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MSc in Human Resource Management

Master's Thesis:

How companies' social media image influences talent acquisition amongst GEN Z candidates in Cyprus.

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How companies' social media image influences talent acquisition amongst GEN Z candidates in Cyprus.

Literature Review

In today's globalized society, social media have a crucial role in everyone's lives. Thus, companies and enterprises, as alive organisms evolving along time, have started to incorporate the use of social media in many of their functions. The current paper will focus on how companies' social media image influences talent acquisition, amongst candidates who belong to the Generation Z (Gen-Z). Generation Z refers to the generation of people born between 1995-2010 (Papadopoulos, 2023). It is a matter of fact that nowadays, whilst companies utilise social media to look for candidates, and often get a first impression about them, there has been a shift in the equation, having candidates using social media to assess companies in various ways, which will contribute either positively or negatively towards their decision to apply to the company or not.

While the competition for talent has increased amongst companies, candidates have easy access to every company's social media and webpages, allowing them to research more in depth and have more choices (Phillips-Wren, Doran and Merrill, 2016). Thus, there is a need for companies to leverage their social media use and utilize social media as a powerful tool to attract candidates. According to Phillips-Wren et al. (2016), candidates generally visit companies' websites and social media accounts to assess them and check whether they could potentially fit with the culture (as demonstrated through their social media) or not. As the authors outline, through the companies' social media accounts and websites, there are four factors presented, which may influence job seeker's decisions. These factors are 1) The Brand (excellence and leadership), 2) the opportunities for career development that the company offers (challenging work, career path), 3) the culture of the company and 4) and the general purpose of the company, including company's mission, values, vision and strategy. As mentioned above, these four topics that are usually presented within companies' websites and social media accounts, are important determining factors about the candidates and whether they would apply or not. Thus, having these nicely presented and well documented through social media is very important. Additionally, the first impression that is created by the company's social media pages and how attractive is the page or not, also plays a role to the potential candidates. Another important role that companies' social media serve, is the role of communication amongst candidates and the company. For example, recruiters may seek a first meeting or invite candidates to apply to a new role through Linkedin. Finally, through their social media accounts, organizations have the opportunity to demonstrate their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, which may seem appealing to candidates. (Phillips – Wren et al., 2016).

Similarly to Wren et al. (2016), Dutta (2014) also mentions that organizations have been going through the ''war of talent'', trying to attract and hire the best talents of the market. In order to be attractive and win this race, lately, there is a need for Human Resource (HR) Managers

and practitioners to think differently. In fact, according to the author, they need to think and act as marketers, to be able to source and attract talent through media sourcing strategies. Hence, social media as a recruiting tool has gained much popularity and value. Generally, organizations engaging in such practices are considered to be more innovative, and open to change. However, it is now inevitable to engage in social media marketing and recruitment strategies to attract the current pool of candidates, considering the fact that people of the latest generations have a growing interaction with the social media through all their forms. Thus, the need to leverage social media use is very crucial. (Dutta, 2014).

Another thing which is achieved and demonstrated through companies' social media accounts, is employer branding. According to Dutta (2014), employer branding is defined as the total of efforts an organization puts into communicating to their already existing and to their potential future employees that it is a desirable place for them to work. Hence, organizations are using social media as channels to contribute towards positive employer branding by creating a unique favourable image about themselves. Having read the above, undoubtedly, employer branding can serve as a positive recruitment and talent attraction tool, since if done correctly it can demonstrate how attractive the company is and the benefits that an employee can get by working there. (Dutta, 2014). Tyagi (2020) also demonstrates the importance of employer branding, since it is mentioned that good employer branding promotes a good work environment, whereas bad employer branding makes companies which may also offer a good work environment, seem bad to the candidates' eyes. Consequently, organizations' positive presence through social media works as a powerful decision making tool for candidates.

As Dutta (2014) mentions, younger people and especially university graduates tend to seek information regarding an organization from people outside of the organization, as they find them more reliable and credible, rather than seeking information from organization representatives. Thus, it can be concluded that younger generations rely heavily on reference groups. However, there is a need to examine how is this information relatable to the context of social media. Through social media, the level of peer communication is very high. Thus, this can again indicate that organizations need to utilize social media in a favourable way, to promote themselves and present an attractive image to influence candidate attraction. For all candidates, choosing an organization to apply to, is a process that begins from evaluating the information that the organization presents through their social media, or other digital communication channels, be them recruitment websites or the organization's individual website. Hence, an organization's fail attempts to state this information on social media and maintain a good social media presence, may be considered by potential candidates as lack of professionalism and reduce their interest towards applying to the organization. This indicates that organizations need to invest in their social media platforms and online recruitment channels and realize that social media is a medium of communication and collaboration amongst them and the candidates but also a good tool for promotion purposes.

More specifically, attention needs to be given by the HR professionals and organization executives in general, to the growing population of Linkedin. According to Linkedin's CEO Jeff Weiner, Linkedin is a professional social network, aimed to work as a self-presentation channel

for individuals regarding their academic and professional career. (Van Dijck, 2013). However, it is also used by organizations as a tool to present and promote what they do and their culture. Interestingly, in 2015 LinkedIn was utilised by the 94% of the 500 most rising organizations worldwide and hence, it can be assumed that nowadays this percentage has increased even more (Tyagi, 2020).

To add on Dutta's (2014) and Wren et al.'s (2016) findings, Tyagi (2020), outlines that modern research on corporate and corporate – independent social media networks, demonstrates that these are important not only to make the employer and the organization more attractive to candidates but to also create an entire corporate picture. Tyagi's (2020) work seems to agree with what is already mentioned by Wren (2016) and Dutta (2014): in the process of looking for jobs, candidates often rely on social network research to access as much knowledge and information about the companies as possible.

Having examined above what the literature from the previous years has to offer around the topic, it is also important to mention what more recent research, focusing more on Gen Z candidates and on how social media has grown until nowadays, demonstrates. Wubbet and Tirral (2022), in their research amongst Gen Z candidates and HR managers aimed to view the perceptions of both sides, regarding organizations' social media use. Both HR Managers and Gen Z candidates, found recruiting strategies through social media very important for a company to engage. As candidates mentioned, social media network platforms are some of the most frequently used sources they rely on to look for a job. Additionally, as Gen Zs stated, it is easier for them to communicate through social media and they also prefer it. Thus, from the company's perspective, recruitment through social media is an easy way to get in touch with Gen Z candidates.

Even though the phrase 'war for talent' is widely used in the talent attraction and acquisition literature and all the above studies agree that social media platforms can be a useful tool to win this race, there is a gap in this research area, as many researchers and academics have started studying the generation Z recently, so there is not much information about them and their characteristics and especially there is lack of information regarding their behaviour in the workplace. However, some basic characteristics about generation Z are known. To begin with, Gen-Z people are characterized as technoholics, as they grew up with technological change, have access to the internet at all times and depend on it. However, the aforementioned characteristics have a negative tone, since they promote that Gen-Z people are ''addicted'' to the internet. More synchronous adjectives, which are more representative for gen Z people is that they are digital natives, who grew up with digital change and thus, often adapt and utilize different ways of thinking. (Wubbet and Tirral 2022)

Wubbet and Tirral (2022), tried to shed more light into the question of how does gen Z perceive company's social media use. In their paper, they mentioned that social media profiles of organizations are a huge part of their digital identity. Interestingly, they mentioned that there is a significant relationship between how professionally or unprofessionally companies use their social media and successful job placements. The authors also stated that Gen Z candidates usually expect companies to have a strong online presence. The results of their study showed that both HR managers and Gen Z candidates attach great importance to online

recruitment strategies through social media. As authors conclude, this importance will continue to grow, as the use of social media is becoming more and more popular as the years pass. Companies are advised to continue growing their social media game, as candidates of Gen-Z like being contacted through Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn and also find it very important for a company to have good career-websites and good looking social media accounts, which are easily accessible and importantly, provide their contact details such as phone numbers and emails. Finally, the authors outlined that it is no longer possible for companies to recruit anyone without the use of social media and that company pages need to be regularly updated and easily accessible even through smartphones.

Additionally, Karacsony, Izsak and Vasa (2020), conducted a study amongst Gen-Z university students from Austria and Hungary. In accordance with what is already known in the literature, they also mentioned that traditional recruitment methods do not exist anymore due to digitalization and that job seekers nowadays search for jobs through online portals or contact companies through email. Thus, the labour market has recently been trying to change and adapt to the new generation's preferences and needs. Due to that, organizations are trying to contact candidates through social media platforms, since the growing use of social media has changed the talent attraction game entirely. Karacsony et al. (2020), stressed how important it is for companies now to be innovative and change their strategies, making them more modern, to be able to source and attract candidates, and meet the expectations of younger people. The results of the study demonstrate that to look for and apply to job openings, Gen-Z candidates rely on social media and online job portals. Specifically, they mostly use Linkedin and Facebook. Even though other social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram are not used as direct means to apply and look for jobs, they serve as marketing tools which companies use to increase their talent attraction and gain popularity. The study showed that Gen Z, need companies to pay attention to how they present themselves through social media, as much as how Gen-Zs are trying to have attractive social media profiles, which will make them seem desirable assets to potential employers. As researchers state, Gen Zs perceive companies' social media profiles as extremely important, to the point that it affects their decisions on whether to look for a job in a company or reject it. More specifically, researchers hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between the reliability of the company social media profiles and the choice of a workplace for GenZ. The hypothesis was confirmed, and the results showed that social media profiles of companies play an important role and affect candidates' perceptions of the potential employer and decisions. As the authors conclude, organizations need to continue paying attention to their social media and advertise vacancies online. Pandita (2021), also presented similar findings, assessing how HR professionals in India try to leverage their talent management strategies by creating an innovative employer branding, through social media. Research has shown that since Gen Z are often characterized by their high technology engagement, innovation in organizations' employer branding through social media, will work positively towards attracting Gen-Z candidates.

