

**COMPANIES' DEVELOPMENT IN HUMAN
RESOURCES IN TERMS OF FACILITATING THE
RECRUITMENT PROCESS THROUGH SOCIAL
MEDIA PLATFORMS**

Bachelor Thesis

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Abstract

Permanent changes and improvements in technology entail crucial impacts on organizations, including the development of human resources by using social media platforms for recruitment. Nowadays, to reach and attract top talents, social recruitment is getting even more important for companies. This study examines the reasons encouraging its usage, analyzes in which extent and how companies implement it and discusses recent and future trends as well as risks and advantages of social recruitment. The research is qualitative and based on secondary data comprising diverse conducted surveys that display the scope of social recruitment usage by hiring managers and human resources professionals as well as successful accomplishments of various companies. Main findings show that companies focus on multiple approaches, such as enhancing the branding and reputation represented online, to attract talents, and benefit from the extension of networks as well as the ability to identify candidates, including passive ones and those living in other countries, faster and more cost-effectively through precise sourcing on social media platforms. Companies are also aware of major trends for future social recruitment, such as artificial intelligence or diversity, which already tend to be successfully performed by certain businesses. However, there are certain risks that come along, such as the insecurity of reliable information and the proper usage of personal data as well as the fact that not all skilled people are registered on these platforms. Thus, based on the major results of the study and referring back to the literature review, relevant recommendations for companies and recruiters, including the enhancement and extension of the social recruitment strategy in a proper way to enable a beneficial development in companies' human resources, are elaborated.

Keywords: social recruitment implementation, social media platforms, future trends, e-recruitment, human resources

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1. Introduction

1.1 General Introduction

The advancement of technology drives the competitiveness of businesses. It gets more and more difficult to compete successfully in global markets. Due to rapidly changing trends, companies have to adjust their processes and strategies as well to maintain their competitive advantage. Hereby, the human resources department is one of the most important areas of a business since qualified and skilled employees conduce to a company's success. Companies aim to attract and obtain highly talented and qualified people that contribute to the further development and productivity of the company. To accomplish this approach, firms are increasingly shifting from traditional recruiting to the online recruitment process in order to reach candidates with specific qualities directly through social media platforms, such as LinkedIn, XING, Twitter or Facebook. The reason for that is the massive usage of social media, particularly considering the younger generation. Nowadays, it is highly difficult to reach and attract potential candidates for vacancies elsewhere than on social media platforms.

1.2 Problem Statement

The development of human resources is, inter alia, driven by the new social recruiting strategy. Aside from several benefits that will also be covered in this study, the transformation to the modern strategy and the usage of social media platforms imply certain risks for companies as well. To give an example, companies would not be able to reach each type of potential candidates through these platforms since there are still many people who do not have an account on any social media platform, but who might perfectly fit into certain positions. Additionally, companies would take risks in terms of their reputation if they would try to recruit

people from their direct and greatest competitors. As a result, it is of great importance to determine through which approaches companies implement the social recruitment process, and to demonstrate the benefits as well as the risks of social recruiting for companies.

1.3 Need and Justification for the Study

The study will demonstrate which risks are hidden behind the social recruitment, if companies tend to receive a better reputation through this process and whether they are more successful in terms of attracting and sourcing qualified people through diverse platforms. Hereby, it is significant to make companies as well as social media users and job seekers aware of the advantages and dangers of e-recruitment that should be considered while using them for certain purposes. This study would contribute to the extension and understanding of several social recruitment strategies and approaches through certain examples and relevant studies conducted by other groups.

1.4 Description of Investigation

The problem will be discussed by focusing on the main elements mentioned above of the social recruitment usage by companies, and by analyzing the impacts of e-recruitment on the development of human resources. Firstly, the literature review will indicate main theories and relevant findings on e-recruitment strategies, their usage and importance as well as on certain risks that might occur through social recruitment. Hereafter, the methodology will demonstrate the research strategy and applied approaches in terms of the secondary data collection and data analysis. Afterwards, main findings and analysis are conducted referring back to the research questions. Lastly, the discussion and conclusion part comprises a short summary of the crucial points and arguments as well as contributions to practical and theoretical knowledge, including

suggestions for companies and recruiters aiming to implement or continue to make use of social recruitment. Then, a critical reflection of the methodology is given for the display of limitations, and implications for further research are elaborated.

1.5 Research Aim

The purpose of this research is to provide pertinent insights on how and why social recruitment processes are put in practice, which effects they have on the development of human resources and, especially, to show the whole recruitment procedure of a company considering related benefits as well as potential threats.

1.5.1 Research Questions

The study focuses on two main research questions related to the usage and impacts as well as characteristics of social recruitment, involving a sub-question to demonstrate future trends:

- 1) How and why are companies implementing the new recruitment process via social media?
 - 1.1) What are the major trends for future social recruitment?
- 2) What are successful outcomes and risks for companies' recruitment based on different social media platforms?

1.5.2 Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are to:

- 1) critically review the literature on companies' usage of social media platforms for recruitment processes and its importance as well as the risks
- 2) show relevant data regarding social media trends and the changing recruitment process

- 3) illustrate how social media usage for recruitment can be beneficial for a company and identify concerns

2. Literature Review

2.1 E-recruitment Strategy and Usage

Compared to traditional recruitment approaches, e-recruitment, being described as the hiring process of potential candidates through the internet, turns out to bring in crucial advantages, such as reduced hiring times and recruiting costs as well as a decrease in employee turnover thanks to highly job-specific and computer assisted processes. However, company-specific factors, such as the company size, would determine the extent of the usage of social media platforms for recruitment. Different factors let employers choose one or two certain social media platforms which offer them the best conditions and fit into their human resources or recruiting strategy. Besides, e-recruitment would be more cost-effective and targeting than the traditional recruitment methods (Broughton, A., Foley, B., Ledermaier, S., and Cox, A., 2013). As argued by Kaur (2015), a crucial reason of using e-recruitment is the fact that organizations do not have certain limits to find or attract candidates since they can reach talents from all over the world. Hence, e-recruitment is gaining more and more popularity since employers can take advantage of the widespread use of the internet and of social networking sites. However, Broughton, Foley, Ledermaier and Cox (2013) claim that organizations should try to combine both methods to one wider recruitment strategy to avoid neglecting potential candidates with less or no access to social media. Banerjee (2012) points out that, based on a conducted study with 100 recruiters from different companies, the majority of companies' recruiters use social networking sites for searching potential candidates in the middle management level, followed by the top management level and lastly for the lower level

positions. The reason is that there is a great number of talents for low level positions, which is the opposite for top level positions since they are less relying on such platforms. Although they can thereby focus on middle level managers, they are neglecting especially the top level managers and would have problems for finding high potential candidates for such positions which would decrease the efficiency of the e-recruitment strategy and its relevance of usage since it cannot promise success for all job positions.

