Tampere University of Applied Sciences

Impact of LinkedIn on Recruiters in Finland

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ABSTRACT

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SUSHMA BIDARKOTE KESHAVAMURTHY:
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Recruitment is a crucial process in an organization. It is important for recruiters to use the right tools and techniques to identify and attract the right talent into the organizations. In order to attract a large pool of candidates, both from active and passive pool, recruiters now opt for social media as a recruitment channel over traditional methods. LinkedIn is one such commonly used channel to perform various recruitment activities. It has proved to be a cost effective and an efficient tool. This research investigates the impact of LinkedIn on recruiters in Finland. The research tries to identify how successfully recruiters search for the right candidates and hire them using LinkedIn.

Quantitative analysis, through a survey, was conducted for 19 recruiters based in Finland who use LinkedIn to perform most of their recruitment activities. The findings indicated that irrespective of the size of the companies, recruiters in Finland used LinkedIn and believed it to be an effective tool. Recruiters in Finland preferred LinkedIn over other social media channels. Recruiters received applications and searched for potential candidates using LinkedIn. Majority of recruiters hired their employees through LinkedIn.

As already known, LinkedIn profiles are created by the users themselves, hence there could be some hidden risks such as authenticity and privacy issues that could not be ignored. However, recruiters in Finland did not encounter any negative or privacy issues by using LinkedIn.

Recruiters have been successful in using LinkedIn to perform most of their recruitment activities and agreed it to be an effective recruitment tool. This study indicates that LinkedIn has a major impact on recruiters in Finland.

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Key words: recruitment, LinkedIn, Finland, research

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

TAMK	Tampere University of Applied Sciences
HRM	Human Resource Management
HR	Human Resource
SNS	Social Networking sites
CV	Curriculum Vitae
AI	Artificial Intelligence
TED	Technology, Entertainment, Design

1 INTRODUCTION

Until recent years Human Resource Management (HRM) was just considered as a supporting unit in any organization that mainly worked in providing employee services. But the current trend and digitalization expects Human Resource Management to be more innovative, operate in a more digital way, use more applications and tools to deliver better solutions. Infact, this new trend is a value addition and source of generating business to any organization.

Attracting the talents and retaining them has become one of the main issues in the human resource management units of many organizations (Schlechter, Hung & Bussin, 2014). The traditional recruitment methods are no longer sufficient in attracting and retaining them. They usually seem to have limited access to the active talent pool and generally are not able to attract the talented resources present in passive and semi passive candidate pools (Dutta, 2014). To handle the issues of attracting and retaining talents and in the quest of right candidates, recruiters now opt for different channels to hire the talented resources. An example of such channel is the outbreak of social media such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook etc (Hunt, 2014; Phillips & Gully, 2012; Tyagi, 2012).

LinkedIn, a social network for professionals, launched in 2003, and currently has more than 300 million members worldwide (Omnioreagency, 2019). It is the most commonly used social networking tool and recruitment tool used by the professionals. Not only does this help the job seekers, but also the recruiters to search the right talent as per the requirement of the organization.

The objective of this thesis paper is to understand the impact of social media, especially LinkedIn on the recruitment process in Finland. The impact is discussed from the recruiter's point of view. This research is aimed to identify how successful recruiters are in Finland with searching, selecting and hiring resources through LinkedIn.

1.1 Thesis aim, objective, purpose and research questions

With the current business trends and the amount of competition, there lies a huge requirement to hire qualified resources. Companies now need to understand which channels to focus on in order to attract the best talents. The use of Social media in recruitment process is growing exponentially.

The purpose of this research is to understand the impact of LinkedIn on recruiters for performing recruitment process in Finland. This research tries to identify how successful recruiters are in Finland by using LinkedIn for their recruitment activities such as Searching the candidates, contacting the candidates, approaching candidates based on the application received through LinkedIn, to know and understand the previous nature of work of the candidates etc. Additionally, the research tries to investigate further, what would be the future of LinkedIn in Finland. And has there been any threats or other negative issues by hiring resources through LinkedIn

The aim of this research is to know the impact of using LinkedIn to search and hire talented candidates by companies in Finland. To give a Recruiters perspective on LinkedIn. To Understand how successful recruiters have been in Hiring resources using LinkedIn, how successful has LinkedIn been in giving talented pool of resources to a company. To know if LinkedIn is an efficient channel for recruitment. To understand the future of Recruitment using LinkedIn and to also evaluate if there could be any threats and other negative issues associated with using LinkedIn to hire resources.

To investigate further the research tries to know if LinkedIn has become an essential part of recruitment in Finland when compared to other social media channels such as Facebook and twitter. Irrespective of the size of the company, do most of the recruiters use LinkedIn as a recruitment tool. Is LinkedIn believed to be a cost effective and powerful recruitment tool in Finland. Does LinkedIn provide Quality hires for any organization. Does LinkedIn have a future for itself as a recruiting tool in Finland. Is LinkedIn believed to be the best place to hire and does it provide the right target pool.

The research tries to get an insight on recruiters who use LinkedIn for recruitment activities in Finland. Based on this, a survey was conducted with a group of recruiters in Finland who use LinkedIn as a recruitment tool. The questionnaire of the Survey is added in Appendix 1.

However, the questions were aimed at identifying if the recruiters in Finland used any form of social media channels for recruitment. How much of LinkedIn is used for recruitment activity irrespective of the size of the company in Finland. What other purposes do recruiters use LinkedIn for, other than searching for candidates and knowing their previous nature of work. Does LinkedIn provide the right talent pool of resources and will it prove to be an effective and cost-efficient tool in Finland. I also would like to know the insights of the recruiters towards LinkedIn and its future in Finland. To know if there were any privacy issues by hiring candidates through LinkedIn.

This thesis is structured and divided into five parts:
Part 1: Introduction
Part 2: Concepts and theories
Part 3: Methodology and an empirical study of impact of LinkedIn as a recruitment tool in Finland.
Part 4: Discussion of the research
Part 5: Conclusion, a summary of the research

2 CONCEPTS and THEORIES

2.1 Human resource management

Human Resources Management is known to have many different definitions which have been also transformed from time to time. Storey (Storey, 1995) defines HRM as following:

"HRM is a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic development of a highly committed and capable workforce, using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques."

The practices involved in HRM can be defined as follows: communication, ethics, training, solving conflicts, employee motivation, record keeping, recruitment, negotiation, strategic planning, morale building and legal knowledge. (Salem Press, 2014)

2.1.1 Functions of HRM

Based on the definition of HRM above, it is almost clear that basic functions of HRM include Planning, Organizing, Directing, Recruiting, Training and development, Job design and Performance appraisal. However, as per Decenzo and Robbins (2009) HRM includes four basic operative functions such as:

1) Staffing,

2) Training and development,

3) Motivation and

4) maintenance.

