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Strategic recruitment through social media

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TIIVISTELMÄ:

Sosiaalinen media on vaikuttanut suuresti yrityksien liiketoimintaan. Lisäksi sosiaalisella medialla on tällä hetkellä merkittävä rooli rekrytoinneissa. Se nähdään kustannustehokkaana ja aikaa säästävänä kanavana rekrytoinneissa. Erityisesti se auttaa yrityksiä saavuttamaan suuria ihmismassoja, kohdentamaan viestintää tietyille joukoille, löytämään passiivisia ehdokkaita, sekä se on tehnyt interaktiivisen kommunikoinnin mahdolliseksi. Parhaiden talenttien rekrytoiminen on välttämätöntä yrityksien menestymisen kannalta. Kilpailu heistä on kovaa, minkä vuoksi heidän houkuttelunsa yritykseen ja työnantajamielikuvan rakentaminen on välttämätöntä. Rekrytointien tulisi olla tehokkaita ja korkealaatuisia, jotta löydettäisiin täydellisesti sopivat työntekijät ja pystyttäisiin siten vastaamaan businesstarpeisiin. Parhaiten sopivien työntekijöiden löytäminen voi johtaa asiakastyytyväisyyden kasvuun ja kilpailuedun syntymiseen. Sen lisäksi, globalisaatio on yhä kasvava ilmiö yritysmaailmassa, minkä vuoksi myös kansainväliset rekrytointitarpeet korostuvat. Kansainvälisyys tuo omat näkökulmansa ja haasteensa rekrytointeihin. Sosiaalisen median ansiosta organisaatiot pystyvät kuitenkin helposti rekrytoimaan parhaita talentteja mistä vaan, ja ylipäätänsä saavuttamaan heidät erittäin kilpailluilla markkinoilla.

Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys kattaa rekrytoinnin ja kansainvälisen rekrytoinnin erityispiirteineen, sekä sosiaalisen median käytön rekrytoinneissa. Nämä aihealueet käydään mahdollisimman analyyttisesti keskeisten mallien, konseptien ja teorioiden avulla.

Kvalitatiivisen tutkimusmallin avulla, selvitetään sosiaalisen median roolia rekrytoinneissa. Tutkimuksen kohteena on myös sosiaalisen median vaikutus rekrytointien onnistumiseen, sekä kansallisten, että kansainvälisten sosiaalisen median rekrytointien hyödyt ja haasteet. Seitsemää asiantuntijaa suomalaisista, myös kansainvälisiä kandidaatteja rekrytoivista yrityksistä haastateltiin. Haastatteluista saatu data analysoitiin sisällönanalyysimenetelmällä.

Keskeisimmät johtopäätökset ovat, että sosiaalisen median rekrytoinneissa menestyminen alkaa sillä, että rekrytoinnit ovat vahvasti osa yrityksen strategiaa. Sosiaalisella medialla, etenkin LinkedInillä on korvaamaton rooli rekrytoinneissa, koska kaksi keskeisintä toimintoa, potentiaalisten kandidaattien houkuttelu työnantajamielikuvalla, sekä passiivisten kandidaattien saavuttaminen tapahtuvat LinkedInissä. Lisäksi suurimpiin hyötyihin kuuluvat laaja kattavuus ja kohdentamismahdollisuudet, henkilökohtainen kanssakäynti, tulosten helppo mitattavuus ja halpuus. Sosiaalisen median käytöllä rekrytoinneissa voi lisätä niiden laatua ja tehokkuutta. Huolimatta sen valtavasta suosiosta, tuli ilmi rekrytointitarkoitukseen liittyen kaksi haastetta, nimittäin luotettavuus ja tiettyjen ryhmien poissaolo LinkedInissä. Monimuotoisuus on hyvin arvostettua ja tavoiteltavaa yrityksissä ja sosiaalinen media auttaakin saavuttamaan kansainväliset kandidaatit nopeasti. Kuitenkin kansainväliset rekrytoinnit ovat erittäin standardisoituja, vaikka se voi vähentää monimuotoisuutta. Tärkeimmät asiat, jotka otetaan huomioon näyttävät olevan kieli ja työluvat. Kansainväliset kandidaatit saavutetaan suurimmaksi osaksi LinkedInissä. Saattaa olla, että työnantajamielikuva on jopa tärkeämpi kansainvälisissä rekrytoineissa kuin kotimaisissa. Ylipäätänsä sosiaalisen median rooli rekrytoinnissa ja sitä myötä siihen panostaminen on selkeässä kasvussa.

KEYWORDS: recruitment, social media, social media recruitment, international recruitment

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1   Introduction

During the past decades the world has changed to more open and interactive place. One reason behind this change is social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, which has changed the ways people act and behave. Social media has affected our everyday lives at home and work. It has become a place for companies to increase their brand awareness and to promote their products or services. More recently, companies and their human resource departments have started to use social media as their recruitment channel and tool. (Fisher, McPhail, You & Ash, 2014, p. 636)

Social networks are increasingly merging to recruitment business. Huge amounts of organizations have profiles for instance in LinkedIn. All the time crowingly amount of organizations use social network applications for recruiting. (Buettner, 2017, p. 1) When social media started to become popular, it was not a necessity for companies to use it. Today ignoring it may not be an option to companies. As opposite, social media has a lot to offer to business, at its best, it can offer a very quick and cost-effective way to recruit. As social media has become a popular channel to recruit, it is important to understand how companies can use social media and how they can benefit from it. (Madia, 2011, p. 19−20)

International job boards such as Monster and Yahoo still have huge amounts of visitors. The problem is that those are profiting plenty of incompetent applicants. When adding social media with job boards to recruitment strategy, the right people can be targeted much easier and more efficiently. (Madia, 2011, p. 19−23) In their research Koch, Gerber and de Klerk (2018) state that social media is crucial in recruitment process today.

"The principal goal of human resources in organizations is to attract, select, motivate, and retain talented employees in their roles." (Katz & Kahn, 1978). In organizations nowadays those are even more crucial, because skills and talents of employees are in huge role. (Huselid, 1995) At first, they have to be of course found and recruited. Accordingly,

strategic recruitment is in a huge role today. Strategic recruitment means that recruitment processes are connected to organizations strategy, which is the key for success in modern organizations. (Philips and Gully, 2015)

How organizations handle information about applicants and their employees has changed a lot because of technology. Technology has changed jobs themselves, and also relationships and supervision at work. Recruitment benefits also from technology, practical example being for instance web-based job applications. Because of technology, global and international organizations are able to hire easier the right kind of people from anywhere, and they are able to work from anywhere. (Stone, Deadrick, Lukaszewski & Johnson, 2015, p. 217)

Organizations are still increasingly globalizing and same time the need of global recruitment is growing. (Banks, Wznyj, Wesslen, Frear, Berka, Heggestad and Gordon, 2019; Goldstein, Pulakos, Passmore & Semedo, 2017). Global recruitment differs from national recruitment by cultural aspects, legal and regulatory forces, global relationships and politics, economic forces, and their labor market for talent. When choosing social media as global recruitment channel, those aspects should be considered. (Goldstein et. al., 2017)

"The recruiting function's purpose is to help the organization employ a talented group of employees who contribute to the company's business strategy so the firm can achieve a competitive advantage." (Phillips & Gully, 2015, p. 194) At its best recruitment can make customer satisfaction better and enhance innovation and creativity. (Stone et. al., 2015, p. 217) High-quality recruitment and top talent are needed, if companies want to compete in modern business world. There is an ongoing competition about the best talent, and social media could help reaching it. (Koch et. al., 2018)

Knowledge and understanding of national cultural values are the key in international recruitment. International recruitment can be necessary also to domestic firms, because they might for instance need key talent from other countries. (Ma & Allen, 2009) Multinational organizations still also struggle with culturally diverse recruitment activities.

International companies face challenges in their versatile context trying to build coherent human resource management and recruitment activities, which are very important strategic resources. (Banks, Wznyj, Wesslen, Frear, Berka, Heggestad and Gordon, 2019)

Organizations balance with standardizing globally and customizing locally with their recruitment operations. (Ma & Allen, 2009) It is known that different cultures and values lead to different behaviors. (Hofstede, 2001) Ma and Allen (2009) suggest that throughout recruitment process national culture might have crucial role in a relationship of recruitment actions and outcomes. Moreover, organizations could gain competitive advantage by taking account cultural values in their recruitment.

1.1 Research gap, research problem and research question

There are several scientific researches done, which state that the use of social media in recruitment is increasing enormously. (Chauhan, Buckley, & Harvey, 2013, p.128; Buettner, 2017; Doherty, 2010) The same researches tell that overall the whole process of social media and recruitment has not been researched enough. Chauhan et.al. (2013, p.127−128) say, that there is a strong assume that recruiters and human resource departments are using social media increasingly also in the future. The main reasons for the increasing use of social networks are their suitableness and lower costs for companies. Despite the importance of social media in the human resource field, there is not much research done about social media's impacts for recruitment. (Chauhan et. al., 2013, p. 127−128; Fisher et. al., 2014, p. 636) Dutot and Mosconi (2016, p.191) add that overall, the use of social media in business purposes, is increasingly researched. However, there is a lot to learn about its effective use. Social media's necessity to business is often talked, but it is still hard to explain scientifically clearly how it can add value.

Although the benefits of using social media in recruiting process are commonly known, there has not been enough empirical studies and theoretical discussion made about how organizations adopt this method in recruitment. As Kashi, Zheng & Molineux, (2016, p.

204) say there is a shortage of theory-driven and scholarly research in this area. Buettner (2017, p.1) continues with same opinions, and argues that although social networks for instance LinkedIn are in favor of people, our knowledge for using social networks for recruitment process is very restricted.

The meaning of strategic recruitment is crucial in any kind of recruitment. However, as Philips and Gully (2015) state, strategic recruitment is still unexplored, even though it has been researched a lot.

Goldstein et. al. (2017, p. 32, 45) tell that global recruitment is becoming more and more important area of research widely and deeply. Even though it has been researched a lot, there is still a lot to research. Banks et al. (2019, p. 498) state that there is a lack of cross-cultural recruitment research. Especially, it is not clear how organizations make the decision about standardizing or customizing their recruitment operations. Furthermore, Ma and Allen (2009) state that international effective recruitment is unclear area of research. They say that attracting effectively international talent can be very challenging and requires a lot of national cultural knowledge. Moreover, Ma and Allen (2009: 335) say that as cultural differences in recruitment are so crucial, they need to be researched extensively. Banks et. al. (2019) say ten years later that it is still not well-known how international recruitment are done in organizations. Accordingly, there has been a lack of knowledge in the literature of international recruitment in organizations for at least over ten years.

Accordingly, the purpose of this research is to add understanding about the role of social media in strategic recruitment. Furthermore, one goal is to find out what impact may recruitment made in social media have to recruitment success. One aspect that this research also focuses clarifying are the challenges and advantages of national and international social media recruitment.

Forming good research questions in research process is crucial. Good research subject can be recognized from research questions and objectives which are clear and defined

carefully. (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007, p. 20). This research has one main research question and two sub questions which were formed according to previous indications. This thesis focuses on one main research question, which is:

- What is the role of social media in strategic recruitment?

And two sub questions, which are:

- What impact may social media have on the success of recruitment?

- What are the advantages and challenges of using social media in national and international recruitment?

1.2 Key concepts of study

Central concepts of the study are explained next.

