example, the finding that perceived ease of use is a very important determinant of behavioural intention of social network sites should drive social network site designers to make their sites even more easy to use. By doing so, these sites could become a more important medium in the labour market. If more talented job seekers engage in social

network sites usage, these sites will become much more interesting for employers to advertise their job vacancies. This will generate more income for the social network sites. This effect also works the other way around; more job vacancies will generate a higher amount of job seekers and subsequently more social network site users.

Recruiters will also benefit from the results of this study. These findings emphasize the increasing significance of social network sites in recruitment practices. As the world becomes more digital almost every day, professionals in many fields, such as recruitment, have to comply with this development if they want to compete for a talented work force. Recruiters are faced with additional prove that they have to adapt their operations to the needs of the job seekers.

The second most important finding is that for social network sites, perceived ease of use is much more important in predicting behavioural intention than in previous models of technology acceptance. This is presumably due to the nature of social network sites. This is a very interesting subject for future research. Perceived ease of use is relatively less significant. Finally, this study showed that among the respondents LinkedIn is the designated social network site for professional use. Recruiters can use this information to focus on this social network site for effective social network site recruitment efforts.

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