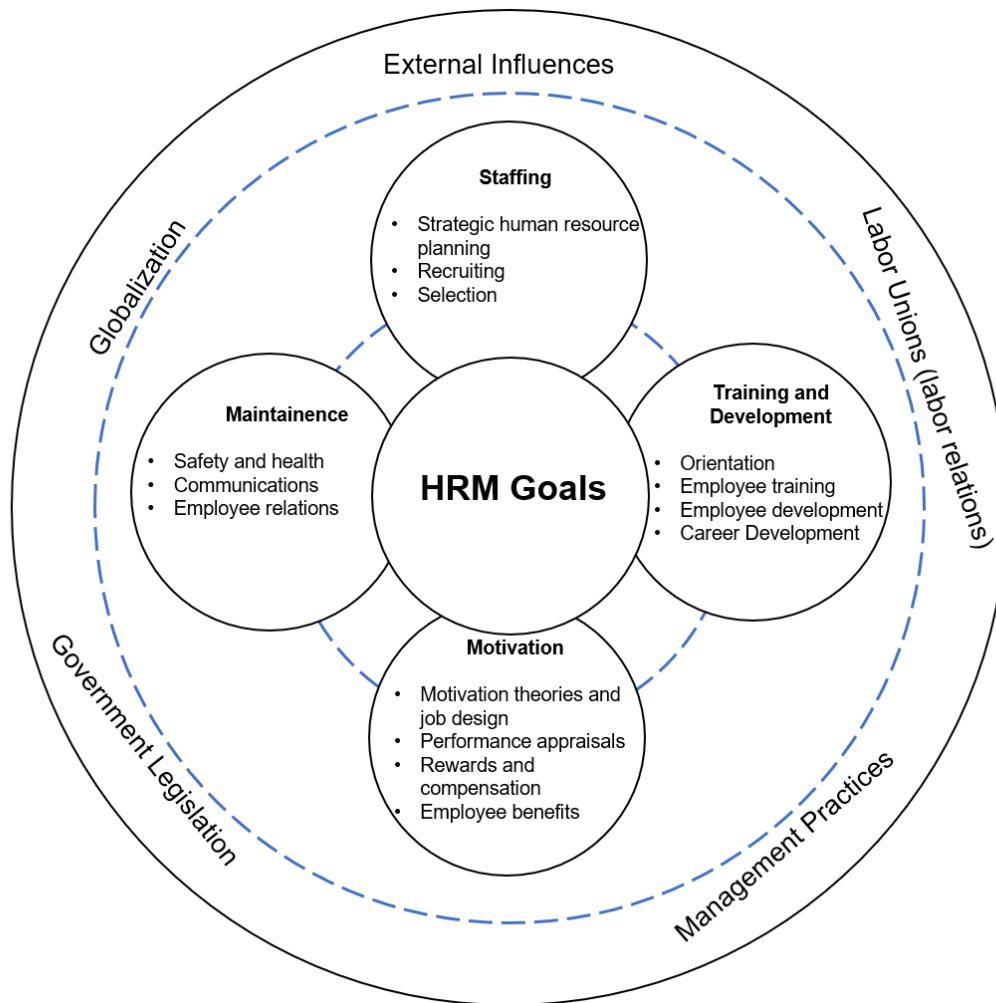All of these are represented in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1. Human Resource Management: Primary Activities. Adopted from De-Cenzo & Robbins (2009, 34)

The basic operative functions of HRM defined above is a part of any organization irrespective of their size and hierarchy. In other words, every line manager will be responsible for the implementation of the above activities.

2.1.2 Recruitment

Recruitment is an essential entity of HRM process. It can be defined as "the process of searching the right talent and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organization" (Sinha & Thaly, 2013, p. 142). Every recruitment is crucial for the company. A wrong hire may cost double the persons annual salary to the company. (Armstrong, 2006; Houran, 2017). Having the right talent employed will turn to be an asset to any company. Many studies have also proved that companies

with the right talent tend to be more productive, profitable and show better per-formance in general (Armstrong, 2006; Kehinde, 2012; Michaels, Haneld-Jones & Axelrod, 2001; Nagpal, 2013). Organizations now need to attract and retain these talents in order to succeed.

"War for talent" is a concept that has been in the HRM industry from 1998 (Cham-bers, Foulon, Hand eld-Jones, Hanking & Michaels, 1998). In the current situa-tion, finding the right talented resources is becoming a significant challenge. Terms such as 'competency deficit' describes to be one of the reasons why or-ganizations are facing the challenges of employee attraction (Herman, Olivio & Gioia, 2003).

Hence, the aim of recruitment is to attract the right and talented resources into an organization (Ready et al., 2008; Thunnissen, 2016). In general, the role of re-cruitment is to identify, attract and retain the most competent employees for an organization's current and future talent needs (Armstrong, 2006; Thunnissen, 2016).

2.1.3 Recruitment Process

Recruitment is a process of finding the right talent, influencing the talented re-sources to apply for the job opportunities and convincing them to accept the job offered (Phillips & Gully, 2012). According to Breaugh and Starke (2000, 408), this process can be divided into five stages as shown in Figure 2, below.

Recruitment objectives → Strategy development → Recruitment activities → Interveining variables → Recruitment results
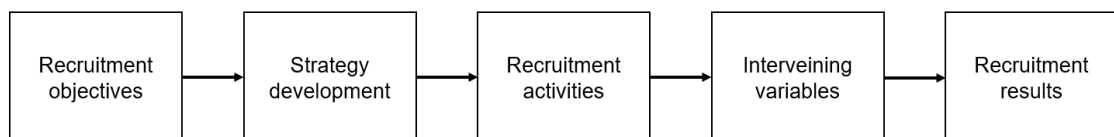
FIGURE 2. Five stages of recruitment process. Adopted from Breaugh & Starke (2000,408)

The first step is to determine the recruitment objectives, this in turn acts as a base for development of recruitment strategy. Along with this pre-hire, post-hire out-comes are also classified (Breaugh and Strake, 2000, 409). Developing Strategy is mostly derived by answering the questions below:

- Who should be recruited?
- Where to recruit?
- When to recruit?
- What recruitment sources should be used?
- What message is to be communicated?
- Who should carry out the recruitment process?

Budget limitations is also advised to be considered at this stage (Breaugh et al. 2008, 48). After the development of successful recruitment strategy, certain specific recruitment activities can be launched. This usually includes the recruiters, recruitment sources and the messages to be communicated. Combination of various recruitment activities leads to a successful recruitment result. The Intervening variables phase helps recruiters to identify, understand and gauge the relationships between recruitment activities and its outcomes (Breaugh and Strake, 2000, 412).

2.1.4 Types of Recruitment

Sources for recruitment ideally refers to the ways in which potential candidates are made aware of the job openings. (Breaugh 2008, 57). As already mentioned, recruitment is not only finding the right candidate for the job opening, but also influencing these candidates to apply for the job and convincing them to accept the job offer (Phillips & Gully, 2012). This can be divided into 2 types (Breaugh, 2008; Hughes & Rog, 2008; Stahl et al., 2010; P. Subba Rao, 2009):

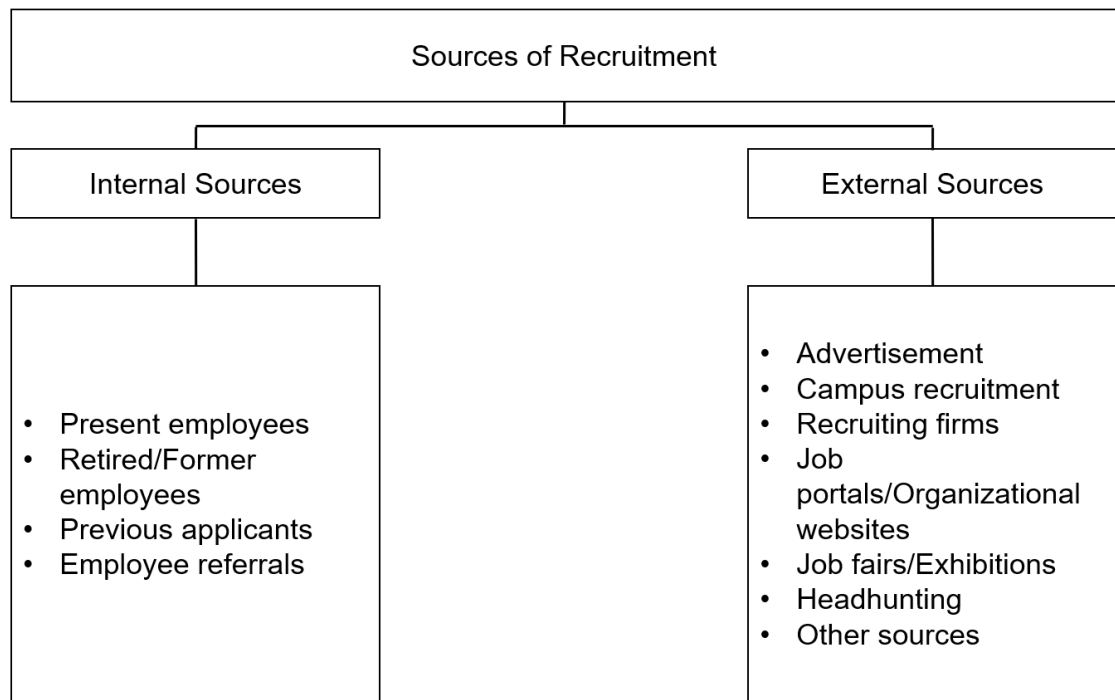- Internal Recruitment
- External Recruitment

FIGURE 3. Recruitment Sources. Adopted from P. Subba Rao (2009,100)

Internal Recruitment

Internal recruitment refers to recruitment of suitable candidates who are currently working in the same organization under different positions. Internal recruitment finds in sources in current employees of an organization, employee referrals, former employees and previous applicants. Internal recruitment finds its prospective candidates for job openings among the employees who are already under the payroll of an organization (Sarma 2008, 90). Employee referrals is one of the oldest and the most effective used sources of recruitment, which is believed to save upto 70% of the costs for the company (Rashmi 2010, 36). It can be believed that internal recruitment is one of the best ways to recruit employees, and it has the following advantages (Patel and Rana 2007, 41):

- Employees are already immersed in the company culture and management already knows about the employee's performance.
- Increased motivation for employees since their potential is recognized and offered promotions
- Enhanced resource utilization
- Increases company loyalty.