Recruitment can be defined as a process that is focused on searching the best talent possible to company by attracting them so that they would apply for a job. (Sinha & Thaly, 2013, p. 142) Recruitments' goal is "to efficiently place and retain the right people in the right roles to effectively support the company's business strategies". (Hunt 2014, p. 60) Recruiting exists in order to help organizations to achieve their goals. (Ployhart, 2006)

"**Strategic recruitment** refers to recruitment practices that are connected across levels of analysis and aligned with the goals, strategies, context, and characteristics of the organization." Recruitment is said to be strategic, if recruitment process, activities and outcomes are connected to organizations strategy. (Philips and Gully, 2015, p. 1416) Strategic recruitment is the key for companies to gain competitive advantage. (Ployhart (2006)

International recruitment is mostly consequence of globalization and growing need for international talent. It is basically recruiting from foreign countries, which is a key skill

for companies, in order to be able to compete today about the best talent and achieving competitive advantage. (Ma & Allen, 2009)

Social media means "online environments of electronic media sharing and user generated content, giving users the ability to create, aggregate, link, and share created content instantly". They are now very common and popular communication channels for both personal and business interactions all over the world. (Brooks, Heffner & Henderson, 2014, p. 25) Social media has huge amounts of users worldwide. Approximately 2 billion people are using social networks in 2020, and the amount is still increasing. (Statista.com)

1.3 **Structure of the study**

The structure of the study is following. Chapter two is the theoretical framework, which covers central models, concepts and theories concerning this research. Next in chapter three, methods of empirical research, the research itself and analysis are presented. Furthermore, validity, reliability and ethicalness are discussed at the same chapter. Findings are presented in chapter four. Conclusions are discussed in chapter five, including answering to research questions, contribution to theory, managerial implications, limitations and future research suggestions.

2   Recruitment

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of this study trough central models, concepts and theories. It begins by recruitment and international recruitment, moving on to social media and using social media in recruitment, and ending up to summary.

The huge development of technology has had enormous impact globally on economy and companies. The impact can also be seen in HR processes and specially in recruitment. Today recruiting should be efficient and high-quality. In that way, it will help companies to find perfect fits in recruitment processes. Perfect fits will improve and complete the know-how and diversity at the existing employee group. In addition, it can help companies to improve customer satisfaction and advance abilities of innovation and creativity. (Stone et. al., 2015, p. 216–217).

"Organization is a reflection of its people and the success of the organization depends on the quality of the talent employed by the organization" say Goldstein et al. (2017, p. 3). This sentence shows how important recruiting in organizations really is. Sinha & Thaly (2013, p. 142) define recruitment as "process of searching the right talent and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organization". Whereas, Hunt (2014, p. 60) says that recruitments' goal is "to efficiently place and retain the right people in the right roles to effectively support the company's business strategies". Right employees and talent are extremely important for organizations to succeed. (Sinha & Thaly, 2013) Therefore attracting the right people and recruiting them is in a key position. Competition about the best talent is tough, and that is why companies must differentiate themselves. (Koch, Gerber & de Klerk, 2018, p. 2)

A lot of companies still think recruiting is just an administrative process, without paying enough attention to its strategic value. Recruiters are said to pay more attention to quantity than quality of recruitment, which can be seen in counting the number of recruitments, instead of how new employees manage in their jobs. Nevertheless, direction

is luckily to more quality emphasizing way, as strategic human resources reinforces its' place in organizations. This is mainly because of conciseness of talented employees, cost of labor and importance of human capital. Recruitment is said to become "the key differentiator in the emerging war for talent". (Hunt, 2014, p. 60)

2.1 Recruitment process and selection

Three main phases can be recognized in recruitment process; applicant attraction, recruitment operations, and final job choice decision. (Dutta 2014, p.94) "Recruitment is the process of finding the right person who is interested in working for an organization, influencing these particular individuals to apply for the job and convincing them to accept the position." (Phillips & Gully, 2015)

Sarma (2008, p. 89) suggests that there are certain steps in a recruitment process that companies should follow, in order to achieve success. Those are defining the job, establishing the person profile, making vacancy known, receiving and documenting applications, designing and using the application form, selecting, notification and final check, and finally induction. To be able to reach the selection phase, at first candidates have to be identified and contacted, then they apply, and after that have to be decided who to continue the recruiting process with. Staffing methods are in key position to succeed in high quality hiring. No less than increase of productivity and retention of employees can be achieved. (Hunt, 2014, p. 89)

There are plenty of tools, which can be used in selection. Taking account organizations resources and features of the job, the best selection tools should be defined and used. Hunt (2014, p. 89–92) names several recruitment assessment tools, which he divides into six categories; physical exams, for example drug screens or physical ability tests, background investigations, for example resume screens, interviews, self-report measures, knowledge, skill and ability tests, for instance bad simulations. Most common tool is definitely interviewing, which is usually used in every recruitment.

Recruitment processes are used in order to be able to hire the best suitable people. Furthermore, when recruitment process is over, it should be evaluated. However, especially today, when different recruitment methods are used, as a criticism to those steps, these all phases will not happen in all recruitment.

According to Sarma (2008, p. 90–92), there are also certain techniques and methods used in recruitment. Those are divided in four categories, which are direct methods, indirect methods, third-party methods, and internet recruiting. One common example of direct method could be recruiting done in schools. Indirect method can be for instance job advertisement in magazine. Third-party methods are for instance employment agencies. Internet recruiting is recruiting done in the internet with different channels and methods. Compared to all other methods internet recruiting is said to be cheaper, faster and have better results with quality.

Overall, one best way of doing recruitment does not exist. What works for one, may not work for another. Hunt (2014, p. 67–68) has a different list than Sarma (2008), which consists of nine issues which should be considered in all recruitment, which are; the type of job, amount of people to hire and when, what kind of people are needed, what are the roles of different people related to recruitment, and how following areas will be handled: sourcing, selection, productivity of new employees, retaining, measuring success and improvement.

Retaining employees should also be a part of post recruitment process. It is very expensive to go through the recruitment process again, if a new employee quits fast. If a new employee leaves within a year, the recruitment has not usually been successful. If that happens, the new employee and the job did not fit somehow together. Furthermore, recruitment professionals in organizations are often willing to know why employees

leave after year in order to be able to keep the talented employees as long as possible. (Hunt, 2014, p. 94)

Finally, defining the measurement criteria for successful recruitment process is needed. Otherwise it is impossible to find out whether the recruitment process is effective or not. Measuring and improvement in a long-term are needed in recruitment process, as in any areas of business. (Hunt, 2014, p. 94–95)

2.1.1   Strategic recruitment

Strategic recruitment is in a huge role today. Recruiting is said to have impact on motivation, performance, and retention of employees. Organizations' employees have huge influence on capabilities, strategic execution and competitive advantage. "Strategic recruitment refers to recruitment practices that are connected across levels of analysis and aligned with the goals, strategies, context, and characteristics of the organization." Recruitment is said to be strategic, if recruitment process, activities and outcomes are connected to organizations strategy. (Philips and Gully, 2015, p. 1416) In other words, recruiting exists in order to help organizations to achieve their goals. Furthermore, strategic recruitment is the key for companies to gain competitive advantage. (Banks et. al., 2019; Ployhart, 2006) In strategic staffing is also important to notice different needs of human capital according to business needs. Different employees bring different value to organization. (Ployhart, 2006)

Strategic recruitment model by Philips and Gully (2015, p. 1418) is made in order to explain comprehensively the subject of strategic recruitment. They say it is "a theoretical framework that organizes and explains connections across research germane to strategic recruitment. By looking at strategic recruitment as a multilevel input-process-outcome system, this model helps to describe the core elements of strategic recruiting and illustrates how we can create recruiting systems, policies, and practices that best support

firm, individual, and team performance by identifying the levers that exist at different organizational levels." Accordingly, it seems to be helpful tool for understanding and executing strategic recruitment in organizations. Moreover, they introduced horizontal and vertical strategic recruitment in their model. Horizontal strategic recruitment is about "the alignment of inputs with recruitment systems, policies, and practices to yield desired outcomes within a given level", which are organizational, team and individual levels. Vertical strategic recruitment means "the vertical alignment of recruiting input factors, processes, and outcomes across organizational levels and focuses on the subcomponents of the recruitment system." (Philips and Gully, 2015, p. 1423, 1431)

2.1.2 Sourcing

To be able to attract prospective employees, they have to be found first. (Phillips & Gully, 2015) Or as Hunt (2014, p. 64) says, the best talent has to apply first, in order to be able to hire them. Sourcing is about finding talent and reaching them. (Phillips & Gully, 2015) Sourcing is understandably said to be very important phase, therefore, companies who outstand in sourcing, success in the whole recruitment process. Sourcing is also said to have a very important role in effective recruitment process. (Hunt, 2014, p. 83)

Sarma (2008, p. 92) says that attracting the right people at the right time is the key of recruitment. It is supposed to attract the best possible talent, whose personalities, interests, and preferences could fit to organization most probably, moreover, who also have the skills, knowledge, and abilities that fulfill the work requirements. Hunt (2014, p. 64) also states that the quality of the people you hire for a job is constrained by the quality of who applies, which also shows the importance of sourcing.

Sourcing should be measured in quality, not in quantity of candidates. As the importance of sourcing is recognized today, there are specific people and new effective tools for solely sourcing purposes. Specialist people use advanced webtools to attract candidates. They also browse through applicants and workforce data, in order to be able to find the

best candidates. Overall, "the specialized technology and workforce analytics applications associated with recruiting marketing enable companies to find, attract and engage high-quality candidates with the minimal investment possible". (Hunt, 2014, p. 64)

According to Hunt (2014, p. 83−84) there are six different sourcing methods, with their own strengths and weaknesses. Those six methods are employer branding, building talent pools, job posting, professional recruiting, social networking, and career pathing. Employer branding is considered to be in a huge role to companies today, so it will be discussed in the coming chapter.

2.1.3   Employer branding

Employees' opinion about the company they work for has been in companies' interest for a long time. Inside the company their opinions effect to employee loyalty, engagement and retention, and outside the company to its public image and an ability to attract new talent. (Dabirian, Kietzmann & Diba, 2017, p.197) As the competition about the best talent is tough today, employer branding has become a popular tool for companies. (Eger, Mičík & Řehoř, 2018)

Olivas-Lujan and Bondarouk (2013, p. 27) define employer branding as "long-term strategy of any given company, aimed at both building a unique and desirable employer identity and managing the perceptions of prospective and current employees, in order to gain competitive advantage". Phenomenon can also be called employer attractiveness, in other words how well companies attract employees. (Dabirian et. al., 2017, p. 197) Philips & Gully (2015, p. 206) say that employer brand should answer to a question "why should I work here?" Employer branding is important part of recruitment process, as employer brand awakes the interesting of potential employee towards organization. (Olivas-Lujan & Bondarouk, 2013) When employer brand differentiates organization from its competitors, it can contribute competitive advantage to organization. (Philips &

Gully, 2015, p. 207) In order to succeed in employer branding, it should support company's human resource strategy. (Olivas-Lujan & Bondarouk, 2013)

Employer branding could be divided in three categories; value proposition, external marketing and internal marketing. Value proposition is the image that current employees experience that company offers to them. External marketing is about having unique image, which can attract targeted people, especially potential employees. Internal marketing means executing inside the company the image that was created to external marketing. (Olivas-Lujan & Bondarouk, 2013, p. 27−28)

Dabirian et al. (2017) report their findings about important factors in employer branding, which current, potential and former employees appreciate. They suggest that there are seven of those factors, which are: social elements of work, interesting and challenging work tasks, the extent to which skills can be applied in meaningful ways, opportunities for professional development, economic issues tied to compensation, the role of management, and work/life balance. These are not all equally important, and their importance may also vary depending on the company.

Hunt (2014, p. 84) argues that employer branding is most effective, when companies are hiring lots of candidates in a long time period. In addition, employer branding is considered to be especially efficient when companies are trying to build awareness in certain candidate groups. Hunt also describes its strengths and weaknesses. Its certain strength is that it has influence in lots of potential employees. Employer branding is also able to attract otherwise perhaps unreachable candidates. Additionally, one of employer brandings strengths is that it can help at the same time with other company branding areas. Employer branding has its weaknesses. First of all, it takes a lot of time. Second of all, its marketing costs can rise high. Furthermore, its results are hard to define. It is possible that it also attracts plenty of not so talented candidates.

