

Digital tools - The effects and benefits to recruiting processes

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Bachelor's thesis
September 2017
International Business
Degree Programme in International Business

Author(s) Pikala, Jussi-Pekka	Type of publication Bachelor's thesis	Date 10/2017 Language of publication: English
	Number of pages 50	Permission for web publication: x
Title of publication Digital tools - The effects and benefits to recruiting processes		
Degree programme Degree Programme in International Business		
Supervisor(s) Saukkonen, Juha		
Assigned by		
Abstract <p>Efficient recruiting is a critical part of a successful company since hiring the wrong person may cost plenty of money and time. Hence, today companies also utilize digitalization and digital tools in their recruiting process since they potentially make it more efficient and cost-effective. The aim of the thesis "Digital tools – the effects and benefits of recruiting processes" was to introduce the concept of digitalization and the way how it was applied in the recruitment process. The primary focus was on the recruitment process of different companies, how digitalization was utilized there, and discovering the effects and benefits of digital tools.</p> <p>The theoretical part discusses the structure of a typical recruitment process, the nature of digitalization, and the relationship of these two. The methodological approach used in the thesis was qualitative research, and the data was collected by interviewing five different professionals from companies of different size. The interviews were divided into three main themes: the current recruiting model of the participant companies, the use of digitalization/digital tools in their recruiting processes and the future of their recruiting processes. The goal was to find similarities and differences among the answers.</p> <p>The results obtained showed that all the companies had distinctive approaches in their recruiting processes, and the use of digital tools varied greatly. The larger the company, the more frequent the use of digital tools was, which was partly due to the fact that they had their own HR departments. The participants found both benefits and downsides in the use of digital tools. Job postings on social media and the possibility of using video interviews were the most attractive ones to utilize. As a conclusion, the general attitude towards digital tools was positive and in the future, the use of them will be more widespread.</p>		
Keywords/tags (subjects) Digitalization, e-recruiting, recruiting process, social media, digital tools		
Miscellaneous (Confidential information)		

Tekijä(t) Pikala, Jussi-Pekka	Julkaisun laji Opinnäytetyö, AMK	Päivämäärä 11/2017 Language of publication: Englanti Permission for web publication: X
Työn nimi Digitaaliset työkalut- Vaikutukset ja hyödyt rekrytointiprosesseille		
Tutkinto-ohjelma International Business		
Työn ohjaaja(t) Saukkonen, Juha		
Toimeksiantaja(t)		
<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Tehokas rekrytointi on äärimmäisen tärkeä osa toimivaa yritystä. Väärän henkilön palkkaaminen aiheuttaa sekä taloudellisia menetyksiä että ajan hukkaa. Tämän seurauksena nykypäivänä yritykset hyödyntävät myös digitalisaatiota ja digitaalisia työkaluja rekrytointiprosesseihinsa. Potentiaalisesti nämä työkalut voivat tehostaa rekrytointiprosessia. Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli esitellä digitalisaation käsite sekä sen hyödyntäminen rekrytointiprosessissa. Erityisesti työn fokuksena olivat eri yritysten rekrytointiprosessit; kuinka digitalisaatiota hyödynnettiin prosesseissa sekä digitaalisten työkalujen hyödyt ja vaikutukset niissä.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen teoreettinen osuus sisältää tyypillisen rekrytointiprosessin rakenteen, sen tunnusomaiset piirteet, sekä näiden kahden vaikutuksen toisiinsa. Tutkimus toteutettiin kvalitatiivisin menetelmin ja data kerättiin haastattelemalla viittä ammattilaista, jotka edustivat eri yrityksiä eri kokoluokissa. Haastattelut jaettiin kolmeen eri teemaan: yritysten nykyinen rekrytointimalli, digitaalisten työkalujen hyödyntäminen rekrytointiprosesseissa ja rekrytointiprosessien tulevaisuus. Tavoitteena oli löytää sekä samankaltaisuuksia että eroavaisuuksia vastauksista.</p> <p>Tulokset osoittivat, että jokaisella yrityksellä oli eroavaisuuksia rekrytointitavoissa sekä digitaalisten työkalujen käytössä. Mitä suurempi yritys, sitä useammin käytettiin myös digitaalisia työkaluja. Osallistujat löysivät sekä hyötyjä että haittoja digitaalisten työkalujen käytöstä. Etenkin videohaastattelujen käyttö ja sosiaalisen median hyödyntäminen työpaikkailmoituksissa olivat haastateltavien mielestä kiinnostavia. Yhteenvetona voidaan todeta, että asenteet digitaalisten työkalujen käyttöä kohtaan olivat positiivisia ja että työkalut tulevat yleistymään tulevaisuudessa.</p>		
Avainsanat (asiasanat) Digitalisaatio, e-rekrytointi, rekrytointi prosessi, sosiaalinen media, digitaaliset työkalut, applikaatiot		
Muut tiedot		

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1 Introduction

In this thesis, the concept of digitalization and the way how it is applied in the recruitment process is introduced. According to Oxford English dictionary (Oxford English dictionary, 2017), the term digitalization means: “Changing of analogue data into digital form.” In other words, if a company increases the use of digital or computer technology inside an organization, this is called digitalization (Karapalao etc. 2017, 55.)