- Quicker and cost effective. E.g., Employees training and orientation costs are saved

Although there are many advantages of internal recruitment mentioned above, it can also be believed that internal recruitment comes with its own set of disadvantages too. There is a limited pool of candidates especially in the case of small sized company. Gaining a new perspective is a challenge (Rashmi 2010, 26).

External Recruitment

External recruitment refers to candidates being hired from outside of the company. Organizations may recruit from outside of the company when the desired special skill is not available within the company (Pynes, 2013). External recruitment is expensive and time consuming. There are few external sources that are briefly discussed below:

- **Advertisement**: This is one of the oldest and the most frequently used sources for external recruitment. Previously advertisements were issued in newspapers, magazines, television and radios. Now, the trend is of online advertisements. According to Arthur (2005, 35), a strategy can be used as follows: First, is to capture the job hunter's attention. Second, is to hold the job hunter's attention. And third, is to design the ad by considering factors such as title, placement of logo and graphics, right information and right language (Arthur 2005, 33-36, Rashmi 2010, 26-28)

- **Campus Recruitment**: Inexperienced pool of candidates can be found in the universities. And such candidates can be hired and trained to match organizational skills (Rao 2009, 102, Rashmi 2010, 34)

- **Recruiting firms**: These are the firms that are exclusive for recruitment process and these tend to have the most skilled labours (Patel and Rana 2007, 42). These firms develop a long-term relationship with the organizations and hence must be carefully researched before choosing the right agency/firm (Arthur 2005, 38-39)

- **Job portals**: With the increase in the usage of internet, job portals are now becoming very common source of recruitment. This attracts more applicants and forms to be an effective source of recruitment (Rashmi 2010, 28-29)

- **Job fairs/Recruitment events**: These events help recruiters to identify and interview a few candidates over a short period of time. Such jobs fairs are not just useful for recruitment, but also helps in building network for both the organizations and the job seekers (Arthur 2005, 41; Rashmi 2010, 35)

With the emerging new trends of recruitment, the best method of recruitment remains debatable (Houran, 2017). However, identifying and attracting right potential candidates can become a nightmare (Sinha and Thaly, 2013).

2.2 Selection

Selection is a process of identifying and choosing the most suitable candidate for the requirement. The main objective of the selection process is to decide who would be the most suitable for the role and who would turn out to be an asset to the company. This process of hiring the right candidate is an expensive one and hence it is required to be sure that the candidate has the right skills and qualifications (Rao 2009, 111; Sarma 2008, 96)

2.2.1 Selection Process

The selection process is different for different companies and it mostly depends on the organizational needs. According to DeCenzo and Robbins (2009, 157), the selection process has the following steps:

a. **Initial Screening**: Initial screening of candidates is important to understand the skills matching the needs and to eliminate inappropriate candidates. In addition, the candidates also receive specific job expectations that help them to analyze if they would be a good fit for the role.

b.   **<u>Completing the application form</u>**: An application form is to be filled with some brief basic information about the candidate along with employment profile which helps the company know him/her better. There are also various tests that help in measuring the candidate's abilities, skills, competences etc.

c.   **<u>Comprehensive Interview</u>**: This phase helps to obtain in depth information about the candidate. To understand and evaluate factors such as motivation, work under high pressure, attitude etc.

d.   **<u>Conditional Job offer</u>**: Offer made by the company after all the above steps are cleared. Usually this offer is made permanent after medical, physical and background verification

e.   **<u>Background Verification</u>**: This is a reference check, to verify if the information provided by the candidates is accurate. The HR team asks for the candidate's permission before any background verification

f.   **<u>Medical/Physical Examination</u>**: This is usually done to understand if the candidate is fit to work

After all the above steps are cleared, the permanent offer letter is released to the eligible candidates. This offer is released by the HR manager or the manager of the department where the candidate is going to work in future (De Cenzo 2009, 156-168)

2.3 Social Networking Sites

Social Networking Sites (SNS) is rightly defined by Boyd and Ellison as follows:

> *"web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and*

> *traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system."*

The main goal of social networking sites is to connect, to build networks and information sharing. Social networking sites has a user profile and a list of connections where information, opinions are shared. User profile includes basic information such as age, location, interest etc (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Users have the control of about the privacy settings what information will be made public. Social networking sites have a huge potential to reach large number of people. Hence these sites are used as recruitment tool.

2.3.1 Social media in recruitment

The raise of Internet and its numerous capabilities, along with massive growth of social media has led to new and different approaches of sourcing. Some of which are Internet Job boards (an Internet site that allows both candidates and companies to upload their CV and vacancies respectively), Internet data mining (Using approaches such as Boolean algorithm to get employee information), web crawlers (programmes that search for employee information), flip searching (identifying candidates linked to specific internet job sites) and social networking (using connections and networks on social media) such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter (Nikolaou, 2014; Parez, Silva, Harvey & Bosco, 2013; Sinha & Thaly, 2013)

Amongst the many options of Internet job sites and social media, choosing the right sourcing tool becomes the fundamental decision in recruitment process (Sinha & Thaly, 2013). In order to attract highly talented resources, it is wise to embrace new sourcing tools offered by internet and social media (Dutta, 2014)

Social Media in general can be defined as web-based conversation amongst people who share information, knowledge and opinions online. Amongst the various channels, many researchers have proved that Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are mainly used as sourcing process (Caers & Castelyns, 2011; Doherty, 2010; Dutta, 2014). Now, the use of social media for recruitment is gaining momentum (Dutta, 2014). Social Networking sites such as LinkedIn allows companies to post

their advertisements in their websites to attract large number of potential candidates. The job seekers on the other hand, also have easy access to apply for those posted jobs. With the raise of social media channels, the recruiters can now recruit potential candidates at a very minimal cost and these channels are also believed to be time efficient (Armstrong, 2006)

Also, using social networking sites for recruiting provides an easy access to large pool of candidates who can in turn be reached at any given time. Access to such active pool of candidates is at an increasingly lower cost (Broughton, Foley, Ledermaier & Cox, 2013; Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Khullar et al., 2017). Hence It is not surprising that recruiters and organizations now use social media channels as an effective and efficient recruitment tool.

2.4 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the biggest professional business social networking site which was officially launched in 2003. The main idea behind LinkedIn is to provide a social networking platform for recruiters and job seekers to support the recruitment activity. Their vision is to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce. Their motto is to provide a social media channel for working professionals to increase their productivity and make them more successful, which in turn makes the organizations more profitable. Thus, enabling the economic growth worldwide. LinkedIn has more than 646 million users worldwide. (LinkedIn, 2019). This proves that the LinkedIn's growth has been massive over the previous years.

As of July 2019, most of LinkedIn's members are from the United States, 160 million users. And the second largest being India, with around 59 million users (Statista, 2018). Finland has around 1 million users. LinkedIn popularity is also increasing in Finland and it is one of the most important recruitment channels (Kinsta, 2019).

2.4.1 LinkedIn over other social media channels

As per one of the many researches, it is believed that 93% of recruiters use social media channels for recruitment. Now amongst the various channels of social media, the bigger question lies as to which is the best and mostly used for recruitment. LinkedIn receives more views with respect to jobs listings. LinkedIn is the most preferred social media channel when it comes to recruitment. Over 95% of recruiters who use social media in their recruitment activity indicated that they use LinkedIn compared to 66% utilising Facebook and 52% utilising Twitter (Jobvite, 2014). Recruiters who use LinkedIn frequently have seen more success in the use of LinkedIn and hence use it more often (Caers & Castelyns, 2011; Ollington, Gibb, Harcourt & Doherty, 2013).

One of the main reasons for more usage of LinkedIn among other social networking sites is that LinkedIn relates to public as almost exclusively for building professional relationships, which is not the case with Facebook and Twitter, which are more general social media (Zide et al., 2014). LinkedIn is mostly used for posting job advertisements, searching potential candidates, and contacting them, whereas, Facebook and Twitter are used more to show the employer brand and to post advertisements (Jobvite, 2014).