2.1.4 SIgnaling theory

Signaling theory is popular theory in inter alia human resource literature and especially in recruitment. (Connelly, B. L., Certo, S. T., Ireland, R. D., & Reutzel, C. R., 2011, p. 39) Connelly et. al. (2011, p. 39) describe signaling theory as following: "Signaling theory is useful for describing behavior when two parties (individuals or organizations) have access to different information. Typically, one party, the sender, must choose whether and how to communicate (or signal) that information, and the other party, the receiver, must choose how to interpret the signal." (Connelly et. al., 2011.) Highhouse, Thornbury & Little, (2007:136) describe the signaling theory in recruitment context as following "any instance in which prospective applicants make inferences about unknown organizational characteristics." Whereas Connelly et.al. (2011) describe that organizations try to engage with signaling activities by targeting it to the best talent. Although, the managing of recruitment signals which organizations send to applicants in domestic or international context still remains unclear. (Ma & Allen, 2009; Banks et. al. 2019) As well as the possible differences between signals that organizations send in domestic or international context are unknown. Domestic and international signals may be different for example because of cultural values or legal requirements. (Banks et. al. 2019)

The recruitment signaling consists of employers' positive signals to potential employee about the quality of employer, which would be unavailable to employee otherwise. (Banks et. al. 2019) In recruitment, signals can be divided in two categories instrumental and symbolic. (Highhouse et al., 2007) Instrumental signals are objective and physical, whereas symbolic signals are more intangible. Organizations have to find the most effective signals to attract the best talent. Signals are a huge deal in recruitment process because they influence to the success of the recruitment and finally to economic outcomes of organization. (Banks et.al., 2019)

International recruitment is more complex than domestic also regarding to signaling decisions. Multinational companies can either customize locally their recruitment operations in each foreign country, or they can keep coherent line in domestic and foreign

countries. These are called local customization or global standardization. Both of those have their advantages. If company chooses local customization it can decide what kind of signals would suit the best locally. Furthermore, it can better handle and take into account, national culture, geographic and local pressures. Especially customization helps in concerning national cultural diversity aspect in recruitment. Standardization can help companies to reach employees who could aim to global higher positions. Global mindset increases flexibility and adaptability, which help gaining competitive advantage. (Banks et.al. 2019)

Multinational companies human resource operations and human resource management should be consistent, which means that recruitment signals should be in line with other human resource operations. If recruitment signals are not so standardized, it can have effect on the cohesion of the company. (Banks et.al. 2019)

2.2   International recruitment

Recognizing global talent is said to be one of the most crucial matter in multinational companies. (Björkman, Ehrnrooth, Mäkelä, Smale & Sumelius, (2013) According to Banks et al. (2019) multinational companies have to have locally and globally capable talent pool. Global recruiting is important part of global talent management and strategic human resource management. (Goldstein et al., 2017, p. 29) International recruitment are standard activities to modern multinational companies. Even though they are common, it does not mean that there would not be any complexities. There are many issues that have to be considered carefully, in recruiting home, host and third country nationals. (Kang & Shen, 2013, p. 3325)

There are many aspects that have to be taken into account in global recruitment compared to national recruitment. Mostly global recruitment may differ from national

recruitment by cultural aspects, legal and regulatory forces, global relationships and politics, economic forces, and their labor market for talent. (Goldstein et. al., 2017)

In international staffing literature four aspects are recognized. Those are ethnocentric, polycentric, geocentric, and regiocentric. This is how Kang and Shen define these four aspects: "the ethnocentric approach company fills all the key positions in subsidiaries abroad with parent-country nationals, while the polycentric approach does so with home-country-nationals. The geocentric approach utilizes the best people for senior positions regardless of their nationalities. Finally, the regiocentric approach selects the best people, but within a particular region". (Kang & Shen, 2013, p. 3326)

There are characteristics and competences that are known to be good on potential employees in global recruitment. Those are openness to experiences, self-awareness, curiosity, empathy, optimism and cultural intelligence. Also, family's role has a lot of impact. (Goldstein et al., 2017, p. 38)

Recruitment in global (or any) organizations can be divided in internal or external recruitment. Internal multinational recruitment includes expatriates, alternative international assignments (non-expatriate) and inpatriates. Internal recruiting is the larger one. It means that organization recruits and reassigns employees that are already working for them in a global context. External multinational recruitment consists of self-initiated expatriates, host country nationals and skilled migrants. External recruitment is for the talent who are not organizations employees yet. Internal and external recruitment differ from each other a lot. That is why they also need different types of recruitment. (Goldstein et al., 2017, p. 31–37) Whether the recruitment should be internal or external, depends on many factors. People might quickly think that internal might be better, because employees are known and organizations want to offer them first new positions, but always required skills might not be available, or there might be some other reasons to choose external recruitment. (Koch et. al., 2018, p. 3)

Global recruitment consists of different kinds of groups of people. There are permanent global managers, contract expatriates, shorter term assignees on foreign positions, international commuters, business trips, international transferees, global expatriate managers, virtual international employees working in cross-border teams, individuals working remote centers serving global operations, self-initiated movers who live in a third country but willing to work for a multinational, host country nationals willing to work for global organizations and immigrants attracted to a national labor market. (Goldstein et al., 2017, p. 29)

2.2.1 Effectiveness in international recruitment

Efficient human resource systems are crucial because it has huge impact in many ways in organizations. It impacts to labor costs, the whole firms' productivity, profits, and the competitive advantage. The employee relations alter remarkably worldwide, which makes it challenging for global managers to use human resource practices that are suitable. There are differences for instance in culture, economies, politics, and laws. (Katz & Elsea, 1997, p. 16–23) "Effectiveness has primarily been assessed by examining turnover/job survival rates and job performance." (Zottoli & Wanous, 2000).

Singh and Finn (2003, p. 395) tell that recruitment is in a key position in organizations success. Furthermore, how well an organization is able to attract and retain talent, has a straight connection to organizations effectiveness. (Singh & Finn, 2003, p. 395) In order to be really successful, organizations should be able to stand out concerning attraction, development, and retention strategies. (Al Ariss, Cascio & Paauwe, 2014) Hunt (2014, p. 59) say it clearly: "Running a successful business depends on having the right people in the right roles to effectively execute its' strategies".

Goldstein et al. (2017, p. 31) tell that recruitment strategies in global organizations are affected by several factors. They describe in their book, that five most important factors

inside the organization, affecting global recruitment effectiveness are host country organizational context and strategy, individual characteristics of recruits, type of global work assignment, internal or external recruitment, and multinational organizational context and strategy. Other important influencing factors that come from outside the organization are labor market for talent, economic forces, global relationships and politics, legal and regulatory forces, and cultural forces.

More precise, brand image and culture might be the most important factors influencing global recruitment effectiveness. Concerning brand image, global organizations, as any others, should specialize themselves in order to be able to attract potential employees. Brand image is a huge deal in awakening right kind of talents' interest. In global context national differences and global strategy must be taken carefully into account. (Goldstein et al., 2017, p. 38−39) There is more about brand image in separate chapter. Following chapter deals cultural differences in global recruitment.

In order to be able to measure the effectiveness of recruitment process, the measurement criteria must be specified. Companies should have a recruitment process, which has one main object, business execution. In addition, main focus should be in staffing effectiveness, not in hiring efficiency. Meaning that the focus should be in quality of recruitment, which will also bring the effectiveness. If companies are able to increase the quality of hiring, it can impact enormously financially in companies' performance. This can be done when hiring managers are totally aware of costs and benefits related to hiring decisions. (Hunt, 2014, p. 59-62)

Recruiting in multinational corporations can lead to having the global talent needed in order to create value. If international recruitment is done effectively, they impact on turnover rates, which again have impact on operating costs. Organizations should recognize recruiting signals which are effective locally and globally. (Banks, Wznyj, Wesslen, Frear, Berka, Heggestad and Gordon, 2019, p. 479)

As Banks et. al. summarize (2019, p. 479) Philips and Gully's (2015) findings "The successful balancing of standardized and localized recruiting HRM activities (a) creates value, (b) is not easily executed (i.e., is rare), (c) is not easily substituted, and (d) is a socially complex phenomenon that may not be easily understood by outsiders and thus not easily imitated by competitors." (Phillips & Gully, 2015). In order to find out the ways to gain competitive advantage, the implementation of cross-cultural recruitment has to be well-known. (Banks et. al., 2019, p. 479)

2.2.2   Quality in international recruitment

Sinha and Thaly (2013, p.141) tell that that organizations value increasingly quality, cost, availability and time in their recruitment. In addition, high-quality recruitment and top talent are needed, if companies want to compete in modern business world. (Koch et. al., 2018) Or as mentioned before how Goldstein et al. (2017, p.3) point it out "Organization is a reflection of its people and the success of the organization depends on the quality of the talent employed by the organization" say Goldstein et al. (2017, p. 3). The quality of the people organizations hire for a job is constrained by the quality of who applies, which means that the quality process starts from the first phase of recruitment. The focus should be in quality of recruitment, which will also bring the effectiveness. (Hunt, 2014, p. 59-64)

The attention in recruitment used to be more to quantity than quality, which means counting the number of recruitments, instead of focusing how new employees manage in their jobs. However, the quality is increasingly emphasized, and strategic human resources reinforces its' place in organizations, caused by conciseness of talented employees, cost of labor and importance of human capital. Huge financial influences can be gained if organizations are be able to increase the quality of recruitment even a little. High quality recruitment can also lead to increased productivity and retention of employees. (Hunt, 2014) Furthermore, social media has brought new level of interactivity to recruitment, which shows in results as increased level of quality. (Doherty, 2010)

2.2.3 Cultural differences in recruitment

Goldstein et al. (2017, p. 31, p. 38-39) say that culture is one of the most important factors influencing global organizations recruitment strategies. Moreover, culture might be the another of the two most important factors influencing global recruitment effectiveness. In global recruitment cultural differences have to be taken carefully into account.

Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010, p. 4) say: "The world is full of confrontations between people, groups, and nations who think, feel, and act differently." In order to be able to work together, skills of cooperation and problem-solving are needed. In business life good worldwide solutions are needed, so that these cultural differences can be handled effectively and fairly. Culture is "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.". (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 4)

Hofstede et al. (2010, p. 6–7) describe in their book the three levels of uniqueness in mental programming, which are human nature, culture and personality. Human nature is the fundamental psychological and physical heritage in genes what we all have in common. Culture is learned and sheared with people from same social environment. Personality is individual and unique, partly learned and partly inherited. These all together form persons mental programming, which affects how one thinks, feels and acts.

National cultures and groups differ from each other from their language, religion, rules, laws, organizations and software of the minds. In business life it is necessary to understand why people act the way they do and understanding their societies. (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 25)

There are well known national cultural dimensions of Hofstede, which are power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term versus short-term orientation and indulgence. (Hofstede et. al. 2010, p. 31) Power distance's definition is "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally." "Individualism is the extent to which people feel independent, as opposed to being interdependent as members of larger wholes." Masculinity versus femininity can shortly be defined as "Masculinity is the extent to which the use of force in endorsed socially." Uncertainty avoidance deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. "Long-term orientation deals with change." Indulgence is about the good things in life. (Hofstede, n.d.)

Cultural dimensions can be measured and compared to other cultures. These might be good to consider when planning global recruitment strategies. As Schuler & Rogovsky (1998) state, "Hofstede's cultural dimensions are perhaps some of the most widely cited and applied measures of national culture". Although, those dimensions have been also criticized (Lowe, 2001; McSweeney, 2002).

Cultural factors can have impact on the human resource management activities of organizations. (Banks et. al., 2019, p. 482-483) Schuler & Rogovsky, (1998: 161) define national culture as following: "the values, beliefs, and assumptions learned in early childhood that differentiate one group of people from another" (Schuler & Rogovsky, 1998: 161). Culture is assumed to be crucial factor in international human resource activities. (Ma & Allen, 2009, Schuler & Rogovsky, 1998) Furthermore, cultural distance might have impact on the level of standardization in recruitment signals. (Phillips & Gully, 2017)

Cultural differences play a huge role in multinational companies' human resource activities from designing to implementing them. Multinational companies must decide whether to use geocentric or ethno-centric recruitment signals. (Banks et. al., 2009)

Schuler and Rogovsky (1998) say that when choosing local customization as recruitment strategy cultural awareness is in the center and it will attract potential employees with similar values. The problem is that those values may not be coherent with organizations global values, which can cause confusion. (Banks et. al., 2009) As Banks et. al. (2009) say based on Bowen & Ostroff's (2004) research, organizations should send recruitment signals based on what is "valued, expected and rewarded." Banks et al. (2009, p.483) summarize that "Given this need for internal consistency, it is not clear the extent to which firms can balance global standardization and local customization in their recruiting practices."