1.1 Research Aim, Motivation & Structure of the Thesis

Recruiting is one of the key fundamentals of a successful company. As explained later in Chapter 2.1, one cannot underestimate the importance of a right hire. Basically recruiting means the process of hiring a new employee for a company, and naturally, it is one of the most important processes of companies, as it is both a time- and money consuming process. However, with the right hire these people can be make a difference in the company.

Digital recruitment, also known as e-recruitment, means the practice of using technology and Web-based resources for recruiting processes intended to find, attract, asses, interview and hire new staff. The aim of digital recruitment is to make the processes more efficient, effective and less expensive. E-recruitment can reach a larger pool of potential employees and facilitate the selection process. (Tech Target, 2017.). Nowadays, there are also companies that focus on digitalization applied to recruiting. These companies have recruiting tools for both themselves and job seekers and some of them have attracted a great deal of interest.

In order to understand the relationship between digitalization and recruiting we need to understand what kind of digital tools can be used in recruiting. The most common example are the different job sites that can be found online. Other tools are different social media sites, such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter that can be utilized in recruiting processes as well. Furthermore, video interviews via Skype or video applications made by specified programs are all part of the revolution of digital recruiting tools. In addition, nowadays there are also different applications that both

the recruiter and job seeker can use. These applications are explained later in the thesis.

The aim of this study was to examine the recruiting methods that companies were currently using and whether they utilize digitalization in that process. The author's goal was, on the one hand, to examine what kind of benefits digital recruitment tools may have. On the other hand, the secondary focus was on the negative sides of digitalization in recruiting. Moreover, the author was eager to find out what kind of digitalization was already used in the recruiting process and what type of digitalized tools could be used.

The first chapter of thesis explains the main concepts of traditional recruiting and digitalization. Next, there is an introduction to the research methods used in the thesis. This part explains the research process was implemented, what kinds of methods were used and how the interviews were completed.

Furthermore, there is an explanation of the interview part, which was conducted by interviewing three corporate managers and three HR professionals. The following chapter is about the results of the interviews. In addition, there is a Discussion part, recognizing possible limitations in the results, and considering their validity. Finally, suggestions are provided for further studies in the Conclusion chapter.

1.2 Research Problem & Research Questions

The aim of this thesis was to examine the effects and benefits of digitalization in a recruiting process. Recruiting is a time-consuming and costly process and, therefore, companies try to find effective methods for the recruiting process. Digitalization is a new approach that has not been widely used in the recruiting world. Nowadays, there are different kinds of applications, social networks and sites that can provide digital recruitment tools for companies to use. Thus, as digitalization and recruiting together is a new method, it is interesting to investigate how many companies are willing to try or have tried these digital tools in their hiring process and what kinds of opinions they have on digitalization.

The main goal in the thesis was to find answers to the following questions:

1. What kind of advantages and disadvantages may digitalization have for recruiting processes?
2. What kind of role does digitalization play in recruiting at present and in the future?

These two questions above were the main themes of the interview part as well, and the results can be seen in the Results chapter.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Importance of recruiting

According to Aswathappa (2007, 132) the definition of recruitment is: “the process of searching for and obtaining applicants for jobs, from among whom the right people can be selected.” It means that when there is an open position inside a company, naturally the company has to find an employee for that. Recruiting describes the process of finding this candidate. Recruiting is one of the most critical processes of a successful company (Cancialosi, 2016). There have been studies on how much a wrong hire costs money to a company. A survey by Robert Half International found that 39 % of the chief financial officers said that unsatisfactory recruitment decisions had cost them losses in productivity. On the one hand, 11 percent said that a bad hire resulted in fewer sales. On the other hand, supervisors spent 17 percent of their time, which is almost one day per week, managing poorly performing employees, which is extremely inefficient. The author has noticed in his job that spending time helping his teammates takes approximately 30 minutes of each workday, which results in decreasing the time spent with the clients. Furthermore, the results of the study show that 41 percent of the HR Managers who had made a wrong hire estimated that the financial loss of it was thousands of dollars. In addition, 35% said that poor recruitment greatly affected the employees’ morale. (Deleon 2015.) In summary, this results in a considerable sum of money and underlines the importance of the right hire. When also the employees’ morale is at stake, it has an effect on productivity, which means that even more money is lost. However, there are various kinds of approaches and methods, some of them superior to others,

which could decline the percentage of hiring wrong candidates. Naturally, the right one depends on the job. These approaches and methods are determined in the next two chapters. (Dessler 2013, 172.)