Recruiters mostly have a preference towards LinkedIn rather than Facebook for recruitment process as they consider LinkedIn to be more effective than Facebook (Nikolaou, 2014). Recruiters believe that LinkedIn gives the best insight into candidates' employment profile, education, years of experience (Zide et al., 2014). The Jobvite annual Social Recruiting Survey is one of the best surveys of its kind. This survey in 2014 was conducted online by 1855 human resources professionals, from across several industries. Around, 79% of recruiters indicated that they hired a candidate through LinkedIn, 26% indicated that they did this through Facebook and only 14% indicated that they hired a candidate through Twitter (Jobvite, 2014).

2.4.2 LinkedIn in Finland

Finland is a Nordic country in the northern Europe. Its capital city is Helsinki. Finland has around 1 million LinkedIn users. LinkedIn's popularity is also increasing in Finland and it is one of the most important recruitment channels (Kinsta, 2019). To be precise, in Finland there are 1,005,984 registered LinkedIn accounts. This means that 37.5% of the working population has a LinkedIn account. Finland ranks number 16 in the relative usage over 44 European countries. Amongst the 37.5% LinkedIn users in Finland, 6.8% of the people works in Information Technology and Services. 2.8% works in Hospital & Health Care and 2.3% has a job in Government Administration. Over the past year, the number of LinkedIn users in Finland has grown with 11.4%. If Finland continues to grow at this speed, they will have 1,109,180 members by August 2020. In the last 3 months, 69 LinkedIn accounts were created per day in Finland. In Finland, the biggest employers on LinkedIn are Nokia, University of Helsinki and OP Financial group (Next business academy, 2019.)

2.5 Issues of recruiting from LinkedIn

Along with the substantial increase in the use of social media for recruitment, one should also consider its drawbacks as well. (Doherty, 2010). For example, when candidates upload their own profiles it is likely that they can add some false information such as a few positive terms to describe themselves, his/her past accomplishments or current status (Houran, 2017). This can be described as attempts to artificially enhance one's profile through little white lies. Recruitment through LinkedIn includes candidate identification and screening through social media, this can also lead to wrong use of information (Melanthiou, Pavlou & Constantinou, 2015).

The present-day social media offers various sourcing opportunities to recruiters, resulting in an enhanced recruitment process within companies, but this does not form a complete recruitment process. Rather, it is merely part of the company's recruitment process. (Dutta, 2014). Recruitment process is now being transformed from a more sequential process to a parallel process. In other words, social media tools are not used to directly replace traditional sourcing tools, but

rather to assist them to give recruiters access to the highly active candidate pool (Doherty, 2010).

3 Methodology

This chapter mainly describes the methods used for this research, along with a discussion of previous thesis on similar topics. Quantitative research is used as a primary data. Literature and theories as secondary data. Quantitative research proves to be a more scientific method which is considered to provide more accurate and undisputable data. Quantitative research was chosen here as a method for the surveys, since quantitative research gives definite, often numerical responses, which is easy to analyse and have less scope for imagination (Creswell 2009, 4).

3.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative research was conducted to understand the impact of social media, specifically LinkedIn on recruiters in Finland. Target group for this research are mainly recruiters from all over Finland. In chapter 2, there is an in-depth discussion about how challenging it is for recruiters to attract right talents from active and inactive pool of candidates. Traditional recruitment techniques such as Internal recruitment techniques and external recruitment techniques discussed in section 2.1.4 shows the limited access these techniques have towards active and inactive talent pool. Hence social media and different channels of social media are gaining momentum. These social media channels are good sources for recruitment (both internal and external sources). Trends of recruitment is shifting towards social media. There are various channels of social media used for recruitment as described in section 2.3. But the focus is on LinkedIn as LinkedIn's popularity among the job seekers and recruiters is increasing tremendously. Section 2.4 discusses more about how and why LinkedIn is used over other social media channels. This is again being proved in this current research. The research results and analysis will be presented in the chapters 4 and 5, respectively in this thesis.

LinkedIn is not only used to provide active and passive pool of candidates, but candidates chosen amongst the LinkedIn's pool of talented sources are also selected and further hired. Section 2.2 discusses about the importance of Selection

of candidates. Selection is a process of identifying and choosing the most suitable candidate for the requirement. This process of hiring the right candidate is an expensive one and hence it is required to make sure that the candidate has the right skills and qualifications (Rao 2009, 111; Sarma 2008, 96). There are various steps for the selection of candidates. And LinkedIn also helps in handling various steps of selection process such as Initial screening, completion of application forms and background verification (discussed in detail in section 2.2.1). These processes of selection can be easily done using LinkedIn.

However, one cannot ignore the potential drawbacks of using LinkedIn as a recruitment tool for performing various recruitment activities (Doherty, 2010). Sometimes, candidates can upgrade their own profiles with little white lies to enhance their application. As recruitment through LinkedIn includes candidate identification and screening through social media, this can also lead to wrong use of certain information (Melanthiou, Pavlou & Constantinou, 2015).

The recruitment process as discussed in section 2.1.3 includes various steps such as recruitment objective, strategy development, recruitment activities, Intervening variables and recruitment results (Breaugh and Starke, 2000). The present-day social media offers various opportunities to recruiters, resulting in an enhanced recruitment process within companies, but this does not form a complete recruitment process. Rather, it is merely part of the company's recruitment process. (Dutta, 2014).

3.2 Survey

The survey for this thesis had a questionnaire to be answered with about 12 questions for recruiters in Finland. The qualification criteria to answer this questionnaire is that recruiters must be based in Finland and these recruiters need to use LinkedIn for recruitment activities. The questionnaire was created in such a way that it brought out the impact of LinkedIn on recruiters.

- How recruiters use LinkedIn to search and hire talented candidates by companies in Finland.
- To give a recruiter's perspective on LinkedIn.
- How effective and useful LinkedIn is over other social media channels.

- To understand the different recruitment process and selection processes LinkedIn is used for by recruiters in Finland.

- To Understand how successful recruiters have been in hiring resources using LinkedIn.

- How successful has LinkedIn been in giving talented pool of resources (internal and external sources) to a company.

- To know if LinkedIn is an efficient channel for recruitment.

- To understand the future of recruitment using social media channels, specifically LinkedIn and to also evaluate if there could be any threats associated with using LinkedIn.

The questionnaire has been listed in Appendix A. This questionnaire was shared in various Finland recruiter's group on Facebook and LinkedIn. Also, personal email requests were sent to known recruiters to fill the survey forms. The survey received about 19 responses.

The questions in the survey included checkboxes, multiple choice and open-ended questions. Most of the questions were mandatory, with a few optional questions.

3.2.1 Demographics of survey

According to the demographics of the survey conducted, 63.2% recruiters in Finland use LinkedIn for recruitment irrespective of the size of the company. As in companies with a head count in the range of 5 to 100 000 use Social media channels for recruitment. Around 91.7% recruiters feel LinkedIn is an efficient channel of recruitment. Around 66.7% of recruiters choose applicants from LinkedIn. Around 75% of applicants through LinkedIn are hired. Around 87.5% recruiters approach candidates on LinkedIn. Around 66.7% of approached candidates in LinkedIn are hired. LinkedIn is believed to have an excellent future in the field of recruitment. And there has been no Privacy or any other negative issues by using LinkedIn channel for recruitment process in Finland.