Cultural values may be the largest single matter that has impact on effectiveness of recruitment. (Ma & Allen, 2009) Countries with low and high power distance or very individualistic or collectivistic countries are said to be for instance quite challenging to handle global recruitment entirety. (Hofstede, 1993) Banks et. al. (2019) argue that the level of cultural factors or even which cultural factors impact on organizations standardizing or globalizing recruitment activities, is indefinite.

2.2.4   E-recruitment

E-recruitment is a word used when electronic technology is used as help in recruitment. 90% of large companies use e-recruitment in their recruitment processes. They usually use one or more technology at a time. Using e-recruitment, companies get more work applications. Anyhow, using e-recruitment does not raise the number of high-class applicants, because it attracts equally good and not good work applicants. (Stone et. al., 2015, p. 217−218)

According to Chauhan et al. (2013, p.127−128) there are two simple precepts in using the Internet in recruitment process. First of all, open job positions are good to be announced also in organizations own websites. Second thing that they suggest is searching

by applicant's name, if there is any information available about the applicant in Google et cetera, in order to avoid bad recruitments. This is suggested to done at the end, just as a background check. The irrelevant information that may be found there must not be a reason to hire or not to hire anyone. Organizations must be careful with this, otherwise there may be legal sanctions. (Chauhan et. al., 2013, p. 127−128)

Recruiters use the Internet generally in recruitment worldwide, because there are huge advantages in its use. They use it to collect candidate's job applications, to tests, advertising and collecting data. Using the Internet in recruitment pushes the costs down. In addition, the whole recruitment process in the Internet is simple. Tremendous amounts of applications are screened and processed in the Internet by human resource professionals. There is one counting that e-recruitment can decrease the cost of one recruitment for a little under 3 000 dollars, which is a lot because one recruitment is usually counted to be around 3 300$. (Chauhan et. al., 2013, p. 127−128)

In the internet recruiters can use passive or more interactive techniques. Passive techniques are for instance job boards and more interactive techniques for instance virtual job market. (Stone et. al., 2015, p. 217)

2.3 Social Media

Social media's history begins in the late 1990's, but it was very primitive compared to today's social media. In 2001 appeared the first business and professional social networks. Today's social networks are "online environments of electronic media sharing and user generated content, giving users the ability to create, aggregate, link, and share created content instantly". Social networks are now very common and popular communication channels for both personal and business interactions all over the world. There has been a research done, which showed, that people spend every five minutes in social media. (Brooks, Heffner & Henderson, 2014, p. 25)

Social media has huge amounts of users worldwide. Approximately 2 billion people are using social networks in 2020, and the amount is still increasing. As much as 45% of people were using social media in the beginning of 2019. Facebook is the most popular social network with 2,4 billion users. LinkedIn has 610 million users and Twitter 340 million users. (Statista.com)

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p.61) describe social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generate content". There are a lot of different social media platforms, for instance Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter. It is widely showed by previous researches though, that only Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are mostly used in sourcing. (Doherty, 2010; Dutta, 2014).

In order to be able to benefit from social media, it is important to understand what is behind the enormous use of it. Hoffman & Fodor (2010, p. 42–43) say that there are four driving factors behind it; connections, creation, consumers and control. Social media is also mostly leaded by consumers, not by marketers. (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010) Companies utilize social media as a tool or channel to different business purposes. Furthermore, it is a strategic source of information about customers, products and market, which can help companies with execution of their strategies. (Dutot & Mosconi, 2016, p.191)

2.4 Social media in recruitment

Human resource divisions and recruiters have many ways to benefit from social media in their recruitment. First of all, social media is said to be "a driving force in communications". Using social media in recruitment is increasing all the time among companies' human resource professionals and recruiters. Social media is a tool for recruiters and HR professionals. There are different ways to utilize it in recruitment. Recruiters and HR

professionals use it to search potential candidates, and to find more knowledge about potential employees. (Curran, Draus, Schrager, & Zappala, 2014, p. 442) It is easy to share information, create user-specific content and facilitate collaboration between people. There are strategic tools in social media sites, especially LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, which can be utilized in identifying, attracting, and recruiting. (Doherty, 2010) For example social media can be utilized for job applications and university admissions. Screening potential employees' social media accounts is also one very common, but controversial way to use social media in recruitment. (Jeske & Shultz, 2015, p. 536)

Social media bears incoherent amount of information, which can be utilized in the hole recruitment process. This information is very valuable when recruiters are comparing potential employees' personal features and organizations' needs. Other possible benefits that organizations might gain are for instance help searching aggressively potential applicants, be able to find passive applicants, help in target recruiting, make it easier to find certain specialized, skilled target groups. Social network can even provide a whole platform for recruitment. The whole organization can benefit for instance by improving their image and seeming more appealing to both existing workers and applicants. (Kashi, Zheng, Molineux, 2016, p. 204)

Organizations often try to hold costs low. One reason, why organizations have started to use social media in their recruitment, is because it is very cost-effective. Social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are free to join and use, excluding some services, which are chargeable. (Doherty, 2010, p. 11) Although, when starting to use social media in recruitment, organizations may need to reallocate their resources. But It is often worth it, because it could end up being huge competitive advantage. (Kashi et al., 2016, p. 204–205)

Social media is used especially by modern youth. Despite the beginning to accept social media as a part of organizations business, it has now become the modern place to interact with potential and current employees. When companies are visible in social media it

gives value to their image showing that they are up to date and contemporary place to work. In addition, using social media for recruitment is easy strategically thinking, because the results for instance hiring times and costs are effortlessly measurable. (Doherty, 2010, p. 11) Overall, taking social media as a part of organizations recruitment strategy is a big step forward. The whole recruitment strategy is said to be going to more comprehensive direction, and companies are trying to build more personal relationship with their employees. (Doherty, 2010, p. 12)

It takes a lot of precise planning to be able to benefit from social media in recruitment. There must be enough resources reserved in human resource departments to social media planning and using. It is reasonable for companies to use only the social medias that are appropriate. Usually using one to three social medias is a good way to start. The quality is better than quantity. For instance, LinkedIn is often seen as safe and professional social media for companies. Companies should have updated accounts and be active in social media. Being inactive and having outdated information in their account, would only give a negative image to possible new employees. (Madia, 2011, p. 21−24)

Interactive recruitment has been showing good results. In particularly good applicants appreciate interactive recruitment, whereas wrong applicants will not even apply. Interactiveness also gives a positive image about the way that things work in organization. Non-interactive techniques can be seen unilateral and cold, and attract more unsuitable applicants, and it does not let the applicant near the company as interactive recruitment does. (Stone, Deadrick, Lukaszewski & Johnson, 2015, p. 218)

2.4.1 Sourcing, employer branding and selection in social media

Social media sites are often used by recruiters and human resource professionals to search public and private information about potential employees. That kind of screening or pre-screening could bring new valuable information about candidates' suitability to specific job. (Landers & Schmidt, 2016, p. 5−7) Today's multiple networking systems and

online job sites allow companies to quickly and effectively source potential employees. As other recruitment areas, also sourcing has changed a lot after technological evolution and internet. (Hunt, 2014)

There are different kind of candidates; active, semi-passive and passive. Active candidates are looking for a job. Semi-passives are interested of a new job, but not actively searching. Passives are not looking for a new job. Depending on which type candidate is, sourcing strategies will be chosen. (Philips & Gully, 2015) There is so called spray and pray recruitment technique, which is not effective enough anymore. (Joos, 2008) The technique attracts only certain group of active candidates, which is not enough in a "war of talent". (Dutta, 2014) That is why there are now new sourcing tools and techniques made in social media. (Philips & Gully, 2015) Social media makes it possible to attract also passive potential candidates, as otherwise without social media it has not been successful. (Dutta, 2014) Quality, cost, availability, and time are the most important benefits that social media brings to sourcing. (Sinha & Thaly, 2013)

As many other areas of recruitment, also employer branding has changed a lot after social media. Only after social media, companies are able to find out themselves what is the crowd's opinion about them. (Dabirian et al., 2017, p. 197) Social media is said to be crucial in branding the company to potential employees. (Eger, Micik & Rehor, 2018)

Furthermore, organizations have benefited a lot of the growth of social media in their employer branding, because the information sharing is easier. It is mainly because they are able to reach huge increasing volumes through social media, with low cost. If everything is done well, companies are also able to gain competitive advantage through social media. (Olivas-Lujan & Bondarouk, 2013, p. 28)

Social media is increasingly used also in selection process. Much information may be gained from social media to selection process, which has to be handled carefully though. Receiving selection relevant information form social media, is very cost effective and

time saving. Social media information could also be used to assess candidates' future performing, based on the personal qualities. (Van Iddekinge, Lanivich, Roth & Junco, 2016).

2.4.2 Modern CV

The personal information available in social media is about to replace the original Curriculum Vitae (CV). As traditional CV gets old very soon and is often hard to read, the information in social media is often relevant and easy to read and access. Relevant information for recruitment, which can be found in potential employees' social media profile, are for instance working history, education, skills and interests. This information can be very comprehensive to recruitment purposes and may give better picture of candidate's personality too, because social media's CV's structure is not defined. From employee's point of view, using social media profile as a CV is much easier and probably also more pleasant. (Doherty, 2010, p. 12)

The facts that social media sites are available for anyone to view, and that there are a lot of contacts, have also make it easier for employers to directly contact candidates proactively. To be able to get the information much faster from applicant's social media page, makes the recruitment more efficient. Searching from social media is also easy and fast. Passive candidates, who are not seeking for job at the moment, are also available to work markets because of their social media profile. With minor effort recruiters can find their profiles and they can update the profile information, even though they are not looking for a job at the moment. (Doherty, 2010, p. 12)

2.5   Risks of using social media in recruitment

Despite the remarkable benefits of using social media in recruitment, there are some aspects that need to be considered carefully. Strategic planning is also needed in the following cases. Taking social media as a part of recruitment, insists that it is also integrated to recruitment, human resource, and organizations strategy. It cannot be any disconnected random product that is just being tested. Taking the social media as a part of recruitment strategy, and when it is done well and planned carefully, it can raise the whole company's image and value. (Doherty, 2010, p. 13)

Although there are lots of advantages in using social media in recruitment, it is not considered to be enough alone. This is quite obvious because there are still people who do not use social media (Doherty, 2010, p. 13), or do not have access to the Internet, or may not be able to use it otherwise, or may not want to use it. (Chauhan et. al., 2013, p. 127−128) Since all the applications do not come via social media, organizations have to pay attention that candidates are treated coherently throughout the recruitment process, regardless the applying channel. (Doherty, 2010, p. 13)

Another question adduced is the right kind of targeting. Before entering to social media world with recruitment, there has to be a clear strategy. Targeting should be done depending on what kind of candidates the company is looking for. In addition, social media sites should be chosen correspondingly. (Doherty, 2010, p. 13)

One issue is very commonly used screening prospective employees' social media accounts, which can be controversial way to search information. Recruiters may screen all the information available in prospective employees' social media. All the information available, is often not relevant concerning employment. Ethical issues arise when screening, because it is not validated and established process. Applicants may often also feel that they do not have a choice but to share also private social media information, with their potential employer, if they are willing to have the job. These issues should be considered in corporate codes and standards of ethics. (Jeske & Shultz, 2015)

Furthermore, recruiters must be careful when using Facebook for recruiting. There is a lot of irrelevant information in applicants own Facebook-sites, which does not concern the abilities at work. Also using social media as a part of recruitment decision-making, can be a risk, because making recruitment decisions based by social media profile, is not protected by law. In worst case, organizations could be charged of "illegal invasion of privacy". (Chauhan et. al., 2013, p. 133)

In addition, there are many things that are legally forbidden in many countries to ask in a job interview, for example age, gender, race, disabilities, religion, political views, marital status and children. Recruiters often see above-mentioned in applicants' social media. Those should not have any effect on recruitment decision. Some recruiters might try to form impression about the personality and characteristics of applicant by screening. There is a risk that wrong presumptions could be made. Presumptions could also be made about a person who does not have social media accounts today. Only relevant information from social media concerning recruitment should be considered in the process. (Jeske & Shultz, 2015) Social media usage in recruitment brings up also the moral and ethical questions. There is no clear line between professional and private information. Special cautiousness has to be obeyed when using personal public information in recruitment. (Doherty, 2010, p. 13)

Career functionalities are increasing in the largest social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn. (Buettner, 2017, p. 2) Buettner investigated the connection between the amount of connections one has in social media and getting job offers. He found out that there is a negative relationship between them, which he says questions the whole use of social media in recruitment purposes. When speaking about quality, the results were opposite with over 60% of increase. (Buettner, 2017, p. 11)

Landers and Schmidt (2016, p. 5–7) summarizes important aspects in using social media in recruitment that need to be considered carefully. Those are a question of reliability and validity of the information available, practical usefulness of the information, legal

and ethical issues, procedures to include the information in the selection decisions and changes in technology, which may make it hard to have such procedures. None of the previous aspects are barriers to using social media in recruitment, they just need to be recognized, paid more attention, and solved strategically.