2.2 Importance and Risks

Considering the importance of social recruitment, Madia (2011) explains that companies have the chance to attract the best suitable people in the market by having a powerful online presence. Also, by searching for top talents, using a mix of job boards and social networking sites and the ability to enter various targeted as well as niche communities and platforms with great networks is efficient for recruiters to enlarge the outreach. Hereby, companies that are still reserved of using social media for recruitment, should at least add social recruitment to their traditional recruitment methods since other competitors, making use of social recruitment, would easily outpace them by hiring skilled people. The corporate online activity would quickly increase as well which would form an extensive corporate footprint in the digitalized world. Gravili and Fait (2016) state that the younger generation expects to have direct access to any information at any time about the company and recent vacancies, which is why companies have to adapt to the needs of younger people to catch their attention to certain job positions. Also, by enhancing the company image, sales can be impacted positively in terms of improved marketing methods aligned with social recruitment tools which would turn out as an additional advantage for the whole company.

With regard to certain risks that come along with social recruitment, Clark and Roberts (2010) emphasize that social networking sites play a crucial role for the human social interaction and are well-known for posting private matters. Thus, using them for recruitment processes where employers check candidates' online character and make decisions based on their profiles, which are normally private, would be harmful to the society. People should be able to freely form and carry out their private realm and disconnect it to their work realm. It would cause a limit of a human's right of personal space, if he or she would be judged by employers based on his or her online appearance. This would fall back to the corporate social responsibility of the company in which it has to take care of its actions to positively affect, inter alia, the social wellbeing. The normative stakeholder theory inspects the ethical demand that stabilizes the relationship between the business and the society. Although a firm might perceive the online character checks during the e-recruitment approach as relevant and facilitating, it should think of the impacts these might have on the whole society and on users that are, for instance, too young, uninformed or not aware of employers searching for their profiles and judging them accordingly. Research by Gravili and Fait (2016) supports that the identity of a person can be constructed differently in the internet, also known as the digital identity, since people can easily hide certain characteristics and create a well performing profile of themselves on social media or even post certain pictures and make inappropriate statements on specific issues to be accepted socially or impress friends. This might have negative impacts on recruiters' impression of the individual and lead to his or her elimination of the hiring process. Thereby, referring to the "Care Principle", employers should avoid using unnecessary information of candidates but concentrate on relevant data that would normally be considered for the job. The employers have to avoid being influenced by any stereotypes since a selection based on "such meaningless parameters would be totally unjustified and harmful" (Gravili & Fait, 2016).

2.3 Research Design

The literature review comprises the first main concept involving e-recruitment strategy and usage, and the second concept based on the importance and risks of social recruitment, which both imply crucial information to refer back to the main thesis problem of how businesses' development in human resources is achieved through the usage of social recruitment. The figure below shows the model of the two concepts derived from the literature review and how they affect the main research problem of the study.

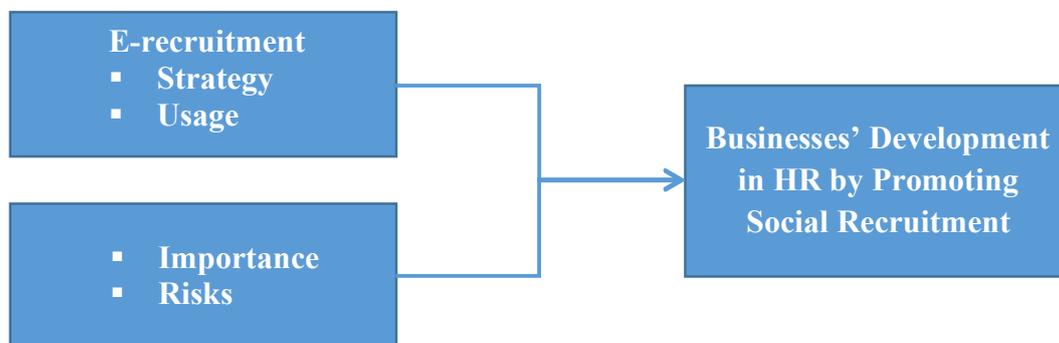


Figure 1: Research Design

Source: own illustration

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Strategy

The study is based on the archival research type. The author uses the inductive research strategy, which involves qualitative research and the usage of research questions limiting the scope of the study. There are no experiments of theory or other quantitative measures included. The research mainly embraces relevant information from journals, business magazines and books related to social recruitment. The advantages of the conducted research strategy contain a high range on studies about numerous topics as well as recent articles related to social recruitment since the topic is a very recent trend which gets even more recognized these days.

Moreover, it is highly informative regarding the history and the developing shift from traditional to social recruitment. However, there might be tendencies of bias and the risk of inaccuracy due to certain limitations and different stances towards social media. Conducting an inductive research strategy enables the author to collect recent data and gain comprehensive knowledge about the problem to make relevant suggestions for companies and recruiters in terms of extending their social recruitment strategy with regard to certain activities and paying attention to important factors.

3.2 Methods of Data Processing and Data Analysis

For the secondary data collection, specific keywords for finding the most relevant articles were used, such as “relevancy of social recruitment”, “recruiting on social media”, “risks of social recruitment”, “social recruitment advantages”, “usage of social media” or “trends 2018 social recruitment”. Data was mainly collected through Google, Google Scholar and through online libraries. After reading through the abstracts and conclusions of the articles, the most appropriate ones related to the research questions were selected and read in detail. To narrow down the sources, great importance was attached to making sure that the selected sources involved different ideas and investigations related to the main issues of this study, and were reliable as well as relevant to solve the main research problem.

For the analysis, the content analysis technique is used to interpret, identify and demonstrate what was meant by the data pointing out the main crucial points to conduct a precise and clear analysis with regard to the research aim. Regarding selected data characteristics, key resources from books, journals and magazines with their main characteristics, involving main findings and an evaluation of the extent of their support to the research, are listed in an extra table which

can be found in the appendix. Additional resources from internet websites are also listed in the bibliography.

4. Findings and Data Analysis

4.1 Definition and Relevancy

At the first stage, this chapter briefly defines and describes social recruitment and its approaches to give the reader a structured overview of the terms and the relevancy of the topic.