2.2 Recruiting Process

Job Analysis

The first part of the recruiting process is the job analysis. Without a complete understanding what is needed for the job it is really hard to find the best person for it. According to Dessler the job analysis is the procedure through which one determines the duties of the company's positions and the characteristics of the employees to be hired. Dessler argues that It is important to remember that job analysis is about the job, not about the person. It is a process where decisions are made from the data collected on a job. Job analysis produces two kinds of information; job descriptions which describe what the job entails, and job specifications which explain what kind of people should be hired for the job. (Dessler 2017, 133.) In Figure 1 there is a demonstration regarding the differences between this two.

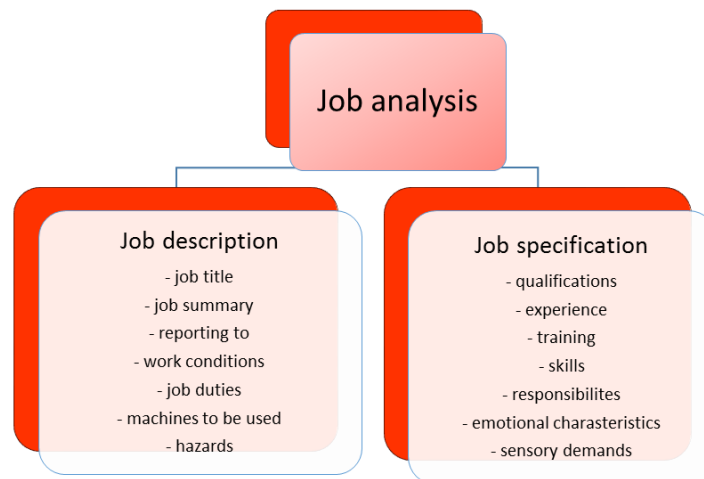


Figure 1. Job analysis (Mishra, A. 2015, 19, edited.)

Job analysis can be divided into six parts. The first thing to identify is work activities. In this part “he/she collects information about the job’s actual work activities, such as cleaning, selling, teaching or painting. This list may include how, why and when

the workers perform each action.” (Dessler 2013, 131). The second part is human behaviors. This is the information about the kind of human actions the job requires, such as communicating or lifting weights. The third part is the machines, tools, equipment and work aids related to the job. An excellent example of this could be a tool that is required to be able to do a job, for instance, a car is needed for a sales representative’s job. The next part is performance standards that provide the employee with specific performance expectations for each major task. They are the observable behaviors and actions which explain how the job is to be performed, and the results that are expected for satisfactory job performance involving more than technical expertise. The fifth part is about the job context. This is the information about physical working conditions or, for instance, the number of people the employee is working with. Finally, the last part is human requirements, for example, the education level or work experience needed for the job. (Dessler 2013, 131.)

There are many steps how to actually conduct a job analysis. These steps include the following: 1. Decide how the information will be used as this determines the data that will be collected. 2. Review the relevant background information such as organization charts, process charts, and job descriptions. 3. Select representative positions. 4. Carefully analyze the job by collecting data on job activities, working conditions, and human traits and abilities needed to perform the job. 5. Verify the job analysis information with the worker performing the job and with his or her immediate supervisor. The last step 6, is developing the job description and job specification. (Dessler 2013, 133-136.)

Finally, there are many methods to collect the job analysis information. Interviewing is a method where the recruiter can interview employees who have the same job and thus determine the right description for the job. The second method is questionnaires. It is a popular way where employees describe their job-related duties. Using a questionnaire is a quick and efficient way to obtain information from a large number of employees. However, there might be some obstacles such as whether the employees understand the questions correctly or not. Thirdly, there is the observation method where the recruiter observes the worker and through this forms a quality job analysis. Moreover, the other two methods worth mentioning are participant diary/logs and quantitative job analysis techniques such as a position

analysis questionnaire. Nevertheless, the first three methods are the most common ones used. (Job Analysis Methods 2016.)

However, there are some differing opinions about the importance of job analysis and especially job description. Liz Ryan (Ryan, 2015). comments that job descriptions are a waste of time in today's work environment in a Forbes' article. She compares doing a job description to killing a butterfly and putting it onto a wall."Any time we try to grab a butterfly and kill it, then stick a pin through it and stick it on the wall with a description of the butterfly's natural habitat and mating habits, we are fooling ourselves." By this commentary, Ryan means that employees should not be slotted into specific job duties. An illustrative example of not having a detailed job description is the "20% time policy"of the Google company which means that employees can use 20% of their time on what they think will most benefit Google. Such products as iPod and iTunes are products created by intrapreneurship within the company (Deeb 2015). Intrapreneurship means that employees act like entrepreneurs inside the firm. However, even though Google's idea sounds great and it brought brilliant innovations, they have actually abandoned the idea as the new ideas that were developed turned out be out of the core business of the company (Ross 2015). The author thinks that both of these arguments have truth within themselves. It is beneficial to have some boundaries for the actual work that the employees should perform and job description is an excellent tool for that. In addition, it is important to understand what kind of position is open and describe it as carefully as possible specifically in the recruitment process since if the actual job differs hugely from what is described, it may lead into unsatisfactory recruitments. For example, it may lead into an incorrect picture of the open position and drive into hiring overqualified employees who will decide to leave later on, which is highly expensive for the company. On the other hand, employees should have their freedom to think and act when they feel like there is an opportunity that will benefit the company. The before mentioned example Google reflects that the key is to find balance. Freedom can generate major innovations, however, the company's core idea should be kept in the minds of the employees.

