THE USE OF THE INTERNET AS A SITE FOR JOB SEARCHING: A SURVEY OF GRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Bernice Anatama Bangfu, hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Gilbert Tietaah of the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. Acknowledgements have also been given where other works and studies have been cited.

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Date...........................................  Date............................................
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the Almighty God for His faithfulness in my life and to my
Mother, Mrs. Margaret Bangfu; thank you for all the sacrifices you make for me daily.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very grateful to God Almighty for His mercies, faithful kindness and abundant love in my life which have brought me this far.

I am most grateful to my mother Mrs. Margaret Bangfu for all her support, prayers and for being there in every way a mother could possibly be for her daughter. Mum, God richly bless you. To my sisters, Doris, Ruth and Pearl, thank you all for your supportive presence in my life.

My deepest gratitude goes to Dr. Gilbert Tietaah for his guidance and intelligent inputs in every aspect of my dissertation. Dr. Tietaah, you are very patient, kind and understanding. God bless you.

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ABSTRACT

In light of the contemporary presence and pervasiveness of information and communications technologies (ICTs) into practically all facets of social structure and habits of people, this study sought to contribute a technological perspective to the job-search literature from the Ghanaian context. The study was grounded in online job seeking literature and framed within the technology acceptance model (TAM).

The study involved a survey of 150 graduate students from the three graduate hostels of the University of Ghana. In order to find out the relationship between gender and other variables in this research, equal number of male and female respondents were sampled for the study.

Results showed that majority of the respondents perceived online job search to be effective as compared to alternative job search methods. Although minority of the respondents had personal success with online job search, majority were aware of success with online job search by others.

The findings also revealed that “ease of use” and “improved chances of getting a job” were respondents’ biggest motivations for using online job search. The online job seekers surveyed stated that, they faced challenges while undertaking online job search. Some issues raised regarding the challenges of online job search were: concerns about security of personal information, slow feedback or follow up, poor internet access and connection, filling out long application forms amongst others.

The limitation the study had was the lack of probability sampling. In conclusion, more research in the field of internet job search has to be done on online job search websites.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, some background information on the history and growth of the internet is provided to understand the context of this recruitment channel. It also explores the background of the study, internet and job search culture, research problem, objectives and questions. Chapter one further provides the significance of this study as well as explain the organisation of the entire study.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO STUDY

Job search is the process that aims to match job seekers to suitable job opportunities (Green, Hoyos, Li and Owen 2011). From an economics perspective, job-search theory is concerned with individuals’ decisions to accept or reject job offers given the cost of searching and the reservation wage. A sociological perspective on job search takes into account more aspects of the job-search process such as motivating factors leading individuals to search and activities that lead to job offers being made (Green et al 2011).

In the light of the contemporary presence – and even pervasion – of information and communications technologies (ICTs) into practically all facets of social structure and habits of people, this study sought to contribute a technological perspective to the job-search literature from the Ghanaian context.
Green et al (2001) further indicate that job-search methods have traditionally been divided into ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ methods. Formal methods include using the services of employment agencies or answering advertisements published in newspapers, journals and, more recently, the internet. Using one’s personal contacts is among the most studied informal job-search strategies. Green et al (2011) also classify job search behaviour as ‘active’ or ‘passive’ depending on the level of activity that an individual engages in to seek employment, with the former being associated with greater activity than the latter. Another concept used in studies of job search is that of job-search ‘intensity’ – variously measured by time spent looking for jobs, the number of applications made or the number of different job-search methods used (Green, Hoyos, Li and Owen 2011).

Job seekers are usually searching for job postings that they are qualified to apply to. Richardson (2003) refers to job posting as the practice of publicising an open job to employees (often by literally posting it on bulletin boards) and listing its attributes, such as criteria of knowledge, qualification, skill and experience. The purpose of posting vacancies is to bring to the attention of all interested persons (inside or out of the organisation) the jobs that are to be filled.

Traditionally, recruitment was usually conducted internally through the promotion and transfer of existing personnel or through referrals, by current staff members, friends and family members. Referrals are usually word-of-mouth advertisements that are a low-cost way of recruiting.

According to Richardson (2003), internal recruitment does not always produce the number or quality of personnel needed; in such an instance, the organisation needs to recruit from
external sources, either by encouraging walk-in applicants; advertising vacancies in newspapers, magazines and journals, and the visual and/or audio media; using employment agencies to “head hunt”; advertising on-line via the internet; or through job fairs and the use of college recruitment.

1.2 HISTORY AND GROWTH OF THE INTERNET

Some background information on the history and growth of the internet is provided to understand the context of this recruitment channel. The internet is a worldwide group of public and private computers linked together to exchange information. The internet began as the ARPANET during the cold war in 1969 (Barua & Whinston 2000). It was developed by the U.S. Department of Defense’s (DOD) in conjunction with a number of military contractors and universities to explore the possibility of a communication network that could survive a nuclear attack. According to Barua & Whinston (2000), it continued simply because the DOD, its contractors, and the universities found that it provided a very convenient way to communicate.

The main purpose of the internet is to share information. To this end, the internet offers a variety of services. The two most popular are the World Wide Web (WWW) and electronic mail (email). Other commonly used services include newsgroups, file transfer, chatting, and searching. Physically, the internet is a vast network of wires. Multiple high-speed "backbone" cables carry information to a series of other network cables (or nodes), which in turn carry information to smaller outlying cables, and so on.
Users connect to the internet by an Internet Service Provider (ISP) or by a Local Area Network (LAN). ISPs are companies that bring World Wide Web access to individuals. The ISP pays for a very high-speed connection to the internet and then offers the user access to that connection for a monthly or hourly fee. A LAN connects to the internet and is managed by a company, school, university, or other institution. Once linked to the internet, a user can access files and programs stored on other computers and send email messages to anyone else who has an internet account (Netscape 2000).

Growth of the internet has increased over the years. Some claim this is due to the internet facilitating interaction with human behaviour and habits. Parrish (1997) states, it is not just a dynamic network medium but - perhaps just as important - a quickly growing communication infrastructure.

People access the internet from several locations including home, work, school, library or community center, in addition to, new wireless devices that provide access essentially anywhere within the network range.

1.3 THE INTERNET AND JOB SEARCH CULTURE

The world of job search and networking is not the same as it was five years ago. Today it is more important than ever to use technological resources to look for jobs and sell oneself. The traditional standards of personal contact, filling out applications, and sending in résumés still apply, but job seekers must also be able to fill out online applications, email cover letters and résumés, and use social media networking sites to make connections and market themselves. Monster.com, reliefweb, UNjobs and devnetjobs are some of the top online job search sites being used by job seekers worldwide (Capelli 2001).
As Marchal, Mellet and Rieucau (2007) remarked, since the mid 1990s, the extension of the internet into virtually all branches of economic activity has led to the development of a new interactive medium used by job seekers to search for jobs and by employers to locate applicants. Pin, Laorden and Saenz-Diez (2001, p.2) explain that, “Recruitment via the internet or e-recruitment, is a phenomenon that has led to the appearance of a new market in which there is an unprecedented level of interaction between employers and potential employees.” Web-based platforms provide instant access to important information and promise to increase the number of possible matches between firms and applicants.

Job hunting has changed dramatically in the past decade. This is due to the presence and growth of the internet which has become an omnipresent factor in the working experiences of people including the pre-employment job search. Companies and job seekers alike have moved away from traditional print advertising to the internet. Capelli (2001) affirmed that, today, almost all the Fortune 500 companies have internet sites and many smaller companies are recognizing the need for some presence on the internet as well because over eighteen million people are posting their résumés on Monster.com annually.

Furthermore, the internet is clearly beginning to cut into other types of employment advertising revenues. Expenditure on newspaper advertisements and head-hunter retainer fees have dropped in many countries as internet advertising revenues have increased (Boehle, 2000). As more and more job seekers and employers get online, the internet becomes a natural ground for recruiting and job searching. The internet can be used to research companies, obtain current industry information, search and apply for job openings, distribute résumés and network as well as build contacts.
Mang (2012) asserts that one reason why online job search has become so popular is that it has considerably improved the job search process. Employment websites like Monster.com allow job seekers to access thousands of job offers and use intelligent filter mechanisms to find suitable vacancies. She further explains that, online job descriptions provide more detailed information than traditional “help-wanted” ads in newspapers and magazines. Therefore, employers benefit from the better targeting options of internet job advertisements and are able to screen online applications more efficiently. As a result, Mang (2012) indicates that the matching process on the labour market does not only become more efficient but the quality of job matches also increase.