2.6 Summary and conclusions

Social media has had an effect on how companies do business. It is also widely utilized in companies human resource departments. Furthermore, social medias' remarkable role in todays' recruitment seems to be undeniable. Social media is seen as cost-effective and time-saving tool and channel in recruitment.

Recruiting should always be connected strongly to business strategy. Recruiting the right and talented people is in a key position in companies' interest. Today the competition about the best talent is though, because companies need to find a way to succeed. Recruiting should be efficient and high-quality, in order to find perfect fits. Finally, perfect fit recruitment can end up increasing customer satisfaction and competitive advantage.

Globalization is still increasing phenomenon among companies, which means that global recruitment needs are also emphasized. Globality brings different aspects to recruitment, compared to national ones. Most important aspects may be cultural aspects, legal and regulatory forces, global relationships and politics, economic forces, and their labor market for talent. Single aspects affecting to global recruitment effectiveness are culture and brand image. Because of social media, global organizations are able to recruit easier the best talent from anywhere. There is an ongoing competition about the best talent, and social media can help reaching it.

There are many aspects that support the use of social media in recruitment and indicate its huge role. First of all, it is commonly thought that social media is a useful tool and

channel in recruitment, as it is time-saving and cost-effective, and it can be used any-where. Hiring times and costs are also effortlessly measurable. Approximately two bil-lion people in the world are using social networks in 2020, and the amount is still in-creasing, which means that social media recruitment can be widely used. Second of all, social media is a tool and channel for recruitment, which can be used and utilized in many ways. Very common ways are searching potential candidates, screening them and finding more knowledge about them. There are strategic tools in social media sites, es-pecially in LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

Third of all, it is very easy to share information, communicate, create user-specific con-tent and facilitate collaboration globally with potential employees. Social media itself bears incoherent amount of information, which is easy to utilize in recruitment process. Potential employees' personal features, which can be easily found in social media, can be compared to organizations' needs. Social media is a modern place to interact with potential and current employees. In addition, it is a place where to connect with modern youth. Being active in social media shows that company is contemporary place to work. Furthermore, companies are increasingly trying to build more personal relationship with their employees, which can be done in social media.

Fourth of all, interactive recruitment style, which companies are able to execute in social media, has shown very positive results and increasing quality. Precisely, good applicants appreciate interactive recruitment, whereas wrong applicants will not even apply. In ad-dition, interactive style gives positive image of company's style work. Fifth of all, social media offers a way of searching aggressively potential applicants, be able to find passive applicants, help in target recruiting, and make it easier to find certain specialized, skilled target groups. Sixth of all, companies can improve their image and seem more appealing to both existing workers and applicants in social media. Social media is said to be espe-cially crucial in employer branding. Huge increasing volumes can be reached with low cost, and information-sharing is easier.

Employee relations alter remarkably worldwide. In addition, there are several factors influencing global recruitment effectiveness. Outside the company those are labor market for talent, economic forces, global relationships and politics, legal and regulatory forces, and cultural forces. Inside the company can be mentioned host country organizational context and strategy, individual characteristics of recruits, type of global work assignment, internal or external recruitment, and multinational organizational context and strategy. More specific, culture and brand image are considered to be singular most important factors influencing global recruitment effectiveness. All those aspects have to be carefully considered when using social media in global recruitment.

However, there are some issues which could be said to be disadvantages or at least issues which need careful consideration, in social media usage in recruitment. Careful strategic planning is needed when using social media in recruitment. First of all, the amount of resources reserved to social media planning and using must be ensured. Taking social media as a part of recruitment, insists that it is also integrated to recruitment, human resource and organizations strategy. Social media is not considered to be enough alone, because all people still do not use it. Furthermore, issues that arise often are reliability and validity of the information available in social media. In addition, legal and ethical issues concerning the information found in social media also awakes conversation a lot.

In conclusion, social media seems to be a crucial tool and channel in modern national and international companies. It has features that none of the other recruitment tools or channels have. It is very cost-effective and time-saving, which are features that companies of course value a lot. Furthermore, it is the best way for interactive recruitment, which has better results in the quality. In addition, it can be used anywhere, taking account cultural, legal and other country-specific aspects.

It might be even possible to assume that it would not be wise not to use social media in recruitment, as it is so widely and commonly used. People are used to using social media and gaining information there. In an ongoing highly competitive situation about getting

the best talent, companies may not afford missing social medias' advantages. It would also give an outdated picture about the company and its' operations, if they would not be active in social media.

Finally, in this thesis one finding can said to be especially supportive for using social media in national and international recruitment. As the competition about the best talent is very tough today, employer branding has become a popular and important strategic tool for companies. Social media is said to be extremely crucial specially in employer branding. Furthermore, brand image is said to be one of the most important factors influencing global recruitment effectiveness. As a final conclusion, it might be assumed that organizations need social media in their recruitment and especially concerning their brand image. These results are combined also in the following table.

Table 1. Summary.

Social media in national and international strategic recruitment		
Strategic role:	Advantages:	Challenges:
Recruitment derived from business strategy	Time-saving, cost-effective, can be used anywhere, hiring times and costs easily measurable	Strategic planning, part of human resource and organizations strategy, enough resources
Competition about the best talent is tough	Useful tool and channel in searching potential candidates, screening and finding more knowledge about them, includes also strategic tools	Reliability, validity, ethicalness
Employer branding very important	Easy to share information, communicate interactively → increases quality, create user-specific content and facilitate collaboration globally with potential employees, bears incoherent amount of information	Labor market for talent, economic forces, global relationships and politics, legal and regulatory forces, cultural forces
Efficient and high-quality recruitment	Way of searching aggressively potential applicants, be able to find passive applicants, help in target recruiting, and make it easier to find certain specialized, skilled target groups	Host country organizational context and strategy, individual characteristics of recruits, type of global work assignment, internal or external recruitment, multinational organizational context and strategy
		Insufficient alone

Next, in chapter three the empirical part of study starts by presenting the methods.

3   Methods

In this chapter methods of this thesis, data analysis, validity, reliability and ethics are described.

3.1   Research approach, design and purpose

Research philosophy and research approach affect to the way research question is answered. (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 130). Research approach is said to explain the connection between data and theory. There are two research approaches which are deductive and inductive approach. Deductive approach is so called testing theory, and it means that theory and hypothesis are created first, followed by making a research plan in order to test the hypothesis. Inductive approach, also called building theory, consists of collecting data first and then creating a theory as findings of the research. Deductive research is the one that is mostly used in scientific researches. (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 117). Many researches include both approaches. Abductive is the approach between deductive and inductive, and defined by Charles Sanders Peirce as "the logic of exploratory data analysis." He also says abduction being a "process of generating new ideas or hypotheses." (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 14) Abductive approach is used in this research.

Research design is a plan on how research question is being answered. It includes objectives, sources for collecting data, limitations and ethical issues. Research design consists of "research strategies, research choices and time horizons." (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 130-131) Research purpose is divided to exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Research purpose can be one or more of the previous. (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 133) Robson (2002, p. 59) describes that exploratory research can be featured as following: "what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light". This research explores the phenomenon of social media recruitment in national

and international recruitment more deeply and tries to bring new insights. Accordingly, the purpose of this research is exploratory.

Time horizons can be cross-sectional (made in certain time) or longitudinal (longer time period). (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 145) As time for this research is limited, cross-sectional time horizon is used, and all the data is collected during the same specific time.

3.2 Research execution and data collection

Research choices usually means choosing between qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative research focusing on words and quantitative focusing on numbers refer to "data collection techniques and data analysis procedures." (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 145) Saunders et al. (2007) also tell that mono, multi or mixed methods can be used. Qualitative researches status in the field of international business studies is low, but important, because of its recognizable benefits. (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004) Qualitative data is used in this research, since it fits well in gathering information about organizations strategic social media recruitment. Interviews are said to be a helpful, valid, reliable and relevant way of collecting information for research. (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 310) The data collection technique used in this research is interviewing.

Data collection consists only of primary data, which is collected by the researcher. Interviews are made in order to find out a comprehensive picture about the role of social media in recruitment, its advantages and challenges in national and international context and its impact on recruitment success. Interviews are made in seven Finnish companies, some of them are global or international and rest of them at least hire sometimes international candidates. The aim is to interview recruitment professionals who make interviews themselves in those companies and are therefore experts of the subject. Table 2. below shows more specific but anonyme information about the interviewees, their titles and job descriptions, and the companies they are working in.

Table 2. Interviewees.

Company	Title	Job description
Company A, global business and management consulting company	Expert A, Senior recruiter, coach	Recruitment and especially experienced expert or specialist recruitment, and improving employer branding
Company B, Finnish headhunting and recruitment consulting company	Expert B, Senior talent coach	Headhunting, building recruitment processes, training recruiters and managers
Company C, international security consulting company	Expert C, Talent acquisition consultant, employer branding lead	Recruitment and employer branding
Company D, international technology company	Expert D, Talent acquisition specialist	Recruitment
Company E, global consulting company.	Expert E, Recruitment lead	Leading recruitment
Company F, global business consulting company	Expert F, Senior Business HR manager	Strategic HR and higher-level recruitment
Company G, Finnish Hr-service company	Expert G, CEO, partner	Recruitment, all the jobs at the firm

Interviews can be categorized further in to three types; structured and standardized, guided and semi-structured or unstructured, informal and open. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) Interviews of this research are guided and semi-structured as it is assumed to be the best way to answer to the research questions of this research. Furthermore, they are said to fit the best with qualitative research and well with exploratory research purpose. (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 312) Guided and semi-structured interviews are said to be based on topics, issues and themes, but they might differ in words and sequence. Moreover, they mostly include "what and how questions", as the interview questions in this research do. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) The advantage of semi-structured interview is that more specific questions may be asked during the interview. In addition, the interviewer may decide during the interview if all the questions are asked, in which order they are asked and if the questions should be exactly the same. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002).

Interviews were made between interviewer and interviewee. Such interviews are usually made face to face, (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 312) however, due to COVID-19 the

interviews were made by internet mediated Teams-interviews, as it was seen as the best possible interactive way in this situation. The interview consisted of nine main question areas, and the questions were mostly asked in the same order, with some exceptions. The interview contained warm up questions, questions about recruitment, social media recruitment, international recruitment, measurement of recruitment and a closing question. In addition, some extra and specifying questions were asked. Questions asked were mostly open questions, starting with what, why and how words, because they are said to help on having extensive and advanced answers, as well as giving the interviewee the possibility to answer as they wish. (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 329) Questions were asked in Finnish because it was the native language of the interviewer and all of the interviewees. Under in Table 3. are the interview questions in English and Finnish.