Theme 1: Impact of LinkedIn on recruiters

In this theme, the thesis tried to analyse the importance of LinkedIn over different social media channels on recruiters as discussed in section 2.4.1. In this section the following is discussed: how easy LinkedIn is to use when compared to other social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter. Irrespective of the size of the company, how recruiters all over Finland still depend on social media for recruitment. The survey results are as follows: 63.2% recruiters in Finland use LinkedIn for recruitment, 15.8% recruiters use Facebook, 5.3% recruiters use both LinkedIn and Facebook, 15.7% recruiters in Finland use Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn for recruitment. The pictorial representation of the same is shown in Figure 4. Also, the head count of companies from which the recruiters have answered the survey ranges from 5 to 100 000. Also, 91.7% recruiters have mentioned LinkedIn is a very effective channel for recruitment. And 8.3% recruiters are not sure and feel it may be an efficient channel. The pictorial representation of the same in shown in Figure 5. In the section 2.1.4, there is a discussion of many recruitment activities which recruiters can perform by using LinkedIn. However, among the major recruitment activities, recruiters mainly use LinkedIn for the following recruitment activities: search candidates, to know their previous nature of work, gathering other information about potential candidates. 75% of recruiters use LinkedIn to search for candidates and to know their previous nature of work, whereas 33.3% use it also to gather other information about potential candidates. The pictorial representation of mentioning the same information regarding the purposes is shown in Figure 6.
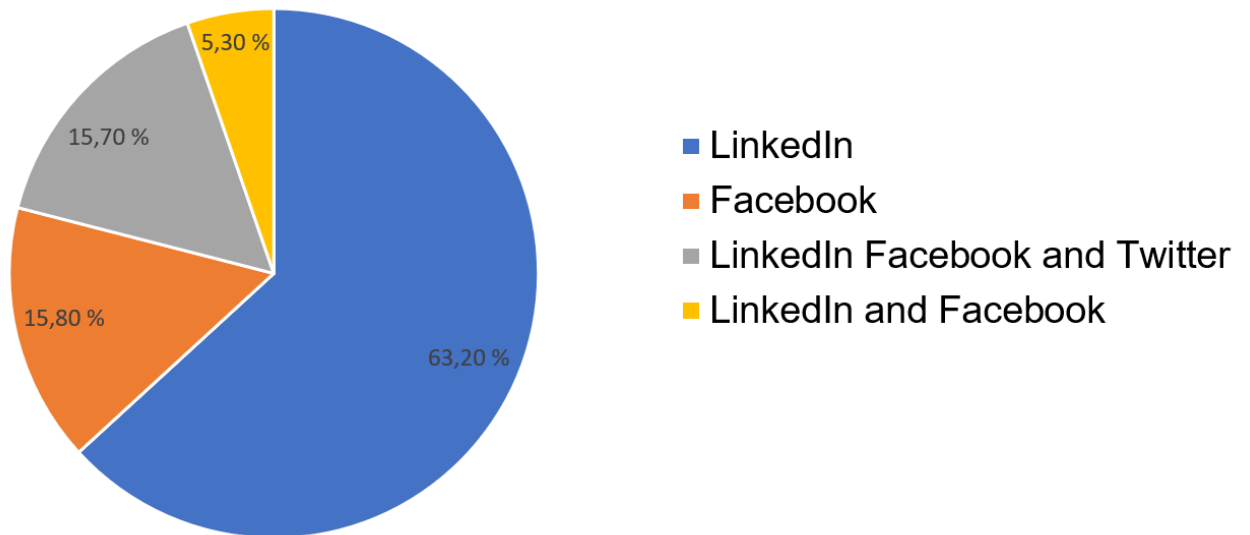
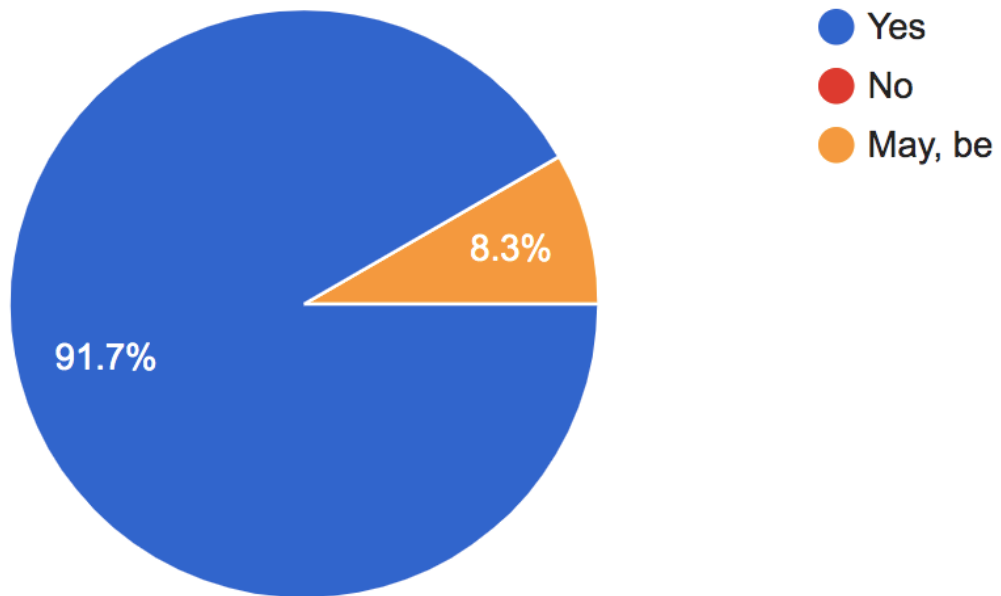FIGURE 4. Usage of different social media channels in Finland

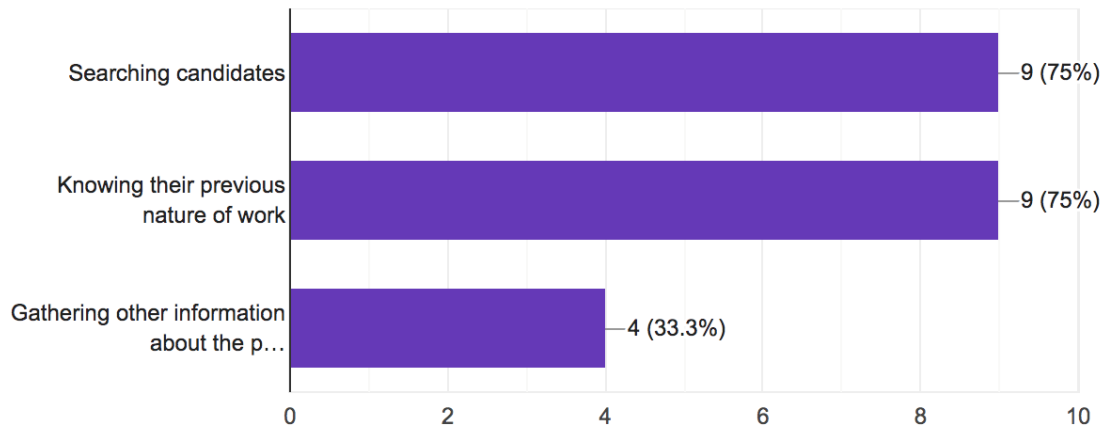FIGURE 5. LinkedIn as an efficient channel for recruitment