Panday, Almira and Navanti (2022), in a more recent study amongst gen Z Indonesian participants, also agree that compared to older generations, gen Z people are more familiarised with the use of the internet. Thus, they often search many topics through the

internet, before proceeding into making decisions. Job search is one of these. As they outline, it is essential for companies to adopt new employer branding and social media marketing strategies to stand out and attract more candidates. It is a matter of fact that companies which do not engage in such practices and do not improve their social media image, usually struggle and miss out in the "war of talent". As researchers found, social media indeed serve as a determining factor for candidates, to decide whether to consider applying to a company or not.

Similarly, Menawy and Saleh (2023) in their study amongst final year undergraduate students in Egypt, found that how organizations handle their presence through various social media platforms such as Linkedin, Facebook, and even Instagram and TikTok, can affect Gen-Z's decisions of choosing an employer. This study confirmed what has already been stated in the literature: that an organization's digital image is very important for candidates of a younger age. According to Halova and Muller (2021), the use of social media as a recruitment and promotion tool within organizations is already proven to be successful towards attracting millennials (the generation of people who are born between 1981-1996), thus, they have a huge potential to be even more successful towards attractive Gen-Z talent.

Since the aim of the current paper is to find how Gen-Z candidates in Cyprus perceive organizations' social media use, and if a strong social media presence makes the organization more attractive to their eyes, it would be useful to examine what previous research on the same area, with a sample of either Cypriot, Greek or Middle Eastern participants has shown. By examining literature derived from these locations, it would be easier to check how similar or different the results of the current study are to the previous literature findings, and this would help to get a better and overall understanding of the Cypriots' perceptions around the topic. Hence, for the purposes of the current study, Greek and Middle Eastern countries are also considered to be relevant to Cyprus due to the geographic and cultural proximity of the countries. As Kargas and Tsokos (2020) mentioned, the majority of Greek companies in the telecommunications sector, was stuck into more traditional ways of employer branding, and thought that the main purpose of employer branding is to promote the company to customers. Only recently, as the researchers mentioned, this perception has started to shift, since some companies have integrated employer branding into their strategy and realized that it is a powerful tool to attract the best pool of candidates. According to the authors, companies need to bring employer branding into the 21st century, since the generation after the millennials, in other words Gen-Z, consists of the people who are going to become the future executives of tomorrow and thus, ignoring their needs and preferences (their familiarity with the social media), will lead to deleterious effects for organizations, meaning that they will become threatened to lose their potential talent pool to a competitor who uses more innovative ways to attract employees. Importantly, as Kargas and Tsokos (2020) outline, companies need to understand that young candidates nowadays have choices in regards to their potential employers. This means that organizations need to take advantage of social media platforms to create a positive image about themselves. Not only by running recruitment campaigns on social media but also by understanding the power that social media hold which allows an increased transparency through facilitating easy communication between shareholders and potential employees. Thus, organizations need to be very careful regarding

how they advertise themselves through social media platforms. Interestingly, as the authors mentioned, the use of social media is increasing so fast, that even methods such as posting simple job ads on LinkedIn has slowly started to become out-dated. Younger candidates tend to be fascinated when companies post content such as videos as a branding and recruiting tool, since videos seem to be more entertaining, eye-catching, and thought-provoking. The results of the study showed that the already existing employees of the one of the two telecommunication companies which took part, find important the way their company advertises through the social media and the reputation it creates, and this parameter influences their decisions regarding future employments they may get enrolled in. Even though the study by Kargas and Tsokos examined the organizations' perspective on employer branding through social media, the findings still agree with what is already stated in the literature: that social media play a very significant role towards attracting young people.

Having seen above literature findings from various years considering samples of participants located in many different places, undoubtedly it can be concluded that the literature supports the fact that Gen-Z people value organizations' online/social media presence and activity and that often times, they tend to depend on those to decide whether to consider an organization as a potential employer or not. It is also obvious, that organizations should utilise social media to win the 'war of talent', by posting eye-catching content, which will present themselves in the most desirable way and attract more younger talent. Specifically, studies around the Cypriot, Greek and Middle Eastern cultures are very few and generally most researchers do not investigate the candidates' perceptions around the topic per se, but mostly focus on the organizational perspectives. It can be said that the current topic regarding the Cypriot labour market and how Cypriot Gen-Z perceive organizations' social media presence, is very under-researched. Thus, the current paper aims to investigate how important organizations' social media presence is perceived by Cypriot Gen-Z candidates, and if organizations' social media use indeed serves as a tool to attract talent.

Methodology

Participants

Demographic Information about the Participants

Participants of the current study were 88 Cypriot people, falling between 18 and 60 years of age. 69.3% (61) were females and 30.7% (27) males. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling. Most participants belong to the 18-24 (38.6%) and to the 25-34 age group (38.6%) equally. Thus, it is safe to say that the majority of participants belong to Gen Z, based on the prior definition given about Gen-Z – people who were born between 1995-2010 (Papadopoulos,2023). Hence, individuals who are aged between 14 and 29 years old. 5.7% of the sample are between 35-44 years of age, 9.1% between 45-54 years of age, and 8% between 55-64 years of age. (See figures 1 and 2)
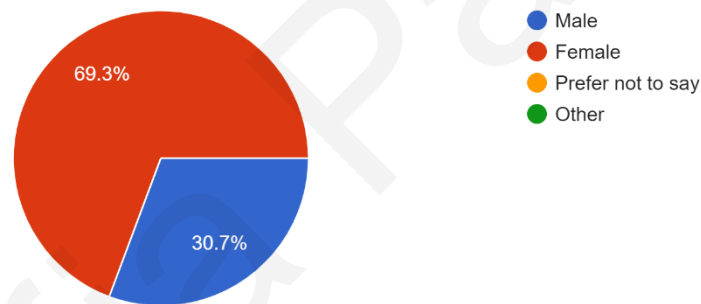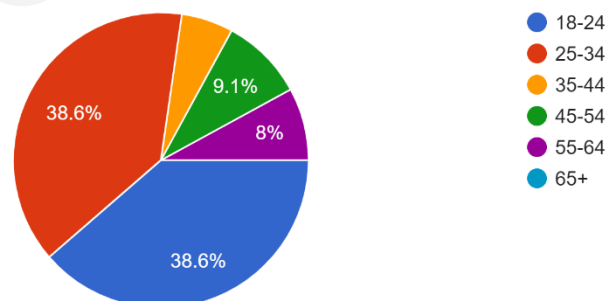

Figures 1-2: Demographic Information of participants.

Materials

For the data collection of the present research, an online survey/questionnaire was used. The questionnaire contained 24 questions. For the purposes of the current research, questions included were taken from other tools, from research papers exploring similar concepts. Most questions were extracted from a research paper exploring digital technologies usage in Arts Organizations in the US. Within the concept of digital technologies, social media was also incorporated, thus questions of that section were used. Since the questions were specifically about Arts Organizations in the US, they were changed a bit to include all types of organizations, in Cyprus. Questions mostly aimed to explore the perceptions of the participants regarding how organizations' social media use and presence on the internet affects their decisions to consider them as potential employers.

Procedure

The questionnaire required 5-10 minutes to complete. It was carried out through Google forms, and participants were given a link to access it. Before the completion of the questions, participants had to read through a small consent form stating the purpose of the research and ensuring the anonymity of all data collected. Participants were given the right to withdraw the questionnaire at any point. The questionnaire was split into two sections. The first one was the demographics one, which required some basic demographic information of the participants such as their gender and the age group they fall in. The second section had questions to explore participants' perceptions on organizations' social media use. There was a total of 22 multiple choice questions. The answers were measured on a 5-point Likert scale with 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree.

Data collection/Data Analysis

Data was collected through Google Forms. For the Analysis of the data, first the raw data were coded into numbers, where: male=1, female=0, Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5, and 18-24=1, 25-34=2,35-44=3,45-54=4,55-64=5 and 65+=6. Then some descriptive statistics were performed to interpret each question.

Ethical Considerations

A consent form explaining the aim of the research and ensuring the anonymity of all participants and data collected and the right to withdraw was stated at the beginning of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was first approved by a professor in the School of Economics and Management, Department of Economics and Public Administration –

Master's in Human Resource Management of the University of Cyprus, before it was sent out to the participants.

Results and Findings

The section below is going to offer an analysis of the dataset extracted from the questionnaire, aiming to explore perceptions on organizations' social media use by candidates in terms of how this affects them considering an organization as a potential employer or not. Whilst data was collected from people belonging to various generations, the main focus of the findings will be turned to Gen-Z participants.

1. Importance of an organization's social media in attracting potential employees.

In the statement 'I think an organization's social media presence is important in attracting potential employees' out of the 88 responses collected, 58% stated that they agree with the statement, and 31.8% stated that they strongly agree with it, whilst only 1 participant stated that they disagree with that (1.1%). The rest 9.1% neither agreed nor disagreed. Thus, it is safe to say that most participants find that social media of an organization are important in attracting potential employees. (See Figure 3)
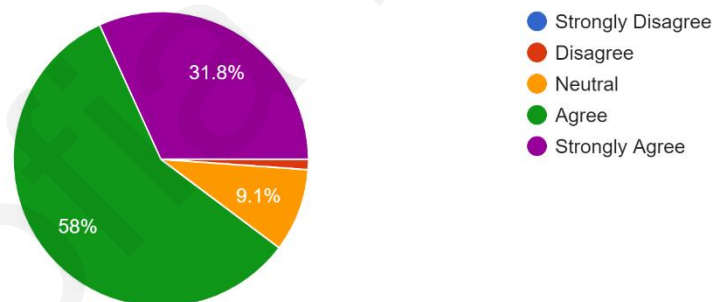

Figure3: Importance of an organization's social media in attracting potential employees.