Social recruitment can be described as the process of searching potential candidates for certain job positions through social media platforms and networks. It involves two approaches; firstly, the increase in outreach to attract qualified people and make them aware of specific job opportunities by disseminating different vacancies and relying upon the usage and effect of people's social networks. Secondly, it encompasses the active sourcing of candidates with certain qualifications based on online available information on people's social media profiles ("What does Social Recruitment mean," n.d.).

In practical terms, social recruiting can also be related and combined with the traditional recruitment process which seems to bring even more successful outcomes for a company. Social recruitment strategies include, for instance, the given opportunity to candidates to simply and directly apply to vacancies with their already existing social media profiles as well as the ability to directly get in touch with the candidates through direct messages and "Inmails" even before the application process. Companies are able to offer career opportunities and vacancies directly on their social media company pages to catch the attention of followers and

other individuals that are registered on these sites (Social Recruiting, n.d.). Thus, businesses have the possibility to make use of it as a marketing purpose for their jobs and the company itself, due to the fact that it gives the impression of a modern company being adapted to the digital world which is especially attractive for the younger generation. According to a study from Aberdeen Group (as cited in Careerprofiles, 2016), 73% of millennials, aged 18-34, detected their last job position through social media platforms. Taking Twitter as an example, it turns out to be the most potential effective platform for recruiters to hire millennials since Twitter declared that up to 45 % of the whole user base consists of people aged below 30.

Having briefly demonstrated the crucial terms and the relevancy of social recruiting, the next chapter will discuss in detail the need of the online social recruitment process and its implementation through different platforms.

4.2 Need and Implementation of the Recruitment Process via Social Media Platforms

Nowadays, people all over the world, and especially the younger generation, tend to spend a lot of their time on social media platforms. Thus, they can be reached more easily through these platforms than through newspaper job advertisements or job postings on the corporate website. Moreover, social media platforms, such as Facebook, offer several opportunities to narrow down candidate profiles and target the most appropriate ones. On Facebook, companies are able to set certain parameters based on times of day, people's interests and public profiles ("The Importance of Social Media in Recruiting," 2017). For instance, one can set the parameters in such a manner that all registered software engineers on Facebook in the U.S. see the job advertisement at 6 pm while scrolling through the news feed. Hereby, hundreds of people that would fulfil the requirements at best might apply to the job through Facebook. This

would allow the company to obtain a huge outreach for all kinds of job positions. Also, people would appreciate the company as modern and a brand which is open for and adjusting to new technological trends which would enhance the company reputation. As stated by Post (2018), “one of the big trends to look out for” is that companies have to ensure a very good reputation being represented on social media platforms to gain high qualified future employees as well as to engage with clients and customers.

In view of other approaches to source candidates for different vacancies, social media platforms offer diverse possibilities and options to conduct a highly precise search. To give an example, LinkedIn provides tracking features as well as sophisticated search where it shows recruiters the most appropriate candidates with certain characteristics on their profiles and focuses particularly on people that fall within the own network. Furthermore, employers are able to benefit from existing employees’ networks by offering them rewards for references leading to successful hiring. They could post a link to certain vacancies of the company on Twitter or Facebook to reach similar followers and contacts that might be interested in the vacant position. Also, buying advertisements which appear when people search for specific keywords, might attract their attention even if they are not actively looking for a new job (Belton, 2014). A further reason and efficient time-saving solution for a company would be, during the recruiting stage, the implementation of online psychometric tests or job relevant questionnaires at the application phase to be able to eliminate failing applicants and consider the ones with better results.

According to Belton (2014), there are various groups of “high-performing, highly-skilled employees hanging out with their friends and peers” on these networks. Therefore, searching

for and reaching a few graduates successfully, the recruiter would then have the chance to also reach their network consisting of other similar graduates which makes it easier to attain proficient alternatives. It is also applicable to higher professionals since employers would always have the chance to discover their network consisting of people with similar career paths. As an example, Twitter provides the option to use hashtags, such as “#careeradvice”, which is mainly utilized by recruiters with active followers searching for a job. By screening the network of interesting users, recruiters can see their followers that might be interesting for other job positions as well. This principle is crucial for finding the proper communities and diverse people that have appropriate profiles and career paths and might be the target employees, even when they are not actively searching for a new job. However, it would not be valid for all registered people due to the fact that they can set their privacy setting in such a way where no one else can see their connections. Research by King, O’Rourke and DeLongis (2014) supports the fact that people using social media can easily be identified and contacted precisely since recruiters are able to conduct their searches with very specific settings and criteria, such as location, language, interests, knowledge in certain fields and many other keywords or any mix of these criteria. Hence, recruiters have to be creative in their research procedure when targeting special skilled talents, whereas active job seekers have to complete their social media profiles with all relevant details of themselves and descriptions of their previous work to allow recruiters to recognize and contact them for appropriate job positions.

A study by Careerbuilder (2017), based on a sample of over 2.300 human resources professionals and hiring managers, indicates that 57% of these are less enthusiastic to interview candidates that cannot be found on the internet. Also, 70% of the employers make use of social media sites to screen candidates, compared to 11% in 2006, showing a rising trend which has

potential to increase even more in the near future. Also, 61% of the employers use social media platforms to get information that support candidates' qualifications for a job, 50% check if the candidates have a professional online persona, 37% look through the posts of candidates and 24% look for reasons not to employ a candidate. Thus, it is of great importance to avoid or delete any information being presented on professional profiles that might have a negative effect on employers.

Considering further the HR recruitment strategy, Belton (2014) argues that a crucial part of it should involve the appropriate way of stable relationship building and communication. For instance, the mentoring approach could be used to adopt the expertise of a highly-skilled person responsible for social recruitment. Employees would then have the chance to gain new skills to navigate social media platforms in the most efficient way if they are trained by experts. Furthermore, as stated by Melanthiou, Pavlou, and Constantinou (2015), the companies can apply either the recruitment strategy of having professional corporate recruiters or the third-party recruiters which offer expert services in that field and operate as a medium between the company and potential candidates. The company has to evaluate which of the approaches would be more efficient for the organization.

A further crucial factor contributing to the usage of social recruitment is the fact that geographical constraints are eliminated since people from all over the world can be contacted via the internet, which are more and more likely to work abroad thanks to globalization and extending opportunities as well as the prospect to gain key international work experience (Melanthiou, Pavlou, & Constantinou, 2015). Another major reason for companies to apply the online social recruitment process is that there are still numerous candidates that are more

passive in terms of applying for a new job and seeking to make changes in their lives. Hence, social media is a great opportunity for companies to also reach out to qualified candidates that are passive for certain job positions. While doing this, a trained social recruitment team would be effective for a company to professionally screen fitting candidates determined by their online profiles and try to catch their attention for new job opportunities. Besides, it is a less costly and very fast process for companies since setting up a company profile on social media platforms can be done quickly and does not involve high costs. Mostly, the platforms offer statistical information as well so that businesses can directly check the number of viewers, visitors or activities of the followers. Large and well-known companies would also have the advantage to achieve a great number of followers quickly due to their reputation and their higher tendency to offer several job positions in various fields (“The Importance of Social Media in Recruiting,” 2017).