Table 3. Interview questions.

Interview questions	
Theme	Question
Warm up questions	1. Please tell me who you are, what is your role and in which company? 1. Kertoisitko kuka olet, mitä teet työksesi ja missä yrityksessä?
Recruitment	2. What is your typical recruitment process like? Which channels do you use? How is your recruitment startegy connected to companys strategy? 2. Millainen on tyypillinen rekrytointiprosessinne? Mitä kanavia käytätte? Miten rekrytointistrategianne on yhteydessä yrityksen strategiaan?
Social media recruitment	3. What is the role of social media in your recruitment? Which social media channels do you use? How and which recruitment process phases do you use social media in recruitment? Describe how do you use social media in employer branding? 3. Mikä on sosiaalisen median rooli rekrytoinneissanne? Mitä sosiaalisen median kanavia käytätte? Miten ja missä rekrytointiprosessin vaiheissa käytätte sosiaalista mediaa? Kuvaile miten käytätte sosiaalista mediaa työnantajamielikuvan luomisessa?
Social media recruitment	4. Why do you use social media in recruitment? What aspects and targets you consider when creating content in social media concerning recruitment? 4. Miksi käytätte sosiaalista mediaa rekrytoinneissanne? Mitä näkökulmia ja tavoitteita huomioitte, kun luotte sisältöä sosiaaliseen mediaan rekrytointeihin liittyen?
International recruitment	5. How does your recruitment process differ when recruiting domestic versus international candidates? How does your recruitment tactics differ? How do you reach candidates? What kind of impacts social media have in recruiting international candidates? 5. Miten rekrytointiprosessinne eroaa riippuen siitä, rekrytoitteko kotimaisia vai kansainvälisiä kandidaatteja? Miten rekrytointitaktiikkanne

	eroaa? Miten saavutatte kandidaatit? Miten sosiaalinen media vaikuttaa kansainvälisten kandidaattien rekrytointiin?
International recruitment	6. What cultural, legal or some other aspects you concider when recruiting international candidates? How does it appear in your recruitment activities? 6. Mitä kulttuurillisia, lakiin liittyviä tai muita näkökulmia otatte huomioon rekrytoidessanne kansainvälisiä kandidaatteja? Miten se ilmenee rekrytointitoimissanne?
Recruitment	7. How are your domestic and international recruitment in line with organizations values, strategies, goals and activities? How does it appear? 7. Miten kotimaiset ja kansainväliset rekrytointinne ovat linjassa yrityksen arvojen, strategian, tavoitteiden ja toimien kanssa? Miten se ilmenee?
Measurements of recruitment success	8. How do you measure the success of your recruitment? What are your recruitment KPI's? 8. Miten mittaatte rekrytointienne onnistumista? Mitkä ovat rekrytoinnin KPI:nne?
Socia media recruitment	9. What are your thoughts about the role of social media recruitment in the future? 9. Mitkä ovat ajatuksenne sosiaalisen median rekrytointien roolista tulevaisuudessa?
Closing questions	Is there anything else important you would like to add? Olisiko jotain muuta tärkeää mitä haluaisitte lisätä?

3.3 Data analysis

In order to be able to benefit from the interviews as a primary data, analysis about the data has to be made. This is qualitative research which means that qualitative analysis methods will also be used in analyzing the interview results. Qualitative data analysis is a diverse process, which helps forming a theory from data. Process of qualitative data analysis is said to begin as soon as the collecting of data begins and continuing after. Standardized ways of analyzing qualitative data does not exist. There are more structured or loose approaches to analyzing qualitative data. (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 470, 474, 478)

As mentioned above, variety of qualitative data analysis exist. One way of proceeding with qualitative data analysis, is how Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2002) present it in their book. It consists of six subsequent steps which are described on the following qualitative data analysis process Figure 1. This research follows those steps in the analysis.
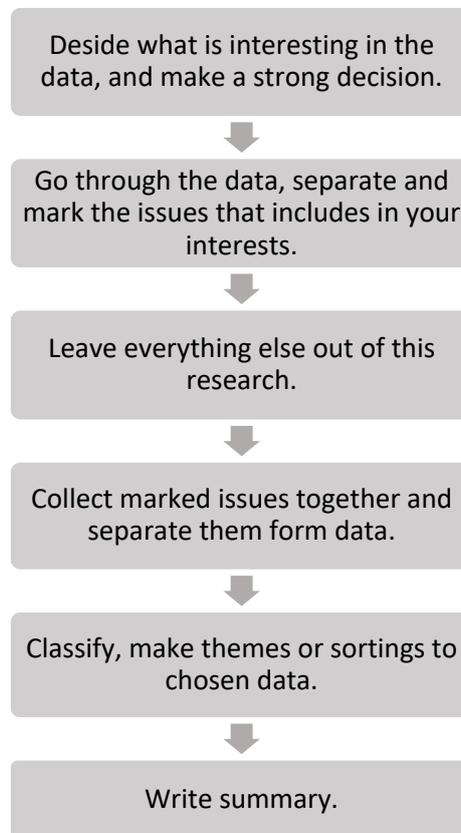
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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Deside what is interesting in the │
│  data, and make a strong decision.  │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Go through the data, separate and │
│  mark the issues that includes in your │
│             interests.             │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Leave everything else out of this │
│             research.              │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Collect marked issues together and │
│     separate them form data.       │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Classify, make themes or sortings to │
│           chosen data.             │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│          Write summary.            │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 1. Qualitative data analysis process. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002)

As showed in the Figure 1. analysis starts by deciding what is interesting in the data and focusing only on those matters. Those matters of interest should match with the ones in the research problem. Boxes from two to four concern transcribing. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002) Primary data gathered in qualitative research usually needs to be transcribed. (Saunders et. al., 2007) The interview of this research was recorded and transcribed, in order to better understand the answers and to be able to analyze it and achieve results. The data was transcribed at adequate level in order to help in analyzing, meaning that it was transcribed exactly as said in spoken language excluding vocables and discussion that does not concern the interview subject, because it was seen as a suitable level for the analysis. The box five is seen as the actual analysis, but it is not possible to execute without the previous and the last phase, which is the summary. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002)

The approach of the analysis can be deductive, inductive or in between them which is abductive. Abductive analysis approach is used in this analysis as it is also used in this research. The abductive way of doing analysis is based on a clue or a hint gotten from theory and utilized in making new theory, in this case from primary data. Furthermore, it can be said that abductive approach is derived from theory, meaning that analysis is not fully based on theory, but theory can be used as a help. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002)

Content analysis is an objective and a systematic way to analyze written material, and it usually fits well to all different kinds of qualitative researches. It aims to give a clear and summarized picture to analyzed subject. It can be used as a method or as a theoretical frame. Overall, content analysis is said to be the basis for all qualitative analyses. Furthermore, content analysis fits with abductive analysis approach, which is used in this research. One criticism towards using content analysis is that it is possible that results of the analysis are only organized conclusions. Abductive content analysis can be done with same analysis model as deductive. Content analysis divides data into themes. Thereafter, themes are named and made to concepts. The meaning of this is to bring out all crucial information from data. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002) Below in Table 4. there is the analysis frame by themes of this research. Data was divided in to three themes; strategic recruitment, social media in recruitment, and international perspective. Next, results of analysis will be discussed in the Findings chapter.

Table 4. Analysis frame by themes.

Strategic recruitment	• Strategic planning and common goals with business executives • Recruitment needs derived from business needs → support business strategically with recruitment • Anticipate recruitment needs systematically (often yearly strategies) as early as possible, and to recognize what kind of talent is needed • Fight about best talent is tough, need to attract → Employer branding in huge role • Candidates cultural fit to organization is important → need to emphasize organizational culture in recruiting, communication about the company needs to be truthful • Measuring mostly quality

Social media (Sm) in recruitment	• Most use LinkedIn as their main recruitment channel, and it is crucial to them
	• LinkedIn is used to post job advertisements, source candidates, employer branding and other recruitment marketing
	• Instagram, Facebook and Twitter in this order are used mostly to recruitment marketing
	• Sm used mostly at the first stages of the recruitment process
	• Competition about the best talent → Need to find passive candidates and attract them → The only way to do this is in Sm and especially in Linkedin
	• Employer branding mostly happening in Sm
	• More advantages:
	  - Personal and varied communication and interaction
	  - Strategic targeting to certain groups and attracting them
	  - Coverage broad
	  - Low costs
	  - Easy to use
	  - Long-term interest achievable → goal that candidates would be aware about the company before possible job openings
	  - Easily measurable
	• Challenges:
	  - No other choice but to use Sm
	  - Is Sm reliable and has it reliable reputation?
	  - Sm not used similar in different companies → disjunctive factors seem to be business area and line, and level of tasks
	• Posts:
	  - Wish to awaken interest and open discussion
	  - To add consciousness and attract
	  - Should be in line how company really is
	  - Derived from business and recruitment strategy
	  - Also, more free posting describing company's culture
	• SM meaning and role increasing

International aspect	• Almost the same process and tactic in recruitment nationally and internationally → some country-specific features might be considered by some firms, but very standardized recruitment activities→ Job advertisement are not specified culturally • Threating equally all candidates • Good reputation and well-known companies easier to attract candidates globally • Checking that international candidates' expectations, wishes etc. fit to organizations culture, because work cultures might be different in different countries • Networks important in reaching international candidates • Diversity extremely valued in companies → adding consciously diversity → Possible issues that could limit diversity are deleted • Differences in law and culture are taken account → language and working permits biggest issues • Recruiting internationally might be long process

	• Advantages: - Brings closer, makes it easier and faster, reaches broadly people - The place to reach international candidates, especially Linkedin → without it reaching would not be possible for many companies - Sharing content to international candidates easy - Employer branding and targeting crucial also globally, employer brand has in some countries even in bigger meaning than in Finland

3.4 Research validity, reliability and ethicalness

Research validity and reliability are an important part of the research design, because they determine the quality of the research. (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 149-150) Moreover, three issues define the reliability of qualitative research; validity, reliability and ethics. Those three issues are attached to each other. (Juuti & Puusa, 2020) Furthermore, they have to be considered carefully in order to get as right results as possible. This can be only done by decreasing the possibilities to get a wrong answer or make mistakes, as was also aimed to do in this research. (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 149-150)

Reliability means that findings of research have to be consistent. (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 149-150) Juuti and Pusa (2020) say that right and justified approaches and methods must be used. Furthermore, same results must be gained in other occasions too using the same measures. Moreover, the observations must be the same if others made the same study. Sense-making from the data must also be transparent. Validity means that findings are what they seem to be. (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 149-150) Or as Juuti and Pusa (2020) say people accept the results as true and trust the results. The collection of data should be done appropriately and after that carefully analyzed. One aspect which was carefully executed in this research concerning validity, was the translation of the interview data from Finnish to English. The words were tried to be keeped as similar as possible as in the answers, at least saving exactly the meaning.

Research ethics should be considered in research design. Ethical concerns may appear in research planning, accessing to companies, and when collecting, analyzing and reporting data. Research ethics can be defined as "the appropriateness of your behavior in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work or are affected by it." (Saunders et. al., 2007, p. 153, 178) Ethics are considered carefully in all of the phases in this research. Next, in chapter four, the findings of this research are described.

4   Findings

In this chapter, the analysis of primary data is taken further to findings. Only the analysis about the data does not give results. Analyzed data has to be interpret and made conclusions in order to get results. Interpretation means in this connection that crucial findings from analyzed data needs to be made clear and considered carefully. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002) Research questions of this research are answered in this chapter by making conclusions about the analyzed data.

4.1   Strategic recruitment

The main research question handles the role of social media in strategic recruitment. First, the strategic recruitment aspect needed to be clarified. The other sub question handles the possible impacts that social media may have to recruitment success, and in that the measurement and evaluation of the recruitment process is in a central role, which is why this chapter answers already partly to it. Both of these research questions are handled in this chapter and in next chapter which is about social media recruitments. The whole process of strategic recruitment is not as relevant to research question as the strategic aspect to recruitment, which is why different parts of recruitment process are not handled.