Perceptions of Age Groups:

The majority of participants who belong to the 18-24 age group, stated that they agreed and that they strongly agreed with this statement, whereas only 1 person of that age group stated their disagreement to that. In regards to the second age group of participants (25-34), most of them stated to agree and strongly agree with the statement. Interestingly, none of the participants of that age group stated to disagree with the statement. Moving on to the 35-44 age group, most participants stated to Agree with the statement, whilst only 1 participant of that age group was neutral towards this. Participants belonging to the 45-54 age group, stated

to agree and strongly agree with the statement, similar to all participants belonging to the 55-64 age group.

2. A well-managed social media presence of organizations, influences candidates' perceptions of the organization as a potential employer.

In the statement ''A well-managed social media presence positively influences my perception of an organization as a potential employer.'' 61% of the sample stated to agree and 27.3% to strongly agree. 10.2% of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and only 1.1% disagreed. Having said that, it is clear that most participants get influenced by a positive social media presence to consider an organization as a potential place to work at. (See figure 4)

A well-managed social media presence positively influences my perception of an organization as a potential employer.
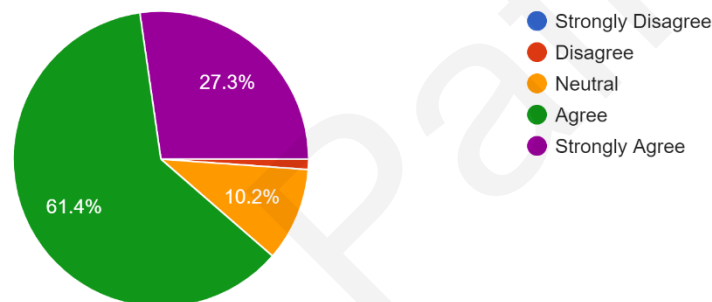88 responses

Figure 4: A well-managed social media presence, influences candidates' perceptions of organizations as potential employers.

Perceptions of Age Groups

Regarding the perceptions of different age groups on that statement, the majority of respondents between 18-24 years old, stated to agree and strongly agree that they perceive an organization as a potential employer when the organization maintains a well-managed social media presence. Only one participant of that age group stated to disagree with that, and 1 was neutral towards it. Most of the participants in the 25-34 age group stated to agree and strongly disagree, whilst only 6 people stated to be neutral towards it. Participants of the two remaining age groups stated to agree and strongly agree.

3. Candidates research through organizations' social media pages before applying for a job there.

Being asked if they research an organization's social media pages before applying for a job, more than half of the sample stated that they actually do that (52.3% Agree and 26.1% Strongly Agree). Only 4.5% of the sample disagreed, and no one stated to strongly disagree.

The remaining 17% of participants stated that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. (See figure 5)

Perceptions of Age Groups

The answers 'Agree and Strongly Agree' came from participants of all age groups, but mostly from participants aged between 18-24 and 25-34. However, the majority of the participants who disagreed with the statement belonged to the 25-34 age group. Interestingly, none of the participants belonging to the age groups of 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64 age groups stated to Disagree with the statement. This leads to the conclusion that no matter their age, most candidates do their research on organizations' social media pages, before applying for a job there.

I actively research an organization's social media profiles before applying for a job.
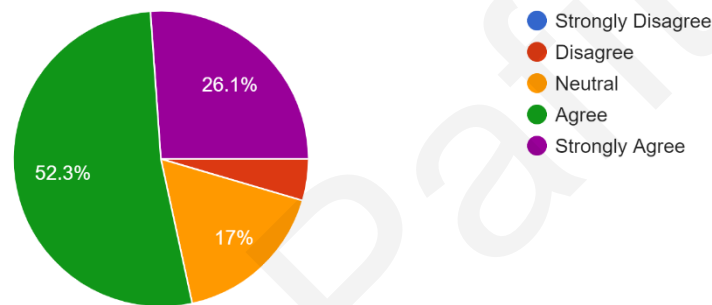88 responses

Figure 5: Candidates research organizations' social media profiles before applying for a job.

4. Candidates are more likely to consider applying in an organization with a strong social media presence rather than one with a minimal or not any social media presence.

When asked if they are more likely to consider applying for a job at an organization with a strong social media presence compared to one with minimal or no social media presence, more than half of the participants stated that they do consider more applying to an organization with a strong social media presence rather to one with minimal or no social media presence. (35.2% Agree and 18.2% Strongly Agree). A rather big percentage of the sample (34.1%) was neutral about it, and 12.5% disagreed. It is worth noting that in this question, the percentage of participants who were neutral (34.1%) was almost equal to those who agreed to the statement (35.2%). (See Figure 6)

I am more likely to consider applying for a job at a company with a strong social media presence compared to one with minimal or no social media presence.
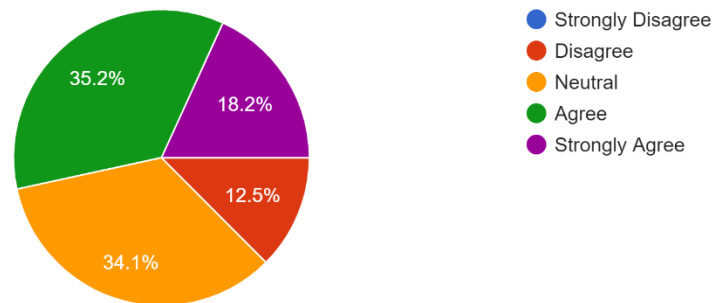
88 responses

Figure 6: How candidates perceive applying for a job at an organization with a strong social media presence compared to one with minimal or no social media presence.

Perceptions of Age Groups

Participants belonging to the two youngest age groups (18-24 and 25-34) had the most responses of Agree and Strongly Agree. The majority of Neutral responses was extracted from participants of the 18-24 group as well. Most participants aged 35 and over were neutral towards the statement.

5. Organizational culture and values as demonstrated through the social media
   Questions 5&6 aimed to see how organizations' social media image influences candidates' perceptions of organizational culture and values.

   In the statement '' I believe that a company's engagement on social media platforms influences my perception of its organizational culture and values'' a relatively big percentage of participants stated that a company's social media presence, influences how candidates perceive companies' organizational culture and values, with 61.4% of participants agreeing to the statement, and 10.2% strongly agreeing. 21.6% of participants were neutral to the statement, and only 6.8% disagreed. No one stated to strongly disagree. (See figure 7). In the following statement ''I believe that companies with a strong presence on social media platforms, demonstrate better their organizational culture'' more than half of the sample stated to agree and strongly agree (45.5% Agree and 23.9% Strongly Agree). 25% was neutral, and only 5.7% disagreed. No one strongly disagreed. (See figure 8). Hence, data from both questions indicate that most candidates believe that social media serve as a channel for organizations to demonstrate their culture and their values and that the stronger the social media presence, the better the demonstration of the culture.

13

I believe that a company's engagement on social media platforms influences my perception of its organizational culture and values.

88 responses
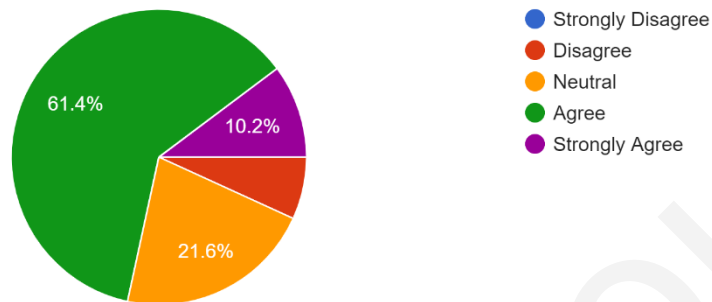
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

I believe that companies with a strong presence on social media platforms, demonstrate better their organizational culture.

88 responses

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
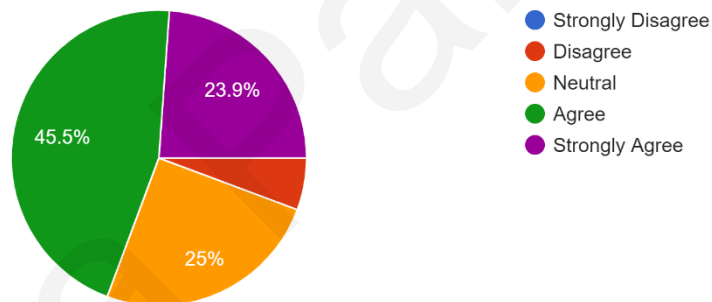
Figures 7-8: Organizational culture and values as demonstrated through social media.

Perceptions of Age Groups

Interestingly, in both questions, most participants of all age groups stated to Agree and Strongly Agree. This indicates that no matter the age, all participants find that social media play an important role in demonstrating organizational culture. In both questions, participants in the 18-24 age groups had the most answers of Agree and Strongly Agree, whereas those in the 25-34 age group, had the most Neutral responses. Considering the definition of gen-Z given earlier in this paper, people from the 18-24 clearly belong to gen-Z, but people in the second age group fall in both generations: gen-z and millennials. Hence, it is possible that most gen-Z participants agree that social clearly demonstrate organizational culture, but millennials are more sceptical and unsure about this.