As Stevenson (2008) asserts, beyond the web, email is a vital part of how the internet has potentially changed job search. According to her, through the use of email, personal networks may be a complement to the internet, allowing workers to learn about openings or let others know that they are seeking a new position. Having learned about a position or a company, the internet facilitates applying for openings and communicating with potential employers. This can all be done 24 hours a day, without ever leaving one’s home or work desk.

As the doors of internet access are opened to more people and as the digital divide shrinks through less expensive computers, internet service providers, internet appliances and other internet access devices, internet recruitment for many types of jobs and positions across many industries have the potential for increased application and growth (Haas, Glover, Tucker and Terrien 2001).

Haas et al (2001) further explain that, on a macroeconomic level, some scholars claim that the advances in Information Technology (IT) and particularly the internet have contributed to
the generally favourable economic performance including low inflation, low unemployment, and the apparent acceleration of productivity growth.

In agreement, Blinder (2000) indicates that this economic performance has coincided at about the same time as the rapid growth of the Internet. Blinder stated:

“It is impossible to make a definitive judgment until sufficient time passes to gain some historical perspective, but some evidence points to a recent acceleration of productivity growth—and therefore, of sustainable Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth—at about the time the Internet was diffusing rapidly through the economy.” (Blinder 2000, p. 15).

As Kuhn and Skuterud (2004) remarked, it is not surprising that economists have speculated about the potential effects of such a technology on the labour markets. Arthur (2001) and Freeman (2002) were amongst the first to suggest that the internet was dramatically changing the functioning of labour markets. Theoretically, shifting job search and recruitment activities to the internet reduces frictional unemployment and improves the quality of job matching by reducing search costs, increasing contact opportunities and rationalizing the screening process of job applicants (Marchal, Mellet and Rieucau 2007).

Although it may be true that most computer related companies find internet recruitment more useful, web searching and web recruiting are not limited to high-tech industries (Caggiono, 1999). Martinez (2000) affirms that web recruiting is not limited to high-tech industries because 65% of all internet job seekers are from non-technical professions and most new university graduates now view the internet as a major source of help in locating job opportunities.
Research shows that job hunting is significantly related to job dissatisfaction (Dalton & Todor, 1993). However, a dissatisfied employee might not seek employment elsewhere because he/she does not have the time or resources to search for another job. The advantages the internet presents to the job seeker makes it the greatest solution to this problem. For workers, the internet allows them to gain quick and easy access to information on a wide range of job possibilities twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, thereby resolving potential conflicts between employees’ current job responsibilities and the time demands associated with active job hunting (Maher, 2000; Silverman, 2000). This is particularly valuable for people who cannot job hunt during regular working hours or who are seeking employment in another geographic area or different career fields. There are no geographic-boundaries to job searching when using the internet. A search can include any part of the job seekers’ country or any other country. Furthermore, the use of internet information and resources has an added advantage of being mostly free.

Internet job hunting also gives employees the opportunity to look for jobs without taking any visible or public action, thereby enabling individuals wanting to exit their current jobs to do so without incurring the displeasure of supervisors who will be unhappy with open acts of disloyalty. Also, for some job seekers, internet job hunting serves as a means of eliminating or lessening the amount of interpersonal awkwardness associated with selling oneself or soliciting job offers in person (Leonard, 2000). Using the internet also demonstrates leading-edge job skills that set one apart from other job-seekers and posting a résumé on internet sites provides maximum exposure with minimum effort. Grooss (2006) indicates that, the speed, ease of use and widespread availability of the internet, makes this medium particularly popular with graduates, who view the internet as a major source of job opportunities.
The internet represents a powerful, fast-changing fluid source of information although it is not without some difficulties and frustrations. Leonard (2000) therefore cautions that, users of the internet must be aware that the internet is an ever-changing medium; sites that are here today may be gone tomorrow. It therefore does not serve as a good reference point. The internet is becoming more and more commercial and many sites that promise help for the job-seeker may simply want to sell something. Also, the internet has always been faced with the accuracy problem. Just because it appears on the internet does not mean that it is true or accurate (Leonard 2000).

Moreover, evidence suggests that many companies face difficulties in using the internet effectively, in particular when they are recruiting large volumes of job applicants such as graduates, as they are struggling to cope with the high amount of unsuitable applications (Gooss 2006).
1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Ghana has not been left out of global internet advancements. Digital technology, social media and other online media outlets are almost as pervasive in Ghana as they are in other parts of the world. According to the National Communications Authority (NCA) (telecom data subscription trends in Ghana for 2014), there were 12,820,334 mobile data subscribers in Ghana as at February 2014. From the statistics, many Ghanaians now have access to the internet and therefore make use of it in many unconventional ways, including job searching.

Two implications of this growth in utility and potential of ICTs and the internet in particular are worth exploring. First, the literature suggests that, ICTs, mobile technology and the internet are a growing industry that both create jobs and provide the tools for leveraging the opportunities in non-ICT industries. On the other hand, while there is no reliable data on the employment statistics in Ghana, recent agitations on the job-search market front, including the formation of a pressure group called Unemployed Graduates Association of Ghana (UGAG), suggests a large pool of job seekers in the country. This being the case, it would seem that empirical insights on the possibilities offered by the internet for creating as well as enabling the employment needs of potential job seekers is an important research mandate.

Although internet penetration rates in Ghana have been on the rise in recent times and despite the fact that its presence has significantly changed and improved the channels of communication between employers and job seekers, there has been little empirical research and evidence on the use, role and effectiveness of the internet in the job search process in Ghana. A significant portion of the existing literature on internet job search has been conducted within western societies, by western scholars, reflecting western norms. Most of these studies focused on the internet job search process from the point of view of the
recruiter, and dealt especially with perception of company attractiveness (Parry and Tyson 2008; Marr 2007; Williamson, Lepak and King 2003).

This study, therefore sought to fill a research gap by contributing a Ghanaian (and African) perspective to the literature on the role and utility of the internet in the job-search practices of potential job seekers.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Three objectives were pursued in this study:

1. To find out the factors that influence graduate students’ use of the internet for job searching.
2. To examine the perceived effectiveness of internet job search
3. To investigate the challenges encountered while using the internet as a site for job searching.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were posed to provide specific focus for the goal of the study:

1. What factors influence graduate students’ use of the internet for job search?
2. How effective is the internet as a job search method?
3. What challenges are encountered in the internet job search process?
1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY
This study is significant as there is fairly limited existing literature on online job search in Ghana. This study also explored the phenomenon within the Ghanaian context by giving an account of the experiences and opinions of graduate students of the University of Ghana with regards to online job search and recruitment. Moreover, it provided an understanding of the issues that graduate students identified as useful or problematic while using the internet as a means of seeking and applying for jobs.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY
The study is organised into five chapters. Following this introductory chapter, the theoretical framework and relevant literature are presented in chapter two. Chapter three covers the methodology used in the study. Chapter four presents the findings from the study which is followed by discussions, recommendations and conclusion of the study in chapter five.
CHAPTER TWO
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the theoretical framework in which this study was situated. The tenets of the Technology Acceptance Model were examined within the focus of the study on factors influencing the use of the internet as a site for job search among graduate students of the University of Ghana. The chapter further reviews existing literature on studies related to the present study.

2.1 TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is one of the most influential extensions of Ajzen and Fishbein’s theory of reasoned action (TRA). TRA and TAM, both of which have strong behavioural elements, assume that when someone forms an intention to act, they will be free to act without limitation. In the real world however, there will be many constraints, such as limited freedom to act (Bagozzi, Davis & Warshaw 1992).

TAM was developed by Fred Davis and Richard Bagozzi (Davis 1989; Bagozzi, Davis & Warshaw 1992) based on the theory of reasoned action and it deals more specifically with the prediction of the acceptability of an information system.

The purpose of this model is to predict the acceptability of a tool and to identify the modifications which must be brought to the system in order to make it acceptable to users. This model suggests that the acceptability of an information system is determined by two main factors:
1. Perceived usefulness (PU) and

2. Perceived ease of use (PEOU)

“Perceived usefulness” is defined as being the degree to which a person believes that the use of a system will improve his performance. “Perceived ease of use” refers to the degree to which a person believes that the use of a system will be effortless (Davis 1989).