Variety of interesting point of views appeared. Strategic planning seems to be behind a successful recruitment. Strategic planning with business executives and common goals ensure that recruitment is high-quality and able to support business, which is the way company can achieve competitive advantage. Moreover, company's strategy determines the direction for recruitment. Recruitment needs comes from business needs. Systematic (yearly) strategies help to anticipate recruitment needs and recognize what kind of talent is needed.

In our company it typically goes like that all our recruitment needs should be always beforehand planned. So that we try to plan them with executive board, and by that plan we go forward the year… First of all, that our recruitment strategy would be mapped out in time, because we have growing company, so the recruitment need must come from business growing needs. And in that way, we can think about who we are going to recruit and what kind of talent is needed. (Expert A)

Competition about the best talent is tough, so companies need be able to separate themselves and to attract candidates. Accordingly, employer branding has a huge role in employees' markets.

Overall, we try to search the best talent from markets to us. And very typical to our many business sectors is that talent is taken out hands, and its' employees' markets and they almost get to choose where they want to work… In our company employer branding and its' development is invested a lot…and we try to reach those target groups by that activity. (Expert A)

In recruitment marketing and employer branding, and especially in interviews the communication about organizations culture is very important. Specific features of organizational culture have to be told truthfully, in order to be able to ensure candidates cultural fit.

We go through company's values in every first interview… We assume that the person in somehow answers to it or can at least consider themselves, that is it like fitting to their own values. (Expert C)

The measurement of the recruitment is a very important part, because it shows how well recruitment has succeeded and been able to fulfill strategic business needs. Furthermore, in order to make improvements to recruitment measuring and evaluating are a necessity. The measurement of recruitment success seems to be focused more to qualitative measures than quantitative. First of all, the main question is, has the right talent been found. Secondly, how well has the answering to business needs succeeded. There can be various methods for measuring those questions. Moreover, feedback in forms of applier experience, inner feedback and customer feedback, are a good way to get

information about the success of recruitment. Reversals in trial period, resigns, the length of careers, and performance appraisals can also tell a lot about the success. The amount of applications such as time and costs do not tell about the success alone. Social media statistics, which can be very detailed numbers, are very good and easy way to measure how well social media is handled.

> *Recruitment' KPI's are surely that, that how much we can find high-class applicants, and how well we can fulfill the places, so answering to business needs concerning recruitment. How much comes reversals in trial periods and all the issues that has to do with the length of the process… But I have to say that, at the moment we are also investing to…how we manage in social media and how we appear in different channels and how we can develop that employer branding.* (Expert A)

> *If a person leaves from us, he/she has to leave for a better job, than he/she has with us.* (Expert B)

> *The feedback we got from customers, that is the most important. And from employees… Those are the most important measurements. Everybody is happy.* (Expert G)

4.2   Social media in recruitment

The previous chapter clarified the strategic role in recruitment and how parts of the strategic recruitment impacts to success. This chapter clarifies the role of social media in recruitment, tells about the impacts of social media usage to recruitment success and brings out the advantages and challenges of recruitment made through social media.

Social media be can said to have a huge irreplaceable role in recruitment of all interviewed companies.

> *There is no other choice today. It reaches the best way people. And then as I said that LinkedIn has certain groups, and you can post there in*

right target groups, the visibility is the best… But if you are not in social media today, I do not know where you could recruit. (Expert F)

Social media channels are utilized in variety of ways to recruitment needs. Instagram, Facebook and twitter, in this order, concerning the level of use in recruitment, are mostly used to recruitment marketing, employer branding and sometimes to post job advertisements. LinkedIn is in its own level of use. It is broadly used on different recruitment acts; to post job advertisements, source candidates, employer branding and other recruitment marketing. Most of the companies use LinkedIn as their main recruitment channel, and it is very crucial to them, since there does not exist any replaceable channel. Social media is mostly used at the first phases of recruitment process.

> *I see that in recruitment mostly used is LinkedIn. Actually Facebook, Instagram, well especially Instagram is used also to employer branding. And then that targeted marketing that can be done in all of those… So that LinkedIn and well especially LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. But also Twitter. But then LinkedIn we have most activities besides the marketing, there we also post job advertisements in our own company pages and then there can for instance source those people. We have in use so called Recruiter account, where can be in certain search features such Boolen-search used and then search for people and also to contact them trough that tool. So there in LinkedIn there are very many opportunities, and we strive on utilize them actively.* (Expert A)

Competition about the best talent is very tough. One way to try to compete is finding passive candidates and attracting them. The only way to do that is in social media and especially in LinkedIn. Therefore, employer branding is largely focused on social media nowadays.

> *In practice, social media is the channel also to how we communicate… If considered precisely, for instance some campaign, or something that links to employer branding and taking messages further, then social media is the primary channel these are marketed.* (Expert E)

> *There are employees' markets and companies have to work for that they are able to attract talent to themselves, and if there are passive candidates, there is really no other way how to reach them than social*

media. That is why we focus on social media. It brings the best results also statistically than any other channel. (Expert A)

Obviously, there are a lot of advantages to use social media in recruitment. Variety and plenty of the advantages that the interviewees mostly experienced gaining, are the following. The main advantage probably is the possibility to achieve passive candidates, which is not possible elsewhere. Personal and varied communication and interaction through social media is also its strength. Other channels do not offer that kind of possibilities to interaction with potential candidates or candidates. The possibility to target strategically certain groups and to be able to attract them is one of the key advantages of social media. Long-term interest is achievable and desirable, because if candidates would be beforehand aware of the company, it would help in new job openings. Furthermore, the coverage is broad and reaches huge masses of people. All this can be done easily with low costs and the results are easily measurable. Social media recruitment brings tools and channels to use, which enable many activities that improve recruitment possibilities. If social media is used strategically it can increase the effectiveness and quality of recruitments.

The main reason is that it (LinkedIn) is followed also by passive candidates, not only the ones that are looking for a job. The coverage is so much broader and it is also long-term, that the waking up the interest in a long-term is possible. And you can follow there the company but also employees, who might be even more important influencers than the company account. That it Is much more versatile and personal than our company's Facebook or Instagram account. (Expert C)

*It reaches best the people…in LinkedIn there are certain groups and when you but it there, it goes to right target groups. The visibility is the best. (*Expert F)

In my opinion, the cost-quality -relationship is as said in social media, that you can right away target and follow where have you put your money. (Expert G)

However, some challenges exist in social media recruiting. Couple of companies do not use social media in recruitment as much as others and more specifically do not use much LinkedIn in their recruitment. The factor that seems to define the importance of certain social media channels and how they are used, seems to be the line of business. Furthermore, the level of tasks seems to be another important factor that has impact on the usage of social media and different channels in recruitment. The question also is if certain social media channels are reliable, or are they seen as reliable and professional enough to sensitive areas of business, for instance to certain business line of security. One interviewed company uses mainly only LinkedIn in their recruitment because it is seen as the only channel which is reliable enough. Moreover, the reverse side is that there seems to be no other choice than to use social media in recruitment. Companies have to appear as active, interesting and modern companies in social media. Nevertheless, why would not companies want to be in social media if it is so crucial for their recruitment and business.

> *Not really, when we are talking about… (many manual worker occupations). They really are not in LinkedIn… If we talk about some person, who is more like construction supervision or management tasks, that can be something that hits in social media.* (Expert G)

> *Not maybe like such informal of all channels are the best, because they are considered a little uncertain, and in certain level they are a little in contradiction with our business areas', how could I put it, with validity demand. So that in certain level it does not suit to our business, to use that kind of channels in recruitment. That lets say, that our totally main channel, where almost everything is focused is LinkedIn. Because our candidates and all can in a way trust it, that if our company posts something then it is right and real.* (Expert C)

The future of social media in recruitment seems bright. The meaning and role of social media is seen to still increase. Companies are investing money and time and hiring right people in order to develop it further. Couple of aspects that are also expected to happen is that the use of social media in recruitment could be going to more personal direction. Also, emphasis to cooperation and association with people who could spread the

message, so that companies would have even broader visibility. Finally, there could be much more potential in social media for recruitment purposes.

> *Yes, it is going to take more. Yes, social media strongly. If thinking about Facebook there is a lot, and potential for even more. There are various possibilities.* (Expert G)

> *The meaning is growing all the time. We have invested to that in money and in time more and also hired the right people to our company, who can develop the activities even more. It is going to grow and emphasize for sure. And it is showing in our activities also.* (Expert A)

4.3   International aspect

Finally, this chapter focuses to international social media recruitment advantages and challenges. The international aspect in social media recruitment is important for this research, because one research question is about finding out the advantages and the challenges of using social media in international recruitment. The basis for international such as all other recruitment too is threating all candidates equally. Diversity overall is extremely valued in companies. Accordingly, companies are consciously adding diversity. Possible issues that could limit diversity are deleted.

> *Basically, we try to add diversity all continuously. But of course, business goals have to be considered, that what for someone is recruited.* (Expert B)

> *If think about kind of diversity aspect, that is also one kind of important to us, because we are international company, that we do not want to be too restricted. I think that in very different kind of backgrounds and skill compos can find like more new and richness, what we maybe could not have even thought about, even if there exists the certain demands what we seek for. For instance, I think that it is important regularly to estimate the messages and what the job advertisements are and what we emphasize. And if they on the other hand have certain wording or something that could restrict that what kind of people decide to apply.* (Expert E)

However, almost the same process and tactics are used in recruitment nationally and internationally. Some country-specific features might be considered by some firms, but they have very standardized recruitment activities overall. Job advertisement are not for instance specified culturally. However, differences in law and culture are considered in necessary level. Working permits seems to be one often faced issue, which can delay the recruitment process. Other common issue in international recruitment process is language. Required level of certain language skills have to be found, as well as the communication in recruitment have to be in appropriate language. Checking international candidates' expectations and wishes concerning their fit to organizations culture is important, because work cultures might be different in different countries.

> *Having conversations openly about the work culture and his/her expectations and assumptions, that they kind of match those wishes and expectations and our organizations culture and reality. So that there will not become any surprises.* (Expert A)

> *We have to consider a little like how in different countries and cultures it is used differently. That we do not customize basically every market that use. If we would do that then maybe we could get better results. (Expert B)*

> *Overall the challenge to recruit from foreign countries (outside EU), if we do not talk about Corona or else, in that case good talent for sure would exist but the process is so long, that it could end to that, so that is causing challenges.* (Expert C)

Networks are very important for some companies in reaching international candidates. Although, for most of companies, social media and especially LinkedIn is the place to reach international candidates. Without LinkedIn reaching candidates outside their networks would be impossible.

> *Social media is the only how we can reach*. (Expert A)

LinkedIn is most definitely, definitely the biggest channel. Otherwise maybe, and through it we have also build networks. (Expert B)

As I mentioned, we have 14 countries, and LinkedIn is the strongest channel, and it is in every country. (Expert F)

Social media brings closer and reaches people broadly, and the country borders disappear because of social media. Recruiting internationally might be a long process, but social media makes it easier and faster. Globally well-known and companies that have good reputation attract candidates more easily. Nevertheless, employer branding and targeting in social media are crucial to all companies. Employer branding might even have bigger meaning in some countries than in Finland, because candidates value companies' reputation a lot. Sharing content and information to international candidates is easy in social media.

I feel like that usually we do not have challenges to reach international candidates. We got daily many applications through even our own web pages from foreign countries. Feels like the ones who have good reputation, they awake interest also internationally… Especially employer branding (highlights for its' importance)), that particularly in this our business area, feels that candidates can choose where to work. (Expert D)

4.4   Discussion and comparison with theory

Empirical data has given various good point of views to the research questions. First of all, everything should start from strategic planning with business executives, in order to have common goals and to be able to support business with recruitment. It is good to have yearly strategies in order to be able to plan recruitment in time. After hiring candidates, the evaluation of recruitment process success is essential. The measurements should be emphasized to qualitative measurements more than quantitative. Thereby the quality of recruitment is measured.