6. Perceptions towards outdated or minimal social media presence.

In this question, participants were asked to state their agreement or disagreement to the statement that organizations with minimal or outdated social media presence are often perceived by candidates as unprofessional. 41.1% of the sample, stated that indeed they perceive organizations with outdated or minimal social media presence as unprofessional (38.6% Agree, 4.5% Strongly Agree). However, a rather big portion of the sample was neutral about it (29.5%). A reasonably large percentage of the sample disagreed with this statement, considering that 25% responded with 'Disagree' and 2.3% with Strongly Disagree. It is observed here that the number of people who responded with Neutral is very close to the number of people who responded with Disagree and Strongly Disagree combined. This leads to the conclusion that more than half of the sample, either believes that it is not necessary that companies with minimal or outdated social media presence are unprofessional, or are unsure regarding if this adds to the professionalism of an organization or not. (See Figure 9)

I perceive organizations with minimal or outdated social media presence unprofessional.
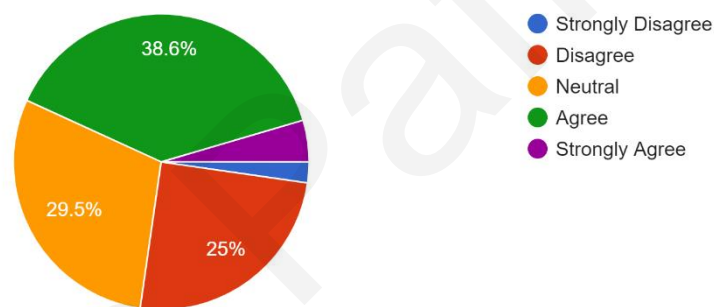88 responses

Legend:
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Figure 9: Perceptions of candidates towards organizations with minimal or outdated social media presence.

Perceptions of Age Groups

In regards to what the participants coming from different age groups think about this, most answers of 'Strongly Agree' came from the 18-24 respondents, whilst most 'Neutral' responses came from the 25-34 age group. Half of the participants in the 45-54 age group answered with Disagree and Neutral, with the rest agreeing to the statement. Surprisingly, most participants of the oldest age group (55-64) stated to agree and strongly agree, no one from that age group disagreed and the rest was neutral.

7. Perceptions of social media as a source of information

    Since the topic that is examined here is candidates' perceptions of information about organizations coming out of their social media pages, it would be useful to see if they generally trust and rely on social media in various aspects of information.

The majority of the respondents (34.1%) selected 'Neutral' as an answer to the question ''I perceive social media as an accurate and reliable source of information''. This demonstrates that most of the sample is actually unsure regarding the quality of the information they receive from social media. They do not know whether this information should be trusted or not. The second largest portion of the sample (30.7%) disagreed with the statement, and 5.7% strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, in total, participants who do not find social media as an accurate and reliable source of information at all are more than those who are neutral about it (Disagree and Strongly Disagree combined together). 28.4% of participants agreed with the statement and only 1.1% strongly agreed. (See figure 10)

I perceive social media as an accurate and reliable source of information.
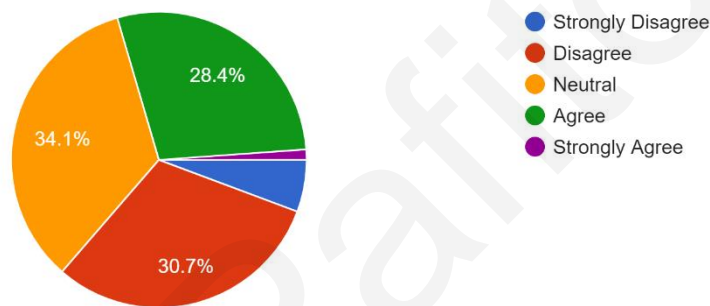88 responses

Figure 10: Evaluation of social media as a reliable source of information
Perceptions of Age Groups

Most of those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement, belong to the 18-24 age group, whilst most of those who were neutral to the 25-34. The 25-34 age group also scored highest on Disagree answers, followed by the 18-24 and 45-54 age group. However, if we take each age group separately, we could see that the majority of 18-24 agreed to the statement, but the majority of 25-34 was neutral towards it. The majority of participants who belong to the 35-44 age group was also neutral, but most of those in the 45-54 age group selected 'Disagree' as a response. Finally, most of those in the 55-64 age group were neutral and disagreed. Regarding the differences between generations, it is showed here that the majority of the younger generation (Gen-Z) does rely on social media as a reliable source of information, whilst millennials tend to not trust social media or be unsure about them. People of older generations also seem to be unsure, or negative towards social media being a reliable source of information. This phenomenon could be explained due to the fact that Gen-Z are a lot keener with technology, since they ''grew up'' with it as many say, whereas all other generations, had to familiarize themselves with the internet and the various forms of social media when they already were at a grown age.

8. Where do organizations in Cyprus stand when it comes to their social media use

Being asked if they believe that organizations in Cyprus are ahead of the curve when it comes to using the internet and digital technologies such as social media effectively, to demonstrate themselves, the data collected in this question mostly indicate that organizations in Cyprus are actually behind the curve considering their effective social media use. This can be seen since 42.1% of the sample selected Disagree (36.4%) and Strongly Disagree (5.7%) as a response. Hence, combined together these make the largest portion of the sample, followed by the second largest (37.5%) who were neutral towards it. Only 20.5% agreed with the statement and no one strongly agreed with that. (See Figure 11)

Overall, I would say that organizations in Cyprus are AHEAD of the curve when it comes to using the internet and digital technologies (such as social media) effectively to demonstrate themselves.
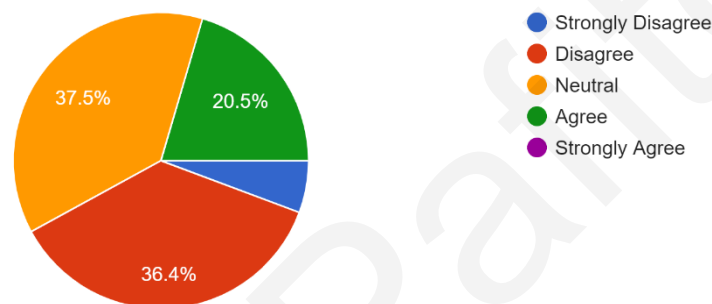88 responses

Figure 11: How well Cypriot organizations utilize social media.

Perceptions of Age Groups

 In this statement most answers of Disagree, came from participants in the 18-24 age group, followed by the 25-34 one. Most Strongly Disagree answers came from the 25-34 group too.. Importantly, in this question most of the participants belonging to the 35-44 age group responded with neutral and most of those in the 45-54 age group with neutral and agree. Most of those in the oldest age group 55-64 were also neutral towards the statement. This might indicate that, the youngest generations which are more familiarized with social media are stricter in terms of how they are evaluating Cypriot organizations' social media use. Since the internet allows access to many sources of information coming from all around the world, they may perceive that organizations abroad implement a better social media use. Another explanation that could interpret all these neutral responses, could be that organizations in Cyprus do not invest so much time and resources on their social media strategies, and thus, very little is shown regarding how they are handling their social media. Additionally, respondents may not know how organizations abroad are behaving in their social media accounts, thus that is the reason they selected neutral. Nevertheless, here we could see that the younger generations were more ''strongly opinionated' regarding this matter, since the majority of respondents in the two youngest age groups disagreed with the statement.

9. Financial resources required from organisations to build an active presence of social media

When asked if they believe that one of the reasons organizations may not have an active presence on social media is that they do not have the financial resources to do so, the majority of the sample of participants (45.5% of participants) stated to agree, and 1.1% to strongly agree. Contradictory, the second largest portion of participants (33%) stated that they disagreed with the statement, and 2.3% to strongly disagree. Finally, 18.2% were neutral. The trend that is observed here is that participants are mostly split into two schools of thought, one saying that organizations do not have the money to invest in their social media strategies and the other saying that this is not the reason for which they do not invest in building a strong social media presence. There is a small amount of people who are unsure behind the reason. (See figure 12)

I believe that one of the reasons organizations may not have an active presence on social media is that they don't have the financial resources to create a strong social media presence.
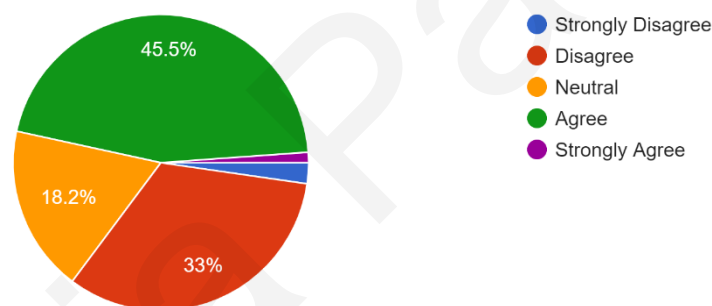88 responses

Figure 12: Lack of financial resources of organizations to create a strong social media presence, as the main reason behind their weakness in social media.

Perceptions of Age Groups:
The majority of participants of two youngest age groups (18-24 and 25-34) responded to this statement with Agee. The two groups also scored high in Disagree. Moving on to 35-44 age group, equal number of participants answered with agree and disagree. Most participants in the two older age groups were relying on Disagree. This indicates that youngest generations (Gen-Z and Millennials) perhaps believe that organizations do not invest the appropriate amount of financial resources to their social media strategies, and that this is the reason why their social media presence is poor.