FIGURE 6. Purposes LinkedIn is used more often

Theme 2: Application received from LinkedIn

In this theme, the thesis analyses the success rate of employment using applications received from LinkedIn. Sections 2.1.3 and 2.1.4, discusses about the recruitment activities, especially of searching candidates from active and passive pool. These candidates can be easily found as LinkedIn's registered users/jobseekers. Recruiters receive many applications through LinkedIn. 66.7% recruiters select applications received from LinkedIn. And 33.3% recruiters do not mostly select applications from LinkedIn. The pictorial representation of the same is shown in Figure 7. In Section 2.2.1, the thesis discusses about the selection and Interview processes and LinkedIn is used to perform many of the recruitment activities such as background verification, skill set matching etc. Out of the selected applications from LinkedIn, 62.5% potential applicants are also called for further interviews. 25% of applicants are sometimes called for the interviews and 12.5% of applications are most of the times called for further interviews. The same pictorial representation is defined in Figure 8. And 75% of such interviewed candidates are being hired by the organizations. 25% of interviewed candidates are sometimes hired by the organizations. The pictorial graph of the same is shown in Figure 9.
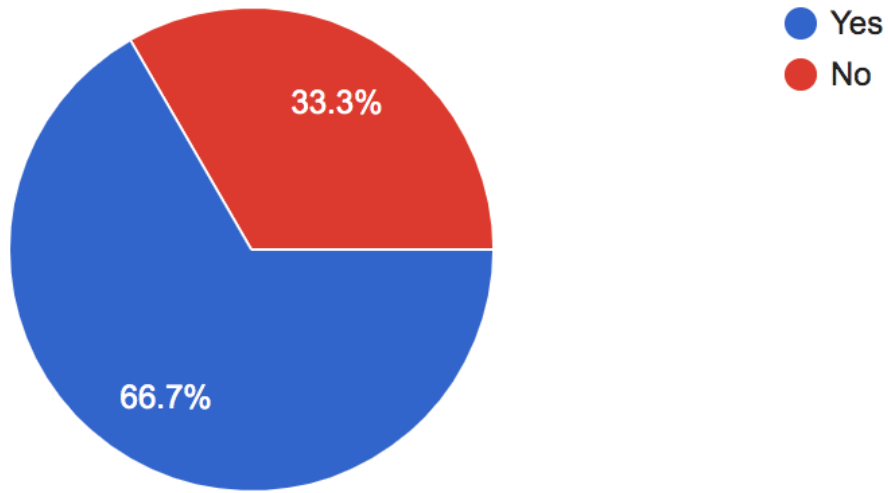
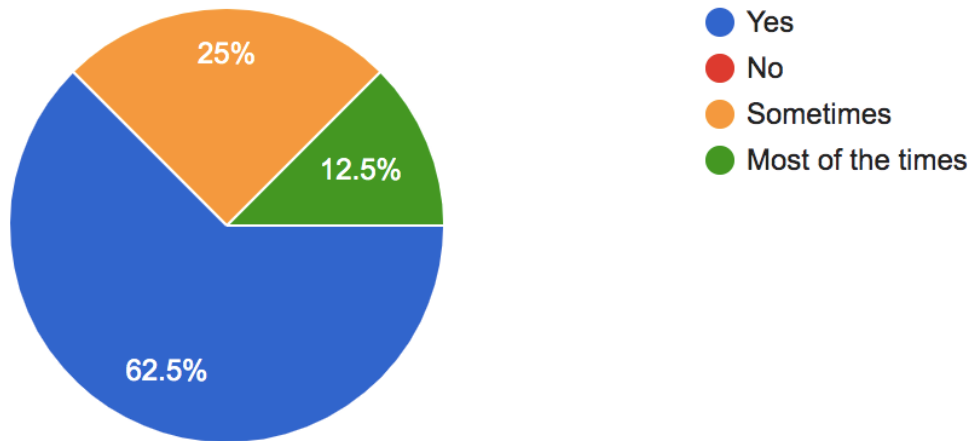FIGURE 7. Select applications received from LinkedIn

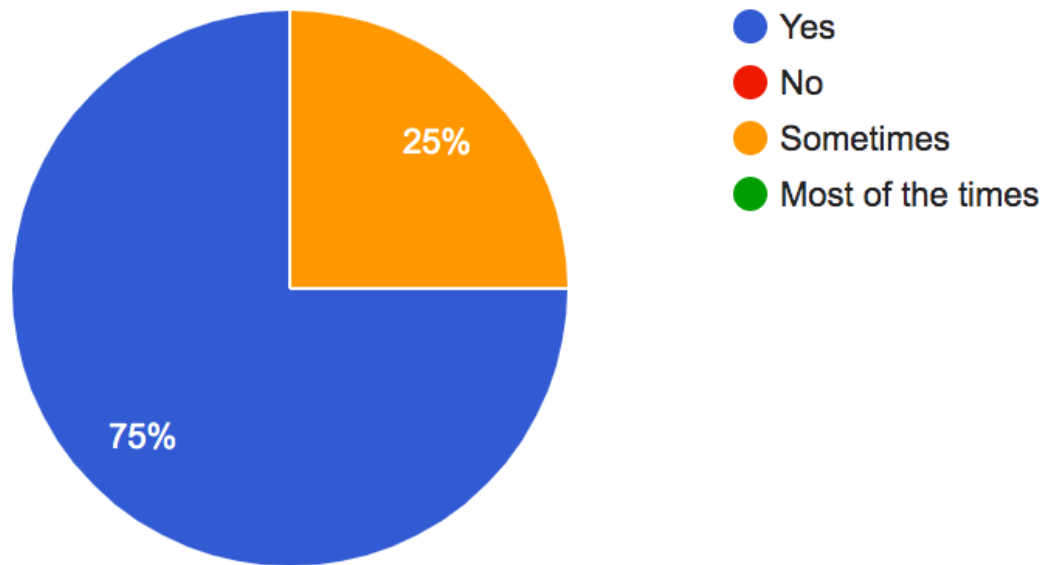FIGURE 8. Selected applicants called for further interviews

FIGURE 9. Interviewed applicants from LinkedIn been hired

Theme 3: Candidates approached through LinkedIn

In this theme, the thesis tries to analyze the success rate of employment when recruiters search and approach the potential candidates through LinkedIn. These candidates can be easily found as LinkedIn's registered users/jobseekers. Recruiters can match the required skillset to search for candidates. 87.5% of recruiters search and approach potential candidates from the active talent pool by LinkedIn whereas 12.5% recruiters do not search and approach potential candidates through LinkedIn. The pictorial representation of the same is shown in Figure 10. Out of those approached candidates, 71.4% of approached candidates are also called for further interviews, whereas 14.3% approached candidates are not called for further interviews and 14.3% of approached candidates are sometimes called for further interviews. The pictorial graph of same is shown in Figure 11. And 66.7% of such interviewed candidates are been hired by the organizations. And 16.7% interviewed candidates are sometimes and most of the times been hired by the organizations. The pictorial representation of the same is shown in Figure 12.
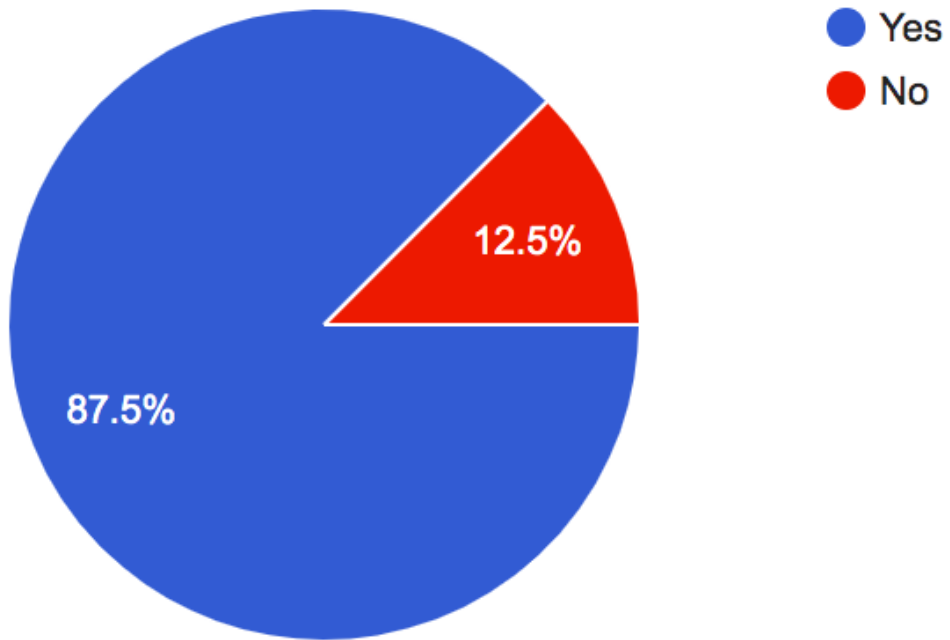
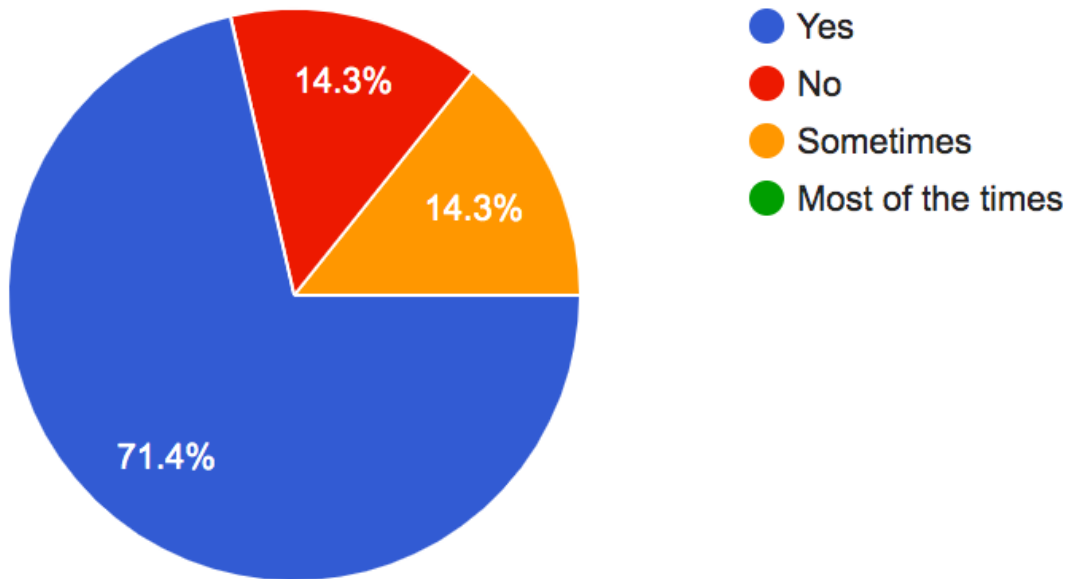FIGURE 10. Approach potential candidates in LinkedIn