Creating an applicant pool

After making the job analysis, the next step in the recruitment process is creating an applicant pool. The applicant pool refers to finding and attracting candidates for the employer's open positions. There are many ways to create this applicant pool and one can divide it into two categories. The first category is internal sourcing. It is the method where the firm uses its current employees to fulfill the open position. Naturally, there are benefits and drawbacks in this method. To begin with the advantages, most likely the employer knows the strengths and weaknesses of their own employees, and this is an advantage that cannot be compared with the candidates coming from outside the company. Secondly, current employees may be more committed to the company. They know how the company operates, and they do not need as much time to settle in as the outside candidates. Furthermore, their morale can be very high after seeing promotion options. Regarding the drawbacks of internal candidates, it might be harder to reject these applicants from the open position than the outside applicants. After rejecting them, they might be demotivated and discontented. Besides, it might be a waste of time, as the people in charge of hiring probably know the person they want for the job, or at least they know who are not suitable for the position. It follows that when current employees apply for the job, they have to go through the hiring process even though the recruiter already knows that he or she will not hire them. (Dessler 2013, 172.)

"Ideally hiring inside the company relies on job posting and the firm's skill inventories." (Dessler 2013, 173.) Job posting is the publication of an open job to employees. This includes the skills and qualifications that have been generated through job analysis. A qualification skill bank means that if the company has this kind of database, they can use it and quickly find the people who are qualified for the open position. One way of using internal sources is rehiring. Rehiring is the method of hiring an employee who has worked in the company before. This is usually the case when the company has had employee co-operation negotiations. However, there are positive and negative sides in this as well. These employees know how the company works and in addition, the company knows their skills. On the downside, they might feel being mistreated and may have some negative attitudes against the company. (Dessler 2013, 173.)

Succession planning is a useful way of using internal sources and it is mainly used when the open position is a top management one. This is the process of identifying, assessing and developing organizational leadership to enhance performance. The key is to profile competencies that the open positions require. The first thing to do in succession planning is identifying the key needs for the post. This includes enlisting top management's support and reviewing current talent. The second step is to develop inside candidates. This means developing those employees who have the talent and potential to fulfill the needs of the positions. The employer can train and develop employees by internal training, job rotation, external training and global/regional assignments. Finally, it requires assessing the candidates and selecting those who are actually able to fill the key positions. (Dessler 2013, 174.)

The second category of the methods of creating an applicant pool is outside sourcing. The most common one is recruiting via the internet. This is probably the one that comes into people's minds when recruiting is mentioned. Recruiters can either use their own websites or use job boards like monster.fi or mol.fi, for example. In addition, nowadays recruiters increasingly use social media sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook. According to Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 77% of companies use social media sites for recruiting (Social Networking Websites and Recruiting/Selection 2013.) These sites are especially useful for hunting passive candidates (people not actively looking for job). Twitter is similar a platform where companies can post job openings. However, according to Allison Stadd (Stadd, 2014) on Social times, statistics show that LinkedIn gets three times more job views than Twitter and 5.7 more than Facebook.

Other ways to attract outside employees to an applicant pool are traditional methods such as advertising in newspapers. The key point is to place the advertisement into a newspaper region where the employer thinks the best candidates are. Thus the company can reach out to several potential applicants. For example, according to Sanoma Mediat website, the Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat, reaches nearly 700 000 readers every day (Helsingin Sanomat, KTM 2016).

As for the United States, this kind of traditional advertisement is even more important. In addition, an ideal place for traditional advertisement is professional journals, especially when company is targeting a certain type of people. (Dessler

2017, 178.) Furthermore, employment agencies have still a major role when handling recruitments. The main reason for using both public ones and privately owned ones is when the company needs help in finding the right people. Public agencies offer guidance and search jobs for unemployed people. They evaluate the candidates beforehand and then recommend them if they are qualified for the jobs. Private agencies, on the other hand, can assist in many situations. For example, when the company does not have their own HR department, private agencies can organize the whole recruiting process. Furthermore, they can conduct the pre-screening and cut down the number of applicants, for example, by group interviews and let then the company hold the individual interviews. With this kind of action, the actual employer does not have to use as many resources and time for recruiting. However, when using agencies it is very important to underline the need of an accurate job analysis. Without it, agencies may turn down perfect candidates for the company. Furthermore, as there are many private agencies, companies should screen them and choose the best match for their interests. (Dessler 2017, 180.) On top of that, agencies can help when companies are looking just for temporary or part-time workers. "In 2010, about 26% of all jobs private-sector employers added were temporary positions" (Rich 2010). Taking everything into account, agencies can help greatly in the recruiting process.