10. Poor social media of organizations due to lack of knowledge and skills.

In this part, participants were asked to express their agreement or disagreement to the statement that the reason why organizations may not have an active presence on social media is due to the fact that they lack the required knowledge and staff skills to begin using

social media. More than half of the respondents (63.6%) stated to agree with this, and 14.8% to strongly agree. This indicates that most of the respondents do believe that organizations do not have the appropriate knowledge and skills for a strong social media presence. A percentage of 12.5% responded with 'Neutral'' and only 9% of participants disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement (4.5% Disagree and 4.5% Strongly Disagree). (See figure 13)

I believe that one of the reasons organizations may not have an active presence on social media is that they do not have the staff skills or knowledge needed to begin using social media.
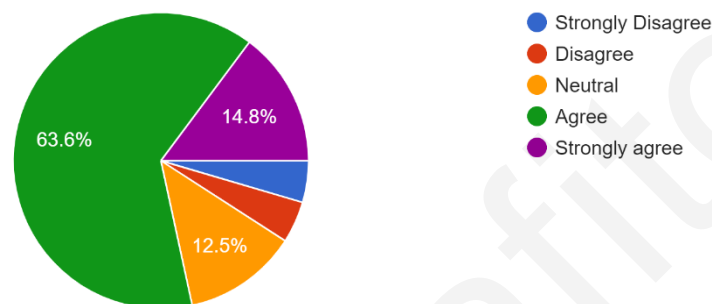88 responses

Figure 13: Lack of knowledge and skills required by organizations to create a strong social media presence.

Perceptions of Age Groups

In this statement, most participants of all age groups answered with Agree. However, the most answers of Strongly Disagree and Disagree came from the age group of 25-34. The same age group also scored the highest in Neutral responses. These data indicate that no matter the age, all participants realize that there are some set of skills and knowledge required for organizations to achieve a successful social media presence, and that most organizations lack in these domains. It is seen here that not only the youngest generations are aware of that, but also the oldest ones.

11. Poor social media presence due to the fact that organizations reach stakeholders and community through other means.

In the statement '' I believe that one of the reasons organizations may not have an active presence on social media is that they are able to reach out community/stakeholders through other means, so they do not need to use social media'', 44.3% of respondents stated to agree 2.3% to strongly agree. The second highest portion of respondents (35.2%) was neutral, and 18.2% disagreed. (See figure 13)

I believe that one of the reasons organizations may not have an active presence on social media is that they are able to reach out community/stakehol... means, so they do not need to use social media.
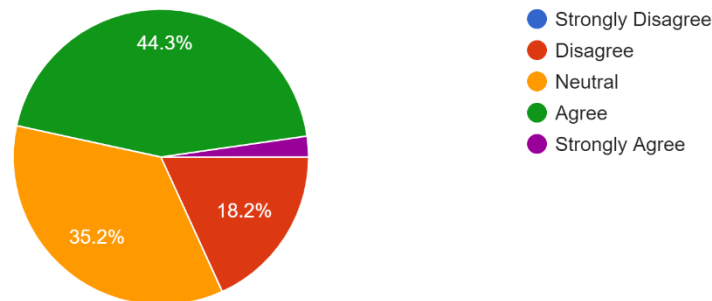88 responses

Figure 13: Poor social media presence of organizations due to the fact that they reach community and stakeholders through other means.

Perceptions of Age Groups

Starting from the oldest age group of participants, those between 55-64 years old mostly responded with Neutral. Moving on to 45-54 age group, most of their answers were Agree, and only a very small portion of them answered with Disagree to the question. Moving on, the majority of the respondents in the 35-44 age group, were split between neutral and agree. Finally, most participants from 25-34 and 18-24 age groups, also stated to agree, but these age groups also had the highest scores in neutral responses. As stated previously, these data confirm that most participants do believe that one of the reasons why organizations do not have a strong presence on social media is because they think that they can reach community and stakeholders through other means.

12. Poor social media presence of organizations due to that it is difficult to control what is said in social networking spaces

In the statement 'I believe that one of the reasons organizations may not have an active presence on social media is that it is too difficult to control what is said in social networking spaces', the majority of the participants (42%) voted to disagree. The second largest percentage of participants (28.4%) stated to be neutral towards the statement. Moving on, 23.9% agreed. Finally, 4.5% strongly disagreed and only 1.1% strongly agreed. These data indicate that most of the participants rely towards the opinion that the reason that organizations do not maintain an active presence on social media is not because it is hard to control what is being said in there about them. Additionally, another large portion of participants is neutral – meaning that they are unsure if this is one of the reasons or not. Considering the statements analysed above, it seems that participants mostly believe that one of the reasons that organizations do not have a strong social media presence is due to the lack of financial resources and also due to the lack of knowledge and skills required for a good social media strategy. (See figure 14)

I believe that one of the reasons organizations may not have an active presence on social media is that it is too difficult to control what is said in social networking spaces.
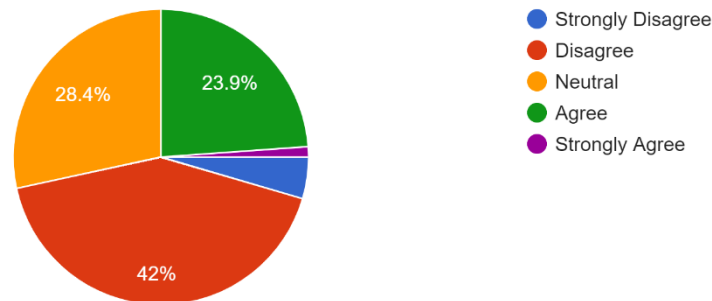88 responses

- ● Strongly Disagree
- ● Disagree
- ● Neutral
- ● Agree
- ● Strongly Agree

Figure 14: Poor social media presence of organizations due to the fact that it is difficult to control what is said in social media spaces.

Perceptions of Age Groups:

In this statement, there are many differences observed amongst the 5 age groups of participants. To begin with, the two youngest age groups (18-24 and 25-34) have responded mostly with Disagree, to the statement, followed by their second most frequent response which was Neutral. Also, most of the respondents aged between 35-44 have agreed to the statement as well. However, equal number of participants in the 45-54 age group, answered with Agree and Disagree. Finally, most of the participants in the 55-64 age group, answered with neutral. This might be an indication that first of all the oldest generation of participants is unsure regarding the reason which is causing an insufficient social media presence of organizations – they may not even observe that organizations' social media presence is not strong enough. In contrast, most of the younger generations of participants have stated to disagree with the statement. Perhaps this is due to the fact that they perceive other reasons more powerful regarding the weak social media presence of organizations. Additionally, these younger generations may have spent more time and are more experienced with the internet, meaning that they realize that social media are networks where anyone can post anything either positive or negative regarding an organization – however, this is what makes them offer a plethora of opinions and views on each matter.

13. Poor social media presence due to the continued resources needed.

The next statement aimed to explore participants' agreement or disagreement to that poor social media presence of organizations is often caused by the fact that organizations are concerned about the continuous resources needed to maintain a successful social media presence campaign. More than half of the sample (58%) agreed to the statement, and 6.8% strongly agreed. Furthermore, 20.5% were neutral and 12.5% disagreed. Only 2.3% strongly disagreed. By these data, it is expected that most participants coming from all age groups have agreed to the statement. This means that most of the respondents are aware of the weak social media presence of many organizations and they agree that in order for an organization

to have a successful social media presence, continuous resources are required. However, they also agree that many organizations do not actually have these resources or do not continuously try to maintain a good social media presence. (See figure 15)

I believe that one of the reasons organizations may not have an active presence on social media is that they are concerned about the continued resour...n a successful social media profile or campaign.
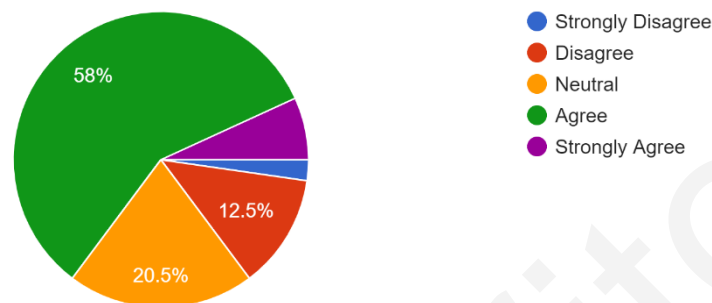
88 responses

Figure 15: Poor social media presence of organizations due to the lack of the continues resources required to maintain a successful social media image.

Perceptions of Age Groups

As mentioned above, most participants from all age groups have voted to Agree to the statement. Impressively, all age groups of participants had equal responses of 'Disagree'. This means that participants had a collective opinion on the matter, that organizations do not commit to maintaining a social media presence since they are concerned about the multiple and continuous resources needed to achieve that.

14. Facebook use by organizations in Cyprus

This statement here ''I believe that organizations in Cyprus use Facebook mostly as part of their social media strategy'' aimed to explore which social media platform are mostly used by Cypriot organizations, according to the participants. 54.5% of the sample agreed to the statement and 1.1% strongly agreed. The second largest portion of the sample (28.4%) responded with Neutral and 15.9% with disagree. (See figure 16)

I believe that organizations in Cyprus use Facebook mostly as part of their social media strategy.
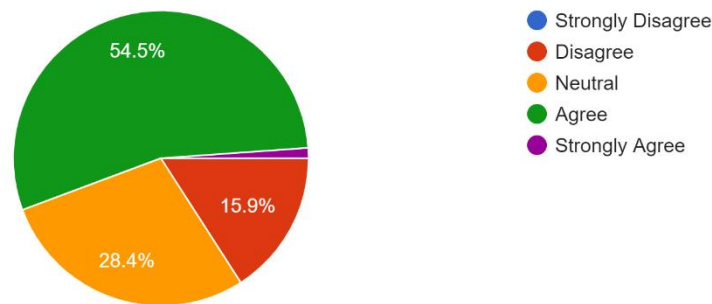88 responses

Legend:
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Pie chart values: 54.5%, 28.4%, 15.9%

Figure 16: Facebook as the most used social media platform of organizations in Cyprus.