As demonstrated in the Theory of Reasoned Action, the Technology Acceptance Model postulates that the use of an information system is determined by the behavioral intention, but on the other hand, that the behavioral intention is determined by the person’s attitude towards the use of the system and also by his perception of its utility. According to Davis, the attitude of an individual is not the only factor that determines his use of a system, but it is also based on the impact which it may have on his performance. By extrapolation therefore, even if a potential employee does not welcome an information system, the probability that he will use it is high if he perceives that the system will improve his job search prospects. Besides, the Technology Acceptance Model hypothesizes a direct link between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. With two systems offering the same features, a user will find more useful the one that he finds easier to use (Dillon and Morris 1996). That being the case, if graduate students perceive the internet search platform as easy to navigate, they should prefer the internet for job search purposes to the alternatives.

**Figure 1: Technology acceptance model from Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989)**

![Technology acceptance model](image)
According to Davis (1986), “perceived ease of use” also influences in a significant way the attitude of an individual through two main mechanisms: self-efficacy and instrumentality. Self-efficacy is a concept developed by Bandura (1982) which explains that the more a system is easy to use, the greater the user’s sense of efficacy should be. Moreover, a tool that is easy to use will make the user feel that he has control over what he is doing (Lepper 1985). Efficacy is one of the main factors underlying intrinsic motivation (Bandura 1982) and it is what illustrates here the direct link between “perceived ease of use” and attitude. “Perceived ease of use” can also contribute in an instrumental way to improving a person’s performance. Due to the fact that the user will have to deploy less effort with a tool that is easy to use, he will be able to spare efforts to accomplish other tasks (Davis 1986).

It is however interesting to note that the research presented by Davis (1989) to validate his model, demonstrates that the link between the intention to use an information system and “perceived usefulness” is stronger than “perceived ease of use”. According to this model, we can therefore expect that the factor which influences a user the most is the perceived usefulness of a tool.

Although the initial TAM model was empirically validated, it explained only a fraction of the variance of the outcome variable, IT usage (from 4% to 45%, according to McFarland and Hamilton, 2006). Therefore, many authors have refined the initial model, trying to find the latent factors underlying “perceived ease of use” and “perceived usefulness”. In TAM2, Venkatesh and Davis (2000) showed that social influence processes (subjective norm, voluntarity, image) and cognitive instrumental processes (job relevance, output quality, and results demonstrability) affected “perceived usefulness” and intention to use. A notable refinement of the TAM model is proposed by McFarland and Hamilton (2006). Their model assumes that six contextual variables (prior experience, other's use, computer anxiety, system
quality, task structure, and organisational support) affect the dependant variable system usage through three mediating variables (computer efficacy, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness). The model also postulates direct relations between the external variables and system usage (see Figure 2) and not only mediation through “perceived ease of use” and “perceived usefulness”.

**Figure 2: Adding contextual specificity to the Technology Acceptance Model from McFarland & Hamilton (2006)**

The technology acceptance model 1 (TAM 1) is best suited for this study because the focus of this study is to find out the factors that influence graduate students’ use of the internet for job searching. The findings will be used to test the validity of the tenets of TAM 1 in terms of the two main factors (perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use) the model advances as what will mainly influence an individual in the adoption of a new technology.
2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.3 INTRODUCTION

A number of research works have been undertaken to explore the use of the internet for job search by job seekers generally. For the purposes of this study, related research materials reviewed focused on the use and effectiveness of online job search, factors that influence the use of the internet for job search, online job search and unemployment durations and job search methods used by university graduates.

2.4 THE USE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ONLINE JOB SEARCH AND E-RECRUITMENT

As an emerging phenomenon, there has been substantial research interest and focus on finding out the frequency and effectiveness of internet job search and e-recruitment among job seekers and organisations respectively. Kuhn and Skuterud (2000) examined the frequency and incidence of internet job search among US workers, both across demographic groups and by labour force status as well as the relation between internet search and the more “traditional” job search methods listed in the current population statistics (CPS) basic monthly survey, over the period 1994 to 1999.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the findings indicated that internet job search was more common among unemployed jobseekers than in any other labour force status group. The fraction of unemployed jobseekers who used the internet to look for a new job exceeded those who used six of the nine “traditional” methods listed in the basic CPS monthly survey: private employment agencies, friends/relatives, school/university employment centers, union/professional registers, placed or answered ads, and “other” active methods.
Reporting on a survey of recruitment activities, Parry and Tyson (2008) investigated the usage and perceived success of both corporate and commercial web sites by employers in the UK over a six year period. In addition, 20 interviews with users and providers of online recruitment were conducted in order to provide a deeper exploration of the factors that may affect the success of these methods. The results indicated that the most common reasons why organisations used corporate or commercial websites were cost effectiveness, ease of use for candidates, to obtain a larger candidate pool, ease of use for the organisation, speed to hire and company policy. The results also showed that most of those organisations that used online recruitment perceived that they did so successfully. However, when compared to some recruitment methods such as employment agencies, online methods were not seen as more successful.

A 2002 study conducted by Feldman and Klass sought to examine the experiences of managers and professionals searching for jobs via the internet. Survey results from 722 respondents (from 28 states of the USA) suggested that facility with internet navigation is significantly associated with the amount of general job searching, particularly for those who want to explore job options initially in private without fear of retribution from supervisors. The data also suggested that managers and professionals were more likely to use the internet for job hunting when the geographical scope of the job hunt is wide, when a major salary increase is desired, and when both small and large firms are being considered as potential employers.

The use of the internet was however perceived as a somewhat less effective job search strategy than personal networking, but far superior to searching for jobs through newspaper ads and “cold calling.” Major issues found to impede the effectiveness of online recruiting
were the degree and speed of follow-up on on-line applications, lack of specific and relevant job descriptions on some company websites, concerns about the security of personal information, and difficulty in customizing, formatting, and downloading resumes to companies’ specifications (Feldman and Klass 2002).

Using the concept of self efficacy from the social learning theory as a guide, Green, Hoyos, Li and Owen (2011) undertook a desk research using labour force survey data on job search. The study was on the use of the internet in job search over the period 2006 to 2009. The findings revealed a significant and consistent decreasing trend in the use of the internet to look for work as people age, with the youngest age groups (those aged 16-24 years) being most likely to use the internet in their search for work and the oldest age groups being least likely to do so. There was a very significant positive relationship between education and use of the internet in job search, with those individuals with degrees being most likely to use the internet in their job search. Holding all other factors constant, there was a significant and consistent increasing trend among job seekers in the use of the internet over time from 2006 to 2009. This emphasises the increasing importance of use of the internet in job search.

Flowing from the above research by Green et al (2011) which revealed young people as being most likely to use the internet in their search for work, Kuhn and Mansour (2013), sought to find out how effective internet job search had become by using data on young American job seekers during the period 2005-2008. The data was taken from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. Correlating with previous research results, they found that unemployed persons who look for work online are re-employed about 25 percent faster than comparable workers who do not search online. Internet job search appears to be most effective in reducing unemployment durations when used to contact friends and relatives, to send out
resumes or fill out applications, and also to look at ads. The study detected a weak positive relationship between internet job search and wage growth between jobs.

With somewhat contrary findings to previous research results, Marr (2007) undertook a nine year longitudinal study to look into the effectiveness of the internet as a recruitment source in a large university in south-east Queensland. The research was designed with two studies to capture two perspectives. Applicant perspectives were assessed by conducting a survey among job applicants and organisational perspectives were captured through interviews with human resource practitioners of eight mid to large sized organisations. The results indicated that the quality of applicants generated by e-recruitment is equivalent to or less than other sources, therefore the researchers conclude that it is not the most effective recruitment source.

Beard, Ford, Saba and Seals Jr. (2010) also undertook a study on internet use and job search. Data on internet use, (un)employment, and other covariates of interest came from the 2007 Internet and Computer Use Supplement to the then Population Survey. This data allows internet use to be measured in three ways: Dialup use at home, Broadband use at home, and Public use (such as at a public library). The study combined regression and propensity score methods to estimate the effect of internet use on job search. The researchers exploited the distinction between the unemployed and the discouraged, where both desired employment but the latter had ceased active job search due to negative beliefs about the labour market. Results indicated that, broadband internet use at home or at public locations reduced discouragement by over 50 percent. The findings suggested that, internet use keeps the jobless active in job search and may be equated to more employment. The results also demonstrated that, public connections (e.g., at libraries) in unserved and underserved areas may produce substantial societal benefits.
2.5 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE USE OF THE INTERNET FOR JOB SEARCHING

In South Africa, Pavon and Brown (2010) researched into the factors influencing the adoption of the World Wide Web (WWW) for job seeking. The purpose of this study was to gain greater insight into the factors that influence the adoption of the internet for job-seeking within a South African context. The impact of the internet and newspaper-reading habits on the adoption process was of specific interest. Data was gathered by survey through telephonic interviews with 228 job seekers applying for information technology (IT) work in Cape Town, South Africa. The findings showed that the income of a job-seeker influences the favourability of internet facilitating conditions they encounter. Facilitating conditions in turn influence internet usage habits. Such habits influence performance expectancy, effort expectancy and intentions to use the internet for job-seeking. The actual extent of internet usage for job-seeking is positively influenced by these usage intentions and negatively influenced by newspaper-reading habits.