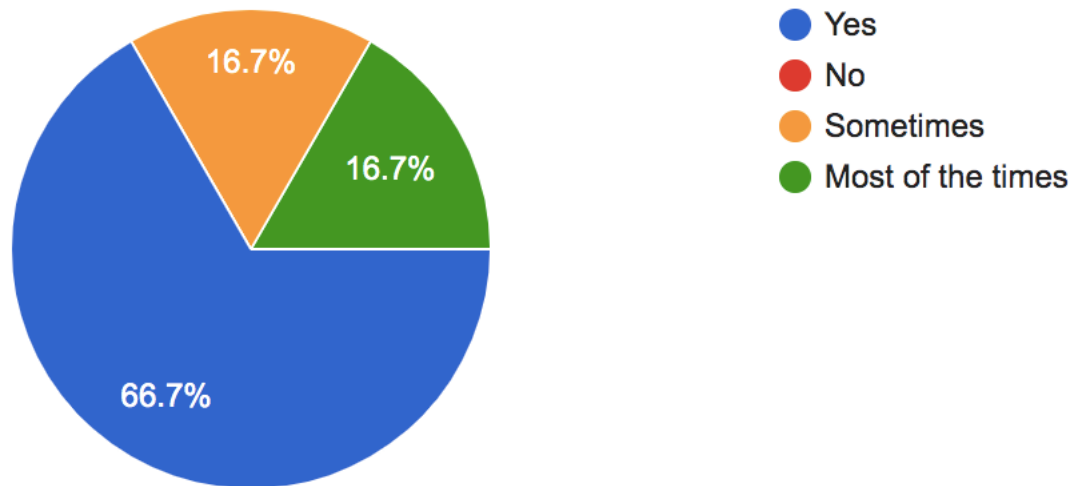FIGURE 11. Approached candidates called for further interviews

FIGURE 12. Approached Interview candidates been hired

Theme 4: Any case of Privacy and Negative issue

In this theme, the thesis tries to analyze the risks involved by hiring employees through LinkedIn. In Section 2.5, there has been an in-depth analysis of the potential risks LinkedIn could offer recruiters and in turn to the company. Since LinkedIn is a known social media channel. The profile information is created by the users themselves. To prove the authenticity of such information is quite difficult. When candidates upload their own profiles, it is likely that they can add some false information such as a few positive terms to describe themselves, his/her past accomplishments or current status (Houran, 2017). But luckily, as per the survey results there has been no such negative/privacy issue reported by using LinkedIn in Finland. Since it was an open-ended question, majority of the recruiters have mentioned that there has not been any such threats or any negative issues by using LinkedIn so far.

Theme 5: Future of LinkedIn

In this theme, the thesis tries to analyze the future of LinkedIn. Section 2.4.2 discuses about the importance of LinkedIn and recruiters in Finland are using LinkedIn actively. Since it was an open-ended question, majority of the recruiters have mentioned that LinkedIn is a best channel and is believed to have an excellent future. LinkedIn has a future as it is the best place to hire candidates, more

and more people in all sectors are aware of it and are using it. LinkedIn helps to reach the right target pool. As the need for sourcing and talent acquisition is ever growing, LinkedIn is also believed to grow in Finland. There are recruiters who also believe that LinkedIn cannot be useful in all sectors of work for example AI driven services. However, it can still be useful to screen potential candidates. Also, recruiters have mentioned the threat with respect to maintaining the level and amount of professional discourse and not letting it be turned into direct sales or any general social media channel, as this would make the professional recruiters turn away from the channel entirely.

4   DISCUSSION

The findings of this research confirm that the use of social media for recruitment activities in Finland is high among recruiters. The findings of this research are same when compared to other researches which show that importance of social media in recruitment increases with the increase in number of users in social media (Dutta, 2014; Khullar & Pandey, 2014). The research findings also state that use of LinkedIn is more than use of Facebook and Twitter in Finland. Another important reason as to why there is a minimal use of Facebook for recruitment can be because of its image as a communication tool for private information sharing than a business tool. Also, Facebook and twitter are not as effective as LinkedIn for recruitment in Finland. Clearly, LinkedIn is the most popular recruitment tool used by recruiters in Finland

This research also found that Irrespective of the size of the companies in Finland, be it a small size, mid-size or a large firm, all the recruiters use LinkedIn for recruitment activities. LinkedIn is so simple that even a small sized company can easily use it for its recruitment activity. It is cost effective and powerful tool. Big companies have their own databases from their own websites. However, their database would still be small when compared to LinkedIn. Hence irrespective of the size of the firm, recruiters believe LinkedIn is an efficient and effective recruitment tool

The findings also confirm that 'LinkedIn recruiting tools focus on finding candidates and networking online. As defined as a recruitment tool, LinkedIn helps in most of the recruitment activities. The major tasks performed by using this recruitment tool is searching candidates, knowing their previous nature of work, getting other information about the potential candidate. The research findings indicate that majority of the recruiters use LinkedIn for searching potential candidates along with understanding their previous nature of work. Although, there are many other activities that be done on LinkedIn such as information sharing, knowledge sharing etc. LinkedIn is mostly used by recruiters for searching potential candidates by understanding their previous type of work, and contacting them, whereas, Facebook and Twitter are used more to show the employer brand and

to post advertisements (Jobvite, 2014). Also, LinkedIn provides an easy access to large pool of candidates who can in turn be reached at any given time. Access to such active pool of candidates is at an increasingly lower cost (Broughton, Foley, Ledermaier & Cox, 2013; Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Khullar et al., 2017). Hence It is believed that recruiters now use LinkedIn as an effective and efficient recruitment tool.

The findings also confirm that recruiters receive many applications or CV's from LinkedIn. Potential applicants from those received applications are called for the next stages of interview. And most of the times, suitable candidates are hired by the company. Once the recruiters post the job ad in LinkedIn, many job aspirants apply for those jobs. And recruiters receive many applications. Based on the applications received recruiters, breakdown on how well the applicant matches with the job description. Now they review the applicants profile information. They carefully gauge to find applicants information on how suitable the applicant is for the given job description along with the previous nature of work. The previous nature of work plays a crucial role to further chose the applicant. Once the applicants are shortlisted, they will be called for further stages of interviews. If the interview and other steps of recruitment are successful, then those candidates are hired by the company

Searching and approaching potential candidates in LinkedIn – The findings confirm that not only recruiters receive applications from LinkedIn. Also, suitable profiles are searched for by recruiters in LinkedIn based on the keywords. And potential candidates are reached out by recruiters. Further, those approached candidates are called for next stages of interviews. If the interview and other steps of recruitment are successful, then those candidates are hired by the company. Previously recruiters searched for candidates on their own database, but now they use LinkedIn as their new tool to search for potential candidates.

Most of the recruiters consider LinkedIn as a major sourcing tool. LinkedIn can be regarded as the best consistent source of quality candidates online. Keyword searching is the most common way for searching right candidates. Keywords can be skillset, certifications and accomplishments. Along with that there are ways also such as searching through contacts and searching contacts of contacts etc.