Perceptions of Age Groups

The most common answer collected from participants of all age groups was 'Agree'. However, the two youngest age groups (18-24 and 25-34) also had the highest scores of 'Disagree' responses, with the youngest (18-24) age group scoring a little higher than those in the 25-34 in Disagree. This may be due to the fact that people in youngest age groups, are aware of more and newer social media platforms besides Facebook. As the literature suggests, nowadays organizations abroad have started focusing on other platforms as well, such as LinkedIn and Instagram. However, there might be the case that organizations in Cyprus are still behind in engaging in other social media platforms, and Facebook might be the most popular one, which stands as a valid explanation for these data. Regarding the 35-44 age group, most participants in that group responded with 'Neutral', some of them with Agree, and none of them with Disagree. Participants aged between 45-54 mostly responded with 'Agree', whereas only one of them responded with 'Neutral' and only one with 'Disagree'. Finally, most of the participants in the oldest age group selected 'Agree' as an answer and some of them 'Neutral'. None of them disagreed. These data reveal a trend: that most likely all participants of the older generations are either unaware of social media strategies of Cypriot organizations in general or are unaware of other social media platforms that organizations have started to use. Here it is observed that responses coming from participants from 35 and above, do not have so much variety, be them mostly agree and neutral. Once again, this shows that they are either not informed accurately regarding the matter, or that they are ''stuck'' on older platforms such as Facebook. Contradictory, participants belonging to Gen Z and Millennials, may have agreed to the statement at most, but many of them have also disagreed. This perhaps indicates that they are aware of other social media platforms, used by companies to promote themselves.

15. Instagram use by organizations in Cyprus.

Here, participants were asked to state their agreement or disagreement to the statement 'I believe that Organizations in Cyprus use Instagram mostly as part of their social media strategy'. 51.1% of the participants agreed with that and 4.5% strongly agreed. 27.3% were neutral and 17% disagreed. No one strongly disagreed nor strongly agreed. (See figure17)

23

I believe that organizations in Cyprus use Instagram mostly as part of their social media strategy.
88 responses

Legend:
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
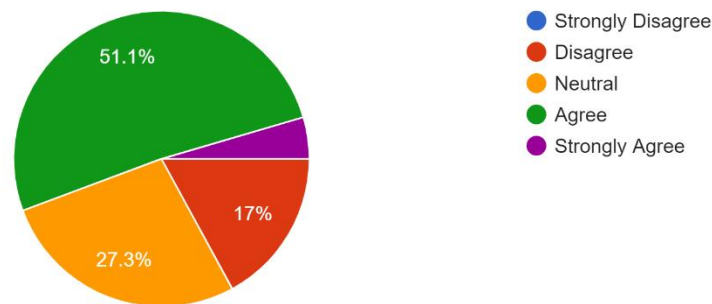- Strongly Agree

51.1%
27.3%
17%

Figure 17: Instagram as the most used social media platform of organizations in Cyprus.

Perceptions of Age Groups

Most participants aged between 18-24 agreed with the statement. Moving on to the 25-34 age group, it is worth noting that equal number of Neutral and Agree responses was collected from participants in that group. This indicates that 18-24 participants are more sure that organizations in Cyprus use Instagram mostly, whilst older participants in the 25-34 group seem to be more unsure about it. Regarding those aged between 35-44, this age group was equally divided into 'Agree' and 'Disagree' responses. Continuing, respondents belonging to the 45-54 age group, were mostly relying on 'agree', and finally, the oldest age group (55-64) had their most responses in 'Agree' and 'Neutral' equally. One of the most meaningful differences stated in this comparison is that even though the majority of respondents in the 18-24 age group agreed, we did not see the same level of agreement in the age group 25-34.

16. TikTok use by organizations in Cyprus.

In the statement 'I believe that organizations in Cyprus use TikTok mostly as part of their social media strategy', most responses collected were 'Disagree' (33%). The second largest portion of participants responded with 'Neutral' (31.8%), followed by 17% of participants who agreed. A percentage of 13.6% strongly disagreed, and only 4.5% strongly agreed with the statement. (See figure 18)

I believe that organizations in Cyprus use TikTok mostly as part of their social media strategy.
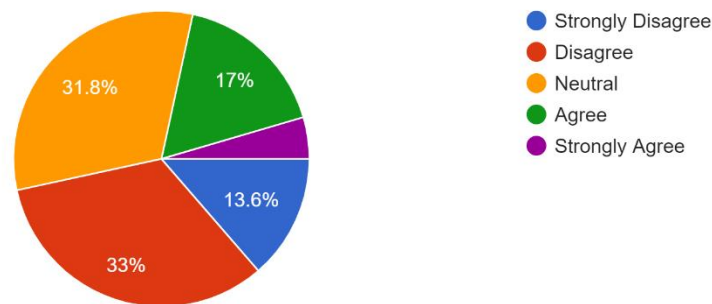88 responses

Legend:
- 🔵 Strongly Disagree
- 🔴 Disagree
- 🟠 Neutral
- 🟢 Agree
- 🟣 Strongly Agree

Pie chart values: 31.8%, 17%, 13.6%, 33%

Figure 18: TikTok as the most used social media platform by organizations in Cyprus.

Perceptions of Age Groups

The youngest age group (18-24) was the one which scored higher on Agree and Strongly Agree responses compared to other age groups, followed by the 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 respectively. None of the oldest age group agreed to the statement. However, if we marginalize the age groups one by one, we will see that most 18-24 participants answered with Disagree, whilst most of the 25-34 participants responded with Neutral. Surprisingly, the majority of participants in the 35-44 age group also agreed with the statement. Contradictory, most 45-54 participants disagreed, and most of those in the 55-64 age group were neutral. These results indicate that no matter the age and if they know or use TikTok or not, all participants of all age groups are negative towards the statement that most Cypriot organizations use primarily TikTok for their social media strategy.

17. LinkedIn use by organizations in Cyprus

Similarly to the statements previously, participants now had to state their agreement or disagreement to the statement that Cypriot organizations use LinkedIn mostly as part of their social media strategy. The largest portion of participants (54.5%) agreed to the statement, and impressively, the second largest portion (19.3%) strongly agreed to the statement. Moving on, a percentage of 14.8% responded with 'Neutral' and 10.2% with 'Disagree'. Finally, only 1.1% strongly disagreed. (See figure 19)

I believe that organizations in Cyprus use Linkedin mostly as part of their social media strategy.
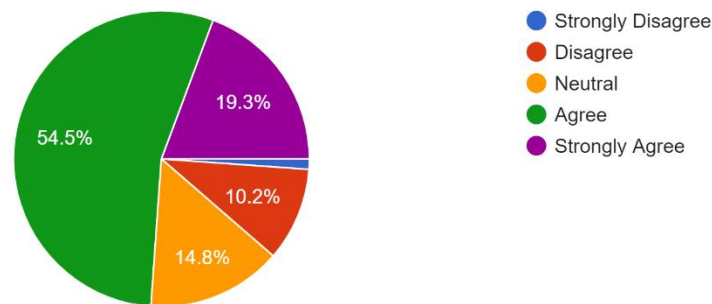88 responses

Figure 19: LinkedIn as the most used social media platform by organizations in Cyprus.

Perceptions of Age Groups

The highest score of 'Agree' responses came from the 25-34 age group. 18-24 had the second highest score, and also had the highest score in 'Neutral' responses. Both groups scored also equally highest in Strongly Agree responses compared to the rest age groups. Continuing with the other age groups, most participants of the 35-44 age group, also stated to agree, and interestingly none of them disagreed, only some were neutral. Most 45-54 aged participants had also responded with agree, whilst equal number of them responded with neutral and disagree. Finally, most respondents from the oldest age group, answered with neutral, and an equal number of participants stated to agree and disagree. These findings tell that almost all participants from all age groups are aware of LinkedIn strategies used by companies in Cyprus. Considering the fact that the oldest age group had more answers of 'Neutral' compared to 'Agree', this may indicate that candidates in this age group may not use LinkedIn or may have not gone through organisations' pages on LinkedIn or even job search through this mean, whilst these scenarios are more likely to happen or have already happened to participants from younger age groups.

18. YouTube use by organizations in Cyprus

In this section, the largest portion of the sample (42%) disagreed to the statement 'I believe that organizations in Cyprus use YouTube mostly as part of their social media strategy'. Continuing, 27.3% was neutral. However, 14.8% of the participants stated to Agree and same percentage answered with Strongly Disagree. Finally, only 1.1% strongly agreed. (See figure 20).

I believe that organizations in Cyprus use YouTube mostly as part of their social media strategy.
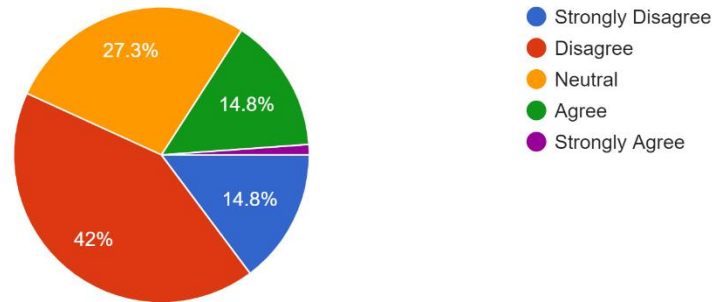88 responses

Legend:
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

(Pie chart values: 27.3%, 14.8%, 42%, 14.8%)

Figure 20: YouTube as the most used social media platform by organizations in Cyprus.