De la Fuente (2007) conducted a reverse to the above research to discover what factors might prevent an unemployed person from using the internet while looking for a job. The assumption underlying this research was that factors which were found in the past to influence both traditional job search intensity and internet use will have a strong connection to the internet job search. The factors included in the present research, which were hypothesized to be significantly related to the internet job search were self-efficacy (specifically internet self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy) and social support. In addition, internet use, traditional job search intensity, e-mail use, and spousal support were measured. Findings from a survey of 371 unemployed Jewish Israeli job seekers, approached in 17 government unemployment offices, showed that all of the variables examined had a
significant positive relationship with internet job search intensity, besides social support. A regression analysis revealed that the most important factors for the internet job search are traditional job search intensity, internet use, internet self-efficacy, and e-mail use, in that order.

In a conference article on “The use of the internet in the job search process in European countries: the position of Croatia”, Dumicic (2011) presented data exploration and regression analysis of the percentage of individuals using the internet in their job search and six independent variables (averages for the period 2004-2008) for EU-27 countries, Iceland, Turkey and Croatia. Among the four regression models, this paper favoured the multiple linear regression model with two regressors for 28 countries. Both regressors were statistically significant, explaining the vast majority of the total sum of squares. As far as the studied variables are concerned, Croatia did not differ significantly from other European countries.

2.6 ONLINE JOB SEARCH AND UNEMPLOYMENT DURATIONS
The studies reviewed here were undertaken to find out how fast job seekers got employed when they used the internet as a site for job search. It also explains the quality of job matching obtained from e-recruitment.

In 2002, a study conducted by Kuhn and Skuterud sought to find out which types of unemployed workers looked for work online and whether internet job searchers became re-employed more quickly. The results showed that internet job searchers have observed characteristics that are typically associated with shorter unemployment spells, and therefore spend less time unemployed. This unemployment differential is however eliminated and in
some cases reversed when observable characteristics are held constant. It was therefore concluded that either internet job search is ineffective in reducing unemployment durations, or internet job searchers are negatively selected on unobservables (Kuhn and Skuterud, 2002).

Similarly, Suvankulov, Keung Lau and Chi Chau (2012) aimed in their study, to estimate the impact of job search on the internet on the probability of re-employment and the duration of unemployment spells. The study used national panel data-sets from Germany (SOEP 2003-2007) and South Korea (KLIPS 1996-2006). The comparative study also explored duration analysis with the aim of estimating the impact of internet job search on the duration of unemployment. The findings were as follows; in Germany and South Korea job seekers who used the internet had a 7.1 and 12.7 percentage point higher probability, respectively, of being re-employed in the next 12 months. Furthermore, job seekers who used the internet had a shorter duration of unemployment in both Germany and South Korea. The findings of the research therefore indicated that the internet is beneficial and should be a part of job search efforts.

In a study which sought to examine the impact of the internet on worker flows and job matching, Stevenson (2006) used data from the August 2000 and September 2001 Current Population Statistics (CPS) Computer and Internet Use Supplements for the United States of America. Findings from this study were similar to previous research where a positive impact of the internet on unemployment duration was found. The findings also demonstrated the importance of including flows between employment to employment in an analysis of the impact of the internet. The results suggested that over 80 percent of online job seekers were usually already employed at the time of their job seeking and internet users were more likely
to change jobs and less likely to transition to unemployment. Furthermore, those who used the internet had greater wage growth when changing jobs.

In another study, Fountain 2005 researched about finding a job in the internet age. Using longitudinal data on two samples of unemployed job searchers in 1998 and 2000, the researcher established a rise in use of the internet as a job-search strategy and assessed whether searching online increased the short-term probability of finding a job. Results suggested that, the contribution of the internet to an unemployed job searcher’s information source could have provided a small advantage only to a certain degree. Thus, the extent to which other job seekers were not using the internet was perhaps due to an inverse relationship between search and screening costs in a two-sided market.

In investigating the association of online job search and matching quality using individual-level data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), Mang (2012) found that job changers who found their new job online were better matched than their counterparts who found their new job through newspapers, friends, job agencies, or other channels. Therefore, compared to newspapers and other traditional employment resources, online job boards presumably led to better matches by providing a wider choice of job advertisements and more sophisticated methods for finding suitable vacancies.
2.7 JOB SEARCH METHODS USED BY UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

This section of the existing literature reviewed is most relevant to this study since it seeks to examine the use of the internet as a site for job search by graduate students of the University of Ghana. This section reviews studies conducted to find out the general job search methods used by graduates in other parts of the world.

Try (2005) used data from the Norwegian Graduate Surveys 1995–2000, to investigate university graduates’ entry into the labour market and the use of job search methods. The study revealed that the two most important new search methods among university graduates in Norway were the private employment services (PES) and the internet. In sum, 47% of the graduates had used the internet as a job search method. The increasing importance of new search methods was seen from the increase in graduates reporting that they had used other search channels than the traditional ones in the period 1996–1999. At the same time, the use of the formal search-methods (PES and ads) declined. This decline could be a result of the introduction of new search methods, if the new methods were used as alternatives to the traditional ones.

In a study by Khan, Awang and Ghouri (2013) which sought to examine the relationship between the recruitment sources, job seekers’ perception and intention to pursue the job, data was collected from 257 respondents (students from three universities in Karachi, Pakistan) and analysed in relation to the research objectives. The findings of the study showed that, among university students in Pakistan, the internet is the most preferred source to search for jobs among other recruitment sources. Furthermore, it was suggested that the effectiveness of e-recruitment depends upon the placement of advertisements and also, salary is the most influential motivator to find interest in the job applied for. Lastly, statistics of the study found
that the recruitment sources and applicants’ perceptions of jobs significantly influenced the intention to pursue the position applied for by the job seeker.

Gooss (2006) studied the effectiveness of online graduate recruitment by conducting interviews with a sample of eight international Masters students of the Nottingham University Business School (NUBS). The results of these interviews indicated that the graduates perceived the internet as a fast and efficient job search tool that provides immediate access to a lot of up-to-date information. However, the interview data also suggested that the graduates experienced major difficulties as they looked and applied for jobs on the internet. The factors that hinder the effective use of the internet are the lack of relevant and specific information about the job and the company on a company's Web site, extremely long and time-consuming application forms, as well as poor web site layouts and user-unfriendly web site navigation. Other factors that the graduates identified as problematic were insufficient and slow feedback as well as low degree of personal contact.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION
This chapter describes and explains the method used in undertaking this research and discusses the research design. Specifically, this includes a description and justification of the use of the survey method, the study area and population of the research. It also discusses the sampling method and data analysis technique used. The study is quantitative in nature and will give an account of the use of the internet as a site for job search by University of Ghana (UG) graduate students.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN
Since this study sought to measure the variables under consideration, the quantitative approach, employing the survey method was used. Quantitative research generally uses numbers to communicate how often a variable is present (Wimmer and Dominick 2010). A survey is a research method used to gather information from a selected group of people through the use of standardised questionnaires or structured interviews. Surveys are generally standardized to ensure that they have reliability and validity (Wimmer and Dominick 2010). Standardization is also important so that the results can be generalized to the larger population. The quantitative method was particularly useful and suitable for this study as the use of numbers allowed for greater precision in reporting results.
3.2 DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

The instrument/tool used to gather the data was a self-administered 19-item standardised questionnaire with both close and open ended items which was distributed to respondents. It was divided into two broad sections. The first section addressed questions on the internet use habits of graduate students and especially their job search activities on the internet. A screener question was used to ensure that only respondents who use the internet for job searching were included. The second section comprised questions on respondents’ demographics. The variables of particular interest in the questionnaire included factors influencing the use of the internet for job search, effectiveness of online job search and challenges of online job search.