A staged approach developed by Belton (2014) demonstrates the crucial steps that have to be taken to build the necessary capability and certainty for the recruitment team. The first stage would be the preparation of the social networking presence on different platforms and the establishment of the resources whereby you can reach candidates at best. Secondly, the company should offer broadcasting information such as a mix of Facebook posts with job vacancies, company information or employee experience posts to attract the attention of the people and win their confidence. Thereby, recruiters can measure, for instance, the number of likes or comments and followers to determine the most popular issues, posts and vacancies. Afterwards, based on the measurements and the responses of the users, the company would be able to make improvements and focus on specific themes to attract more target candidates. The third step would be conversion in which the recruiters of the company extend their engagement

and communication with others to further build strong relationships and to keep the company profile as well as the profiles of hiring managers updated and relevant. As a fourth stage, the author emphasizes the “multichanneling” approach where traditional recruitment ways can be combined with the digital ones. For instance, the hiring team could attend a career fair where it is directly drawing the attention of the interested people to the social network pages of the company where they can get more detailed information about the company and its work environment. Hence, the four stages approach would provide the hiring team a clearly structured process and diverse ways for reaching target candidates and a successful recruitment.

Applying such tailored recruitment approaches would help the whole organization as well as the society to see the main value and intention of social networking and social recruiting for the human resources department and HR managers. It demonstrates the effectiveness and efficiency of the recruitment strategy based on social media platforms for engaging and reaching qualitative potential candidates. In the next chapter, recent and potential trends that would shape the future social recruitment processes will be discussed in order to indicate the power of social recruitment and its benefits for companies from different industries.

4.2.1 Trends Shaping the Future Social Recruitment Processes

Regarding recent trends related to social media recruiting, Berman-Gorvine (2018) states that companies such as Google and Facebook are in the phase of implementing new online recruitment services. While Facebook has extended its own job search service to over 40 countries in 2018, Google has launched its artificial intelligence powered job search engine that lets people search for jobs across all major online job boards to give the seekers the

possibility to see all relevant jobs at a glance (Lardinois, 2017). According to Himel (as cited in Berman-Gorvine), and an online survey with 5.000 adult participants from the U.S. in 2017, one in four people searches for or finds a job through Facebook. Since 2011, Facebook would have invested over \$1 billion to promote local businesses' growth and help people search and find jobs. The company assured to invest the same amount this year as well, especially for reaching more teams, advanced technology and new features.

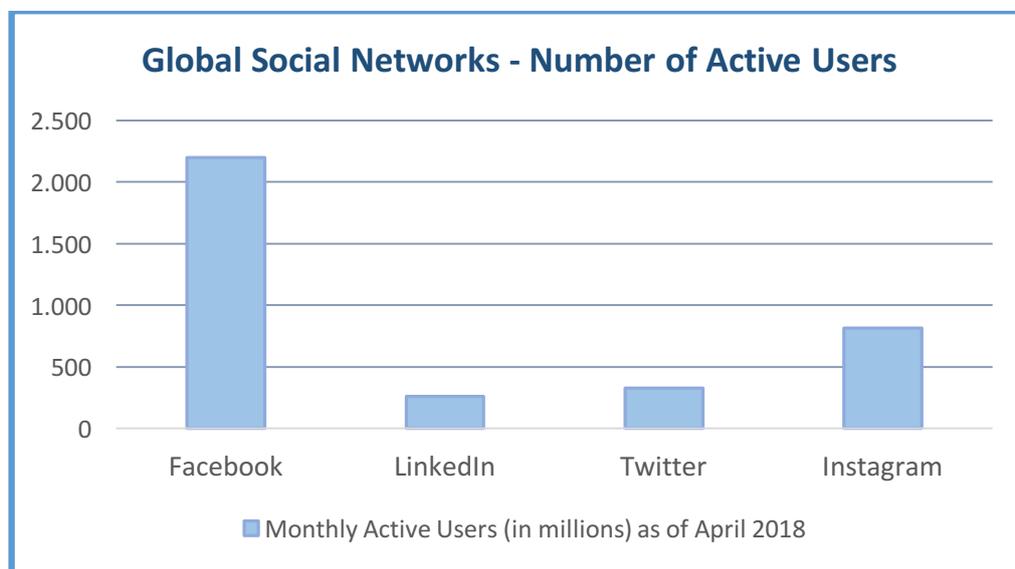


Figure 2: Global Social Networks - Number of Active Users

Source: own illustration, data from: <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/235417/umfrage/nutzung-von-social-media-fuer-die-suche-nach-stellenanzeigen-nach-plattform/>

The upper figure shows that Facebook has the highest potential to let job advertisements be seen by a very high range of people globally. However, since profiles are more often used for private purposes, a career-oriented platform, such as LinkedIn with 300 million monthly active professionals, could be more relevant for companies to find qualified candidates more quickly and easily through more detailed displayed career paths. In addition, focusing on Germany, the

number of total users at the platform XING in the DACH region amounts to 13 million. There are 11 million users in Germany, 1 million in Switzerland and 1 million in Austria (Xing, 2018). Consequently, next to LinkedIn being more internationally oriented, most of the people in Germany tend to make use of XING to connect with colleagues and others in order to display their academic and professional career. Statistics show that in 2017, the majority, with 40%, of 2.800 surveyed job seekers in Germany, used XING to search for a job. Considering the U.S., only 26% of Americans turned out to be online job seekers in 2015, whereas in 2018, 54% of Americans make use of the internet for a job search and 45% apply for certain jobs online. Thereby, the usage of social media platforms for recruitment seems to have grown 54% in the last 5 years (since 2013). This data demonstrates the further potential growth of social recruitment in the future, especially focusing on the Western world (Olenski, 2018).