Perceptions of Age Groups

In this question, participants in the youngest age groups had the highest scores of Disagree and Strongly Disagree responses. Most participants in the 35-44 age group were neutral towards the statement. Contradictory, most participants aged between 45-54 responded to disagree, and most of those in the oldest group of participants also responded with 'Neutral'. The neutral responses may be an indication that most participants especially of older ages are actually unaware o whether this is true or not. On the other hand, the fact that most participants from the two youngest age groups responded with disagree, may indicate that they are more aware of what is going on, on the various social media platforms in regards to how organizations use these tools to demonstrate themselves as employers. Hence, these findings indicate that organizations in Cyprus do not use YouTube mostly as part of their social media campaigns, but compared to the previous questions, it seems that Cypriot candidates believe that organizations in Cyprus use Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn most.

19. Advertising as the main purpose of organizations' social media use.

Here, participants had to state if they believe that organizations mostly use social media platforms for advertising purposes. As Figure 20 shows, the largest portion of the sample (61.4%) agreed with the statement, followed by another large portion of 31.8% who strongly agreed with that. Surprisingly, the rest percentages of each response are very small, since 3.4% were neutral, only 2.3% disagreed and 1.1% strongly disagreed. (See figure 21)

I believe that the main purpose of organizations using social media platforms is advertising.
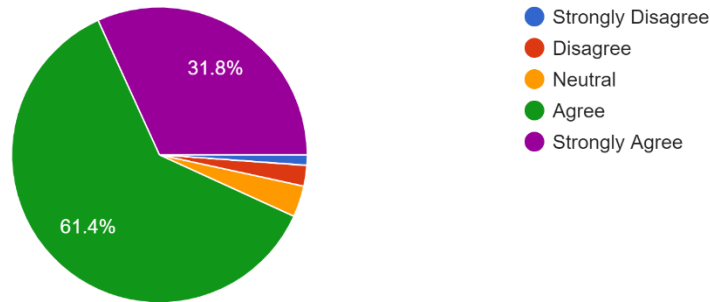88 responses

Figure 21: Advertising as the main reason behind organizations' social media use.

Perceptions of Age Groups

In this statement, all participants from 35-55 years of age (the three older age groups) stated to agree and strongly agree. Most participants in the two younger age groups also stated to agree and strongly agree. The only disagree responses came from participants between 18-24 years and the only neutral responses came from participants aged between 25-34. These results demonstrate that participants from all age groups, realize that the purpose of using social media is to promote and advertise.

20. Talent attraction as the main purpose of organizations' social media use.

The responses to this statement are a bit more diverse compared to the previous one, since here even though most participants (33%) agreed, a relatively large proportion of 31.8% was neutral, and a considerable proportion of 28.4% disagreed. Only 4.5% strongly disagreed and only 2.3% strongly agreed. (See Figure 22)

I believe that the main purpose of organizations using social media platforms is talent attraction.
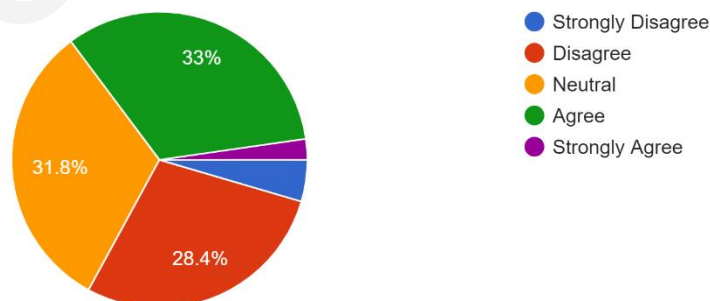88 responses

Figure 22: Talent attraction as the main reason behind organizations social media use.

Perceptions of Age Groups

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Interestingly, most participants of the youngest age group (18-24) have responded with 'Neutral'. The second most frequent response amongst them was Agree, and the third Disagree. Moving on, most 25-34 participants stated to agree with the statement and equal number of participants in that age group stated to disagree and to be neutral. Interestingly, only one participant from the 35-44 age group stated to agree with the statement, and the rest stated to either disagree or were neutral towards it. Additionally, the majority of the participants in the 45-54 age group disagreed to the statement, whilst the majority of the participants in the 55-64 age group were neutral. Here, these results tell that younger participants (Gen-Z and Millennials) believe that organizations use social media mostly to attract more potential employees towards them. However, this opinion is unpopular amongst the older generations participating in the study. Considering the previous statement, it seems that most people of older generations believe that organizations use social media for promotion and advertising purposes rather than attracting talent. According to the literature around the topic, organizations are now trying to incorporate social media to attract younger talent, since younger generations are most used to using social media in many aspects of their lives. However, the causes behind these results may be various. Looking at the overall picture, the number of people who answered with Agree is close to the number of those who stated to be neutral. The number of people answered with Disagree is also close to these numbers. This may indicate that the sample's opinion around the topic varies, and that there are three main opinions. Participants who have agreed with the statement may came across social media efforts by organizations which are definitely dedicated to attracting talent. However, many participants remain unsure regarding this, especially those in Gen-Z. They seem to not know exactly whether organizations' social media posts aim to bring more people onboard, or they do not find these posts sufficient enough to serve the purpose of talent attraction. It is also worth noting that there are many subjects especially those of older age, who believe that the main efforts behind an organization's social media strategy, is the promotion and not talent attraction.

21. Customer feedback as the main purpose of organizations' social media use.

Participants were now asked to state if they agree or disagree to the statement that the main purpose of organizations' social media use is to get customer feedback. The largest portion of participants (39.8%) stated that they disagree to that, whilst another large portion of 36.4% of participants agreed to that. 20.5% were neutral and only 2.3% strongly agreed and 1% strongly disagreed. Considering the questions above, these results make sense, since participants seem to believe that organizations have other more important reasons for which they use social media, including advertising and talent attraction. (See figure 23)

I believe that the main purpose of organizations using social media platforms is customer feedback.
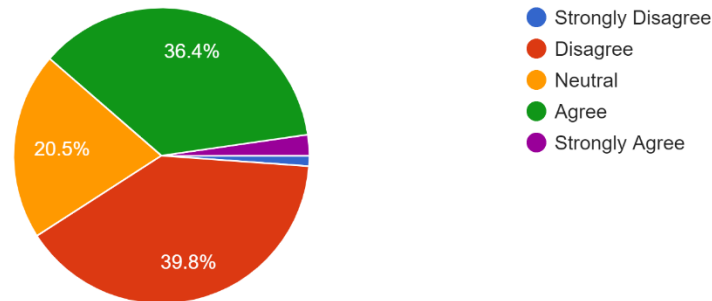
88 responses

Figure 23: Customer feedback as the main reason behind organizations' social media use.

Perceptions of Age Groups

Amongst all the previous statements, in this one there was a major deviation amongst the responses of the two youngest generations. Starting with the youngest one, most of those aged between 18-24 years old, responded with 'Agree'. However, 'Agree' was the least voted response for the 25-34 age group, who mostly responded with 'Disagree'. While in most questions previously these two age groups had similar answers, this case is different. Moving on to the other age groups, only one participant belonging to the 35-44 age group stated to agree since most of them stated to either disagree or to be neutral. Regarding those aged between 45-54 they also mostly relied on 'Disagree'. Finally, those aged between 55-64 surprisingly, answered mainly with 'Agree'. In this question we can actually see similarity amongst the youngest and the oldest age groups of participants, who think that organizations use social media to get feedback from customers.

Discussion and Conclusion

Purpose of the Study

The implementation of modern HR practices is a must, considering the digitalization of today. The current paper aimed to see whether organizations in Cyprus utilize the various social media channels to promote themselves and advertise their culture and values. In addition to that, the aim was to specifically find if Gen-Z candidates take into consideration a well-built social media presence of organizations, and whether that attracts them towards considering an organization as a potential employer. Even though data was collected from many generations of participants, this happened to help with the comparison of the perceptions of all generations and understanding better what Gen-Z believes. The main focus is turned to Gen-Z, since they are the ''future'' of organizations, considering that it is the current workforce

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which has finished their studies and is ready to ''swim'' into the sea of job hunting and in the labour market.

Previous literature findings

Research around HR practices and employee behaviours in Cypriot organizations is very underdeveloped. Thus, this study aimed to shed some light to the question ''Does a good organization's social media presence help to attract more Cypriot Gen-Z candidates?'' and other follow up questions which arise after this one, such as ''Are Cypriot organizations playing well in the social media game, or do they need to level up?''. Emphasis is given on social media, since nowadays they play a vital role in everything. According to Karacsony, Izsak and Vasa (2020) many organizations try to maintain a stable and well-presented social media image, since they know that Gen-Z's preferences and needs regarding the labour market are different from those of older generations. Hence, they are trying to adapt to these changes to be able to attract the young talent. This is why they are trying to pay attention to their social media pages, because they know that these count for Gen-Z candidates. As many researchers mentioned, being agile and engaging in modern and digitalized HR practices, such as incorporating a strong social media presence, is a tool to win the so called ''war of talent'' (Wren et al. 2016 and Dutta, 2014). Importantly, as Panday, Almira and Navanti (2022) mentioned, companies which struggle to commit to a good social media presence, often lose the war to get the best talent, since candidates do not find them reliable, or professional enough, or are simply not interested to apply to such organizations at all.

Results and Conclusions

Having seen above some of the main previous literature findings around the topic, it is safe to say that some of the current study results are in accordance with the previous findings. Firstly, many participants of all ages have agreed that they research a company's social media pages before applying to it. Additionally, many have also stated to believe that they find an organization's social media presence important in attracting potential employees. However, a large portion of the participants of the current sample were neutral towards being more likely to apply to a company with a strong social media presence compared to one with minimal or no social media presence. Nevertheless, most of those who agreed, were aged between 18-24, which means that Gen-Z are indeed considering how a company's social media look, before applying there, and that they rely on this first impression.