3.3 STUDY AREA

The study took place at the University of Ghana (UG). UG was selected for this study because its graduate students make up the population of the study. Specifically, graduate students who were resident at the three graduate hostels were sampled for the study. A formal request was sent to the manager of the graduate hostels in order to obtain the total number of students resident in each of the three graduate hostels. This information was needed to help decide the number of students to sample from each hostel. The statistics showed that currently, Valco phase 1 has a total of 192 postgraduate students made up of 114 males and 78 females. The total number of students in Valco phase 2 is 190 made up of 108 males and 82 females. For Legon Hall Annex C, there is a total of 66 post graduate students made up of 33 males and females each.
3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The target population for the study comprised of all graduate students of UG. A total of 150 students drawn from the graduate student population of the university were sampled for this study. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2010), the required sample size for a study depends on at least one or more of the following factors: project type, project purpose, project complexity, amount of error tolerated, time constraints, financial constraints and previous research in the area. The sample size of this study was determined based on the project type. In order to find out the relationship between gender and other variables in this research, equal number of male and female respondents were sampled for the study.

3.5 SAMPLING STRATEGY

A total of 150 respondents were sampled for this study. These respondents were sampled from the various graduate hostels of the University of Ghana. There are three graduate hostels in UG, they are: Legon Hall Annex C, Valco Phase 1 and Valco Phase 2. The sampling strategy used to obtain respondents was as follows: Sixty (60) respondents each were sampled from ‘Valco phase 1’ and ‘Valco phase 2’ and 30 respondents from ‘Legon Hall Annex C’ to make the total number of 150. The respondents sampled from each hostel were made up of an equal number of males and females. Respondents who had used the internet to search for jobs were identified and asked to fill out the questionnaires. Specifically, a screener question was posed on whether respondents had ever used the internet to search for a job. Only those who responded “Yes” were interviewed (see Appendix One) because the research required the views of graduate students who had actually searched for jobs online. This was in order to find out what factors influenced them to do so, how effective it was for them and what challenges they faced amongst others.
3.6 PILOT TEST

A pilot test is done to determine if there are any flaws, limitations or weaknesses in the questionnaire design, so as to allow for revisions prior to the implementation of the study (Turner, 2010). The research instrument was pre-tested on 10 respondents who were purposefully selected for the pilot test. The test was done as a trial run of the instrument used in the study. Respondents used in the pre-test were not used in the actual survey.

3.7 DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE

The questionnaires were distributed to an equal number of male and female graduate students who have used the internet to search for jobs before. A screener question was used to determine those who have used the internet for this purpose. The question was “Have you ever used the internet to search for a job?” Graduate students who had never searched for a job on the internet were not allowed to fill the questionnaires.

A total of 150 questionnaires were administered to graduate students in the various graduate hostels using the strategy explained under sampling strategy.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected was screened to ensure that all questions were answered in order not to reject any of the questionnaires. The answers were number-coded and entered into computer software. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to facilitate the analysis of the data gathered. Descriptive statistics in the forms of frequency distribution, percentages, graphs, tables and charts were used to interpret and analyse the data.
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS OF STUDY

4.0 INTRODUCTION
This chapter focuses on the findings from the investigation into online job search by graduate students. The findings are revealed through various factors such as perceived effectiveness of online job search and factors influencing the use of the internet as a site for job search. One hundred and fifty questionnaires were completed and analysed, forming the basis of this discussion which is presented in separate themes and represented using appropriate statistical techniques in the form of tables, charts and graphs.

4.1 FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE
The respondents were asked how often they used the internet generally. Figure 3 aggregates the responses on the frequency of internet use by graduate students. More than eight out of ten respondents (81.30%) rated their use of the internet as “very often”. This was followed by less than one third (14.0%) who used the internet “often” and only 4.7% reported their use of the internet as “not often”.

FIGURE 3: FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE
4.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE

To find out whether respondents’ gender affected their frequency of internet use, the variables ‘gender’ and ‘frequency of internet use’ were cross tabulated.

**TABLE 1: COMPARISON BETWEEN GENDER AND FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>How often do you use the internet?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84.0%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in the table above (Table 1) show the findings. Out of the total number of male respondents, close to eight out of ten (78.7%) respondents said they used the internet “very often”, 12.0% used it “often” and 9.3% did not use the internet often. Interestingly, more than eight out of ten (84.0%) female respondents, forming the majority of respondents, reported their frequency of internet use as “very often”, 16.0% used it “often” and none of the females recorded their use of the internet as “not often”.

4.3 CATEGORY OF ONLINE JOB SEARCH

The respondents were asked to choose the category of job they searched for on the internet. This question was asked to find out if there is a relationship between the medium used (internet) and the category of jobs the respondents searched for. The figure below (Figure 4) shows the categories of jobs respondents searched for online. Interestingly, although the internet is an ICT medium, only 8.0% of respondents used the internet to search for IT related
jobs only, while 10.7% searched for both IT and non-IT related categories of jobs online. This means that the overwhelming majority (81.3%) of the respondents used the internet for the non-IT related job category only.

**FIGURE 4: CATEGORY OF ONLINE JOB SEARCH**

![Category of Online Job Search](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IT related job</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-IT related job</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND CATEGORY OF JOB SEARCH

To find out if respondents’ gender had an effect on the category of job searched for on the internet, the variables ‘gender’ and ‘category of job search’ were cross tabulated. The data in the table below (Table 2) show the findings. Out of the total number of male respondents, one of ten (10.7%) said they used the internet to search for IT related jobs. The majority (81.3%) said they used it for non IT related jobs and fewer than one-tenth (8.0%) used it for both categories. On the other hand, only one in twenty (5.3%) of the female respondents reported that they used the internet for IT related job search. Interestingly, the same number of female respondents (81.3%) as the males used the internet for non-IT related job search and 13.3% females used it for both categories of jobs. This means that more males than females used the
internet for IT related job search whiles an equal number of males and females searched for non-IT related jobs online.

**TABLE 2: COMPARISON BETWEEN GENDER AND CATEGORY OF JOB SEARCH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>What category of job did you search for on the internet?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IT related job</td>
<td>Non-IT related job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESPONDENTS’ UNITS AND CATEGORY OF JOB SEARCH**

In order to find out the relationship between units of the university respondents belonged to and their corresponding job search categories, the variables “units of the university” and “job category” were cross tabulated.

The findings of the cross tabulation are displayed on Table 3 below. Out of the total number of students surveyed from the various units of the university, majority from each unit said they used the internet to search for jobs in the non-IT job category. There was therefore no significant relationship between units of the university respondents belonged to and the category of job search as there did not seem to be much difference between courses studied and category of online job search.
TABLE 3: COMPARISON BETWEEN UNIVERSITY UNITS AND JOB CATEGORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>What category of job did you search for on the internet?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IT related job</td>
<td>Non-IT related job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND CATEGORIES OF ONLINE JOBS SEARCHED FOR

To find out if there was a relationship between respondents’ age categories and the categories of jobs they search for online, the appropriate variables were cross-tabulated as seen in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4: COMPARISON BETWEEN AGE CATEGORY AND JOB CATEGORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age category</th>
<th>What category of job did you search for on the internet?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IT related job</td>
<td>Non-IT related job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 - 39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For all three job categories, majority of respondents who searched for jobs in those categories fell within the youngest age category (18 – 28 years) while the minority fell within the older age category (40 – 50 years). From the data, there seem to be a decline in online job search for all three job categories as people get older. This finding seems to correlate the evidence and conclusions of previous studies, which suggest that younger people are more technology-savvy – and therefore use more ICT-enabled media platforms – than older generations.

4.7 GETTING A JOB THROUGH ONLINE SEARCH

The study sought to find out the success rate of online job search. The evidence was obtained through two questions. With the first question, respondents were asked if they had ever been successful in getting a job through online search and the figure below (figure 5) shows the findings. Nearly two thirds (74.0%) reported that they had never been successful in getting a job using the internet whiles the remaining 26.0% admitted that they had ever been successful.

FIGURE 5: PERSONAL SUCCESS WITH ONLINE JOB SEARCH
On the other hand, the second question sought to find out if respondents knew anyone who had been successful in getting a job through online search. Interestingly, as Figure 6 below shows, over half (60.7%) of the respondents admitted to knowing people who had been successful with online job search while 39.3% did not know anyone who was successful in that regard. Comparing the two graphs, one can suggest that a key reason why respondents continued using the online job search method even though many of them were not successful in finding jobs was because majority of them knew others who had been successful with online job search.

**FIGURE 6: AWARENESS OF SUCCESS WITH ONLINE JOB SEARCH BY OTHERS**

![Graph showing awareness of success with online job search by others.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>39.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.8 EFFECTIVENESS OF ONLINE JOB SEARCH

A key objective of the study was to find out the perceived effectiveness of the internet as a site for job search. Respondents were therefore asked how effective they perceived online job search to be. Figure 7 below indicates that less than one third (22.0%) of the respondents perceived online job search to be “very effective” whiles more than four out of ten
respondents (42.0%) representing the majority, perceived it as “effective”. The respondents who perceived internet job search as ineffective were a little over one third (36.0%) of the total respondents.