The last method to mention is referrals. These are important recruiting options. Here the employer posts job openings and offers prizes or cash awards for referrals that lead into hiring (Dessler 2017, 178). For example, in a Finnish Insurance company, they give a bonus for these kinds of referrals. This is an effective method for companies since when they already have a trustful employee, the companies are more willing to trust his/her referrals.

After choosing the applicant pool, the company has to go through the applications. Usually, recruiters go through resumes and decide who the best candidates for the job are. Ordinarily, this is done by various tests, assessment centers and background and reference checks. After this, recruiters send invitations for interviews for the best candidates. In the next part this process is explained in more detail. Below,

Figure 2 illustrates the recruiting process starting from the generated leads and rising up all the way to the new hires.

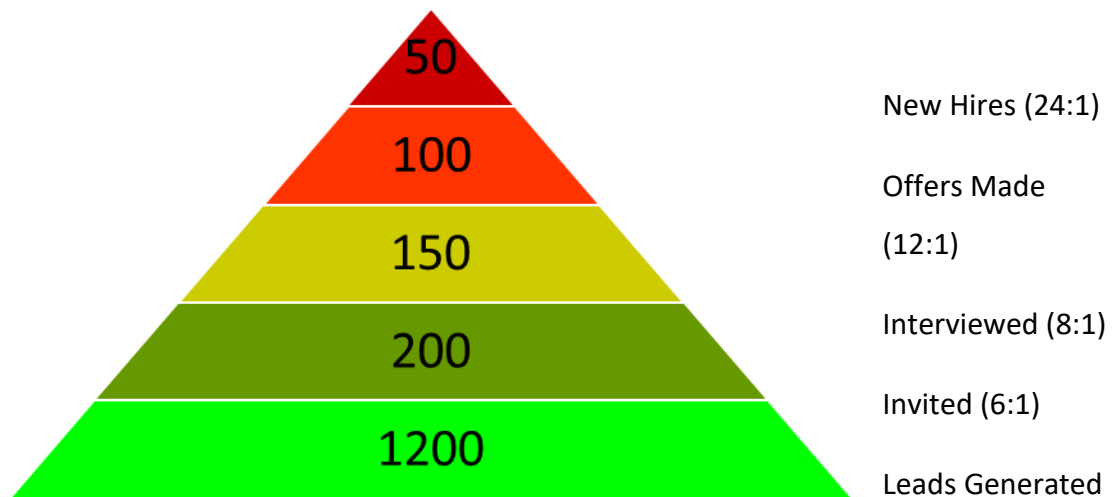


Figure 2. Recruiting Yield Pyramid. (Bika, N 2017, edited)

Testing and selection

The next step in the recruiting process is Testing and Selection. As stated above, selecting the best person for the job is crucial for the company's success. According to Gary Dessler, hiring the right person affects three levels. The first level is performance. Employees who have the right skillset perform better for their employer. Without the skills, employees do not operate efficiently, and the company suffers. The second level is cost. Recruiting is a money- and time consuming process. Currently the U.S. Department of Labor estimates that the average cost of a hiring a wrong candidate can equal 30% of the employee's first-year salary. For this reason recruiting a bad candidate whose annual income was \$50,000 could lead into a potential \$15,000 loss for the company. (Holmes, 2013.) The third level is legal obligations. It is important since mismanaging hiring has legal consequences. Recruiters have to be sure not to hire people with criminal records when the position

is a trustful job, such as a police officer's or insurance advisor. In addition, they have to be sure to follow non-discriminatory selection procedures. (Dessler 2017, 203.)

As far as testing candidates, the key issue is that the tests are both reliable and valid. Reliability means that when a candidate takes a test, he or she has to score consistent scores when doing two alternative forms of the test or when doing the same test on two or more different occasions. Validity, on the other hand, tells if the test measures what one thinks it should be measuring.

There are many types of tests to measure the skills and suitability of the candidates. To begin with, a test of cognitive abilities measures a person's intelligence, memory, and inductive reasoning. A typical example of this kind of test is an IQ test. Adults' IQ score is a derived score, and it reflects the extent the person is above or below the average IQ score. On top of that, there are tests for specific mental abilities such as memory. These are often called aptitude tests. Another category of tests are testings for motor and physical abilities such as finger dexterity. These types of tests are used, for example, when recruiting pilots or police officers where they have to perform physical exercises which measure their suitability into police work. The third category of tests is personality and interests tests. These measure the basic aspects of the applicant's personality, like introversion, stability, and motivation. There are both projective and self-reported tests in this category. Projective ones are, for example, the following: An applicant sees a picture and then he/she has to tell what it reminds him/her of, the answer describing the person's personality. Self-reported ones are examinations where candidates fill out tests by themselves. (Dessler 2017, 211-212.)