With regard to the near future of online recruitment, a new feature might outline biometric data aligned with a cloud-based recruitment where all applicants' information is directly stored (Post, 2018). The usage of biometric data enables companies to determine the performance and characteristics of a person since it contains data "about everything from sleep patterns to how you respond to stress" (Everett, 2017). Since there are organizations that already analyze the whole online footprint of candidates, especially on social media, biometric data might be the prospective expansion of that approach. Everett (2017) argued that there are several advantages involved in the usage of biometrics, such as employers saving money by hiring the most appropriate candidates. Moreover, hiring suitable people would also enhance the employees' own wellbeing and health since they would have a lower anxiety and stress level if they feel comfortable in the company as well as in their position. Employers would also decrease the possibility of candidates lying at interviews or faking personality tests since biometric data

would enable to look at other data sources that are more trustful and cannot be influenced by the individuals. However, there are notable concerns as well, such as the fact that a lot of people might be feared of the extend of how employers might make use of such sensitive data, and of not getting the job due to certain information they would otherwise not like to share and which they feel uncomfortable with. Companies would have to be very transparent regarding this approach since candidates might quickly perceive it as invasive which would harm the company's brand image and ethical standards. Therefore, considering the societal and employment law, it would be difficult to implement biometric CVs, although it would call for a technological advancement in terms of recruiting as well as data collection and analysis. Considering a totally different perspective, Everett also argues that, in terms of the current legal climate, applicants do not need to add information such as marital status or age to their CVs anymore. There are employers that use "blind CVs" in which they delete the names of the applicants and replace it with numbers with the aim of inhibiting unconscious bias. Apart from that, the data must be used in an appropriate way since external factors might influence the applicant's behavior, sleeping habit or stress level considering, for instance, a recent bereavement or a conflict with the partner. Moreover, employers have to be careful with making assumptions based on the data to avoid any direct or indirect discrimination against a candidate. Thus, as an added feature to online recruitment, the usage of biometric data would represent a vehement challenge for employers with numerous risks regarding ethics and privacy issues.

Another trend that is growing for a few years turns out to be mobile recruitment which indicates that most of the users access the web through their mobile devices (Kaur, 2015). Therefore, next to social media platforms that already strive for easy-to-use mobile applications,

companies should also develop an effective mobile recruitment strategy, aligned with the social recruitment process, to attract job seekers directly on the company career website as well. For instance, with more than 14 million active job postings, LinkedIn launched its standalone mobile job search application where people can easily search for jobs all around the world with certain criteria. As a new approach, it introduced a one-click application and a “how you match” feature where people have the chance to directly apply with their LinkedIn profiles to a job with only one click and where they are able to directly check how well they match with a job posting based on relevant criteria taken out from the own profile (Hensel, 2018). A further trend that has high potential of growth in the upcoming years, is the live recruitment that is a crucial option given by social media platforms as well. Having reached candidates through a certain platform online, who are living in another city or country, recruiters have the chance to directly make an interview when they turn on their camera. By doing so, companies have the chance to reduce or totally eliminate costly traveling expenses and difficult appointment arrangements. These new features show that it gets more and more simple to apply for a job position online and that hiring managers also get a quicker and better overview of how an applicant matches to the certain position.

Regarding the global hiring trends being illustrated in a report of “LinkedIn Talent Solutions” (2018), which social recruiters have to take into account as well, 78% of 9.000 surveyed talent acquisition leaders and 36 hiring managers state that diversity is highly having an impact on how they hire. In this way, through the recruitment via social networking sites, recruiters are more able to search intentionally for candidates that show certain differences in origin, age, language or culture. Especially, if the company is trying to involve more diversity within the whole organization, it could be very helpful to directly search for diverse potential talents than

to rely on applications coming in which might exhibit a quite similar characterized group of individuals. In addition, the report demonstrates that companies are shifting progressively towards the implementation of innovative interviews during the recruitment stage, such as video interviews and online soft skills assessments as well as virtual reality assessments. The report refers to a case study showing that Vodafone uses robots, e.g. “computers programmed with advanced algorithms”, to review and analyze the received videos from candidates where they are answering standardized questions. As a result, the robots evaluate if the candidate suits to the company considering various factors such as body language or voice intonation. These robots ensure a bigger talent pool, an enhanced ability to assess soft skills and cut the company’s hiring time in half so far (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2018). Apart from that, the expectation is that artificial intelligence will contribute to the social recruitment strategy as well by inserting chatbots that answer candidates’ questions and a software that reads out the resumes to sort out unsuitable candidates. Relating to a case study of the business and financial software company Intuit, the implementation of artificial intelligence leads to more qualified talents as well as to a faster hiring time through an algorithm-driven platform where candidates’ profiles are immediately scored and prioritized to identify top performers (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2018).

Regarding a study from Jobvite (2015), only 4% of 1.404 surveyed recruiting and human resources professionals from several industries in the U.S. stated that they do not use social media for recruiting.

Only 4% of recruiters DON'T use social media in the recruiting process.
 4% aren't sure, but the **92%** of recruiters that do use social media cast a wider net than ever:

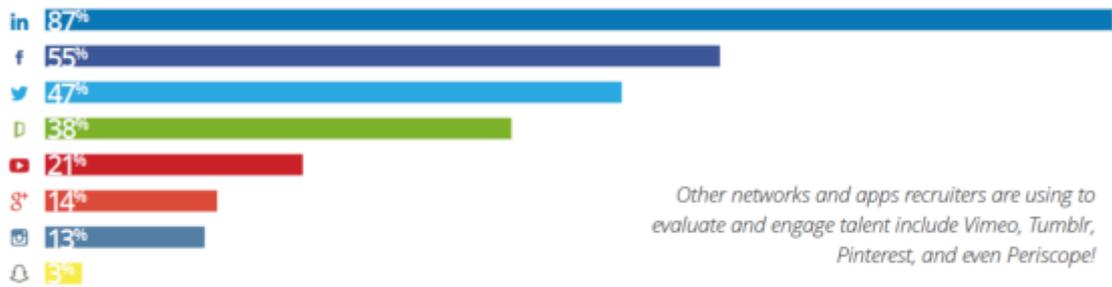


Figure 3: Jobvite - Meet Today's Recruiter (2015 Recruiter Nation Survey)

Source: <https://www.jobvite.com/jobvite-news-and-reports/welcome-to-the-2015-recruiter-nation-formerly-known-as-the-social-recruiting-survey/>

As illustrated in the figure, LinkedIn is the most widely used social media platform with 87%, followed by Facebook with 55% and Twitter with 47%. That shows the potential of the platforms, and especially of LinkedIn, to further strengthen and enlarge their job related platform and functions to maintain the position of the most preferred social media platforms for social recruitment.

Having discussed the reasons for and the implementation methods of social recruitment as well as how e-recruiting strategies and future trends look like, the next chapter will describe the risks and successful outcomes related to companies' social recruitment processes to give the reader an overview and comparison of the positive as well as the negative aspects that either promote or in a way inhibit companies' development in human resources.