The issues that arise in todays' recruitment are attracting and finding the best talent. LinkedIn is a crucial recruitment channel for many companies. Attracting in social media and especially in LinkedIn in forms of employer branding is a necessity to companies. Employer branding is the way to separate company from others and to be able to compete about the best talent. Finding the best talent and especially passive candidates happens also mostly in LinkedIn. Finding passive candidates is a must in highly competitive markets. Companies that use LinkedIn to search for passive candidates do not have any other place to find them. LinkedIn is used also to post job advertisements and other recruitment marketing. Instagram, Facebook and Twitter are mostly used for employer branding and recruitment marketing.

Moreover, communication and interaction in social media are personal and varied. The coverage is broad but targeting different groups and attracting them in a long-term is the key. Furthermore, it is easy to use, costs are low, and results are easy to measure. Most importantly, companies' activities in social media have to be in line with their business and recruitment strategy and all their activities in line with their real values and goals. The challenges of reliability and weather the own target groups exist in LinkedIn or other social media channels, have to considered by every company themselves. Overall, the recruitment through social media may end up adding the effectiveness and quality of recruitment. Furthermore, effective and high-quality recruitment help companies to gain competitive advantage. Social media's importance and role is seen as increasing, which means that investing to it should also increase.

Organizations seem to value enormously diversity in their organizations. Accordingly, they are adding it consciously and deleting possible issues that might limit it. Internationality is one area of diversity. International recruitment is strongly connected to company's strategy and values as well. However, international recruitment activities of companies in social media are very standardized, cultural aspects do not seem to play a big role there. Language is the most considered issue, because it obviously has to be

considered. In addition, issues concerned with law are taken into account, particularly working permits arise often outside European Union recruitment, which also slows down the recruitment process. International candidates are reached mostly through LinkedIn, which is the only channel that helps many companies to reach international candidates. Some companies use also their networks, which might be created in LinkedIn. The meaning of employer branding in international recruitment is the same as in domestic recruitment, or it might be even bigger in some countries that appreciate company's reputation more. Social media reaches people broadly all over the world, making the country borders disappear, bringing international candidates closer and making recruitment faster. Following Table 5. also represents the results.

Table 5. Results.

	Strategic recruitment	**Social media in recruitment**	**International social media recruitment**
The role in recruitment	- Recruitment derived from business strategy - Support business with recruitment - Evaluation important - Employer branding essential	- Main channel for recruitment, used also in attraction and employer branding - For many companies LinkedIn is the only channel they use for recruitment - In LinkedIn: job ads, sourcing, employer branding and recruitment marketing - Instagram, Facebook and Twitter are mostly used in recruitment marketing - Activities in line with strategy - Increasing role	- Mostly happening in social media, especially in LinkedIn - Employer branding is crucial - For many companies LinkedIn is the only way to reach international candidates
The impact on success	-Quality and effective recruitment - Perfect fit recruitment	- Effectiveness - High-class recruitment → quality - Able to compete about the best talent	- Diversity
The advantages	-Competitive advantage	- Able to reach passive candidates - Coverage broad	- Achieving candidates globally - Faster

		- Able to target - Interaction personal - Easy to use and measure - Low costs	- Standardization
The challenges	- Implementing - Timing	- Reliability, reputation - Certain business lines/areas and certain level of jobs	-Standardizations impact to attracting culturally diverse candidates - Language - Working permits slow down the process

Comparison to theory is important because in that way a better overall picture about the results of the research can be formulated. Theoretical framework of this research seems to support findings of empirical results in many ways. First of all, the importance of strategic planning and recruitment that are derived from business strategy are totally empathized also in the literature. As Phillips & Gully, (2015, p. 194) say "The recruiting function's purpose is to help the organization employ a talented group of employees who contribute to the company's business strategy so the firm can achieve a competitive advantage."

Another clear coherence is the tough competition about the best talent and the meaning of attraction and employer branding. Koch et al. (2018) state that there is an ongoing competition about the best talent, and social media could help reaching it. Similarly, the empirical research showed that social media is the only channel that provides possibilities to give tools to compete about the best talent by attracting, targeting searching aggressively and reaching passive candidates. As Kashi et al. (2016, p. 204) benefits of social media are among other things; help searching aggressively potential applicants, being able to find passive applicants, help in target recruiting and making it easier to find certain specialized, skilled target groups. Obviously, the goal both in literature and in interviewed companies is to achieve high-quality recruitment, in order to answer to competition situation and business needs. High-quality recruitment and top talent are needed, if companies want to compete in modern business world, as Koch et. al. (2018) say it.

More detailed information about the use of social media in recruitment is provided in this study's empirical part than in theoretical framework. How social media can be utilized in recruitment seems to be strongly connected to business line/area and level of task. This did not come up in theory.

Many advantages of using social media in recruitment were similar in theory and empirical research. Low costs, easy to use and easy to measure. (Chauhan et.al., 2013; Doherty, 2010) The challenge that came up both in secondary and primary data was the reliability of social media in recruitment. In one interview there was a concern if social media and its' reputation is reliable enough for their business area. Landers and Schmidt (2016) also tell about the issues with reliability of social media. Social medias role overall in recruitment is increasing according both theory and interviews. (Buettner, 2017)

Interviews showed and literature tells that International social media recruitment reach people globally making country borders disappear. (Koch et al., 2018) Banks et al. (2009, p.483) say that "Given this need for internal consistency, it is not clear the extent to which firms can balance global standardization and local customization in their recruiting practices." Interviewed firms seem all to have very standardized international recruitment practices. Banks et.al. (2019) also say that companies seem to have very standardized recruitment signals. Diversity is very appreciated in organizations according to interviews. (Banks et.al. 2019) say that customization helps in concerning national cultural diversity aspect in recruitment, which is not in line with how firms act and what they aim for.

Employer branding has a huge role in international recruitment. Interviews showed that it might be even bigger than in domestic. Possible challenges concerning international social media recruitment that arise from literature were among others legal and cultural. (Landers and Schmidt, 2016; Goldstein et. al., 2017; Banks et. al. 2019) In the interviews

two main issues that came up were working permits and language. Finally, in chapter five follows the conclusions of this study.

5   Conclusions

In this chapter, the research questions are answered by comparing the results of primary data and theoretical framework. Also, theoretical contributions and managerial implications are presented. Finally, limitations of this research are described and directions for future research are suggested.

5.1   Answers to research questions

The main research question of this research was following:

- What is the role of social media in strategic recruitment?

And two sub questions were:

- What impact may social media have on the success of recruitment?

- What are the advantages and challenges of using social media in national and international recruitment?

Behind the successful use of social media in recruitment is a business strategy that defines all the recruitment activities. Recruitment aims to support business by effective, high-quality recruitment and finding the best possible talent. Quality focused evaluation of recruitment helps to improve them. Finally, effective and high-quality recruitment may end up adding competitive advantage to companies.

Social media is utilized considerably and diversely in strategic recruitment. There are companies that use only social media to recruitment, especially LinkedIn. Two very crucial activities to companies, attracting and finding passive candidates are executed only in LinkedIn, and to some extent in other social media channels. LinkedIn is actually the only channel where the real recruitment activities happen, including posting job advertisements, sourcing candidates, employer branding and other recruitment marketing. Other social media channels Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, are utilized to mostly in

other recruitment marketing in order to support recruitment. Recruitment communication happening in social media should be in line with the real organization culture, in order to recruit perfect fits. Overall, social media recruitment brings tools and channels to use, which enable many activities that improve recruitment possibilities. If social media is used strategically the largest impacts to recruitment are the increase of effectiveness and quality, which will finally end up adding competitive advantage.

The advantages are huge and versatile. Companies are able to reach passive candidates, coverage is broad, they are able to target, interaction is personal, it is easy to use and measure, and the costs are low. The challenges that arise had to do with reliability and the reputation of social media. Companies should be and look like credible and reliable, accordingly they also need reliable tools for recruiting. Reliability seemed to be the issue particularly in sensitive business areas for instance in security business. Another issue that was found was that companies with certain business area or line are not able to utilize LinkedIn because their target groups do not exist there. The same issue about the absence concerns some level of jobs. Overall, the role can easily say to be indispensable. Furthermore, the role is still increasing and need to be invested in the future in order to be able to benefit about it as much as possible.

International candidates are mostly reached in LinkedIn, other ways to reach them do not exist for many companies. Most of the activities concerning international recruitment are happening in social media, because it enables reaching candidates globally. Employer branding in social media is in huge role, because companies need to attract globally. It might be that employer branding in international context is even more important than nationally, because some countries may appreciate employer brand more than Finnish. Because of social media international recruitment is faster than they would be without. Global usage of social media in recruitment is not taking much more effort when activities are very standardized. However, companies endeavor to diversity might suffer from standardization and not adapting culturally. The most important issues

concerning law and culture are working permits, which can slow down the recruitment process, and language.

5.2 Theoretical contributions and managerial implications

The interview frame made in this research was affected by theoretical framework of this study. Accordingly, it is no wonder that results were mainly similar and supportive to theory. The importance of social media in recruitment was totally strengthen by the results of empirical research. All the companies use social media in their recruitment and some of them only social media.

This research suggests following contribution to recruitment theory. First of all, the research suggests that only one social media channel might be enough, namely LinkedIn, for the whole company's recruitment. There are many companies that use only LinkedIn in their recruitment and are successful. Although, other social media channels might be necessary for employer branding and recruitment marketing. Another implication is that the area of business or level of tasks may determine the ableness to use certain social media channels in recruitment. In addition, how companies see whether the reliability of social media is enough for their recruitment, is dependable to their business area.

Interesting implication is also that culture may not seem to play so important role in international companies' recruitment. The necessary issues are taken into account, concerning mostly law, but cultural adaptation is negligible in the companies that were interviewed.

Managerial implications of this research are suggestions to managers about what they may want to consider concerning social media recruitment and international social media recruitment. Companies are different and suggestions are necessary not suitable for all. However, hopefully most of companies could utilize these suggestions.

At first, the business strategy shared with recruitment team and implementing the strategy to recruitment is central. Furthermore, sharing the strategic business planning with recruitment team is important, so that they are able to answer business needs and are able to find the right talent. All the social media activities concerning recruitment should be in line with strategy. The importance of attracting in social media cannot be emphasized too much. It affects straight to candidates' interest towards the company. Long-term interest by employer branding happening in social media should be the goal. Moreover, focusing to develop the ways company can find and attract passive candidates in social media could increase their quality of recruitment. Evaluation of recruitment is necessary in order to be able to advance them and compete better both in talent markets and business. Measuring should focus to the quality of recruitment. Utilizing the statistics and the possibilities that social media brings to measurement is very recommended.

In international recruitment the main suggestion is to carefully consider the standardization versus adaptation of recruitment communication. Companies endeavor to diversity could profit of cultural adaptation. Strategic planning in time is crucial also in international recruitment, especially if they are outside European Union, because the working permits might slow the process a lot. Used language in communication and posts should be considered carefully. If Finnish is not required language in the job, the communication and the job advertisements could be in English so that language does not limit the talent out because of language. Furthermore, especially in sensitive business areas, could be desirable to ponder the reliability of some social media channels in recruitment and their suitability to company's brand image. Finally, the cultural fit of any candidate should be anticipated early by social media communication, which is in line with how company really is.

Overall, the importance of social media is still expected to increase, so investing more time, money and human resources to it may be necessary.

5.3 Limitations and future research suggestions

The starting point for this research was that the use of social media in recruitment is increasing enormously, and at the same time the use of social media in recruitment has not been researched enough. International aspect was involved because firms act and recruit internationally more and more. This research was limited to Finnish companies who recruit candidates also from other cultures. Time and resources were limited in this research, which is why the amount of interviews was rather small.

Accordingly, it is suggested that future researches could make similar research with greater amount of interviews, so that the validity would be better. Furthermore, it would be interesting to see if the results would be similar in different countries.

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