According to psychologists, these tests can usually measure five traits; extraversion, emotional stability/neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience. Neuroticism is a trait where the candidate exhibits poor emotional adjustments and experiences negative effects. They are likely to be unconfident and pessimistic. Extraversion, on the other hand, tells about social skills, assertiveness, and activeness. These people like to interact with other people, and they are comfortable around others. Individuals with openness to experience are said to be imaginative, willing to try new things, and they have the ability to think outside the box. These people tend to have a creative career. Agreeableness means that a

person is trusting, compliant, caring and gentle. Lastly, conscientiousness trait tells that people in this category are goal-driven and ambitious and they can control impulses and act politely in social contacts. These people tend to be leaders in companies. (Ackerman, 2017.)

Furthermore, there can be simulations which are considered to be tests. Simulations are tests where they put real work-life situations into practice environment. For example, there can be a question such as how would one react to a particular kind of situation and based on the answer, the recruiter scores the applicant. (Dessler 2013, 202-216.)

Finally, it is important to include background checks as it is a cheap and useful tool for several reasons. To begin with, with a background check "you can verify the applicant's information and uncover damaging information." With background checks, the employer can, for example, be sure that the candidates do not have a criminal record. Nevertheless, the recruiter has to be sure that he/she follows the law and does not interfere with the applicant's privacy laws. (Dessler 2017, 228-229.)

Interviewing candidates

The final part of the recruitment process is interviewing the candidates and deciding who is the best choice for the company. Selection interviews can be classified according to three things: Firstly, how structured they are; secondly, according to their content, which means what types of questions they contain, and thirdly, how the firm administrates the interviews. (Dessler 2017, 239.)

In Structured interviews, the employer lists the questions beforehand, and may even think about possible answers ahead. On the other hand, an unstructured interview or nondirective interview is an interview that is more like a general conversation. A few questions may be specified in advance, but usually, they are not. Structured interviews are more reliable and valid as all the questions are the same for every candidate. These may "enhance the ability to withstand legal challenge," which is important to avoid any discrimination. According to Dessler, the best way is to keep the interview structured to leave an opportunity for follow-up questions.

Regarding the types of questions, the first category is situational questions. In these, the recruiter asks about the candidate's behavior in certain situations. Behavioral questions are the kind of questions where applicants have to tell how they reacted to situations in the past. In addition, there are other types of questions such as stress interview questions. Here the interviewer tries to make the interviewee uncomfortable and the aim is to spot those candidates who have low-stress tolerance. This is especially used for candidates applying for customer service jobs. Puzzle questions, on the other hand, try to discover how applicants work under pressure. (Dessler 2017, 240-241.)

A central part of the interview process is to administrate it correctly. There are various ways to operate this. Some use one-on-one or a panel of interviewers and some all at once, or computerized or personal interviews. Most of the selection interviews are face-to-face and sequential, where two people meet alone, and the interviewer seeks verbal responses. In a sequential interview, many persons interview the applicant, one by one and then they make the hiring decision. In a panel interview, many interviewers together conduct the interview and combine their ratings into a final score. Nowadays it is common to conduct either a phone interview or video/web-assisted interviews. The advantage of a phone interview is that neither one, the interviewer nor the candidate, has to worry about their appearance or handshakes and they can focus on the answers. Furthermore, the answers can be more spontaneous as there is no face-to-face contact. The increasingly used interview type is video-based interviews. As tools like Skype have become more popular, it is natural that they are growing. In video-based interviews, applicants can be, for example, at home, and therefore they reduce travel and recruiting expenses. This is a great tool for applicants who are applying for a job from a totally another country, for instance. The difference compared to phone interviews is that naturally the job seeker has to look representable as a candidate, and one should be sure that the background is also in a satisfactory condition. In addition, the candidate should test the connection beforehand as a faulty connection may lead to misunderstanding and it does not give a great picture of the applicant. The applicant should act as he would be in a real face-to-face interview which means maintaining the eye-contact, smiling and looking confident. (Dessler 2017, 242-243.)

To sum up how to create an effective interview, Dressler explains an 8-step rule: 1) make sure that as an interviewer, you have to know the job as you have to be sure what skills you are looking for, 2) structure the interview so that as an interviewer you can be consistent and ask more job-relevant questions without having a totally full-blown interview, 3) get organized, minimize interruptions and review the applicant's resume and application, 4) establish rapport since the main reason in an interview is to find out about the applicant. The interviewer can do this by greeting the candidate, and by starting with noncontroversial questions, 5) ask questions and try to follow the questions you wrote out before the interview, 6) take brief, unobtrusive notes during the interview. Doing so may help avoid making a snap decision early in the interview. In step 7) close the interview and leave time to answer the questions the interviewee may have and try to end the interview on a positive note. Finally, in step 8) review the interview, score the candidate and make a decision. (Dessler 2017, 249-250.)

After finding the best candidate, the recruitment process is completed, and hopefully, the right person is hired.

2.3 Digitalization

In the following chapters, the author discusses the term digitalization and also the relationship between digitalization and recruiting. As told in the introduction chapter, digitalization is a growing trend in the world. It is used in all kinds of business areas such as marketing and sales. Therefore, today there are also companies that aim at combining digitalization and recruiting. Digitalized recruiting has already been executed in the past five years on LinkedIn and Facebook, but nowadays there are applications and services that are specifically aimed at combining these two (Valkonen, 2016).