4.3 Risks and Successful Outcomes of Companies' Social Recruitment Processes

Thinking of the negative sides and risks for companies of conducting the recruitment process through social media platforms, there is the uncertainty whether social media provides consistent and reliable information on all candidates during the selection process. For instance, one candidate could have publicly open profiles on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Another candidate might only have an account on LinkedIn. Hence, there are no equal amounts of data and information available, which causes inconsistency and can lead to a decrease in the accuracy of the selection process. For instance, if there are lots of private information about a candidate available, which are negatively associated from society, but are not relevant to his qualifications and his performance at his job, they might let the recruiter eliminate the candidate unintentionally. Unconscious biases would play a crucial role in hiring decisions based on information provided through social media due to recruiters being able to check main class information, such as gender, race or age, and base his or her decision on these which would be unethical and decrease the reputation of the company (Lawrence, Ph.D., n.d.). Therefore, it is of great importance to “distinguish between useful and private information” (Melanthiou et. al, 2015) for making hiring decisions. For instance, there are organizations that review the social media profile activities of candidates to determine personality traits based on likes, comments, posts and pictures to get an impression of potential job performance and to analyze if they would match with the corporate culture. The conducted study by Banerjee (2012) shows that most of the 100 surveyed recruiters from different firms stated that the aspect sociability to some extent is judged by the individual's social media profile as well as the behavior and psychology to assure a proper cultural fit to the business. However, according to Melanthiou et al. (2015), companies have to take into consideration that such activities might

not refer to the job performance or the individual's advanced skills in a specific field which would be more relevant to carry out a certain job.

Belton (2014) claims that companies should be aware of general risks involved in the usage of social networks for recruitment, such as legal, privacy or reputational risks considering the applied communication and engagement with candidates. For instance, despite a lower likelihood, a candidate that has been eliminated from the selection process or has been treated in an unprofessional way, can easily complain about the fairness of the company's recruitment process on a social media platform such as Facebook. This would address the reputational and legal risk category and would have high impacts on the company and its ethical stance. More specific risks would also highly depend on the type of the business. Another example would be that if a company uses its corporate Facebook page for recruiting, addressed people may easily check other users' comments on the page and may get reluctant due to negative comments and opinions about the company. Hence, Belton suggests that all companies should pay attention to their social media policy to offer the staff a guideline and certain rules to avoid such risks. Another strategy to avoid similar problems is the implementation of ready responses to be equipped in terms of negative comments, feedback or complaints. To build and maintain stable relationships with potential candidates, the responses should have a favorable tone and be approved by the responsible management for handling the issue.

Further challenges comprise for instance that employers are not able to see the whole career path of a person on Facebook since most people do not update their professional activities. Moreover, a company that advertises jobs on each platform might get thousands of applications that are interested in a position which makes it even more difficult for the company to pick out

the best candidates, being time-consuming as well (Berman-Gorvine, 2018). Since not all people, including active job seekers, have an account and a detailed profile on social networking sites, they might be difficult to reach. Hence, businesses should not completely remove the traditional employment methods but try to merge both approaches in a comprehensive strategy (Melanthiou et al., 2015). Therefore, it would be crucial to make use of the most appropriate social media platform for certain jobs as it would have a great impact on the quality and amount of applications coming in and the extent of the project's success. Thus, it could be helpful for the hiring managers to do relevant research beforehand and to pay attention on the content of their job postings. It should be very precise and clear with detailed statements about the requirements to avoid irrelevant applications and attract skilled as well as most suitable talents. In addition, based on a proven study, it turned out that the effectiveness of social recruitment is much higher for large and well-known companies than for smaller businesses since people try to focus on recognized companies at first and take smaller companies as a second alternative. Therefore, particularly smaller companies would have to think of attractive ways to get more attention from job seekers, otherwise it might turn into an unproductive process for the business if it invests a lot of work and time in e-recruitment. Apart from that, the major obstacles recruiters have to pass are in some extent the lack of qualified candidates, competition, lack of budget as well as the location (Jobvite, 2015).

Considering on the other side the successful outcomes and advantages of social recruitment and its contribution to the development of companies' human resources, one major point would be the reduced time of the hiring process since it is much faster to reach candidates online than through, for instance, newspaper advertisement. According to Kaur (2015), the e-recruitment hiring process is on average 70% faster than the traditional recruitment approach. Besides,

posting their CVs on social networking sites, candidates can easily be contacted by hiring managers even for vacancies that are not advertised elsewhere. Thus, they could feel even more special and develop a higher interest in the certain vacancy and company. The research by Melanthiou et al. (2015) also supports the fact that videoconferencing helps to reduce the time spent on usual personal interviews since the evaluation can already be done directly online, no matter how far away the person is located. The hiring cost through social media platforms esteemed to be 9 times less than the cost of traditional hiring approaches due to the opportunity of sharing job postings on social networking sites for free or on online recruitment pages at a lower price. Thanks to advanced technology and the common usage of diverse electronic devices such as smartphones, laptops or tablets, total access to social media platforms is given and people can immediately be reached and are able to directly express interest which again accelerates the application process. Besides, highly skilled people would be reached and attracted more by companies that apply social recruitment compared to the ones that only conduct the traditional method. Such candidates that apply through social media sites would usually be educated young professionals that strive for contribution to the growth and technological development of a business. Relating to a survey from Jobvite, 92% of U.S. companies already used social recruiting in 2013 and 73% were successful in hiring candidates through social media (Dennis, 2013).

To name an example, as argued by Sundberg (n.d.), Microsoft successfully reshaped its recruitment strategy in the last years focusing mainly on social media. In 2010, after having highly improved their careers site, new hires were increased by 300%. For instance, on Twitter the account “MicrosoftJobs” with over 80.000 followers has the intention to show job seekers the work atmosphere and environment at Microsoft more intensively to attract them to apply

for certain jobs as they also permanently post job vacancies and company news on that account. Information about job opportunities are also posted on the Facebook page “Microsoft’s Careers page”, having over half a million likes. The company provides an additional Facebook page only for women to demonstrate the organization’s openness and support for women working at Microsoft by showing what they can do and change while working there. Another great career page is located on LinkedIn with almost 4 million followers. As a result, job seekers have the chance to directly contact Microsoft recruiters which are also making use of the wide-ranging sourcing tools on LinkedIn to find highly skilled candidates. Furthermore, Microsoft uploads videos on Youtube approaching various international subjects linked to the company, such as culture, diversity or employee perspectives. These diverse approaches show that a successful social recruitment strategy has to involve various tools and ways to reach the appropriate audience. Thereby, Microsoft is actively interacting with candidates and communities through various social media platforms and providing them numerous information about the company, its values, the work environment and employee experiences. Consequently, Microsoft is gaining major success through a well thought out and effective social recruitment strategy from which it benefits in terms of the diversity of possible approaches on social media platforms to reach top talents.