In the survey used for the current paper, there were some questions regarding organizational culture and values and how these are demonstrated through companies' social media pages. These questions could be related to previous literature regarding employer branding, and how this is done successfully or unsuccessfully through social media. In agreement with the literature, participants stated that indeed, how companies are presented through social media platforms is a way for them to demonstrate their culture and values. As Dutta (2014) and Tyagi (2020) say, social media are channels which help promote a desirable work environment and may serve as a useful talent attraction and recruitment tool. Most participants also stated that what they view on companies' social media pages influences their perception of company's culture and values and that companies with an active presence on social media, have the

chance to demonstrate these better. So, considering the findings and previous literature one could agree that companies with well presented social media have an advantage into attracting more talent.

Generally speaking, considering these findings, if we had to provide an answer to the question 'Do social media play a role in attracting talent?' the answer is 'Yes, but it depends!'. And if we ask ''Do organizations' social media pages play a role in attracting Gen-Z talent?'' the answer is again 'Yes, but not only them!'. An overview of the results indicates that organizations' social media pages play a role and matter for everyone nowadays. All around, participants from all age groups scored high in agree, stating that an organization's social media pages are important in attracting potential employees, a well-managed social media presence influences positively participants' perceptions of an organization as a potential employer, they research an organization's social media pages before applying there, etc. The findings of this study also showed that most participants find organizations with minimal or out dated social media presence as unprofessional. Taking into account the fact that most agree responses in this statement came from the youngest age group of participants, one could say that indeed, for Gen-Z candidates, a constantly updated and a stable social media presence of organizations matters heavily.

Another important key point is that all of the participants find that organizations in Cyprus are behind of the curve when it comes to how they utilize their social media. This means that regardless of the age, most candidates think that the majority of Cypriot organizations does not invest in their social media and does not put any effort to maintain them well presented and up to date. Combined with other key points, what could be concluded is that this may mean that they do poor employer branding, since they do not demonstrate their culture and values well. This in fact, may push candidates away from applying, since they may feel that such organizations are a bit unprofessional, or that they do not care to be more modern, or that they do not have any significantly pleasant working environment, due to the fact that they simply do not show it.

Consequently, the findings of the study showed that organizations' social media presence is important to attract candidates. However, not only Gen-Z and Millennial candidates, but also people from older age groups. As participants' responses showed, most of them look through organizations' social media pages, and evaluate them. Thus, organizations in Cyprus need to pay attention to this and try to leverage their social media pages. Most organizations do not seem to realize how powerful social media are, and the impact that they have on the decision-making of potential workforce. Social media have been traditionally mostly used for organizations to ''spy'' on candidates' profiles, or get in contact with them, however they do not realize that they are also evaluated by candidates who visit their pages to access information about them. Hence, there is a need for organizations and HR professionals to change their talent attraction practices, and having a good social media presence is a way to do it.

Suggestions for Organizations to improve:

Through the results, most candidates have agreed to the fact that Cypriot organizations are ''behind the curve'' when it comes to their social media game. The questionnaire also tried to find the reasons behind that, since many participants believe that companies do not have the resources and the skills and knowledge required, to maintain a good social media strategy.

Considering these findings, there are some suggestions including practices that organizations in Cyprus could implement to improve their social media presence and be ahead in the war for talent. To begin with, there is a need for organizations to take advantage of as many social media platforms as possible. The results of the study showed that most organizations stick to the traditional social media means, posting mostly on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. However, they need to help themselves by also making some more audio-visual content through TikTok and YouTube, which they do not utilize at all. They seem to ignore the fact that most young candidates use these platforms daily and that audio-visual content is more interesting and eye catching.

Additionally, it seems that most Cypriot organizations do not have stability in regards to their social media posts. Most organizations do not update their social media accounts frequently. In result, they do not look so appealing. This happens due to the fact that the majority of organizations in Cyprus do not invest in social media. As a solution, they could either create a ''social media'' department or outsource these services to digital marketers. Social media professionals have the knowledge and skills required to maintain a consistent branding, meaning that all the posts would have a standard- consistent logo, colour scheme, same font type, which would be suitable to each company, the industry that the company operates in, etc. These small details are really important since they promote professionalism and are pleasant to the audience's eyes.

Another suggestion that Cypriot organizations could implement, is to research the market abroad, to see what other organizations in other countries and similar industries are doing. This would be really useful to get inspired, and get more ideas of what they want to show through their social media accounts.

Finally and importantly, organizations need to show authentic content. They need to upload all their interesting and important moments that could promote their culture and lifestyle, they need to change and remove themselves from posting only strictly professional/corporate posts, if they want to attract more younger talent. For example, they could utilize their workforce to participate in their content. This could demonstrate their real experiences in the workplace, their day-to-day work, and give a glimpse of the company's culture. This could make a potential candidate relate to that content and think that they would like to become a part of the culture. This is also a great opportunity for the company to promote any Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities that they do. These are also very important, since young people value a company which goes beyond the norms and makes an impact to the community. By following these suggestions, a Cypriot company would look really different from the rest, appealing and interesting, and it would attract more views to their profile, and thus, it would gain more popularity. This would also become a good indicator for candidates who would research on the company's social media before making their application.

In regards to what the HR department can do to help with all of these, they always be alerted and up to date with the new technologies, new social media trends, platforms, etc, to be able to attract as many young people as possible. The HR department should always serve as a strategic partner to the company, and that is the reason that it should always be in collaboration with all the other departments. It should be in collaboration with the management of the company, to communicate new ideas and strategies and with the marketing/social media department or the outsourced consultants to communicate them the company's workforce needs, so they can know how to create a good social media post to target the right audience. Finally, the HR could offer metrics, to evaluate whether the company's content on social media has an impact on talent attraction, and if the company has managed to increase its popularity amongst potential employees. Of course, they could also measure whether organizations' new-hires have increased and the age-range of the new employees. These statistics would be very helpful to evaluate whether a constant social media presence is successful or not.

Study Limitations and Future Research Directions

One limitation of the current study has to do with the sample size. There were 88 subjects who participated in the study. Even though the sample size was not too small, if it was larger (up to 100 participants), the results could be more accurate. Additionally, most participants belonged to the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups equally. If the number of participants from all other age groups was close to the one of the two youngest age groups, this would provide more accurate information and clearer picture of the perceptions of all age groups. In result, the comparison between the groups would be more accurate and the conclusions regarding Gen-Z would be easier to extract. Finally, due to the fact that the study examined only Cypriots' perceptions around the topic, it's difficult to generalize the results.

The current study has highlighted how organizations in Cyprus treat their social media accounts, in relation to attracting young talent. However, for future research, a larger sample of participants would provide more accurate results, and also collecting data from equal number of participants from all age groups, and equal number of male and female participants as well.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

The Impact of Organizations' Social Media Presence on Talent Attraction among Gen Z in Cyprus.

B *I* U ⊖ X̶

The present questionnaire is conducted as part of my master's thesis, in the HRM programme at the University of Cyprus.
The purpose of my thesis is to identify if organizations' social media presence influences Cypriot gen Z talent pool to consider an organization as a potential employer, in comparison to people of older generations.

Participating in this questionnaire takes 5-10 minutes and all data collected are completely anonymous, and will only be used for the analysis of the results of my thesis.
You have the right to withdraw at any point.
Please try to answer all questions as honestly as possible.

Thank you in advance for your participation and your time.

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Part A - Demographics
Description (optional)

Gender *

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ Prefer not to say
- ◯ Other

⠿

| Age | 🖼 | ◉ Multiple choice ▾ |

- ◯ 18-24 ✕
- ◯ 25-34 ✕
- ◯ 35-44 ✕
- ◯ 45-54 ✕
- ◯ 55-64 ✕
- ◯ 65+ ✕

PART B: Perceptions on organizations' social media presence

Description (optional)

I think an organization's social media presence is important in attracting potential employees. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

A well-managed social media presence positively influences my perception of an organization as a potential employer. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I actively research an organization's social media profiles before applying for a job. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I am more likely to consider applying for a job at a company with a strong social media presence compared to one with minimal or no social media presence. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I believe that a company's engagement on social media platforms influences my perception of * its organizational culture and values.

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I believe that companies with a strong presence on social media platforms, demonstrate * better their organizational culture.

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I perceive organizations with minimal or outdated social media presence unprofessional. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I perceive social media as an accurate and reliable source of information. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

Overall, I would say that organizations in Cyprus are AHEAD of the curve when it comes to using the internet and digital technologies (such as social media) effectively to demonstrate themselves. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

⸬

I believe that one of the reasons organizations may not have an active presence on social media is that they don't have the financial resources to create a strong social media presence. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I believe that one of the reasons organizations may not have an active presence on social media is that they do not have the staff skills or knowledge needed to begin using social media. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly agree

:::

I believe that one of the reasons organizations may not have an active presence on social media is that they are able to reach out community/stakeholders through other means, so they do not need to use social media. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I believe that one of the reasons organizations may not have an active presence on social media is that it is too difficult to control what is said in social networking spaces. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I believe that one of the reasons organizations may not have an active presence on social media is that they are concerned about the continued resources that would be necessary to maintain a successful social media profile or campaign. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I believe that organizations in Cyprus use Facebook mostly as part of their social media strategy. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I believe that organizations in Cyprus use Instagram mostly as part of their social media strategy. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

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I believe that organizations in Cyprus use TikTok mostly as part of their social media strategy. *

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

⋮⋮⋮

I believe that organizations in Cyprus use Linkedin mostly as part of their social media strategy. *

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

I believe that organizations in Cyprus use YouTube mostly as part of their social media strategy. *

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

I believe that the main purpose of organizations using social media platforms is advertising. *

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neutral

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

I believe that the main purpose of organizations using social media platforms is talent attraction. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

I believe that the main purpose of organizations using social media platforms is customer feedback. *

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree