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Social Media Recruitment

How to target young professionals of the generation Z

ABSTRACT:

Sosiaalisen median hyödyntäminen osana e-rekrytointia kasvaa jatkuvasti. Ihmiset viettävät aikaa sosiaalisessa mediassa päivittäin. Pelkästään perinteisten rekrytointikanavien hyödyntäminen osana yrityksen rekrytointia ei enää riitä. Myöskin e-rekrytoinnissa panostaminen sosiaaliseen mediaan on tärkeää, jos yritys haluaa olla siellä, missä hakijat ovat.

Tämä tutkimus käsittelee sosiaalisen median rekrytointia. Tutkimus keskittyy siihen, mitkä ovat parhaat keinot herättää sukupolvi Z mielenkiinto sosiaalisen median rekrytoinnissa. Tutkimus keskittyy tarkemmin tutkimaan sukupolvi Z:aan kuuluvien vastavalmistuneiden asenteita, sillä he ovat niitä, jotka ovat juuri astumassa tai juuri astuneet työmarkkinoille. Tutkimuksen tavoitteet on saada tarkempaa tietoa siitä, mitkä käytännöt sosiaalisen median rekrytoinnissa houkuttelee sukupolvi Z:aa ja mitkä taas ei. Tässä tutkimuksessa sukupolvi Z kattaa ihmiset, jotka ovat syntyneet vuosina 1995–2012.

Tutkimus toteutettiin laadullisena tutkimuksena ja siihen haastateltiin seitsemää sukupolvi Z:n edustajaa. Kaikki haastateltavat olivat valmistuneet vuonna 2022 yliopistosta. Tämä tutkimus hyödynsi laadullista sisällön analyysia.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osaltaan tukevat aiempaa kirjallisuutta, erityisesti siitä miten tärkeää yrityksen työnantajamielikuva on hakijalle. Tulokset osoittavat myös, että sukupolvi Z arvostaa läpinäkyvää ja kanavakohtaista rekrytointia. Tuloksissa selviää, että vaikka sukupolvi Z näkee hyvänä, että sosiaalisen median rekrytointi yleistyy, se luo myös paineita ja lisää vertailua. Yritysten tulee panostaa rekrytointiin myös sosiaalisessa mediassa, koska sukupolvi Z näkee helposti, jos postaukseen ei ole käytetty aikaa. Lisäksi tulokset osoittavat, että somenatiiveina pidetty sukupolvi Z kokee sosiaalisen median olevan murroksessa ja vaikka teknologian tunteva sukupolvi on tottunut siihen, niin silti kaiken siirtyminen sosiaaliseen mediaan ei ole heidän mielestään välttämättä niin hyvä asia kuin aluksi luulisi.

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1 Introduction

Imagine having the highest brand sentiment score for your company you have had in five years and reaching estimated 312 million people only in three days with your social media recruitment campaign. This is possible, and it has happened. In 2017 Mc Donald's Australia launched a social media recruitment campaign through Snapchat that went by with the name "Snaplications", and it was a success. (Gibson, 2019) The idea behind this campaign was to use the target audiences used social media channel, in this case Snapchat, to gain the wanted accessibility for the campaign. The campaign itself was simple and it was built around Snapchat filter that allowed the applicant to film ten second video of themselves through a filter that made them dressed as Mc Donald s worker and explaining why they would be a perfect fit for the role. (Gibson, 2019) When looking at the results this was a perfect example on how to utilize social media as recruitment channel. This was a great example of the power of social media. The social media recruiting not just apply to Snapchat, it covers every social media channel used, and therefore it offers this study a create topic to do research on because social media channels can be used to recruit business professionals as well.

The word social media as well as social networking are widely used among different studies regarding the e-recruiting methods. Therefore, in this study social media and social networking terms are used, but their meaning is the same. Social media as a term is hard to define since it covers so many different aspects. Social media can be defined as different actions and services online where anybody can communicate with other people and interact with each other on an online platform. This interaction can be for example posting one's thoughts on Twitter, liking someone's Facebook post, or watching YouTube videos. (Neal, 2012)

Social media plays a big role in almost everyone's lives nowadays. Social media does not only offer private persons the chance to share their thoughts, but it also provides companies a great platform where almost everything can be measured and examined. One of the biggest challenges for social media is the amount of information available. How

to efficiently benefit from the information is an ongoing challenge for the companies, as well as for the private persons. (Brown, 2012)

The benefits of using social media can offer companies the needed competition advantage if they know how to use it. Because of social media and its channels, companies can interact with their consumers instantly and the physical locations sort of lose their meaning since there is no need to meet up face to face that often or even never. All the communication from the customer complaints to the frequently asked questions can be found on company's social media channels or websites. (Humphrey et al., 2016) Being active in social media plays a big role in the employer branding which we will cover more in depth later in this thesis. An additional benefit of social media recruiting for companies is that through social media the company can get access to the whole world which might make social recruiting attractive to international recruiters.

Recruiting world has faced huge changes and challenges in the last three years because of the Covid-19. Companies needed to start fully relying on the e-recruitment channels almost in one night. As it was not challenging enough to attract the candidates the e-recruitment really separated the ones who knew how to utilize it and the ones who did not.

According to Statista (2022), the daily time spent in social networking worldwide is 147 minutes per day per person, which is approximately 2,45 hours daily. Only ten years ago in the year 2012 the time spent online was only 90 minutes per day, so the average usage worldwide has increased over 60 percent in only ten years. These statistics highlight the fact of how many times in daily basics companies can expose their target audience for their recruiting campaigns. Everyone can do an online post about the open position, how to stand out from others is crucial to succeed.

Recruiting is attracting the right talent to fit the open position. In many fortunate cases companies tend to trust in their repetition and that it will guarantee the needed number

of applicants. The use of social media in the recruiting can increase this kind of behavior. It can be easily assumed among the recruitment professionals that posting an open job position is enough, even though it is not. (Almog,2018) This just proves the fact that this study and its topic is current, and what the generation Z values is important to know for the recruiters to succeed.

According to Pichler et al. (2021) understanding the gen Z is the key factor in order have competitive advantage in today's business world. They are the ones who has had a change to grow in a very rapidly changing world, not only in technology wise but as well as in political and in economic. (Pichler et al., 2021) It is also important to realize that approximately 95% of the teens in gen Z has the access to smartphone. This just highlights the volume of the digital natives in gen Z has. (Anderson & Jiang, 2018)

Gen Z is the one who has experienced the technology revolution while growing up. They are called *digital natives*. Researchers offers very different point of view of who fits the criteria of gen Z. There is a debate of who to include in this specific generation. Some sources say they are the ones who are born in early 1990 until the beginning of 2000 and some sources say Gen Z covers the people born in between 1995 and 2012. (Pichler et al., 2021; Thangavel et al., 2019) In this thesis the definition for generation Z is people born between the year 1995 and 2012 (Pichler et al., 2021).

Everyone has an interest to build their own brand and to be seen and valued. The fact that the Gen Z is the first generation to be fully exposed to the newest technologies and are fluent in using them gives this research a justified reason to study especially their attitude towards social media recruiting. From now on when refereeing to new graduates, in this thesis it means a new graduate from generation Z, meaning person born between 1995-2012.

The fact that e-recruiting and social media is free from the geographical limitations it means that the recruiting process can be international and everyone around the world

can see the job ads. That is why this research focuses on Finnish graduates and their opinions about social media recruiting and what kind of social media recruiting post would get them to overall apply for a job and what it would take for them to apply abroad positions.

1.1 Research questions

This study aims to give important insight on what newly graduates, more precisely what new graduates of the gen Z think about social media recruitment and what kind of recruitment ads work. Social media offers a great chance to promote international positions. Employer branding is a key role in what attracts the applicants in the recruitment process.

The main goal of this research is to examine the pros and cons of social media recruiting aiming to recruit new business graduates from generation Z. The main research question is:

What are the best practices in social media recruiting that aim to evoke the attention of new business graduates from gen Z?

To answer this question, there are several sub-questions that refine this study:

- What experiences generation Z has with social media recruiting?
- How the generation Z feels about social media recruiting?
- What are the benefits and challenges of social media recruiting?
- What kind of social media recruiting attracts new graduates?

1.2   Definition of the key concepts

To make this thesis as understandable as possible a few key concepts are important to present on the early stages if the paper. These are the following: recruitment, e-recruitment, social recruiting, international recruiting, generation Z.

Recruitment is defined by Sivabalan et al. (2014, p. 178) like this:

"Recruitment is the process of generating a pool of capable people to apply for employment to an organization"

E-Recruitment is defined by Lee (2011, p.231) like this:

"A hiring process that utilizes a variety of electronic means and technologies with the primary purpose of identifying, attracting, and selecting potential employees"

Social recruiting is defined by (Ku, 2022) like this:

"Social recruiting is the process of advertising jobs, recruiting candidates and connecting with potential employees through social media platforms. It is also commonly referred to as social hiring or social media recruiting."

International recruitment is attracting talent from outside companies' home countries borders. There is a constant demand for international talent and without utilizing the international recruitment companies might lose their competitive advantage. (Ma & Allen 2009, p. 334).

Generation Z covers the people who are born in years 1995-2012. (Pichler et al., 2021)

1.3 Structure of the study

The structure of this thesis is designed in the following way: Chapter one is the introduction that aims to cover and present the background of the research as well as the research problem and justification of it.

Chapter two and three presents the literature review of this thesis. It will cover the main concepts recruiting and social media as well as recruiting through it. These are the main topics, and, in the chapters, there will be more detailed sub-chapters that explains everything in more detail.

Chapter four and five are all about the methodology as well as the actual research. More precisely it will cover the used research philosophy, methods, and strategy. Followed by the actual data collection, data analysis and validity. Also, the most important, findings are presented. Findings are then analysed and evaluated in a deep level.

The last chapter of this thesis will be chapter six whereas the conclusion and the overall summary is presented. Suggestions for the future research is also given. '

2 Recruiting

In this chapter recruiting and its different forms is introduced. Also, specifics of graduate recruitment are explained and introduced followed by the specifics of employer branding.

2.1 Recruitment

A company's most important asset is its people. This is indeed a phrase that is agreed among many professionals. (Pollitt, 2007) Like already mentioned in the introduction, according to Sivabalan et al. (2014, p. 178) recruitment is defined as: *"The process of generating a pool of capable people to apply for employment to an organization"* This pool of people can consist of many different talents and skills and how to know which one to select is the core of the recruitment.
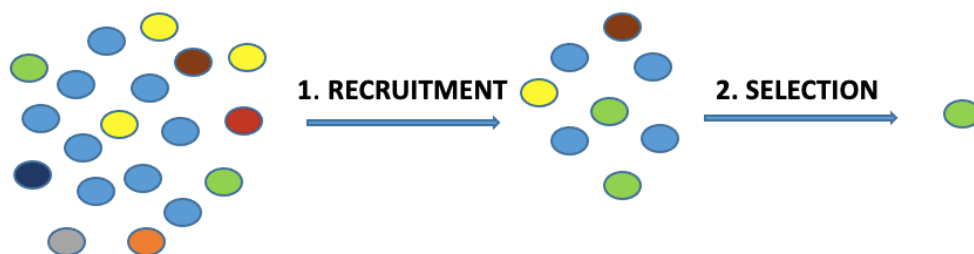
Figure 1 How recruitment and selection works (Rashmi, 2010)

Figure 1 is representing the recruitment and the selection process. In many cases people might mix or even think that the word recruitment means the same thing as selection even though it is not the case because recruitment is what leads to selection. The goal for the recruitment is to target the suitable candidates to help the selection process. After the recruitment in the selection process the applicants have already been narrowed down into a smaller number of candidates. (Rashmi, 2010) As we can see from

the figure 1 after a well-executed selection, the best fit candidate is selected for the role. It is also important to note that there can be several candidates chosen but to keep the process simple the author of this thesis wanted to highlight the decision by leaving only one chosen at the end. There are many ways on how to handle the recruitment process.

The attitudes that the individuals have towards the organizational recruiting has been studied for years and therefore it is not a surprise that how the whole process is done, matters. It all starts from the managerial actions. How the recruiter behaves and how well do they communicate with the applicant throughout the process. (Rynes et al., 1980)

Like anything in life, planning something makes the task more clear and somewhat easier. Same goes with the human resource (HR) practices. Recruiting is expensive and time-consuming, and therefore it is crucial for the companies to pay attention to the early stages of the hiring process right from the quality to the overall strategy. (Martinson & De Leon 2018). The yearly cost of the HR practices of one employee can vary a lot depending on the efficiency of the company policies. (Lepak & Snell, 1998)

In organizations there usually can be a bit of a dismissive way and attitude towards the HR practices. And likewise, there can be some attitude towards the management side from the HR point of view. The most beneficial way for the workers as well as to the organization should be the overall understanding of these practices. HR as well as the management side are both aiming for the same goal. Goal that is supposed to support the organization and increase the profit and the overall performance of it. (Holman et al., 2004)

2.2   International recruitment

When considering hiring and launching an international recruitment campaign, it requires knowledge and understanding of how the international recruitment process differ from the domestic recruiting. The globalization and rabidly growing technologies make

many firms to extend their company borders. (Banks et al., 2019) Having an international experience in the company is also a huge organizational benefit for the whole company. Meaning that having the knowledge and experience from different countries is valuable and gives important insight for the company. (Goldstein et., 2017) Therefore, companies should pay attention on how to gain international visibility and utilizing social media is almost a must to get the best candidates.

In overall recruiting whether it is domestic or international the process can be divided into two different parts, external and internal recruiting. Internal recruiting is recruiting people already inside the organization whereas external recruiting is to recruit someone outside of the organization. (Koch et al., 2018)

According to Goldstein et al. (2017, p. 34) *"The increasing mobility of talent also means that companies must compete internationally for the best recruits."* There is no better way to say it. This highlights the importance of the international recruiting.

The overall popularity of applying international jobs has grown over the years. The main reason for this is usually the desire of personal as well as career growth in persons own field of talent. (Goldstein et., 2017) This interest towards the international career aligns well with this thesis research purposes. Since the interest towards the international career is growing it will be important to know how to utilize the social media to increase that interest.

In the study by Dolot (2018) the generation Z´s thoughts towards the international career were revealed[1]. The results of this study revealed that from 1162 respondents 23% of them were considering to going abroad permanently. This above-mentioned study gives a good insight for this thesis on how the generation Z persuades a global career and over all moving abroad. International recruitment and its different forms are a current topic in the lives of the generation Z.

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[1] In this study the definition of generation Z was people born 1990 and later.

2.3 E-recruitment

Recruitment is a very competitive field and not only the applicants compete about the jobs: the companies are competing about the best candidates and talent. (Lawong et al., 2019b) Therefore it is crucial for companies to know the right process for their recruitment and how to make it as effective as possible. Since the digital era affects us all and is ubiquitous, it is almost impossible to do recruitment without using any digital channels.

Since this study is targeting young professionals, the importance of having companies' socials up to date is an essential facture. The need for paper recruitments and sending applications via mail is history. The recruitment world has faced a new form of recruiting: e-recruitment. E-recruitment in short is utilizing digital platforms in the recruiting process. Digital platforms and tools can be for example using online job portals or conducting the interview online. (Galanki, 2002) The importance here is to be able to separate that the online job sites are not social media. E-recruitment enables applicant to search jobs online without being in social media, but social media plays a significant role being one of the e-recruitment forms. (Headworth, 2015). Especially the social media channel LinkedIn is popular among the young professionals. According to the article by YLE Suomi, LinkedIn as a recruitment channel is very important in the world of recruiting professionals (Tiirikainen, 2020).

For example, video interviews take a lot less time than conducting interviews face-to-face. Real life interviews might sometimes mean planning a trip to a different city, taking a day-off to travel, travel to the destination, wait in a lounge, travel back home, whereas in video interviews the only time consumed is the interview itself. In general, the e-recruitment is a much less time consuming and an efficient way to do the recruitment since the recruits can target so many applicants in way less work than it would take without the e-recruiting tools. (Sołek-Borowska & Wilczewska, 2018)

In research from Holm (2012) the figure 2 below visualizes well on how the traditional recruitment process differs from the e-recruitment.
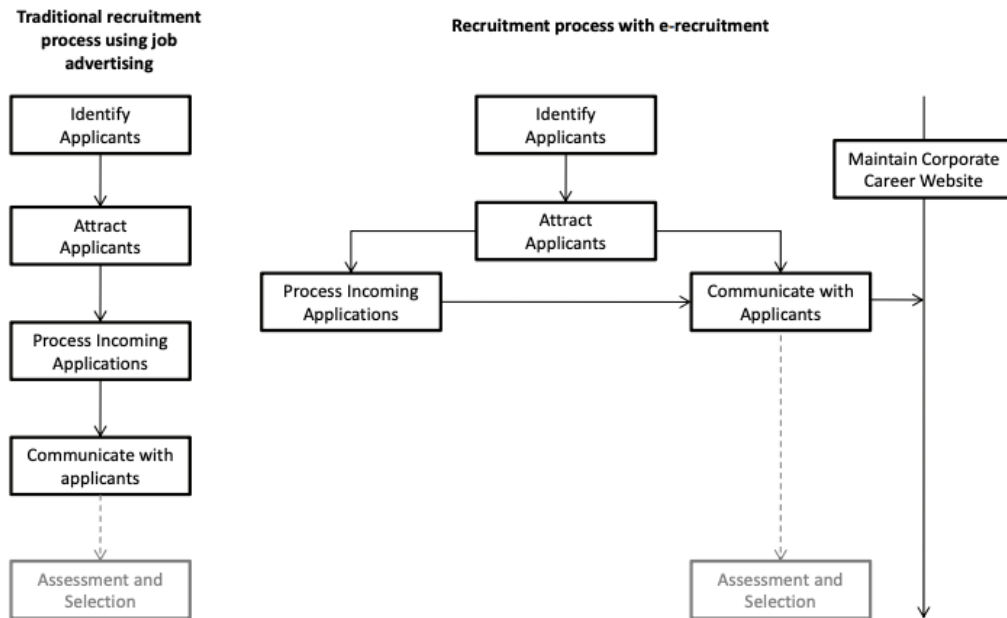
Figure 2 The design and sequence of tasks in traditional paper-based recruitment, Holm (2012)

At a quick glance it seems like the processes does not differ that much. But the most important to notice is that in the e-recruitment the communicating with the applicants can start right after the applicant's attention is gained.

This communication can continue simultaneously while still attracting more applicants. In the traditional way there is no such a possibility to do so. Also, in the e-recruitment the company's website maintenance is an everyday job. (Holm, 2012) It can be said that the e-recruitment process is more flexible and offers not only to the recruiter but also to the applicant a two-way communication channel where the communication is more pro-active and can happen during the application process.

The possibilities the e-recruitment offers to the companies are almost unlimited. The one form of e-recruitment is social media recruitment, and it is a crucial part of this thesis. Therefore, more information of it is presented in more detail in the chapter three.

2.3.1 Graduate recruitment

When the student is ready with their diploma and graduated from university a whole new world opens for them. The overall graduates recruiting does not differ significantly of the normal recruiting process, yet there are some differences to consider. For example, the overall previous work experience can differ considerably depending on the individual. Some of the graduates may have sacrificed their studying time to do part time or even fulltime job together with their studies while someone haven't worked during the studies and gained better grades because of that. What the recruiters value more is not as straight forward as it might think to be. (Humburg et., al 2015)

University graduates can offer companies new talent and ideas. However, in many companies' talent management (TM) strategies can easily forget the power and talent of the university graduates. Yet, graduates are still seen to be very potential new employees with the high talent. (McCracken et al., 2015) Therefore, this offers this research a great research gap to examine on how to get the new graduates excited for the open positions. How to win them in the war of talent?

2.4 Employer branding in recruitment

Branding, nowadays, concerns everything. Almost everyone has their personal brand that they are constantly marketing whether they wanted it or not. (Kang, 2013) The term branding has switched from the basic commercial world to the more complex one where there is branding from all the way to the platform brands to the personal brands. (Swaminathan et al., 2020) Employer branding is no different. Students, graduates, and people talk. Employer branding affects the reputation of the whole corporation. (Martin et al., 2011)

There are many ways on how to define the employer branding. In this research two different definitions are combined to solve the research question. The employer branding is defined throughout the whole research as the following: it is gaining the competitive advantage among the competitors and creating high-quality experiences for the existing employers as well as for the potential ones, and the branding is so strong that the employees are happy to promote the company to others. (Martin et al., 2011; Sivertzen et al., 2013)

The reputation really matters since it has been studied that the job seekers who are considering different options really pay attention to the reputations of the companies and can make their decisions based on what others have said. (Cable & Turban, 2003) And here social media plays a big role in employer branding. Most of the potential job seekers spent their days in social media and how the branding is executed there, affects a lot. Social media also offers a platform for people to share their thoughts and experiences among some specific companies and their recruiting.

The goal for the successful employer branding is to become attractive in the eyes of the candidate. For this there is the term employer attractiveness. Employer attractiveness is how the potential employees see the employment and how attractive the company's values and image are to the employee. The more interested they are and the more they find similarities the more attractive the company is for them. (Sivertzen et al., 2013)

Social media as itself might be very familiar to many of the people since it is almost impossible to live in today's world without even knowing about social media. The importance of people in the business is according to many research the core key to success. That is to say that at the end, people are the ones who make the business by deciding on how to utilize the company's resources. (Łącka-Badura, 2015) Therefore the above-mentioned employer branding is important. One of the aspects is to look at it is through recruiting and most specifically through advertising of the recruiting.

3   Social media recruitment

In this chapter the recruitment through social media is introduced. Also, how to utilize the different channels of social media as well as employer branding and its importance is explained.

3.1   Recruiting in social media

The use of social media in HR practices increases constantly. Among the applicants the acceptance of the social media recruiting is mostly positive since it can be compared with being like advertising the job. (Davison et al., 2011) Companies are benefiting from their marketing techniques to inform the applicants of the open positions via their social media. (Baum & Kabst, 2014) How social media recruiting affects the applicant is also an interesting and important aspect to cover. Since the target group in this study is gen Z graduates the focus will be on how to attract them. The likelihood for the student to go to job fairs and discuss with the different company representatives decreases constantly. Nowadays students expect to see ads on the possible new jobs through their screens. (Wazed & Ng, 2015). Not only is it beneficial for the job seekers to see the job ads on the Internet, but it is an also a cost-effective way for the companies to do recruiting and collect information about the applicants. (Böhmová & Chudán, 2018) Therefore many companies are moving more and more away from the traditional recruitment channels. These traditional channels are for example newspapers, television, and the above-mentioned job fairs. (Melanthiou et al., 2015)

Social media offers for the HR professionals a good and cost-effective platform to seek information about the applicants as well as provide information about the open positions to the applicants (Aggerholm & Andersen, 2018; Nikolaou, 2014). From the applicant's point of view, social media offers many good possibilities to connect and network with many different people and companies (Nikolaou, 2014). The threshold to press the

"connect" can be lower than going and talking to someone face to face and asking for their business card or even giving yours to them.

In this study the core goal is to find out what kind of social media recruiting, and which channels are the ones that work for the new graduates, especially for the gen Z. They are, after all, the ones who are more likely to search for a job from different social media channels. These channels in question will be, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. However, there have been claims about how effective or how fair the way of conducting a recruiting campaign through social media is. The high risk of misuse of social media is a real issue. Some people tend to share more than others and the shared information might affect the applicant's chances to be chosen if the shared content does not fit well with the recruiter or the company's values. (Nikolaou, 2014) In order to answer to the main research question of the study it is important to investigate the attitudes the new graduates have towards the e-recruiting process, especially social media recruiting.

3.1.1   Recruitment in different social media channels

Like mentioned above, online recruiting has many different platforms to choose from. This selection of different channels can give the companies a hard time to know which channels to use and take advantage of. Also, sharing of the job advertisement is not enough and the organization needs to know how to stand out from the other ads and the competition to get the best applicants. (Böhmová & Chudán, 2018)

Someone may think that it does not matter how the social media recruitment is executed or which channels to use and this is in fact, the first trap that some companies fall into. Social media recruitment should be implemented to the company's communication strategy and treated as important as any other communication part. (Aggerholm & Andersen, 2018) In this study especially when the target is young professionals and graduates the importance of how to benefit from social media is very important.

Like written before, the importance of the HR matters and the e-recruitment may have been underestimated in some companies but nowadays companies are more and more accepting the fact that recruitment and especially e-recruitment is important and deserves the effort. After all, a company is as good as its people are. For a long time now the most popular online sites used among the companies are Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. In all these three sites the user can create the account for free so the threshold to join is not that big. (Doherty, 2010)

Social media channels are also shaping the traditional CV´s meaning since they usually are very soon out of date and can be very hard to read. Therefore, the social media always offers the up-to-date information of the applicants and can be very specific. Also, the applicant can easily find new jobs only by finding out that his or her qualifications match to some specific job. (Doherty, 2010)

Previous sub-chapter mentioned social media channels this thesis focuses. Those were-LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. The number one rule to remember when recruiting through social media channels is the target audience and whom you want the add and posts to be seen. In social media people expect things to be easily to understood, not too long and conciseness are in today's world a must. (Salli & Takatalo 2014)

3.2   Possibilities of social media recruiting

Social media offers for the recruiting world great and different possibilities compared to the traditional recruitment. One of them being the reputation. Company who can well utilize their social media channels can be seen as a flexible and innovative company. These factors affect positively especially to the younger job seekers. Also, this reputation can be seen all over the world if wanted so. That is the benefit and possibility of the social media. Social media does not have any geographical barriers and therefore the Finnish graduate can see for example job ads from United Kingdom. (Doherty, 2010; van

Esch & Mente 2018) The fact that social media recruitment is free from the geographical limitations supports this research purpose and research questions.

The importance on how to benefit from the online channels in recruiting is not a new phenomenon. Twenty years ago, paper from Galanaki (2002) already highlights the importance of knowing how to take advantage of online recruiting. And this mentioned paper is not even the oldest one but just an example on highlighting the fact on how long the online recruiting has been in the discussion in the recruiting world. Even though the online recruiting discussed in Galanaki's article (2002) not specifically address the social media recruiting there are a few good points that are still valid in today's world. Galanaki (2002) mentions the benefit of online recruiting to be for example the already mentioned possibility to reach more people as well as the good reputation of being up-to-date company and via online recruiting the chances of getting higher response rate for the open job position increases.

When the social media recruiting campaign is well planned it aligns with the company's online recruitment strategy. One of the key aspects in social media recruiting are the passive candidates. These are the people who are not actively looking for a new job but when exposed in right way for the camping they might apply. (Doherty, 2010) And that is why the social media recruiting is filled with possibilities. One of the social media channels, LinkedIn for example, the applying for a job is made for the applicant very easy with the "Easy Apply" feature. This "Easy Apply" feature allows the applicant easily to fill their information for the open position with their LinkedIn profile. This is meant to decrease the threshold for applicant to ignore the job ad. Meaning that like already mentioned, the CV´s can be easily out of date and this kind of easy apply feature gives the applicant chance to easily apply for the job with their already existing and up to date LinkedIn profile. (Doherty, 2010; LinkedIn, n.d.)

Social media is *social.* Meaning that people have different connections and friends in social media. Usually in many apps people can see what their friends are doing. What

they like, comment or support. This leads to other possibility that the social media offers in recruiting, visibility. This means that even though that one applicant would not have been directly exposed to your recruiting campaign their friends may have. This one friend saw and liked your post and therefore this one not exposed future applicant can see your post as well. (van Esch & Mente 2018) It is important to remember that being social in social media concerns the companies as well. Companies' actions in social media leaves a reputation and curtain image to the applicant. This means that companies must be social by actively comment, like, share and reply to different posts and comments. Building that strong social media base helps to target the best candidates. (Madia, 2011) For this there is an example of a Facebook recruitment post and the power of reposting it. This example is from a book written by Salli & Takatalo (2014, p.32) and there is an example company that has 500 workers in it. This company shares their open position in their own Facebook. After this their all 500 workers repost this recruitment post in their own Facebook and automatically for their 100 Facebook friends. By this time 50 000 people have seen and been exposed to this post. This example just highlights the power of social media and the importance of being active.

3.3   Challenges of social media recruiting

The fact that social media offers anyone with an Internet access a place to share their thoughts and daily life can cause some issues. Sometimes people cannot see what is appropriate to share on social media and may share impropriate content. (Davison et al., 2011). In the article from Greysen et., al 2010 the social media is defined to be like a mirror: "*Much like a mirror, social media can reflect the best and worst aspects of the content placed before it for all to see.*" Meaning exactly like it says, everything you do in social media can be seen and reflected to everyone's eyes. The mentioned impropriate content can be for example something that does not fit the ones profession. Someone being in a high-power position posting a drunken photo to their social media channel can lead to a serious action and the reputation or even career of this person can be on the stage. (Greysen et., al 2010)

Someone may argue that if you just know how and where to post about your private life it cannot affect to your professional life, but they are wrong. You cannot trust anyone in social media and once it is on the Internet it will be there forever. Not even long ago there was this massive scandal concerning the Finnish current Prime Minister Sanna Marin, who has been partying with her friends in a private house. Someone of her friend group still decided to film and post videos of her and Sanna dancing and partying on their private Instagram account. In this account there were at the time 92 followers. And these videos leaked and cause a worldwide scandal. Because of these videos many people were concerned about the Prime Ministers ability to do her job. (Hämäläinen, 2022 HS) This mentioned example is very huge and scandalous, but it is great example to highlight how the information can speared though the social media. This offers this chapter great chance to discuss about the privacy concerns the applicant have towards the social media recruiting.

From these examples is it clear to see that one the challenges social media recruiting has, is the privacy matter. Applicants are worried of how much data their future or current employer can collect and have about them. Through social media the recruiters can do a very specific background check of the applicant and be exposed to some information that is irrelevant for the job. But the recruiters are only humans and some decisions whether to hire someone or not can happen based on these irrelevant facts. These facts can be for example what the applicant has commented on their social media or what kind of profiles they follow. (Melanthiou et al., 2015; Slovensky & Ross 2012)

Some of the recruiters think that the traditional resume and cover letters are only a cover of the applicant, and their true personality is revealed in their social media channels (Slovensky & Ross 2012). This kind of behavior and thinking of the recruiters gives this study important information. Like mentioned the goal is to examine the attitudes of the new graduates have for the social media recruiting, their opinions of this privacy concern offer this study a whole new insight and therefore it is relevant to mention here.

3.4   Generation Z

To define people with the same experiences of the events during their lifetime the scientists has developed a word generation. Generation as a word is supposed to put people with the same characteristics to a same group of similar experiences from some specific's years. (Berkup 2014) One of the things and experiences the generation Z shares among each other is the technology and its usage. They are the tech generation and sometimes they are referred as iGen. In the generation Z´s lives the internet has been always there. (Gabrielova & Buchko 2021). Since the oldest ones of this generation are now entering the workforce, it is very current topic to do research on how they see the social media recruitment. As well as to find out that are they really that internet oriented as the studies claim. In this study the generation Z are the people born 1995-2012. (Pichler et al., 2021)

3.4.1   Gen Z in social media

Like already stated before, the generation Z is the first generation to be fully exposed to the revolution of the technology and Internet. The generation Z is fluent in social media, and they are creative and know how to get the best from their socials and are not afraid to give feedback, comment, or influence. (Prakash Yadav & Rai 2017)

The constantly globalizing world is constantly increasing the competition between individuals and the social media platforms make it more possible than ever. In social media people can highlight the best parts of their personal development as well as career wise. In a paper by Manai & Holmlund (2015), is mentioned that in today's global and competitive world, students are facing more challenges than ever. Meaning that the needed degree and skills for the position may not be enough anymore to get that job. This issue arises a definition of a self-marketing skills that the new graduates are expected to have. In this already mentioned study by Manai & Holmlund (2015, p.751) the self-marketing

is defined as follows: *"the means by which one communicates one's abilities to a wider audience in networking situations, in applying for jobs and in making a name for oneself as a means of getting ahead in one's career."* With this definition the actions and choices the gen Z does in their social media channels can be analyzed through their self-marketing. Especially when the self-marketing concerns the changes of getting a job.

Self-marketing, personal brand, reputation, all these mentioned words are almost a must in today's world. It is now more important than ever to brand yourself since like already mentioned, the competition between individuals is increasing constantly. The reasons why competition is growing are many but one of them is the globalizing world. The globalization makes the competition for jobs higher. Candidates can be competing for the same role from all over the world. (Kang, 2013) In this world where the social platforms and media plays a big role, the generation Z whose involvement in social media is almost unavoidable, building a personal brand for gen Z is necessity, not a choice (Vitelar, 2019).

Of course, there is so much more than just personal branding when considering the gen Z and their actions in social media. They are the technology generation, the ones who knows how to utilize their medias. What it comes overall of their feelings towards the social media is that they are found out to be really comfortable in overall technology related matters. Generation Z and their communication with others comes naturally in the social media platforms. They as a generation can easily create meaningful connections and bond with each other whether it is face to face or fully in online platforms. (Prakash Yadav & Rai 2017) So, without saying, the social media plays a big role in generation Z´s lives.

While gen Z uses social media it highlights the importance gen Z´s future employers' participation in social media as well. Gen Z is active generation in social media and in online platforms as well it really gives this research an interesting point on how they view the recruiting in social media. For example, on what kind of social media posts lure

the attention and leads to apply for the job. Because like already written, everything is online and that really gives the challenge to the technology fluent gen Z as well. How to separate the important and current job adds from the jungle of ads in the social media?

3.5   Summary of the theoretical framework

This chapter presents summary of the theoretical framework used in this study. This study examines the recruitment, more precisely recruitment through social media. The focus will be on generation Z who have graduated from university in 2022. The generation Z is defined to be people born between the years 1995-2012 (Pichler et al., 2021). The main research question is: *What are the best practices in social media recruiting that evoke the attention of new business graduates from gen Z?*

Social media plays a big role in almost everyone's lives nowadays. Social media does not only offer private persons the chance to share their thoughts, but it also provides companies a great platform where almost everything can be measured and examined. The literature of this thesis also reveals that the social media plays big part of the e-recruitment in today's world and the importance of to use it increases yearly. As the theoretical framework highlights the generation Z is the generation that is been fully exposed to the new technologies and are fluent in tech. Generation Z´s feelings towards recruitment done through social media offers this research a great topic to do research on.

First part of the theoretical framework introduced the recruitment and it different forms. The recruitment world in general has changed during the years due to the globalization and emerging technologies. Companies most important asset its people. In the litreature it was mentioned that due to the globalizing world and growing technologies there is constant need for more talent. The need for talent creates a war for talent between the companies and for a company to succeed they need to adapt new recruitment skills that are the international recruitment and e-recruitment. International recruitment is important part of this theoretical framework of this study since one of the goals is to find

out what it takes from generation Z to apply abroad. The globalizing world forces companies to expand their company borders and seek the talent outside of their home country. Also, international experience in the company is a good asset and valued feature of the employee.

In international recruiting the companies are not the only ones competing against each other. The applicants are competing about the positions. Like in the chapter 1 described, the overall popularity for international jobs has increased and the applicants are not only aiming to gain international experience but personal and career growth as well. Also, a study about the attitudes of the generation Z has towards applying abroad was introduced and there it was revealed that among the generation Z there is interest towards moving abroad. This interest gives good insight for this overall study.

E-recruitment in this study was defined to be utilizing digital platforms in recruiting. In the literature these digital platforms were defined to be for example online platforms and executing job interview through online video applications. It was also highlighted that it is important to keep in mind that the online job sites are not the same as social media. It is possible to use e-recruitment channels without using the social media, but it was highlighted that social media plays a significant role in e-recruitment. Since e-recruiting is geographically free it offers the international recruitment good platforms to hire talent outside the company home country borders. Social media is a good example of a platform that is free form the country borders. When the social media is part of the e-recruitment strategy the recruiting can be international, and everyone can see the open job position. Meaning that for example someone from Finland could apply a job in United Kingdom and like vise.

To the recruitment world the university graduates can offer new and fresh ideas and it is up to the companies whether they value that or focus too much on the fact that most of the university graduates might not have so much working experience. The literature still reveals that the graduates are seen to be very valued and potential employees in the

eyes of the company. What then gets the graduate from the generation Z to apply for some specific job is something to be find out in the research part of this thesis.

Aligned with the recruitment and it different forms in the literature the importance of the employer branding arises. The employer branding is introduced in the literature since employer branding can reveal the attitudes of the applicants of how much they value the reputation of different companies. The term branding has switched from the basic commercial world to the more complex one where there is branding from all the way to the platform brands to the personal brands. (Swaminathan et al., 2020) The importance of the employer branding arises especially in peoples chats to each other. Daily conversation with a university friend can reveal some new information about some specific company and their recruiting for example. In this research the employer branding was defined as follows: it is gaining the competitive advantage among the competitors and creating high-quality experiences for the existing employers as well as for the potential ones, and the branding is so strong that the employees are happy to promote the company to others. (Martin et al., 2011; Sivertzen et al., 2013) Since the goal for the successful employer branding is to become attractive in the eyes of the applicant it is important to think as a company how their social media is done. Because most of the potential job seekers spent their days in social media it is important to pay attention how the company's brand is represented there.

After the different forms of recruitment, the theoretical framework focuses on a deeper level in the social media recruitment and the possibilities and challenges it might have. The importance of using social media in human resource practises increases constantly. It was also written that the more traditional ways of getting a job are decreasing. These traditional ways mean for example job fairs, because the technology-oriented generation Z expects to see the open positions ads from the screen of their phone. Social media platform offers cost-effective platform to the HR professionals to let the applicants know about the open position as well as finding information of the applicants. Like stated, the goal is to find out what kind of social media recruitment campaigns and what are the

channels that evokes the interest of the generation Z and leads to the actual application for the job. These channels in question will be, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

The possibilities that the social media offers are many. For example, the reputation in social media travels fast. In the literature it is said that the company who know how to utilize their social media channels are seen flexible and innovative in the eyes of the applicants. Also, like already stated the social media offers international recruitment a great way to recruit international talent beyond home county borders. (Doherty, 2010; van Esch & Mente 2018) The key element in social media recruitment are the passive candidates, the ones who are not currently looking for a job but when exposed to an impressive recruitment campaign they might apply. When applicants are being social in social media, they are expecting the same from the companies. Therefore, companies should never rely on the power of social media itself. When used right, the social media has the power to get the company the needed visibility and reputation, but it requires work. That is why it is important to put effort on the social media recruitment post for them to catch the attention of the needed target group.

Like everything in life if there are possibilities there are some challenges. Social media recruiting is no different. The biggest challenges social media recruitment has is in the privacy matter. Some of the applicants are worried on how much their current or future employer can see from their social media channels. Social media has also given the recruiters chance to form opinion for the applicants based on their actions in social media and this is the fact that worries the ones who are looking for a job. Since the generation Z is the technology generation and they are sharing most of their lives in their social media channel it will be interesting to see how they see this privacy matter. And that is why this gives this research an interesting another angle to cover.

Generation Z is the first generation to be fully exposed to the newest technologies and they are the ones who are not afraid to give feedback and comment and be overall active in social media. In the literature mentioned, generation Z is comfortable in social media

and best to describe this is how they can create meaningful connections and bonds with others by using only online platforms. The generation Z is online the importance of their future employers to be there as well increases. Also, the globalizing world increases the competition between individual since there can be applicants from all over the world. This competitive world arises a word self-marketing and personal branding. Because in today's world not only the companies have a brand, but the individuals also need to have brand too. The personal brand is built online and represents the individual. Having a personal brand for gen Z is necessity, not a choice (Vitelar, 2019). The technology wise gen Z and their attitudes towards the social media recruiting is the core of this whole thesis. In the next chapter research method and how it will be executed is presented.

4   Research method

In this chapter the research method and the research approach are defined. This chapter is divided in four different sub-chapters that are: research philosophy and approach, research method, data collection, sample, data analysis and validity and reliability.

4.1   Research philosophy and approach

When choosing the research method and design it is important to first think and choose the right research philosophy. According to Saunders et al. (2007, p. 101) the research philosophy is *"development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge"*. This means that research philosophy is the set of different beliefs on how the research and its data should be gathered and analysed. Moreover, the chosen philosophy determines on how the researcher views the research process and what they find useful and meaningful. Therefore, it is important to cover these different types so the used philosophy in this research can be justified. There are three different philosophy types, and those types are divided into a smaller pieces. These types are epistemology, ontology, and axiology.

Epistemology is researchers' perception that is based on human knowledge and assumptions of the researched matter. The way the researcher approaches the research and what the researcher considers to be acceptable in their field of study defines what philosophy to use. This in short means that some researchers prefer to approach the study in more measurable way whereas others prefer to approach the study in more feelings based, meaning that the attitudes and the feelings of the people matter more than the statistical data. These different ways of thinking lead to divide the epistemology in different concepts; positivism, realism and interpretivism. (Saunders et al., 2007)

Positivism can be seen as a way to approach the study in measurable way. This mean that the researcher who approaches the study in positivism way aims to separate one's own feelings and attitudes for the facts and data. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008) Realism is

very similar to the positivism. It focuses on explaining thorough the measurable data the things that happen around us. As a contrast or even opposite to positivism and realism there is interpretivism. Interpretivism is focusing on more to the feelings, attitudes, and behaviour rather than measurable content. Interpretivism also lets the researcher to be part of the research. (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 103-107) Since the goal is to study attitudes and feelings this thesis utilizes the interpretive approach.

Ontology examines the nature of existence, and how reality is observed among the researchers (Ding et al., 2021; Saunders et al., 2007). Ontology is normally divided into two different approaches: objectivism and subjectivism. Objectivism supports the idea that the reality is external from social factors. Subjectivism on the other hand believes that the reality is created form the actions of the social factors and therefore it considers these factors part of the reality. (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 108).

Axiology relies heavily on the values of the researcher. This means that in the research world axiology determines what the researcher finds valuable and important. In short, axiology considers and examines what is good and valued in the already existing world of information and knowledge. (Biedenbach& Jacobsson 2016; Saunders et al., 2007)

After the suitable philosophy is chosen it is also important to consider how to approach the actual research. In scientific research there are two commonly used approaches that are deductive and inductive. Deductive approach builds on existing theory, while inductive approach is developing the theory with the observations made during the data collection. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008; Saunders et al., 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016).

When considering the right approach for this research neither of these above-mentioned approaches match with the goal of this thesis. Therefore, in scientific research there is a third approach that combines these two. This one is called abductive approach. Abductive approach allows the researcher to utilize theories, but it also let them to find, observe and explain those observed patterns. This way there is more room for the

research to develop and move when there is not such a strict guideline on how to proceed. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016) Therefore, this thesis will follow the abductive approach.

4.2 Research method

In every research there is its purpose and meaning. These two gives the research its direction and needed guidelines on how to proceed. (Hirsjärvi et al., 2009) Usually when executing research researcher has two options on how to collect the data, qualitative or quantitative method. In short, qualitative research method is trying to understand others perspective while quantitative method relies on things that can be measured and does not depend on attitudes of others. (Morgan 2014) In other words, it can be said that quantitative method is used when there is need for more measurable results and the qualitative method is used when there is more room and need for feelings and attitudes. Since this study aims to understand what kind of attitudes newly graduates from gen Z has towards the social media recruitment, it is only natural to choose the method where the goal is to understand other perspectives and experiences. Therefore, this research uses the qualitative method.

Different qualitative research methods can for example be different kinds of interviews, focus groups or observations. (Alamri, 2019). This study will use interviews to full fill the research questions. Interviews are divided into three different forms that are structured, semi-structured and unstructed. In structured interviews the researcher follows precisely same questions and pattern with all the interviews. In the semi-structured interviews the format allows the researcher to be more flexible with the questions. Meaning that there is more room for the discussion to emerge and some sub-questions can be asked to support the conversation. This way the interviews can give more new point of views since there is more room to have more free discussion about the topic. This way it also allows the collected data and results to have more variation and levels. Unstructured interviews on the other hand follows no specific question pattern. (Alamri, 2019) Semi-

structured interviews support best the research questions. The topic of this thesis is very much relaying on the feelings of the interviews and by conducting the semi-structured interviews there is more room to new point of views and opinions. (Galletta, 2013). Together with the interviews the goal is to find answers to the research questions and new data to support the literature reviews findings. Therefore, in this study semi-structured interviews are used.

4.3   Data collection

What data to use depends on the study. Researcher can choose to use primary or secondary data or both if needed. Empirical data collected by the researcher is called primary data. The already existing empirical data that is collected by someone else on is called the secondary data. This data collection can be for example through interviews or questionnaires. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p.81) This study will focus on collecting the data through the semi-structured interviews and with the collected results aims to answer the research questions. This study uses the primary data in data collection.

In the beginning of this thesis there were a plan to interview approximately six to eight people and after carefully done selection, in total of seven persons from gen Z were interviewed. To get as current feelings as possible all these interviewed persons are graduated during the year 2022. All the chosen persons were collected from the social media through the connections and networks the author of this thesis has. For the interviewed people there were two criteria: being gen Z, meaning that person was born in 1995-2012 and being graduated from university in 2022. Respondents got the questions before hand to prepare for the interview.

To get as truthfully data as possible all the interviews are executed anonymously to create as safe atmosphere for the interviewers as possible. Also, since everyone interviewed were Finnish the interviews were executed in Finnish to gain as natural conversation as possible. The answers were translated later by the writer of this thesis. The interviews

lasted between thirty to forty-five minutes. From these seven interviews four of them were conducted remotely via Zoom due to the fact the author and the interviews lived in different cities. However, three of the seven interviews were conducted face to face. Every interview was recorder and the permission for this was asked beforehand.

4.3.1 Sample

In total seven semi-structured interviews were conducted. Among the interviews there were in total of four females and three males. All expect one has graduated in economics and one has a degree from law. Everyone is from gen Z. To protect the identity of the interviewees only some general characteristics of them are presented in the Table 1 below.

Table 1. Information of the interviewees

Respondent	Gender	Graduated	Born year	Field of which graduated	Employment status
Interviewee 1	Female	April 2022	1998	Economics	Working full time
Interviewee 2	Female	April 2022	1997	Economics	Student
Interviewee 3	Female	September 2022	1998	Economics	Unemployed
Interviewee 4	Male	February 2022	1995	Economics	Working full time
Interviewee 5	Female	June 2022	1995	Law	Working full time
Interviewee 6	Male	July 2022	1997	Economics	Working full time
Interviewee 7	Male	April 2022	1995	Economics	Working full time

From the seven interviewees five were currently employed and one was looking for a job. One of them was already again in university and studying totally different field than economics.

4.4 Data analysis

After the data is collected it needs to be analysed. During the interviews some notes were taken but not so detailed so the writer of this thesis could focus on listen carefully the interviewees. According to Saunders et al. (2007) when recording the interviews, it allows the interviewer more time to fully concentrate and focus on what the interviewees are saying. Therefore, it is justified to record theses interviews and theses recorder interviews will be supportive element together with the notes. The recorded interviews were then transcribed entirely to avoid mistakes and misunderstandings. Transcript process gives the researcher room to fully understand and observe the answers and focus on them again with more time. Transcripts give more room to analyse and fully understand the results. Also, because of the transcript it is possible to use quotes of what the interviewee said, and this way create even more deeper analysis of the answers when everything is not just based on some notes and memory of the interviewer. All the interviews were transcripted within twenty-four hours from the interview, so the interviews were freshly in the researcher mind.

This collected data is analysed through the qualitative content analysis. The purpose of the qualitative content analysis is to analyse the overall content and meaning of that collected qualitative data. Meaning that the idea is to study and focus on the content and examine it with the intention of finding out what was said, why and how it is said and done. The qualitative content analysis can be utilized in analyzing various qualitative data. This data can be for example interviews that are transcribed, written documents or audiovisuals. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p.119) In this study the data is the interviews that are transcripted.

There are few different ways on how to execute qualitative content analysis and these are categorizing the data and interpretation of the data. One of the important part of categorizing is coding. There are different variations of coding but in short it is separating the collected data under different labels, themes, or words. After the data is categorized coding scheme is devolved where all the coded categories are. Usually, the categories are developed from the collected data as well as from the literature. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016, p.121-122) This study is no different, and the collected data from the interviews is analyzed by coding the answers in different categories and together with the literature different themes are created. During the process of creating the interview questions the writer of this thesis has divided the questions under different themes based on the literature and research questions of this research. This way the analyzing and coding the data is flexible since there are already some themes and categories formed during the discussions in the interviews.

4.5   Reliability and validity

In every research the end goal is to get as accurate and transparent results as possible. In the qualitative research evaluation concerning the accuracy and transparency should be done during the research process, not just at the end. It is good for a researcher to constantly evaluate their research process and not to leave that at the end of the study. For this there are two different aspects to focus during the whole research process: reliability and the validity of the study. (Saunders et al., 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016)

Reliability relies heavily on the consistency of the study, meaning that the study should be consisted in a way that if some other researcher would do it, they would get the same results. Since there is limited time and small resources the possibility to test the consistency with some other researchers is not possible, but this study has been made in as consistent way as possible. Meaning that the interviews were recorded and then transcripted as accurate as possible and to increase the transparency in the results there are some quotes from the interview presented. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016)

Validity on the other hand refers to that the researcher should be able to produce a valid and accurate explanation of the results and what happened in the research. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016) These explanations are also expected to be true. In their book Eriksson & Kovalainen (2016, p.305) defines this true to mean *"that your findings accurately represent the phenomenon referred to and that they are backed by evidence (i.e. they are certain)."* In short, the researcher should be able to show that the conclusion of the study is aligned with the research and its results. To make sure that the results of this study are valid there has been very careful planning of the research questions that allign well with the literature to get as valid research results as possible.

However, even though the study is executed as transparently as possible there is always room for human mistakes. According to Bengtsson (2016, p.11) these mistakes can be fatigue, errors interpretation and personal bias. To avoid these human mistakes in this study the interviews were conducted during a time that suited not only for the interviewee but also the writer of this thesis. By setting a suitable time for both of the parties the possible lack of focus because of the fatigue was tried to be avoided. The personal bias is sometimes hard to even notice but to keep that as minimum as possible the interviewer tried to keep neutrality during the interviews by not letting their own thoughts shown.

Next part of this thesis will present the result and findings of the study. These findings are analyzed and compared to the literature review of this study.

5   Findings

This chapter presents the results of the interviews, discusses about the results, and compares them to the reviewed literature. This study studies the attitudes the generation Z has towards social media recruitment. The main research question was: *What are the best practices in social media recruiting that aim to evoke the attention of new business graduates from gen Z?* This chapter is divided into four parts, based on the sub-questions of the study: what experiences generation Z has with social media recruiting, how the generation Z feels about social media recruiting, what are the benefits and challenges of social media recruiting, and what kind of social media recruiting attracts new graduates.

5.1   The experiences of the social media recruiting

At the beginning of the interviews, it was asked if the applicants have current or previous experience on social media being part of recruitment processes at any level. There was variation whether they interviewees had applied to jobs after graduation or not. One of the interviews revealed to be currently un-employed and looking for a job. What it comes to the experience of the social media recruitment the answers varied but everyone had some sort of experience. LinkedIn was mentioned in many answers.

> *I have lately applied to jobs through LinkedIn. Some of the jobs I have found straight from a specific company webpage, but mostly I find jobs from LinkedIn and apply through there. (Interviewee 2)*

> *I have two experiences with LinkedIn, one of them being that someone messaged me directly. I thought that it was really nice that with such a short message you could reply, it really decreased the threshold to ask more about the position. And another one was where I messaged the recruiter directly myself and I feel like it is sort of easy because the threshold to send that message is low and it is easier to chat there than for example in email. And also, I hate speaking on a phone, so it is nicer to speak to someone through messages. (Interviewee 3)*

Well overall LinkedIn is something where I have previously applied for jobs. There I just go through the open positions I have notifications on that alert me when a specific position with my chosen key words appears. (Interviewee 4)

From these answers it can be clearly seen that the LinkedIn as a social media channel really has a solid foot in the young graduates' job searching. As already stated in literature, LinkedIn has been seen very popular among the young professionals (Tiirikainen, 2020) These answers are just another proof of that.

5.1.1   Meaning of social media in generation Z lives

Generation Z has seen to be the technology savvy generation that uses the social media a lot and they are focused on building their personal brand there. For many of the interviewees the meaning of social media was high and their attitudes towards it were mainly positive. The generation Z can easily bond with each other's through online platforms. (Prakash Yadav & Rai 2017) The meaning of social media overall in the lives of generation Z was revealed in literature to be quite natural and they are comfortable in technology related matters as well overall communicating through social media platforms.

Well, it means quite a lot. I feel that all the current information of today's world is on social media, and I am for example that kind of person who would not read separately any news channels or anything because I find all the information in social media. (Interviewee 5)

It means a lot. I work with social media daily through marketing. And as a private person I use social media a lot and it is a huge part of my life. (Interviewee 1)

It is an important place to spend time and I am connected to my friends and with the people I know there. Plus, it is a place that I get information from, I follow the channels that I am interested in. I also get to react different things that come through my friends feed or story. (Interviewee 3)

From these above answers, it is clear to see that the importance of the social media for the generation Z is quite big. These findings support the fact that people from generation

Z are fluent in technology, and they are connected to each other via different platforms. (Prakash Yadav & Rai 2017) Like for example the interviewee 5 says, they do not even see why to check separately any news when the social media offers all in one place. Social media was seen as a good way to see what the interviewees' friends are doing and maintain different social connections. However, few of the interviewees of this study revealed that they are not sure anymore how they feel about social media in general:

> *Well currently I feel like that it (social media) is in some sort of a transition. I don't know, maybe Instagram feels like it is facing the same destiny as Facebook, that there is more random posts rather than what actually your friends are doing and I have started to think that maybe I should leave Instagram in a less use like I have already done with the Facebook. (Interviewee 4)*

> *Well, here is the issue that I do not see myself as very active user of the social media.. (Interviewee 2)*

As the interviewee 4 says, there is so many different things going on in social media that it is hard to sometimes separate what are the important things and what are just that "random" things. Like literature of this study already revealed one of the challenges of social media is the skill on how to stand out in the jungle of ads. And based on these answers the job applicants, these social media users, have also seen this and are getting frustrated with the information flood they are facing. The challenges generation Z sees in social media and recruiting through it will be covered more later in this chapter.

One person spends approximately 2,45 hours daily in social networking worldwide (Statista 2022), and the time the interviewees said to spent in social media was approximately from one hour to three hours. That is a lot of time to be exposed to different kind of social media posts and recruitment campaigns. Still, the interviewees were not worried about their daily usage of social media, and they were even pleasantly surprised of how low their screen times were. The most used social media channels among the interviewees were Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

5.1.2   The most used e-recruitment channels

E-recruitment was defined in this study as following: *"A hiring process that utilizes a variety of electronic means and technologies with the primary purpose of identifying, attracting, and selecting potential employees" (*Lee (2011, p.231) The interviews reveals that the most used e-recruitment channels were the Finnish work websites such as Duunitori.fi, Monster, Aarresaari and Valtiolle.fi but like the previous experiences of social media recruitment already revealed that LinkedIn was definitely the most used e-recruitment channel for every participants.

> *Well sometimes I go on specific company web pages, because I think that even though the companies post on Linkedin, maybe all of the jobs are not there. You can find something more from the company web site. But I am not using any other e-recruitment channels than LinkedIn and company web sites. (Interviewee 2)*

> *Well mostly I just google some jobs for some specific field and of course these web pages for open job positions that are Oikotie and Aarresaari and from there I maybe use their search engine. Or then just LinkedIn which for me is purely work-related app. (Interviewee 3)*

It was important to see from the e-recruitment point of view that even though the e-recruitment does not necessary mean utilizing social media, one of the social media channels – LinkedIn – has still been in a very active use in many of the participants lives.

5.2   Feelings towards the social media recruiting

Recruiting in social media can differ a lot depending on which channel the recruiting is done. Therefore, in the interview it was asked separately what feelings the interviewees have towards recruiting in different social media channels. The reason behind this was purely to get as good overview as possible of the feelings and attitudes the generation Z has towards social media recruitment. The questions started with the most used e-recruiting channel of the interviewees, LinkedIn.

5.2.1 Recruiting through LinkedIn

Overall, every participant said that recruiting through LinkedIn is natural and convenient. Yet one of the interviewees said that they see it to be in only use of some certain fields. This point gives a good point of view for this thesis by questioning how significantly these results would be different if the interviewees were from different fields than economics and law. The easiness of the platform and the threshold to contact someone was mentioned to be lower in LinkedIn and it was seen as a positive thing.

Well, I see that it is a really good thing that usually from the company's LinkedIn page you can see the people that work there. Sometimes you might even get a direct message from some HR person about some interesting position and trough that you get to straight know someone who is interested in you and who to contact if needed. Because usually in some normal recruitment ad there is just a phone number or email and usually the threshold is higher if you have to contact someone through calling or email. (Interviewee 6)

Many of the interviewees seemed to think that they believe that every open job of their own field is in LinkedIn, and they do not need to look anywhere else. All interviewees revealed to check open positions weekly, even though they weren't actively looking for a job. One of the reasons said to be that in LinkedIn platform it is easy for the applicant to look through some specific jobs and, they want to know what kind of places there are available. Social media recruiting is a good way to reach out the passive job applicants and LinkedIn enable this. From the total seven interviewees five were passive candidates, the ones who are not actively looking for a new job but if they see something interesting, an effective social media campaign for example, they might apply. (Doherty, 2010) Every one of these five passive candidates said that they keep their eyes open and might apply if something interesting appears.

Even though LinkedIn seemed to get massive support and compliments from the interviewees there were some things that did not get as many compliments as it could have. For some in the literature mentioned "easy apply" feature was experienced to be hard

to use and for it to really work they did not believe in it. When asked did they feel that the easy apply feature has made their life easier these few responses revealed that not:

I do not think that it is very easy. I have never applied through it, but every company still have their own portals where you have to tick all the boxes – and then there is always that "attach video or application letter if you want", which leaves me thinking that I have to attach these because how else I could separate myself from the other applicants if I have only used the easy apply. (Interviewee 1)

Maybe it is the fact that it is public profile, and you should write down every compliment you have on yourself, and I like to keep my applicant letter and CV as private and send them separately to the company. I do not feel comfortable by sharing all these to everyone. But maybe that is a feeling I only have that I do not see it as a nice thing that I would write about myself to everyone. (Interviewee 2)

Another feature that the LinkedIn offers is that from some positions you can see how many applicants have already applied for that certain position. This was also found to be stressful and increasing the pressure and doubts towards persons professional self-confidence.

Well, I see that it is a sort of good that LinkedIn is used in the recruiting because it is focusing on the professional world but sometimes, I feel like it is still very problematic. Meaning that I do not know how they get the numbers that shows the number of applicants for some open job positions. Because for me seeing that fifteen people have already applied it might subconsciously make me feel that "well now I am definitely not getting this job" (Interviewee 5)

Interviewee 5 continued that it is easier to compare yourself and your skills to each other in LinkedIn:

I have heard that there are headhunters that direct message to you through LinkedIn. I heard from my colleague that someone had contacted them, and I started wondering what is it that they have that I don't – why didn't that headhunter contact me? I then went straight to see their LinkedIn profile and then I realized that you should be very active and loud post-sharer person there to gain visibility. And I am not like that, or at least it does not come to me naturally. (Interviewee 5)

For many the pressure to be active and post something on LinkedIn seemed to be a hard thing to do and they felt uncomfortable doing it. Even though the generation Z has seen to be the ones who are not afraid to comment and to be loud on social media these seven interviews felt like there is pressure to be active in LinkedIn and it can cause anxiety. Even though the overall feelings and attitudes towards recruiting LinkedIn were mainly positive and it was seen as a natural place for companies to post open positions as well as for them as applicants look for them, pressure and comparison to each other raised to be an issue there as well.

5.2.2   Recruiting through Facebook

Next the interviewees were asked their feelings towards recruiting through Facebook. For many the platform itself was not in an active use anymore. It was mainly used as tool to be in track of different events and nothing else. What it comes to recruiting they felt like all they see are adds of some jobs but physical posts on some open positions are rare. One of the interviewees highlighted that maybe some company that is looking for their fourth or fifth worker would benefit from a Facebook recruiting and even get new employee from there. But if some bigger company is looking their next CEO maybe the Facebook is not a place for that. They felt like it is not as professional as LinkedIn is for example. Many of the interviewees also revealed that they do not have enough experience on Facebook recruiting to say anything for this specific question. But a few of them had some experience on Facebook recruiting groups through their school or they have personally joined one.

> *I have been part of this Facebook group "communication and marketing jobs" and in there are sometimes some open positions posted. (Interviewee 1)*

But what is comes to their overall feelings towards recruiting through Facebook they did not see it as effective tool and in general feel like they do not use Facebook that much.

5.2.3 Recruiting through TikTok

In social media it is easy to get lost in the information and the constant stimulus that comes through different platforms and posts makes hard for the companies as well as for the private persons to know how to separate different information from each other. (Brown, 2012) TikTok was seen to be among the interviewees a platform where the separating the important post from the entertainment was hard but at the same time it was expected that there are entertaining content and not too serious things. Many of the interviewees said that they mainly use TikTok for entertainment purposes. There were many different feelings towards recruiting through TikTok. Three out of seven interviewees did not have TikTok, though they knew the idea of the platform and were able to even mention some companies who has been doing their TikTok well.

In the literature there is a discussion about the employer branding and the importance of it. It was defined as gaining the competitive advantage among the competitors and creating high-quality experiences for the existing employers as well as for the potential ones, and the branding is so strong that the employees are happy to promote the company to others. (Martin et al., 2011; Sivertzen et al., 2013) In the literature it was also highlighted that social media plays a big role in employer branding since most of the job applicant, passive and active spent many hours a day in social media. And with social media the companies are aiming to become attractive in the eyes of the applicant. For this there is specific word, employer attractiveness. It means on how tractive the company's values and image appears to the applicants and it effects on their feelings towards applying for that company's job. (Sivertzen et al., 2013)

For the power of company attractiveness and overall employer branding was found among the answers of the interviews as well. Like already mentioned three out of four did not even have TikTok, yet from the three persons who mentioned Finnish Tax Administration two of them did not even have TikTok. What they then said about this Finnish Tax Administration was hat they have seen or heard from a friend that they are doing

funny and creative content in TikTok, and they think that that kind of content is a good example of how to build up that employer attractiveness.

> *Well, I think that it is (recruiting through TikTok) it's sort of own form of art and TikTok overall as a social media is different. But if Finnish Tax Administration has done fun content and it works, I think that if you as a company know how to use TikTok there is a point being there but if you do not know, then you should not be there. (Interviewee 3)*

> *I do not have TikTok but for marketing purposes I think that TikTok can be good. For example, if you consider the Finnish Tax Administration. How I have understood is that they have succeeded in TikTok and if they would now put some post about their open positions, I would think that it would increase the applications considerably. (Interviewee 4)*

> *Even though I do not have TikTok I have heard that the Finnish Tax Administration has very good content there. – They have very positive brand image there and I think that when thinking companies in TikTok many would say them as an example. Their actions have affected a lot of the image of how people see them as a company, and they are seen as an attractive place to work. I think that overall the importance of TikTok will grow in the future when considering how many people use it daily and how it will really benefit companies if they just know how to target the right people there. (Interviewee 6)*

From these answers It can be seen on how much they put value on the well-executed employer branding. But overall, the attitudes towards TikTok recruiting were that for a company to succeed there they should focus very carefully on who they are targeting and why. And even though they see it as an entertainment platform they are understanding the increasing need for companies to move to TikTok in oderd to keep the visibility and their brand in the applicant's mind. And for this the mentioned Finnish Tax Administration is a good example. How they have been able to make a company who is responsible for the taxation in Finland an attractive place to work is amazing and an excellent example of what as it best utilizing social media can be.

5.2.4   Recruiting through Instagram

Feelings towards recruiting through Instagram were mainly positive. When asked if the interviewees feel any sort of irritation about seeing open job adds or recruiting post during their time in Instagram, they said that it does not bother them that much. They said that when exposing themselves for so many different adds and posts daily it does not differ from any other. These feelings interviewees have goes well together with what was already said in the literature. The feelings of the social media recruiting are mostly positive since it can be compared with being like advertising the job. (Davison et al., 2011) Even though the thoughts towards recruiting through Instagram were mainly positive there were still some comments that were not so keen about it.

> *Well, it feels more natural than TikTok because when I think about TikTok I can only see someone dancing. And that I do not connect to recruiting at all, but I have same with Instagram. I do not see recruiting connected to it that much. But maybe it is more natural platform to recruit than TikTok. (Interviewee 2)*

For some of the interviewees it was hard for them to find a reason why recruiting through other social media than LinkedIn would be beneficial, and they even felt anxious about it even though every one of the seven interviewees understood the importance of companies to be in other social medias. But overall, from these four different introduced social media platforms they have been exposed to recruiting campaigns the most in Instagram. One of the key recruiting campaigns many of the interviewees mentioned was *My day* -videos that the companies post in their Instagram stories. My day -videos mean that an employee of said company introduces their workday and the company in a relaxed, fun way. The interviewees told that usually they have seen these kinds of my days concerning some trainee or graduate program whereas the person who has been part of this previous program now shares their feelings and the reasons why you should apply. It is usually done in a form of a My day -video since many of the trainees or graduate program participants has been continuing to work for that company.

> *As I was applying for a trainee program, they had my days in their Instagram where they introduced the position. There was also an insta-live info session that lasted*

about one hour and there you had a chance to ask questions regarding that position. (Interviewee 6)

I would say that the Instagram my days have brought extra spice to recruiting but usually I am not fully convinced about the position with only the videos. It is rare to find anything new there since the stories tend to be very generic for me to find anything new there. Usually I have already decided to apply there anyway, though. (Interviewee 7)

My days through Instagram have left some sort of a mark on the applicants but like these two above quotes describes that they are not as effective as they could be. So, it can be said that marketing with my days for some curtain position had no correlation with the intention of the interviewees to apply for that curtain position and they would have done that anyways.

5.2.5   Overall feelings towards social media recruiting

With regard to that the opinions varied a bit depending on how much of a social media user the interviewees were, everyone saw that it is almost a necessity in today's world to use social media as one of the recruiting channels since everyone is online.

Social media is the right media nowadays. Because if you but some open job campaign in the physical newspaper or some ad after the ten o´clock news it is not efficient. I feel like in social media recruiting the possible reach you can get with reasonable price is very good and overwhelmingly the best place when comparing to other medias. (Interviewee 4)

Well overall I see it as a positive opportunity to get visibility for open positions and the employees can easily see the open job positions because I remember when I was younger that I really had to like put effort on job applying and nowadays even though you are not actively looking for a job you see different options and may even decide to apply. (Interviewee 5)

Many of the interviewees liked the fact that the possible open job positions come to them, and they do not even have to search for them. Since the social media tend to offer

content that interest the user and because of that, those interesting job positions are easy to see.

There were also some concerns and not as positive feelings as it could be. Some were worried that how they can find the right positions and is the targeting working as good as it could. Meaning that sometimes they can get wrong fields positions in their fees and that is of course not so hoped outcome of the recruiting camping. And one of the interviews especially highlighted that since they are not so active social media users, they do not see the potential the social media recruiting can have.

I am kind of a boomer. I do not feel so comfortable thinking about recruiting through social media. But it is what it is, and it would be fool not to utilize the social media in recruiting since so many people spend time in there. So of course, you have to recruit through it and it makes sense but I am not so in in that scene and I rather focus on LinkedIn and companies own web page. (Interviewee 2)

Interestingly this certain interviewee is an active LinkedIn user, but they did not see LinkedIn as a social media. They categorized it as something different. For this specific user it was clear to separate the professional side, in this case LinkedIn, from other social media channels.

5.3   Benefits and challenges of social media recruiting

The benefits the interviewees see in social recruiting it was seen as efficient, modern, and natural way of recruiting. It was mentioned that it can offer so many new and interesting ways on how to do the recruiting. These views the interviewees had towards the recruiting through social media aligned well with what was already discussed in the literature review.   It was mentioned that companies who know how to use their social media channels are seen flexible and innovative in the eyes of the applicants. (Doherty, 2010; van Esch & Mente 2018) This was exactly how the participant of this study saw these companies who are active in their social media.

One of the interviewees wanted to share an example of an efficient recruiting done through social media. It was about their friend who found their job through an Instagram test. The whole proceed was executed in a way that first the applicant saw an ad about this open position with a title "check if you would fit in this role" and after clicking it, it opened up a test that was about to reveal would that person fit in that specific role. After the test the applicant had a chance to leave their contact information if they wanted for the company to contact then if the results are good. Then the company contacted them and through that they got the job. By this example the interviewee wanted to highlight one of the benefits social media recruiting can have, the effortless nature of applying for a job. Their friend maybe did not even realize to be applying a job because it all happened very unnatural ways, but it was still efficient way for the company to also separate the applicants easily for those who fits the role and for those who don't.

As many of the participants revealed to be passive candidates, they said that they consider it to be a huge benefit of the social recruiting that they can see open positions so easily. Also, the easiness for building employer brand and bringing the company closer to the applicants was mentioned to be one of the benefits.

> *Well for me the benefits are just that efficient way of reach people and the easiness to build the employer brand there and to be present in the channels where the people are. (Interviewee 7)*

Every one of the interviewees saw why the companies need be in social media. It was also highlighted that it is important to post in a way that fits for the channels overall feeling and that the posts represent the channel. Meaning that in a channel as a channel's way: you shouldn't post something that does not fit in the channel's content nature.

Even though there were many positive things the generation Z saw on recruiting through social media there were some challenges mentioned. It was mentioned in the benefits that the social media recruiting is seen very innovative and modern way. One of the

challenges is the understanding of which social media channels to use. Because of that some of the interviewees were concerned about companies who are not in social media. Meaning that what does it say about a company who has not yet utilizing social media efficiently enough. For example, recruiting through Facebook were mainly seen inefficient channel and one of the interviewees said that they would be concerned for a company who would recruit only through Facebook. And this concern would lead to doubts about overall of the company and are they behind in other things as well. Meaning that generation Z is not maybe a target audience who you would find in Facebook.

The importance of the companies to execute their recruitment campaign in social media all the way to the end was mentioned to be one of the challenges the generation Z has faced. Meaning that it is not just enough to post some recruiting camping and then disappear.

> *It can be challenging. It depends on a lot of the company that can they handle the whole process. Because they can get hundreds of applications. So, for the company sake it is important to have enough people handling the recruiting camping. Because it is very unpleasant if you have applied for some certain positions that sound like very nice and then you just wait for that the company will come back to you but all you get is some generic email saying that you were not chosen. And you get this email one month later. And that leaves you with just awful feeling and you are certainly not interest to apply again. – You should keep the applicants posted on how the process is going. (Interviewee 6)*

It was already highlighted in the literature that it is important for the companies to be social in social media. Like interviewee six says, after badly done recruitment, they do not feel like applying to that company again. Companies' actions in social media really matter and it leaves a certain image for the applicant and that image can be either positive or negative. (Madia, 2011)

One of the interviewees told that few years ago they applied to a well-known Finnish company's summer job. Concerning these summer jobs the company created a special Facebook group where they posted some important information on how the recruitment

process is going. First this seemed like a good idea and the interviewee said that they got so good image of that company. Until the company stopped replying or posting any information to the group. There were even some applicants posting there to ask what the situation with the recruiting was because their applications were said to be pending. No one ever replied to that question, nor did they post any updates at all. This has happened in 2019 but this interviewee still remembers this very clearly because they said that they have never felt so ignored during a recruitment process than they felt then. This example just proves what was already said in literature that companies must be social by actively comment, like, and overall interact to different posts and comments. Because with the strong company social media they can target the best candidates. (Madia, 2011) This above-mentioned example by the interviewee of this badly executed Facebook group recruiting is not something that helps to get the best candidates. It is more like getting rid of them.

> *Not so many companies maybe realize that the social media should be social, they just post a lot of material there but are not really being social. (Interviewee 1)*

Another challenge mentioned is connected to the importance of choosing the right media. What works in TikTok may not work in Instagram and like versa. They want the content to be proper for those certain channels, so it blends in well with the other content that is shown there. Meaning that the user of Instagram does not wonder why this video that would be better for TikTok is here. But at the same time, they still demand it to be personal and distinctive from the other posts, so it catches the eye. So, one of the challenges is to how create interesting enough content that evokes the attention but not that kind of content that makes the audience wonder why it is there.

> *It must be identified that what is wanted and where it should be done. (Interviewee 7)*

Last challenges and concerns in social media recruiting were regarding the privacy matter. These concerns were about being scammed, privacy related matters and the constant

comparison to others plus the increasing number of applicants because the recruitment posts are online and so many people can see them. And lastly what if all the recruitment related would be only in social media.

Well maybe in social media if someone would come for example in your Instagram direct messages asking your personal details for some open positions it would leave you feeling like maybe this should be done in somewhere else. In email for example, because it feels like it is a bit more reliable. So maybe all these privacy matters and security related things worry. And the younger users there is the less maybe they are aware of these kinds of things and can easily be fooled. (Interviewee 3)

There is the thing that ever time you see someone work related person you always go and stalk they socials or you google them by their name. So overall that you google and see what you can find, and I have tried to of course check that there is not much to find. For example, I have looked through my Facebook even though there are no secrets. (Interviewee 6)

Interviewee one said that they on the other hand don't want to work for some company who would not like this social media. By this they meant that if the company judge them by their social media posts, who they are dating or how they overall look they do not want to work in that kind of company. In that matter privacy was not worrying for them, it was more like a make it or break it from their side that if the company does not approve, they do not approve either.

These privacy related worries align well what was written in the literature. It has been studied that the applicants can be worried on how much their future or current employer can see from their social media. The recruiters can do wide background checks nowadays and even though the results should not affect their decisions, they are only humans after all. These different things they can check can for example be on what applicants have commented, liked or what profiles the applicants follow. (Melanthiou et al., 2015; Slovensky & Ross 2012) These concerns, and possibilities social media offers for recruiters were clearly seen among the interviewees as well. Interviewees reveal that they try to decrease the worrying about this matter by making a clear separation on what to post on which channels and who can see it.

I have drawn a strict line on that in some social media channels I do not post basically anything. I feel like the possibility for someone to see effects on everything and therefore I do not post anything that I would consider to be bad if it was seen in my working place. Because of this I separately post something only for my closest friends. So, in a way there is that concern on what I post or what I like and what kind of effect it has on my own personal visibility in social media and even possibly to my future employers. (Interviewee 5)

When I post something for example in Instagram it is usually very considered and if I accept someone from my work to follow me, I usually trust them that they are not judging me. Everything that ends up there is usually very considered because when I think about this in objective way, I can see it to be very current issue that so many people can see what you do online. What I have now followed from news and understood is that the higher position you have, the more people are interested of your life. So, from my perspective it is easy to keep private life separated in social media but for some it can be harder. (Interviewee 7)

Previously in this chapter it was already mentioned on how LinkedIn is creating anxiety and comparison in the interviewees, and this was only media where the interviewees felt that they needed to compare themselves to others. Of course, other medias create need to comparison but in professional way LinkedIn was the number one channel for that.

Last thing that worried the interviewees was that what if the recruitment world would fully move to the social media. Some of the interviewees were thinking that since they are not so eager to use social media, they felt like if the recruiting would happen only social media, they would not benefit from it. They still appreciated the more traditional ways of e-recruiting that in their opinion were sending the private applications and CV via some job applications portal that they found from a company's website. Even though the willingness to market yourself is almost a must in today's world not everyone wants it. In this thesis the self-marketing definition was based on the study by Manai & Holmlund (2015, p.751): *"the means by which one communicates one's abilities to a wider audience in networking situations, in applying for jobs and in making a name for oneself as a means of getting ahead in one's career."* Since some of answers the

interviewees had referred to the opposite of what it comes to the importance self-marketing it can be said that thinking that the self-marketing comes naturally for generation Z is not straight forwards as it might seem for technology generation like generation Z.

5.4 Attractive social media recruiting

To get the overall idea of what really attracts the generation Z here is presented what they require from a recruitment post in social media. More specifically what they need in that post for them to open the post and read more about it. One of the first thing that the interviewees said was that the recruitment post or an ad must be well targeted. Meaning that if they do not see why they should apply for that job or why this post came to their screen they do not bother to open it. It needs to be something to do with their career.

In this matter the importance of the employer branding arises once again. The interviewees confessed that they do not require that much from a post of some company they already know or have heard positive things. They said that from companies that are smaller and not well-known they require more. Smaller companies' recruitment posts need to be more impressive and really stood out for them to be really interested and open the post.

> *If some big company, for example the bank Nordea posts a recruitment campaign in social media it can automatically create interest because they have good reputation but if you start to think about some smaller companies that are not so well known, then the marketing gets automatically harder. (Interviewee 4)*

> *Well, I can see that if it's some bigger company it automatically interests me more than if it would be some smaller company that I do not know nothing. (Interviewee 5)*

Based on these answers, the company itself can be the reason for some recruitment post in social media to be attractive and affect the applicants decision to apply. It was

proposed in the literature as well that the job seekers who are considering different options really pay attention to the reputations and their decisions to apply can rely on that (Cable & Turban, 2003). The interviewees said that if they have heard from a friend some bad things about some specific company it does not matter how well their recruitment post is done if the reputation is ruined, they are not interested.

One other thing the interviewees emphasized was the realistic demands for that role. By this they meant that if already in the recruitment post there is a list of unrealistic demands that the company wants from their applicants, they are not interested to even open it. They appreciate a post to be clear on what they want, what it requires and what the tasks would be.

> *For me the post would need to have quite specific description of the tasks. If there is just written trainee I would not open that because what trainee? Every company has trainee positions, and it can mean so many different things. If there is some targeted thing related to my profession it would more likely get my attention. (Interviewee 2)*

> *I have seen some posts that has ridiculous list of all the different features that the huma could possibly do. Like you have to have been a cosmonaut for ten years and politic experience and so on. It should more like say that all we need is your real interest towards this position. (Interviewee 4)*

It was hard for the interviewees to specify on what is the key element for recruitment post to be attractive but another factor that many of them mentioned was the visual side of the post. They emphasized that if the company is using some generic stock photos that they have already seen in other posts it does not arise any interest. It makes the company feel like very distance and not real. The more real and authentic the posts and their picture are, the more attractive it is. It is also a huge benefit if the colours and the overall all look of the post goes well together with the company's overall brand look. Matching colours and fonts show that the company is really have been putting a though for that post and that they care. If the post is generic and the overall look is something that every other company has, it is very easy for them to just swipe it away because the

social media offers so many different posts to choose from. Especially all the passive candidates among the interviewees said that they are open for new positions, but they require all these above-mentioned things. If they need to do any extra work to find more information the small interest they might had will disappear.

If there is someone telling about in a video on how it feels to be working, there it would give more information than just some stock image with the text "welcome to work with us" The more information you get at that first glance the more attempting it is to click it open because you can expect already what is behind that link. (Interviewee 3)

The post needs to be very summarized because if I have to start to really look for that information through different webpages or they do not tell all the important information at once, I am not interested. Like at all. (Interviewee 5)

Well, some visual things are huge deal for me. If there is firm's logo it needs to be recognizable – It also needs to be inspiring but not too much but not too official either. I have seen some funny recruitment post that really stood out and woke the interest. Because if it's too same as everyone it just drowns in the mass. And if it's too positive it is not attractive. It needs to be truthful and of course the more information there is, the better. (Interviewee 6)

They also said that language needs to be attractive. If there is a lot of writing mistakes it does not give a good image of that company. Or if the company is trying to be trendy by using some slang to make that post funny, it is more like pushing the applicants away rather than making them interested. Lastly, they require there to be link for them to read more and possibly apply. If there is no link and it would mean that they should start to look for more information on their own, it immediately decreases the interest.

5.4.1 International career

In the literature the study by Dolot (2018) was introduced. The results of that study showed that from 1162 respondents of generation Z, 23% of them were considering to going abroad permanently. In this study from total of seven interviewees none of them have been working abroad. They have had some international working experience in

international company or in international teams but none of them have been physically worked abroad. Yet many of them were interested in working abroad on some period of time in the future. Four out of the seven interviewees said that it would be a fun experience to see how working abroad would differ from a domestic work life. In order to see would the interviewees utilize the social media when applying abroad they were asked if they would now apply, where would they look for the international careers. Almost everyone said that they would first go to LinkedIn since there is very easy to filter the job markets and search for a job from specific countries. A few of them would also utilize Facebook to search some groups of Finnish people in some country. And maybe post there if someone knows open positions or overall read about how the life in that specific country is.

A few of the interviews have been participating the student exchange and they said that during that time they felt like it was easier to apply abroad. The reason or this was that they were already away from their home country so the threshold to stay away was lower. Now they have home and a whole life in Finland which makes it harder to possibly leave.

> *I have applied a few places abroad through LinkedIn. When I was an exchange student, it felt more natural to stay abroad when comparing now when I am safely in my home country. Now it feels harder to leave if that kind of chance would come. But I would take that chance anyways. And also, I have search international jobs straight from the companies' web pages. (Interviewee 2)*

Overall, the feelings towards international career were positive but the interviewees were not so keen to move abroad. They though that you can gain international experience already in Finland by just working in an international company that has an office in Finland and for many of them that seemed to be enough.

In the next part main findings are discussed. Lastly the managerial implications, the limitations and suggestions for the future research.

6 Conclusion

In this part the main findings are discussed, and the theoretical contributions and managerial implications of the study are presented. Lastly, the limitations of this study are presented and suggestions for the future research will be given.

This study aimed to answer to its research question: *What are the best practices in social media recruiting that aim to evoke the attention of new business graduates from gen Z?* To answer this question, there were several sub-questions that refined this study:

- What experiences generation Z has with social media recruiting?
- How the generation Z feels about social media recruiting?
- What are the benefits and challenges of social media recruiting?
- What kind of social media recruiting attracts new graduates?

To answer the research question, seven semi-structured interviews were conducted. Due to the geographic limitations four out of seven interviews were conducted via Zoom. Generation Z was defined in this study to be people born in 1995 to 2012 (Pichler et al., 2021).

6.1 Main findings

Based on the results, one of the key challenges of the recruitment through social media is how to see the important recruitment post from the constant information flood that the social media offers. The findings support the literature where it was stated that the companies need to know how to stand out from the other ads and posts to get the best applicants. (Böhmová & Chudán, 2018) If the post is not interesting enough the generation Z finds it hard to get excited about it. Social media recruitment should be well planned, and it should show the applicant that the effort has been made.

The most used social media channel for recruitment was LinkedIn. Every interviewee agreed on that if they need to search for a job, they will search it from LinkedIn. Even

the passive candidates said that they check LinkedIn jobs at least once a week. Overall, among the interviewees there were five passive candidates that said that they think that social media recruitment is good for them. They think that it is good that they have a chance to see open job positions by just being on their phone. Social media recruitment has made the reaching the passive candidates easier when it is executed well, and it aligns with the company's online recruitment campaign. (Doherty, 2010)

Naturally, when being the first generation that has been fully exposed to the revolution of technology and the Internet, importance of the social media increases. (Prakash Yadav & Rai 2017) Overall, the findings reveal that social media is very important to the generation Z. They use it in almost everything. It is a place to be in touch with friends and family, place to post about different life events as well as search for a job. Social media is also a place to search information and inspiration. However, even though there were mainly positive attitudes towards the social media some of the interviewees felt like the importance of it in their life is in some sort of transition. The fact that everything is online can create anxiousness and cause unwanted comparison. It was revealed that now when the working life has moved mostly to the social media as well it causes more pressure and comparison in the interviewees. They said that even though LinkedIn is good channel to search for a job, it also creates anxiousness because you can see in real time where everyone is working and what kind of positions there is available and then compare it to your own situation.

Overall, the best practices on what works best for generation Z in social media recruitment it can be said that the simplicity, true full content, and reputation are the key elements. The interviewees emphasized that for a company to stand out they want the posts to be well written and informatic enough to get the interest. All interviewees agreed that depending on the channels, the recruitment style needs to be adjusted to fit in that channels style. Facebook was seen as old channel and if some company is using only Facebook for their social media recruitment, they would not want to apply for that company because they would be worried that they are behind in other things as well.

From this Facebook example it can be said that according to the findings of this study the generation Z requires companies to pay attention where to post those recruitment posts. According to the interviewees social media nowadays you can behind and use some channels that are already not in the favour of your target group, in this case the generation Z. If companies do not consider carefully which social media channels to use, they are more likely to lose their target audience. According to Aggerholm & Andersen (2018) it is important for a company to implement their social media recruitment strategy to their overall communication strategy. These findings support this statement as the interviews also said that they expect the companies be social in social media.

Another key feature that evokes the interest of the generation Z is the reputation of the company. According to Martin et al. (2014) employer branding affects the reputation of the whole company. The findings are aligned with this statement. The interviewees said that for them to show interested in social media recruitment posts it is easier if the company is well known and its reputation is good. They said that some smaller companies to gain interest can be harder since they do not have that strong employer brand. Also, if a friend has recommended some company to be good or like versa someone has said bad things about some specific company, it affects to the feeling as well. When the employer brand is strong and positive employees are happy to promote the company to others. (Martin et al., 2011; Sivertzen et al., 2013)

In conclusion this research provided results on what are the best practises of getting the interest of the generation Z in the social media recruitment. These practices were the importance of clear communication, transparency, reputation of the company and the importance to know which channel to use. As a technology generation they know what they want and, they know when a social media camping is well done. They require companies to be up-to-date and really put effort on their social media practises in recruitment. As it best when creating effective campaign, the companies can get the attention of active as well as passive candidates of the generation Z.

6.2 Theoretical contributions

This study provides an analysis of the social media usage of the generation Z. It offers perspective on the existing literature of the generation Z and their attitudes towards the social media and overall technology skills. According to the results, the generation Z is aware of how they want their social media recruitment post to be, and they certainly are not interested in every recruitment posts they see, they want quality, and they are willing to demand it. Also, an interesting finding was that even though in many sources the generation Z was identified to be the generation that cannot live without technology these findings shows that this is not the case. Many of the participants said that they are starting to need more time offline rather than online and this puts the growing social media recruitment world in interesting position. At the same time, people demand everything to be online but also, they need more time offline.

Although the social media recruitment has been studied before there is not much research that focuses on the applicant's point of view. Especially the generation Z that is currently the generation that is entering the working life. Therefore, this study increases the understanding of the needs the new technology orientated working generation has towards the social media recruitment. This study can give companies a good insight on where to focus on when planning a recruitment campaign in social media.

6.3 Managerial implications

When looking at the findings of this study, many suggestions can be proposed. At first companies should really put effort on the social media recruitment posts and be social in social media. Especially in the early stages of the campaign the generation Z expects interaction, communication, and transparency during the process. Also, the companies must focus on that the post they post in social media are well aligned with the overall trend with that certain campaign. If the company knows that their values do not fit in

TikTok, they don't have to go there just because everyone else is. Generation Z values accurate and well-planned posts more than being in every possible social media channel there is.

Also, the campaigns in social media must be well planned and there should be all the needed information about that position because if there is not all the information, the generation Z most likely will not be interested. They appreciate that they can see that the companies have put time and effort to the posts and are willing to give truthfully picture of the position as well as from the company culture. Also, it is important for the companies to realize that being personal is good. By putting personal touch in the posts that shows the company's culture and what is it to work there, you are more likely to be able to get the interest of the new graduate of the generation Z.

6.4 Limitations of the study

Like in every research this also have some limitations. The first limitation is about the sample size. Even though the participants had different kind of experiences and overall views of this topic these findings cannot be generalized. In order to get more generalized data there should have been more than seven participants in the interview. The second limitation is concerning the experiences of the different kind of social media recruitment. Although almost everyone had some sort of experience about the recruitment through social media, these experiences were mainly about LinkedIn. From the other social media channels the participants had more like opinions not a concrete experience of being part of a recruitment campaign. Not having so many different experiences from different social media channels leaves room to have more wider sample with more experiences and opinions. The last limitation is the nationality of the sample group. There were only Finnish graduates and for that reason these results could differ considerably if executed in some different county with different culture to Finland. In the next section the suggestions for the future research is presented.

6.5 Suggestion for the future research

This final section of this study will focus and discuss about the suggestions for the future research. There are several different options on how the future research could be done. Firstly, in order to generalize the results of this study a bigger sample is needed. Therefore the future research could be done on the same topic but with a much more bigger sample size. In order to get bigger sample, the study would need more time and someone with more connections, or it could be done as a quantitative study, for example survey. The future research could be also conducted with different nationalities in order to see the differences between countries. Finnish graduates' opinions and point of views can differ form a student from Spain or in the United States.

Since the popularity of the social media recruitment is constantly increasing it would be interesting in the future to study the generation Z but a few years later. Then the people born after 2000 from the generation Z could participate as new graduates. They are after all even more used to have technology around and it would be interesting to see their opinions and whether they are different form the oldest participants of the generation Z.

Lastly, as the study introduced the interviewees had tendency to compare themselves to each other and they revealed that the social media causes them some insecurities it would be interesting to study more on that. Meaning that in the future study it could be more focused on the pressure the social media is creating in the recruitment world and how the generation Z is handling it. Since the usage of the social media is constantly increasing, research could focus even more on the challenges of it. This would be interesting and beneficial for the future employers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview questions

Background questions

    1. What year you are born?

    2. Could you please tell when and to what profession did you graduate?

    3. Are you currently employed?

    4. After your graduation have you applied for a job?

        o What kind of recruitment process there was?

    5. Do you have any experience of social media recruiting being part of your previous recruitment processes?

Social media

    6. Could you please describe what social media means to you?

    7. How much approximately you spend online?

    8. What social media channels you use the most?

    9. For what you use these channels?

E-recruitment

    10. When looking for a job where do you look for it?

    11. What is your most used e-recruitment channel? And why?

Social media recruitment

    12. What do you think about recruiting through LinkedIn?

    13. What do you think about recruiting through Facebook?

    14. What do you think about recruiting through TikTok?

    15. What do you think about recruiting through Instagram?

    16. Overall, what you think about using social media in recruitment?

    17. In your opinion what are the benefits of social media recruitment?

    18. Then what about the challenges?

    19. What elements you require in recruitment post for you to open it?

    20. Could you describe what kind of social media posts you consider to be professional? Are there some specific channels?

21. Does something about social media recruitment worry you?

International career

22. Have you worked abroad?

    o Were there any elements of social media in the process?

23. Would you like to work abroad?

24. Where do you look for international careers?

25. Is there anything else you would like to add to this topic?