Recruiters can also search potential candidates and approach them from several groups and company profiles in LinkedIn. Recruiters read the recommendations mentioned in the user's profile to understand the candidates better, along with checking their network list, finding similar people and alumni group. Once recruiters identify the right skilled candidates for the defined job description, they reach out to candidates and take it further to other stages of recruitment

The research findings indicate that most of the LinkedIn applicants are hired by the companies. It is believed that quality hires are possible with LinkedIn. Irrespective of whether those candidates had applied for jobs advertised in LinkedIn or searched by the recruiters on LinkedIn. In turn it can be stated that LinkedIn provides highly skilled talent pool for the job opportunity. About 70% of the total global workforce is made up of passive talents who are not actively job seeking, whereas 30% are active job seekers. 87% of such active and passive job seekers are open for new opportunities. They tend to look for career opportunities, a better compensation, professional development and better work life balance. Over 75% of people changed their careers in LinkedIn. Candidates from LinkedIn are proved to be high in demand and above average hires (Business LinkedIn, 2015)

It can be said that recruitment process in LinkedIn is becoming more of a modern 'spray and pray' approach. Recruiters 'spray' their job requirement through LinkedIn's job posting and key word searching, and job seekers in turn 'spray' their CVs through LinkedIn in the direction of recruiters, with both parties 'praying' for a positive outcome. The whole process is now easier and more cost effective than traditional way of recruitment.

As per this research findings, majority of the recruiters believe LinkedIn has an amazing future for itself as a recruiting tool in Finland. Since it was an open-ended question, all the answers received indicate that LinkedIn has a future as it is the best place to hire candidates, more and more people in all sectors are aware of it and are using it. LinkedIn helps to reach the right target pool. As, the need for sourcing and talent acquisition is ever growing, LinkedIn is also believed to grow in Finland. There are recruiters who also believe that LinkedIn cannot be useful in all sectors of work for example AI driven services. However, it can still be useful to screen potential candidates.

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional networking platform. It is a powerful tool for both businesses and professionals. As and when LinkedIn makes certain changes or updates, the users are also adapting to it (Forbes, Aug 2019). LinkedIn has proved to be a major staple of daily professional life. It is essential for recruiters and HR professionals, to understand where they hang out. It has become the place for people to connect with other professionals, as well as a place to help candidates find their dream job.

LinkedIn has many aspects that will allow it to remain as the number one recruiting tool in future. Few of the aspects are discussed here: LinkedIn provides a high active and passive candidate pool for recruiters. The number of users keep increasing every day, hence the talent pool. It is easy to search and compare profiles using LinkedIn. It is also a referral friendly tool. The profile information is believed to be accurate most of the times.

According to Forbes (August 2019), the future of LinkedIn is predicted to be as follows: Although LinkedIn is a worldwide platform, the future is going local by developing LinkedIn local, where it is easier to find talent with certain radius of your location. AI is believed to analyze the LinkedIn profiles in future. As LinkedIn is becoming more and more popular and essential for job seekers, it may transform into a pay-to-play service, where connection requests are based on fees and only premium users can connect. LinkedIn is also a platform for sharing content and even using hashtags. This may help recruiters and jobseekers to highlight the expertise required. Soon there can also be an online couch to help job seekers crank the interview process. The future of LinkedIn is that it can replace emails and act as a communication tool as well. Information and knowledge sharing will continue and reach next level where employees share great tips, TED talks and other YouTube videos that are useful and effective.

According to this thesis, there has been no negative or any privacy issues reported by hiring employees through LinkedIn. Hence it can be concluded that the quality of the hiring through LinkedIn is good in Finland. With so many advancements in LinkedIn and the current growing trends, one must never ignore the negative side of the coin. Usually candidate profiles are created by themselves in

LinkedIn. Hence there could be a possibility of adding some false information such as some positive terms to describe themselves etc. This is nothing but an attempt to artificially enhance one's profile through little white lies.

As per the research findings, there has been no negative or privacy issues reported while recruiting using LinkedIn in Finland. The issues can be based on reliability, authenticity of the candidate information, legal and other ethical issues. These issues if occurred needs to be handled by the recruiters. Recruiters need to know how truthful, is the information described in the candidate's profile. A basic check of candidate's profile information against his/her resume can be done by the recruiters themselves. Another consideration is that how useful will be the valid information on the profile.

Legal and ethical issues can occur while using LinkedIn for recruitment. Recruiters can make conscious or unconscious choices with respect to age, race, sex, religion, nationality etc. This can be termed as discrimination. And such discrimination is prohibited. Also, continuous changes and updates in technologies can lead to more and more issues for recruitment using LinkedIn (Richard N. Landers & Gordon B. Schmidt, 2016). All these issues can be avoided if recruiters consider only work-related information while making recruitment decisions. Also screening the candidate's information closely is also considered an important aspect for recruiters to avoid negative and other privacy issues.

This thesis is a case study of research in Finland. Although there are various research papers on the impact of LinkedIn, importance of LinkedIn over other social media channels, recruitment through LinkedIn etc, there has been no previous study of LinkedIn from the recruiter's point of view in Finland.

4.1 Limitations to this study and future recommendations

This research is limited to recruiters in Finland alone. Moreover, because of the relatively small size of recruiters, the findings of this study cannot be applied to all recruiters in Finland. The aim of this study was to understand the impact and usage of LinkedIn as a recruitment tool among recruiters in Finland. And it did

not focus on detail recruitment process using LinkedIn. This research only gives the recruiters point of view on LinkedIn and not the jobseeker's considerations.

The current research has scope and provides recommendation for future research such as recruitment in Finland using LinkedIn as a recruitment tool among various different sectors of companies, for example recruitment firms, corporate sectors, paper industries etc. This study was focused on individual recruiters from different companies, there is a scope to perform research on group of recruiters from different companies. Also, there can be further research on whether recruiters are trained or to be trained to use the tool efficiently. Also, the same study can be performed to a larger group of recruiters in Finland in order to validate the conclusions of this study.

5 Conclusion

The aim of this research is to investigate the impact of LinkedIn on recruiters in Finland, specifically on the identifying how successful recruiters are with searching, selecting and hiring resources using LinkedIn. The findings confirm that LinkedIn has become an essential part of recruitment in Finland when compared to other social media channels such as Facebook and twitter. Irrespective of the size of the company, most of the recruiters use LinkedIn as a recruitment tool. Hence LinkedIn is believed to be a cost effective and powerful recruitment tool.

Research confirms that Although, there are many other activities that be done on LinkedIn such as information sharing, knowledge sharing etc. LinkedIn is mostly used by recruiters for searching potential candidates by understanding their previous type of work and contacting them. Recruiters receive many applications for job posted on LinkedIn as well as search for right candidates and approach them at any given time. The selected candidates in both the cases above are called for further rounds of interview. And majority of the time suitable candidates are hired by companies. It can be concluded that Quality hires are possible with LinkedIn.

This study also proves that LinkedIn has an amazing future for itself as a recruiting tool in Finland. LinkedIn is believed to be the best place to hire candidates and for reaching the right target pool. Also, this study confirms that there are no negative or any other privacy issues occurred by using LinkedIn for recruitment in Finland.

The study makes an important contribution towards understanding how effective recruitment process is after using the LinkedIn channel. By conforming the importance of LinkedIn in Finland, the study confirms the increasing role of LinkedIn among recruiters within Finland. It suggests that in order to continue to have an effective recruitment process in Finland, recruiters and job seekers need to have a LinkedIn account and continue to use it extensively.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Impact of LinkedIn on Recruiters in Finland (Survey)

Attracting the talents and retaining them has become one of the main issues in the talent management units of many organizations. The traditional recruitment methods usually seem to have limited access to the active talent pool. In order to handle the issues of attracting and retaining talents and in the search of right candidates, recruiters now opt for different channels to hire the talented resources. One such channel is LinkedIn.

In my master's thesis, I try to bring the recruiters point of view towards the usage of LinkedIn. So, I hereby request you to kindly answer the following questionnaire Note: The information collected from this questionnaire is mainly used only for thesis. The information collected will not be shared with any public/private enterprises and Institutes.

1. Do you use Social media channels for recruitment? If yes, what are the different social media channels you use?
2. What is the size of the company?
3. Do you feel LinkedIn is an efficient channel for recruitment?
4. What purposes do you use LinkedIn for?
5. Among all the channels (e.g., Indeed.com, Internal reference etc) of recruitment, do you select applications received from LinkedIn?
6. Do you call LinkedIn applicants for Interviews?
7. Have those Interviewed candidates further been employed?
8. Among all the channels of recruitment, do you approach potential candidates through LinkedIn?
9. Do you call approached candidates for Interviews?
10. Have those Interviewed candidates further been employed?
11. Do you feel there is future for Recruitment using LinkedIn in Finland? If yes, kindly state some insights with an example situation?
12. Has there been any Privacy or other negative issues by using LinkedIn channel for recruitment process? If yes, Kindly state some insights with an example situation?