According to *Digitalisaatio – yritysjohdon käsikirja* (Ilmarinen & Koskela 2015, 22-23), there is no accurate determination for the word digitalization. The term used in the media is usually linked with online stores and in politics, for example, it is believed to be one of the saviors of the Finnish economy. However, the fundamental principle in digitalization is the process when things or processes are turned from an analogic

into digital formats, such as converting photos into digital pictures and saving these onto cloud services. By providing an example from the insurance business, it is easier to illustrate what is meant with digitalization. In the past, a Finnish insurance company used to send hard copies of insurance documents to customers by post. Nowadays customers can receive their documents into their own service with one mouse click provided by the internet. This is a great example of how digitalization can save time for both the customers and the company itself. Digitalization is also heavily linked with technology. Technology itself does not cause digitalization; however, the possibilities to act with it do. Digitalization can also be divided into macro and micro levels. On the macro level, it means changing the behaviors of society, the dynamics of the economy and markets and as well as the changes in the way people act. On micro level digitalization influences the companies' strategies, services, products, knowledge and skills and learning mechanisms. Naturally, these two levels affect each other. For example, the changing markets add pressure to businesses to change their attitude towards digitalization. (Ilmarinen & Koskela 2015, 22-23.)

A term that often appears when talking about digitalization is disruption. Disruption means that a new company comes into the market and breaks down traditional methods of doing business and money. These new businesses have noticed that they can provide services for customers that are needed by utilizing digitalization. Spotify is an example of this. They realized that customers were more interested in the songs rather than the complete albums that stores and companies were selling. Furthermore, digitalization affects job markets as some companies replace employees with digital tools. (Ilmarinen & Koskela 2015, 26-27.) For example, the insurance company "N" does not use traditional offices in several locations anymore. Instead, they have placed telesales and customer service operations in designated locations, and these handle customers all around Finland. In this way, the company "N" has reduced the costs in facilities and also in employees' salaries and enhanced their effectiveness. However, when digitalizing processes there might be a downside effect. For example, in the insurance company case, some customers still prefer face-to-face service, and for that reason, they have changed to company "N's" competitors who still provide these services.

According to Digitalisaatio – yritysjohdon käsikirja, digitalization can be categorized into three generations. At the moment we are in the third generation. It has not still been formatted completely; however, we can predict at least to some extent where it lands on. Instead of just talking about sales, services, and markets it is linked straight into producing value. For example, self-driving cars can have a great role in the car industry. In 2015, one of the most prominent topics was the term "the internet of things" and services that can answer questions that are presented in natural language. In the next couple of years, this will be even more developed into services that translate spoken language automatically into a different language. (Ilmarinen & Koskela 2015 27-31.)

To paraphrase, digitalization is a tool for redesigning companies' business strategies. Growth, profitability, and competitiveness are key values in every company that is trying to be successful. It follows that every company can encourage their growth, reduce costs, develop their quality of service and offer better customer satisfaction through digitalization. (Ilmarinen & Koskela 2015, 31). One method is to transfer marketing, sales, and services onto digital channels. A typical example of this is online stores. According to an eMarketer study, the share of online store sales of the whole of retail sales was 6.7% at the end of 2015, and the estimation that it will grow in the future is shown in Figure 3. Through online stores customers can order products worldwide from their home and do not have to go to the actual store. Sites like Zalando, Verkkokauppa.com, and Amazon have become tremendously popular through their online stores. Amazon is, in fact, the most valuable retailer in the world. (La Monica 2015.) Furthermore, an interesting point is the fact that some companies like the above mentioned Zalando operate only as an online store.