FIGURE 7: EFFECTIVENESS OF ONLINE JOB SEARCH

4.9 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF ONLINE JOB SEARCH.

In order to find out whether respondents’ ages affected how effective they perceived internet job search to be, the appropriate variables were cross-tabulated.

From the table (Table 5), majority of the respondents who perceived online job search to be “Very effective” and “Effective” belonged to the youngest age category (18 – 28 years). Again, none of the respondents within the oldest age category (40 – 50 years) perceived online job search to be “Very effective”. It can therefore be concluded from the data that the older the respondent, the less effective they perceive the online job search option to be. This is not surprising, since the literature indicates that older generations of job seekers tend to be less technologically savvy than younger persons.
TABLE 5: COMPARISON BETWEEN AGE AND PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF ONLINE JOB SEARCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age category</th>
<th>How effective do you perceive internet job search to be?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very effective</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 - 39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.10 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF ONLINE JOB SEARCH.

Similarly, respondents’ gender and perceived effectiveness of online job search were cross-tabulated to find out if there was a difference in perceptions between men and women.

TABLE 6: COMPARISON BETWEEN RESPONDENTS’ GENDER AND PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF ONLINE JOB SEARCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>How effective do you perceive internet job search to be?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very effective</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table 6, majority of both male and female respondents perceived online job search as “very effective” and “effective”. This shows that, both male and female respondents had similar tendencies of perception on the effectiveness of online job search. Perhaps, the more remarkable difference is that more females (2 in 5) than males (less than 1 in 3) thought online job search was “not effective”.

4.11 GENERAL USES OF THE INTERNET

The study also sought to find out general uses of the internet by graduate students aside from the purposes of job search. As the figure below (Figure 8) shows, the biggest use of the internet by respondents was for academic purposes (33.1%). Two in ten respondents (23.10%) said they used it for networking. Other uses of the internet recorded were recreational purposes (22.20%), for work (16.90%), news (4.20%), health information (0.20%) and religion (0.20%).

FIGURE 8: GENERAL USES OF THE INTERNET
4.12 USING OTHER JOB SEARCH METHODS

It was important to find out if the respondents used other job search methods in addition to online job search. The findings are displayed in Figure 9 below. Exactly two thirds (66.7%) of the respondents admitted that they used other job search methods in addition to online search while a third (33.3%) said they did not use any other job search methods apart from online job search. This correlates with conclusions from previous studies which suggest that many online job seekers use the internet along with other job search methods to help improve their chances of getting jobs.

**FIGURE 9: USE OF OTHER JOB SEARCH METHODS**

![Pie chart showing use of other job search methods](image)

4.13 REASONS WHY RESPONDENTS USE OR DO NOT USE OTHER JOB SEARCH METHODS

An open ended question was purposely constructed as a follow up to find reasons why respondents stated that they either used or did not use other job search methods apart from online job search. The findings have been classified under two tables, Table 7: Reasons for using other job search methods and Table 8: Reasons for not using other job search methods.
apart from online search. It must be noted that although all respondents admitted to either using other job search methods or not using them aside from online job search, some did not have any particular reasons for doing so. Such respondents therefore did not give any reason and this category has been labelled “no particular reason” on the table.

**TABLE 7: REASONS FOR USING OTHER JOB SEARCH METHODS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for using other job search methods</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To explore all job search avenues</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To broaden chances of getting a job</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The internet is not the most effective way to search for a job</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easier to use the others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No particular reason</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 above shows the reasons for the first classification. Majority of the respondents (34.2%) who used other methods of job search said they did that in order to explore all job search avenues available to them. The other reasons were as follows: the internet is not the most effective way to search for a job (32.9%); to broaden chances of getting a job (31.6%); and it is easier using other job search methods as compared to online job search (1.3%).
TABLE 8: REASONS FOR NOT USING OTHER JOB SEARCH METHODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for not using other job search methods</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No knowledge of other job search methods</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not searching for a job now</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Already employed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online job search is the most effective method</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardly have time for other job search methods</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No particular reason</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>78.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For those respondents who said they did not use other job search methods apart from online job search, the reasons are enumerated in Table 8 above. The majority (36.4%) said it was because they were not searching for jobs at the moment. Other reasons given were because: online job search was the most effective method (24.2%); respondents were already employed (21.2%); and they hardly had time for other job search methods (12.1%). Interestingly, 6.1% of respondents who did not use other job search methods admitted they did so because they had no knowledge of other job search methods.

4.14 MOST EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH METHOD

Respondents were asked to choose the most effective job search method from a list of options and Figure 10 below aggregates the findings. Four out of ten respondents (40.0%), forming the majority, considered the internet as the most effective job search method. This was followed, in rank order of highest to lowest, by family and friends, print and broadcast media, recruitment agencies, internal vacancy announcement and professional association register.
4.15 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND CHOICE OF EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH METHOD

To find out if there was a relationship between gender and respondents’ testimony of what is the most effective job search method, the necessary variables were cross-tabulated. The findings are displayed in Table 9 below.

TABLE 9: COMPARISON BETWEEN GENDER AND MOST EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH METHOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Most effective job search methods</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|        | Recruitment agencies            |       |
| Male   | 9                                |       |
|        | 12.0%                           |       |
| Female | 5                                |       |
|        | 6.7%                            |       |
| Total  | 14                               |       |

|        | Family and friends              |       |
| Male   | 13                               |       |
|        | 17.3%                           |       |
| Female | 27                               |       |
|        | 36.0%                           |       |
| Total  | 40                               |       |

|        | Print and broadcast media       |       |
| Male   | 11                               |       |
|        | 14.7%                           |       |
| Female | 11                               |       |
|        | 14.7%                           |       |
| Total  | 22                               |       |

|        | Professional associations       |       |
| Male   | 1                                |       |
|        | 1.3%                            |       |
| Female | 3                                |       |
|        | 4.0%                            |       |
| Total  | 4                                |       |

|        | Internal vacancy                |       |
| Male   | 5                                |       |
|        | 6.7%                            |       |
| Female | 5                                |       |
|        | 6.7%                            |       |
| Total  | 10                               |       |
Out of the total number of male respondents, close to one in two respondents (48.0%), forming the majority, selected “the internet” as the most effective job search method. For the females however, the majority (36.0%) selected “family and friends” as the most effective job search method. Therefore, according to the data, more males than females consider the internet to be the most effective job search method.

4.16 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND CHOICE OF EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH METHOD

To find out if the perception of a job search method as most effective was based on the age of the respondent, the appropriate variables were cross-tabulated.

**TABLE 10: COMPARISON BETWEEN AGE AND CHOICE OF EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH METHOD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age category</th>
<th>Internet</th>
<th>Recruitment agencies</th>
<th>Family and friends</th>
<th>Print and broadcast media</th>
<th>Professional association register</th>
<th>In-house/Internal vacancy announcement</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 - 28</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 - 39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the Table 10, majority (39.4%) of the respondents within the youngest age category (18 – 28 years) perceived the internet to be the most effective job search method whereas majority (50.0%) of respondents within the oldest age category (40 – 50 years) perceived the most effective job search method to be “Family and friends”. This data indicates a clear
difference in the preference of job search methods between the youngest and oldest age categories of respondents.

4.17 FACTORS INFLUENCING ONLINE JOB SEARCH

A key question this study sought to answer was why respondents used the internet as a site for job search. Respondents were therefore given a number of possible factors which could influence their use of online job search and were asked to choose as many as applied to them. For this reason, respondents generally identified multiple factors; which explains the high cumulative total (497); beyond the total sample size of the study (150).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved chances of getting a job</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet self-efficacy</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of job (IT related or non-IT related)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide spread availability of the internet</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of the internet</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No geographic boundaries of internet job search</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More affordable as compared to traditional job search methods</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased convenience as applications are submitted online and not in person</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 shows the responses they gave on the motivations for their use of the internet for job search. ‘Ease of use’ was reported as the most influencing factor (25.8%) in respondents’ use
of the internet for job search. This was followed by ‘improved chances of getting a job’ (14.7%), ‘increased convenience as applications are submitted online and not in person’ (14.3%) and ‘no geographic boundaries of internet job search’ (12.3%). Other factors given were internet self-efficacy, category of job, wide spread availability of the internet, speed of the internet and affordability of the internet as compared to traditional job search methods.