This chapter showed that aside from several benefits and successful outcomes, social recruitment involves crucial risks and concerns as well that have to be considered by all companies while applying a social recruitment strategy. The next chapter will conclude the study with the major results, practical and theoretical implications as well as the limitations of the study and implications for future research.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion of the Results

Referring back to the first research question, there are several reasons and approaches for companies to execute the new recruitment process through social media. The study showed that based on certain parameter settings and specific sourcing functions, companies are now more able to conduct their searches for suitable qualified candidates and identify them in a much quicker and cost-efficient way. Apart from that, companies have to focus on their branding and attain a good reputation represented on social media to attract more skilled professionals. In addition, recruiters can benefit from the extension of networks on social networking sites since someone suitable is once reached, there is the chance to discover his or her network as well, consisting of people with similar skills or career paths. Hereby, the social recruitment strategy should contain trainings or mentoring sessions for recruiters in terms of stable relationship building and efficient communication with potential candidates. Furthermore, the research demonstrated, based on several conducted surveys from other researchers, that the majority of the hiring managers and recruiters prefer to use multiple social media platforms, especially Facebook and LinkedIn, to find appropriate candidates, screen their profiles and get more detailed relevant information. Another main reason to implement social recruitment is that geographical constraints are totally eliminated since recruiters have the chance to reach candidates from all over the world. A further major point showing up as a reason is the opportunity to reach passive candidates that would also fit very well to certain vacancies. Due to the fact that they are not actively searching for jobs, recruiters would have to be highly convincing to ensure that they are offering them very attractive job positions which are worth a change. Therefore, the major steps to build a stable capability and certainty for the recruiting would be a well-developed presence on different platforms, to provide company and

job information to the people, to keep the company profile updated and lastly, to combine the online recruitment with traditional recruitment approaches. The above mentioned reasons are crucial for companies to recognize the advantages of social recruitment and its great importance to stay competitive in the market since a lot of companies are already implementing it with different approaches through a number of platforms.

Considering the sub-question which comprises the trends shaping the future social recruitment processes, the research indicated that several big online companies, such as Google or Facebook, extend their job services with highly advanced searching functions. Due to 2 billion active users, Facebook is on top of the platforms where job advertisements can be seen by a huge range of people globally. Another main point is the potential new feature called biometric data, from which companies would be able to determine the performance and personality of a candidate deeply by analyzing for instance the sleep patterns and how someone copes with stress situations. However, this showed some serious concerns in terms of privacy issues and ethics as well as the risk of being influenced by external factors which would falsify the outcome. Other trends that companies need to take into account encompass mobile recruitment, including the execution of easy-to-use mobile applications, as well as diversity which contains the search after diverse potential talents with differences in background, culture or race. Also, the Vodafone and Intuit cases showed how chatbots or robots can ease and accelerate the social recruitment process for an organization by directly evaluating a candidate's profile through algorithms based on the requirements of the job vacancy.

Last but not least, the answers for the second research question comprised on the one side that risks are mainly related to an insecurity whether social media demonstrates reliable information

since there are unequal amounts of information available from all candidates to make fair comparisons and which can lead to unconscious biases. As a consequence, it is vitally important that recruiters and hiring managers make their decisions based on relevant and useful data rather than only focusing on private information. Also, companies should be aware of legal and reputational risks, as people can easily post negative comments and complaints on the social corporate page which might influence potential candidates to avoid applying there. Apart from that, companies should not remove traditional employment methods since there are further obstacles recruiters have to pass related to social recruitment, such as lack of qualified candidates, competition or the location. This shows that relying only on social media platforms is not enough and might decrease a stable development in human resources if crucial skilled talents would be missed. On the other side, the reduced hiring time through precise sourcing and special approaches such as videoconferencing as well as the tendency of reaching more highly qualified candidates than through traditional methods, lead to more efficient and successful outcomes in the hiring process. The example of Microsoft indicated that the usage and combination of different social media platforms and approaches as well as the interaction with followers and potential candidates lead to success in terms of reaching top talents and attracting more and more people to be fascinated by the company and its work environment.

5.3 Contributions to Practical and Theoretical Knowledge

As for practical implications and relevant suggestions for companies and recruiters, it can be said that companies' human resources should always think of new innovative and creative ways to attract candidates via social media platforms. For instance, more visual advertisements including pictures or even short videos could attract specifically young people. It is crucial for hiring managers and recruiters to try to implement all recent recruiting trends and further

strengthen them to retain competitive advantage. Human resources should pay attention to giving relevant trainings and seminars for recruiting professionals to develop their communication skills as well as teaching them how to build stable relationships with potential candidates. Especially for social recruitment, it would be important to train the employees to efficiently cope with social networking sites and diverse opportunities to reach top talents. In that respect, raising the budget for social media hiring efforts would lead to powerful and successful outcomes at the end if they are used in an effective and contemporary way.

In general terms and referring back to the state of research, the access and acknowledgement of social media would strengthen the HR practice literature in terms of discovering further social recruitment approaches that would contribute to the development of human resources, and to research in which extent social media can influence HR practices in the near future and in the long-term, applied by companies from different industries. Furthermore, the study reveals how companies transform their traditional recruitment strategy to a digitalized social recruitment strategy to enhance their overall human resources department and maintain competitive advantage.

5.4 Limitations and Implications for Future Research

The study is based on archival research, which is why the major limitation is that there is no primary data, such as self-conducted interviews or questionnaires, involved. Moreover, the time was limited to three months and there was one researcher. In addition, the study focuses mainly on the companies' perspective with related surveys and findings, and leaves out the stances from job seekers.

In terms of future suggestions for further studies, it would be valuable if some primary data, e.g. relevant questionnaires, surveys or interviews, could be carried out. Different companies could be asked how their recruitment strategies look like and in which extent they develop the human resources division. Moreover, human resources consulting firms could also be contacted to conduct interviews with the managers or employees to determine their recruiting procedure and detect the steps they take, or on which social media platforms they work, to attract talents. Since the study focuses more on the companies' perspective, in a further study it would be interesting to consider the job seekers' perspective as well and demonstrate how and in which extent job seekers are making use of social media platforms to search for a new job or attract recruiters through detailed and interesting profiles. A survey with recruiters and hiring managers from several companies or with experts from personnel consulting firms could also be carried out to identify how their social recruitment strategy looks like, which challenges they have come across, which successful outcomes they have achieved in the last few years and if their future e-recruitment plans are based on familiar innovative recruitment trends.