4.18 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND FACTORS INFLUENCING ONLINE JOB SEARCH

It was also important to analyse respondents’ gender with regards to the factors which influenced them most to search for jobs on the internet. It must be noted again that respondents were allowed to identify multiple factors thereby explaining the high frequencies on Table 12 below.
### TABLE 12: COMPARISON BETWEEN GENDER AND FACTORS INFLUENCING ONLINE JOB SEARCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors influencing online job search</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved chances of getting a job</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet self-efficacy</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64.0%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of job (IT related or non-IT related)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide spread availability of the internet</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.8%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of the internet</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No geographic boundaries of internet job search</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65.6%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More affordable as compared to traditional job search methods</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased convenience as applications are submitted online and not in person</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cross-tabulation indicates that on the basis of frequency, both male and female respondents (128) identified “ease of use” as the factor that influenced them most to engage in online job search. In percentage terms however, more females (51.6%) than males (48.4%) were influenced by “ease of use”. On all other factors, the percentages were greater on the side of the males than the females.
4.19 DIFFICULTIES WITH USING THE INTERNET FOR JOB SEARCH

Online job seekers were asked to select from a list of options, the challenges they faced while searching for jobs online. Again, respondents were encouraged to select as many problems as applied to them. Respondents generally identified multiple difficulties; causing the high cumulative total (364); beyond the total sample size of the study (150).

Table 13 below shows the difficulties encountered when using the internet for job search. Among the online job seekers who responded to the survey, ‘concerns about security of personal information’ (23.9%) ranked as the biggest difficulty they faced. This was followed by ‘slow feedback or follow up’ (15.7%), poor internet access and connection (14.3%) and filling out long application forms (12.6%). Interestingly, none of the respondents reported that they had no difficulties when using the internet for job search.
TABLE 13: DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED WHEN USING THE INTERNET FOR JOB SEARCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulties</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of relevant data in a company’s website</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in website navigation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filling out long application forms</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor internet access and connection</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow feedback or follow up</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns about security of personal information</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty downloading or printing out information</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor links to specific firms’ websites from general sites</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want more personal contact</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in posting resumes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble accessing sites during normal business hours</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble accessing sites in the evenings and weekends</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty finding company’s website on the internet</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs of downloading data</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor quality graphics</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.20 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED WITH ONLINE JOB SEARCH

Also, respondents’ gender and which difficulties they faced most with online job search were compared to find out if they reported similar or different experiences. It must be noted again that respondents were allowed to identify multiple factors here.
## Table 14: Comparison between Gender and Difficulties Encountered with Online Job Search

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulties encountered while using online job search</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of relevant data in a company's website</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84.0%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in website navigation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filling out long application forms</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71.7%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor internet access and connection</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow feedback or follow up</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns about security of personal information</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty downloading or printing out information</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor links to specific firms' websites from general sites</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want more personal contact</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in posting resumes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble accessing sites during normal business hours</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble accessing sites in the evenings and weekends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty finding company's website on the internet</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs of downloading data</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor quality graphics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When compared on the basis of frequency, both males and females (87) express the most concern about the security of their personal information. What is perhaps more striking about this picture is that in percentage terms, more females (51.7%) than males (48.3%) were concerned about the security of their personal information. Meanwhile, on all the other factors, the percentages weighed more heavily towards male respondents than female respondents.

4.21 EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

To find out the employment status of respondents, two questions were asked. The first question was: ‘are you currently employed?’ The second was: ‘were you employed when you used the internet for job searching?’

From Figure 11 below, out of the total number of 150 respondents, more than half (56.0%) said they were not currently employed and 44.0% said they were currently employed. This concurs with the literature which indicated that internet job search was more common among unemployed jobseekers than in any other labour force status group.

FIGURE 11: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS
On the other hand, Figure 12 shows that more than half (62.7%) the respondents had not been employed at the time they used the internet for job searching whiles close to four of ten (37.3%) respondents were employed when they undertook online job search. This question was relevant since the literature indicated that one of the advantages of using online job search was that, it afforded people who were already employed the chance to search for other jobs without incurring the wrath of their supervisors. This is because they can do so without physically leaving the office.

**FIGURE 12: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS**

4.22 ONLINE JOB SEEKERS DEMOGRAPHICS

This provides the demographic data of the online job seekers sampled for the study. The areas looked at were gender, age category, unit of the university respondents belonged to and level of respondents. Finding out the demographic information of respondents was important because the study looked at the relationship between the demographics and some responses.
4.23 GENDER
In order to find out the relationship between responses and the gender variable, an equal number of males and females were sampled for this study. This is shown in the figure below (Figure 13).

FIGURE 13: GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

4.24 AGE CATEGORY
A little over two-thirds (69.3%), forming the majority of respondents sampled for this study, fell under the youngest age category of 18 – 28 years. The remaining 26.7% and 4.0% of respondents fell under 29 – 39 years and 40 – 50 years, respectively. This shows that majority of online job seekers are young people.

FIGURE 14: AGE CATEGORY
4.25 UNITS OF THE UNIVERSITY RESPONDENTS BELONG TO

For this study, the units of the university were categorised into social sciences, business school, law school and sciences. Close to one in four of respondents came from both the social sciences (37.3%) and sciences (36.0%) respectively. About a quarter (24.7%) came from the business school and 2.0% from the law school.

FIGURE 15: UNITS RESPONDENTS BELONG TO

4.26 RESPONDENTS’ LEVEL

Post graduate students at the Masters level in University of Ghana are categorised as level 600 students while post graduate students at the PhD level are level 700 students. The figure below shows a breakdown of the respondents’ level of study. Nearly all the respondents (93.3%) sampled were level 600 students with the remaining 6.7% being level 700 students.
FIGURE 16: RESPONDENTS’ LEVEL
CHAPTER FIVE
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION
This chapter discusses the findings reported in chapter four. It draws a link with the research objectives, theoretical framework and the literature. The chapter also identifies the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for future research.

5.1 ANALYSIS
The first research objective for the study was to investigate the factors that influence graduate students’ use of the internet for job searching. In rank order, from the most cited to the least mentioned, factors that influenced respondents’ use of the internet for job searching were ease of use, improved chances of getting a job, increased convenience, the absence of geographic boundaries on internet job search, affordability, availability and speed of internet, internet self-efficacy and the categories of jobs respondents searched for online.

The technology acceptance model (TAM) gives an insight into the outcome of the ranking of influencing factors from respondents. The model suggests that the acceptability of an information system is determined by two main factors: Perceived usefulness (PU) and Perceived ease of use (PEOU). Perceived usefulness is defined as the degree to which a person believes that the use of a system will improve his performance. Perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which a person believes that the use of a system will be effortless (Davis 1989).

The findings for the first objective of the study therefore validate the tenets of the technology acceptance model since ‘ease of use’ and ‘improved chances of getting a job’ (thus, perceived
usefulness) ranked as the top two factors that influenced respondents’ use of the internet as a site for job search. Besides, the Technology Acceptance Model hypothesizes a direct link between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. This link is expatiated by Dillon and Morris who state that, with two systems offering the same features, a user will find more useful the one that he finds easier to use (Dillon and Morris 1996). Graduate students found the internet as a more useful way of job searching as compared to the alternatives because they perceived the internet search platform as easy to navigate.

This finding is also in line with findings in a study conducted by Grooss (2006) which indicated that, the speed, ease of use and widespread availability of the internet, makes this medium particularly popular with graduates, who view the internet as a major source of job opportunities.

The second research objective of this study was to find out the perceived effectiveness of internet job search. When put together, respondents who perceived online job search as “very effective” and “effective” form nearly two thirds of the respondents sampled. Also, when asked to choose from a list of options the job search method they considered most effective, majority of the respondents chose the internet above alternative job search methods. The other methods were: recruitment agencies; family and friends; print and broadcast media; professional association register; and internal vacancy announcement. This means that generally, graduate students perceived internet job search to be more effective as compared to other job search methods.

This concurs with the research by Kuhn and Skuterud (2000) which found that, the fraction of jobseekers who used the internet to look for a new job exceeded those who used six of the nine “traditional” methods listed in the basic population monthly survey: private employment
agencies, friends/relatives, school/university employment centers, union/professional registers, placed or answered ads, and “other” active methods.

The reason for respondents in the majority choosing the internet as the most effective job search method could also be due to the link between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness predicted by the TAM. Consistent with the expectations of TAM, graduate students found internet job search more useful or effective because of the ease of use that comes with it.

Internet job search can also be said to be effective in the sense that, according to the findings, although respondents who had been successful in finding jobs through online search were in the minority, the majority knew people who were successful in finding jobs through online search.

The third research objective was to investigate the challenges encountered while using the internet as a site for job search. The top challenge respondents encountered with using the internet for job search was their concern about security of personal information. The second dominant challenge was slow feedback or follow up associated with online job search. This was followed by poor internet access and connection. None of the respondents reported that they had no difficulties with using the internet for job search. This means that although majority perceived the internet as an effective method of job search, they still encountered problems while using it for job search.

Other difficulties the internet job seekers in this study faced were: filling out long application forms; lack of relevant data in companies’ websites; some job seekers want more personal contact with companies; poor links to specific firms’ websites from general sites; difficulty in website navigation; trouble accessing sites during normal business hours; cost of
downloading data; difficulty in downloading or printing out information; and poor quality graphics.

Similar findings emerged from a study by Feldman and Klass where the major issues found to impede the effectiveness of online recruiting were the degree and speed of follow-up on on-line applications, lack of specific and relevant job descriptions on some company websites, concerns about the security of personal information, and difficulty in customizing, formatting, and downloading résumés to companies’ specifications (Feldman and Klass 2002).

Another study with findings in close affinity to the above was the one conducted by Grooss (2006). He found that, the factors that hinder the effective use of the internet for job search were: the lack of relevant and specific information about jobs on the websites; extremely long and time-consuming application forms; as well as poor web site layouts and user-unfriendly web site navigation. Other factors that his respondents identified as problematic were insufficient and slow feedback and low degree of personal contact.

The category of jobs respondents searched for online is also worth noting. Interestingly, although the internet is an ICT medium, over two thirds (81.3%) of the respondents, forming the overwhelming majority, used the internet for the non-IT related job category.

This validates Martinez (2000) who found that web recruiting is not limited to high-tech industries because 65% of all internet job seekers are from non-technical backgrounds or professions. He also found that most new university graduates viewed the internet as a major source of help in locating job opportunities.

Looking at the age distribution, majority of internet job seekers fall within the youngest age category (18 – 28 years) provided in the questionnaire. This is similar to the Green, Hoyos, Li
and Owen (2011) findings, which revealed a significant and consistent decreasing trend in online job search as people get older. This makes the younger age groups most likely to use the internet in their search for work and the older age groups least likely to do so.

In order to analyse how gender affected some of the variables in this study, various cross-tabulation findings were reported in the previous chapter, some of which are discussed next.

A look at the relationship between gender and frequency in the use of the internet provided interesting analysis as the findings showed that, female graduate students of the University tend to use the internet more often than the males. This contradicts the multivariate analysis of data on use of the internet in job search over the period 2006 to 2009, which revealed no significant difference between men and women in the use of the internet (Green, Hoyos, Li and Owen 2011).

A comparison between respondents’ gender and perceived effectiveness of online job search showed that although both male and female respondents had similar tendencies of perception on the effectiveness of online job search, more females than males thought online job search was “not effective”.

Again, a look at how gender affected the category of job respondents searched for online revealed that a greater number of males than females searched for jobs in the IT category while an equal number of males and females searched for non-IT related jobs online.

Age was also an important factor in assessing perceived effectiveness of online job search as a cross-tabulation of variables led to the conclusion that the older the respondent, the less effective they perceive the online job search option to be. This is not surprising, since the literature indicates that older generations of job seekers tend to be less technologically savvy than younger persons.
5.2 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The limitation of this study was the inability to use probability sampling, which affects the statistical generalizability of the findings. The inability to use probability sampling was due to the lack of a sampling frame for graduate online job seekers – who were the specific subjects of research interest. Non probability sampling was therefore used for the study which meant that each unit did not have an equal chance of being selected for the study. Lack of in-depth interviews of job recruiters, as well as a content analysis of online job recruitment sites, may also be a limitation; in that such a triangulation of methods could have illustrated and enriched the interpretation of the nominal frequencies.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted to investigate whether and how the internet is being used as a site for job search by graduate students of the University of Ghana. It threw light on the factors that influence students’ use of the internet for job searching, effectiveness of online job search as well as challenges students face while searching for jobs online.

The internet and computer mediated communication have become important aspects of the world of work. Therefore, public and private job recruiters, with policy guidance from the relevant government ministries and agencies, could organise into a formal unit to produce a comprehensive directory or portal for job recruitment. At the job-search end, university counselling and placement centres could provide a system of online registration for job seekers. This would enable both recruiters and seekers to find common ground.

With recent technological advancements, the internet has been made useful in every sphere of life including job search. This is due to the ease that comes with its use. More research in the
field of internet job search can be done by undertaking a content analysis of online job search websites. This would provide solutions to some of the difficulties identified in this study and would in turn give recommendations for creating more effective job search websites.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Due to the widespread use of the internet in Ghana, this study aimed at finding out the use of the internet as a site for job search by graduate students of the University of Ghana. Specifically, this study investigated the perceived effectiveness of online job search, factors influencing online job search and challenges encountered with online job search.

The findings of the study showed that majority of the online job seekers surveyed perceived online job search to be effective as compared to alternative job search methods. “Ease of use” and “improved chances of getting a job” were revealed as the two biggest factors influencing respondents’ use of the internet for job search. Some issues raised regarding the challenges of online job search were: concerns about security of personal information, slow feedback or follow up, poor internet access and connection and filling out long application forms.
REFERENCES


Survey Questionnaire

This study is being conducted to solicit information on the use of the internet as a site for job search. Please, be assured that the information you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for only academic purposes. Carefully read the questions and tick or provide the appropriate responses.

SECTION A

S1. Have you ever used the internet to search for a job?
If Yes [Continue] If No [Terminate]

Q1. How often do you use the internet?
   1. Very often [ ] 2. Often [ ] 3. Not often [ ]

Q2. Are you currently employed?
   1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

Q3. Were you employed when you used the internet for job searching?
   1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

Q4. What category of job did you search for on the internet?
   1. IT related job [ ] 2. Non-IT related job [ ] 3. Both [ ]
Q5. Have you ever had a job through online search?
1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

Q6. Do you know anyone who has got a job through online search?
1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

Q7. How effective do you perceive internet job search to be?
1. Very Effective [ ] 2. Effective [ ] 3. Not Effective [ ]

Q8. Apart from job search what else do you use the internet for? Tick as many as apply to you.
1. Academic purposes [ ] 2. Recreation [ ] 3. Networking [ ] 4. For work [ ]
5. Other (Specify) ………………………………………

Q9. Apart from using the internet, do you use other job search methods?
1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

Q10. Why?
..............................................................................................................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................................................................................................

Q11. Which of the following job search methods do you consider most effective?
1. Internet [ ]
2. Recruitment agencies [ ]
3. Family and Friends [ ]
4. Print and broadcast media [ ]
5. Professional association register [ ]
6. In-house/Internal vacancy announcement [ ]
7. Other (Specify)……………………………………
Q12. What factors influence your use of the internet as a site for job search? Tick as many as apply to you.

1. Ease of use [ ]
2. Improved chances of getting a job [ ]
3. Internet self-efficacy [ ]
4. Category of job (IT related or non-IT related) [ ]
5. Wide spread availability of the internet [ ]
6. Speed of the internet [ ]
7. No geographic boundaries of internet job search [ ]
8. More affordable as compared to traditional job search methods [ ]
9. Increased convenience as applications are submitted online and not in person [ ]
10. None [ ]

Q13. What are the difficulties you encounter when using the internet as a site for job search? Tick as many as apply to you.

1. Lack of relevant data in a company’s web site [ ]
2. Difficulty in website navigation [ ]
3. Filling out long application forms [ ]
4. Poor internet access and connection [ ]
5. Slow feedback or follow up [ ]
6. Concerns about security of personal information [ ]
7. Difficulties downloading or printing out information [ ]
8. Poor links to specific firms’ websites from general sites [ ]
9. Want more personal contact [ ]
10. Difficulty in posting resumes [ ]
11. Trouble accessing sites during normal business hours [ ]
12. Trouble accessing sites in the evenings and weekends [ ]
13. Difficulty finding company’s website on the internet [ ]
14. Costs of downloading data [ ]
15. Poor quality graphics [ ]
16. None [ ]

Section B
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

D1. Gender: 1. Male [ ] 2. Female [ ]

D2. Which of the following age categories do you belong to?
1. 18 – 28 [ ] 2. 29 – 39 [ ] 3. 40 – 50 [ ] 4. 51 – 60 [ ] 5. 61 and above [ ]

D3. Which of the following units of the University do you belong to?
Social sciences [ ] Business school [ ] Law school [ ] Sciences [ ]

Level:........................................

Date:........................................... Time:............................................