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Appendix

Author	Year	Title	Journal	Nature of	Main findings	Evaluation
Banerjee, Ms. Poulami	2012	Social Networking Sites: A Fad or a Breakthrough in New Age Recruitment	Global Journal of Management and Business Research	Journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study of 100 recruiters from various firms showed that mostly talents in middle management level positions were searched, followed by top and then the lower level • Top level: less individuals relying on social media sites 	Interesting contribution based on primary data
Belton, Amanda	2014	Social Networking in Recruitment	/	Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility to reach networks of suitable candidates → enables alternatives • Crucial part of HR recruitment strategy: stable relationship building & communication → mentoring approach • Staged approach → crucial steps to build a necessary capability for a recruitment team • Companies have to be aware of legal, privacy and reputational risks 	Very helpful to see different approaches of using social recruitment and which risks it implies
Berman-Gorvine, Martin	2018	Move Over LinkedIn: Facebook Is Entering Job Recruiting Market	/	Source of Business Information for Professionals (Bloomberg BNA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google and Facebook → in the phase of implementing new online recruitment services • Employers not able to see whole career path of each person -> not up to date 	Shows trends related to big online companies
Broughton, Andrea; Foley, Beth; Ledermaier, Stefanie, and Cox, Annette	2013	The use of social media in the recruitment process	/	Research Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-recruitment: reduced hiring times + decrease in employee turnover • Job-specific and computer assisted processes • Certain factors determine extent of usage + which social media platforms should be used • More cost-effective and targeting than traditional recruitment 	Positive contribution - advantages and usage of social recruitment

Clark, Leigh A., Roberts, and Sherry J.	2010	Employer's Use of Social Networking Sites: A Socially Irresponsible Practice	Journal of Business Ethics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using social networking sites for recruitment → harmful to society due to recruiters making decisions based on the online character Causes limit of human's right of personal space being judged based on the online appearance Falls back to corporate social responsibility → should positively affect social wellbeing 	Positive → demonstrates crucial themes which have to be considered in terms of privacy and ethics issues
Dennis, Michael	2013	Recruiting on a Budget: How Social Media Can Save You Money	/	Blog post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey: 92% of U.S. companies - usage of social recruiting in 2013 73% successful in hiring candidates through social media 	Somewhat helpful
Everett, Cath	2017	Recruitment data: Is this the dawn of the biometric CV?	/	HR News Article (Personnel Today)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage of biometric data: enables companies to determine performance and characteristics of individuals Advantages: save hiring costs and hire suitable people Concerns in terms of privacy and the extent of using personal data 	Positive → very informative about biometric data (trend)
Gravili, Ginevra, and Fait, Monica	2016	Social Recruitment in HRM: A Theoretical Approach and Empirical Analysis	/	Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people expect access to any information at any time Companies have to adapt to younger people's needs Enhancing the company image → additional advantages for whole company Identity of a person can be constructed differently in the Internet "Care Principle" → avoid using unnecessary information of candidates 	Supportive → based on younger generation, shows advantages for companies as well as concerns related to social recruitment
Hensel, Anna	2018	LinkedIn to roll out 1-click apply, 'How you Match' feature for job seekers	/	Article - Technology website publishing news (VentureBeat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LinkedIn: "How you Match" option - people can directly apply to a job and check how well they fit to it 	Interesting contribution

Kaur, Prabjot	2015	E-recruitment: A conceptual study	Inter-national Journal of Applied Research	Journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No limits for employers → reach talents globally • Take advantage of widespread use of the internet 	Mediocre → less new and crucial contributions
King, David B.; O'Rourke, Norm and DeLongis, Anita	2014	Social Media Recruitment and Online Data Collection: A Beginner's Guide and Best Practices for Accessing Low-Prevalence and Hard-to-Reach Populations	Canadian Psychology	Journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media users can easily be identified through various criteria and settings (such as location, language, interests etc.) 	Contributive
Lardinois, Frederic	2017	Google launches its AI-powered jobs search engine	/	Article, Technology industry news (Techcrunch)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google launching its AI powered job search engine → people can search across major job boards 	Less contributive
Lawrence, Amie, Ph.D.	n.d.	Why You Should NOT Use Social Media to Make Hiring Decisions	/	Blog post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about reliable and unequal information of candidates • Unconscious biases → unethical, bad company image 	Gives great insights into the risks of social recruitment approaches
LinkedIn Talent Solutions	2018	Global Recruiting Trends 2018	/	Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity: crucial trend + high impact on how recruiters hire • Search internationally for candidates • Innovative interviews • Vodafone uses robots to review and analyze videos from candidates • Intuit → implementing artificial intelligence: faster hiring time and more qualified top talents 	Very good insight on major trends and case studies from various companies
Madia, Sherrie A.	2011	Best practices for using social media as a recruitment strategy	/	Book/research article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract best people with powerful online presence • Mix of job boards & social networking sites + enter communities and platforms with great networks → efficient to enlarge outreach • Increase in corporate online activity 	Very supportive → shows importance of social recruitment for employers and recruiters

Melanthiou, Yioula; Pavlou, Fotis, and Constantinou, Eleni	2015	The Use of Social Network Sites as an E-Recruitment Tool	Journal of Trans-national Management	Journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical constraints eliminated • Merge traditional and social recruitment approach → comprehensive strategy 	Insight into advantages of social recruitment usage
Olenski, Steve	2018	Taking Corporate Recruiting To A Whole New Level	/	Business Magazine (Forbes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018, 54% of Americans: online job seekers, compared to 26% in 2015 • Usage of social media platforms for recruitment: grown 54% in last 5 years 	Demonstrates potential growth of social recruitment
Post, Jennifer	2018	Hiring in the Digital Age: What's Next for Recruiting?	/	Article, Source for Business owners/News (Business News Daily)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies have to ensure a very good reputation on social media platforms → gain high qualified employees & engage with clients and customers 	Neutral
Sundberg, Jörgen	n.d.	How Microsoft Uses Social for Employer Branding	/	Blog post (case study)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study from Microsoft → reshaped its recruitment strategy • Usage of all important social media platforms to engage with candidates 	Very supportive and interesting case with good examples

"Companies' development in human resources in terms of facilitating the recruitment process through social media platform"

By

Gürsu, Gizem

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor in Business Administration**

At Berlin International University of Applied Sciences

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