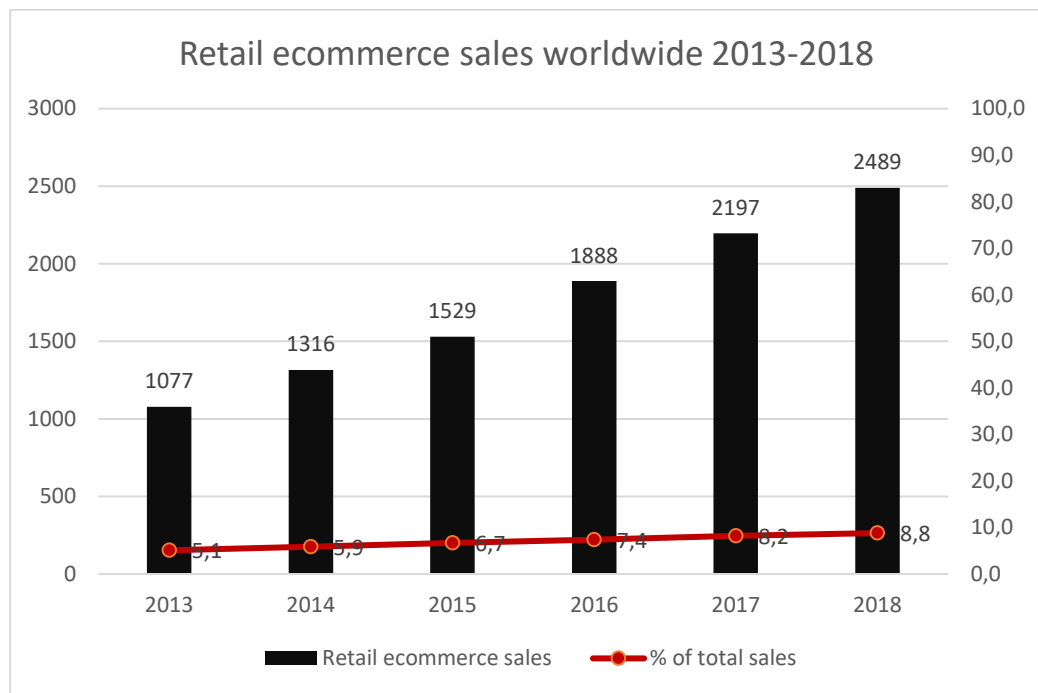


Figure 3. Retail Ecommerce Sales Worldwide 2013-2018 (Emarketer study, 2014, edited)

Regarding customer service, companies can, for example, offer services for clients where they can book their appointments online as in the case of medical services by Mehiläinen or change their addresses or see their billing details. With these kinds of tools, customers' time on traditional customer service ways, such as calling customer service and then queueing for several minutes, is reduced. These kind of services are nowadays almost demanded by customers, and if a business does not provide them, it is a competitive disadvantage. (Ilmarinen & Koskela 2015 105-106.)

2.4 Digitalization in recruiting

According to Harvard Business Reviews article, (Spinellis 2015), there are simple online tools that can be utilized and make hiring easier. To start with the recruiting process, companies should put their job adverts into several locations. Facebook, LinkedIn, online site and Twitter should all be included with their Url links into the actual job advert. Companies should also add their newsletters, mailing lists, and internal channels. Additionally, to avoid getting thousands of paper CV's it is advisable to make, for example, a google drive basis for all the applications as then

they automatically enter into a spreadsheet. Once the application deadline has been announced, the recruiter should share the drive for all the people that are part of the recruiting process. Then each of the recruiters votes the best candidates, and by doing this, they easily achieve the applicants who should deserve an invitation for an interview. These above mentioned “tools” are one of the many possibilities of utilizing digitalization as part of the recruiting.

Pew Research study exposes an interesting fact about the job seekers' online behavior. According to the study, the number of American online job seekers have doubled since 2005, and the use of social media in recruiting has grown 54% in the last five years. Especially the generation Y is active on online platforms for job seeking. Studies show that millennials visit their social media accounts on average 9.5 times a day, so it is natural that a job advertisement on Facebook draws their attention. (Smith, 2015.) Similarly in Finland, a youngster of the age of from 15 to 24 spends time on social media 8 hours on a weekly basis. (Vizeum, CSS survey June 2016). Another interesting benefit of using social media as part of recruiting is the number of jobseekers who are not actively seeking for a job. According to Jen Picard's blog on LinkedIn, 60% of the workforce who are not actively looking for a job are willing to discuss new work opportunities, and often they notice these jobs, for example, on LinkedIn. All these above mentioned facts underline the importance and the need of digital tools in recruitment processes.

As described in the Testing and Selection chapter (Pikala 2017, 15) recruiting a new employee can be an extremely costly process. For this reason, video recruiting is a method that can save money and time, especially when the candidate's location is challenging. It helps to avoid scheduling and availability issues. It also has benefits versus phone interviews as one can see the applicants' body language and other non-verbal clues. According to Launchpad, most HR professionals knew whether or not a candidate was a great hire within 90 seconds when a visual component was added to the interview. (Hopping 2017.) With applications like Skype, the recruiter can interview candidates from their office no matter what the candidate's location. As a recruiter, one can also ask a list of questions via video, save the recording, and then analyze the answers later on and share them with his/her hiring team. Besides location issues, video recruiting is useful when there are several open positions, and

the recruitment pool is large. By using video recruiting, the company can cut down costs and time to a fraction versus traditional face-to-face interviews (Hopping 2017.)

However, according to a Harvard Business Journal article by Peter Cappelli (Cappelli 2013), reducing costs and time is not always a positive factor. Companies should also remember to create value from the new hiring methods. As mentioned earlier, a poor hire can cost much more than the actual recruiting process. Furthermore, if the company chooses an inexpensive recruiting approach it usually leads into a bad hire. Especially after the recent recession, companies have reduced their hiring costs. Decreasing the hiring cost is not a damaging issue itself, however, when it becomes the only objective, it usually leads to wrong choices and recruitments. In conclusion, companies should actively use digital platforms in hiring processes, yet, the digital aspect should be applied with a careful implementation, and always remember that it has to create value, not only to reduce the costs. (Cappelli 2013.)

Furthermore, some new digital recruiting methods have recently entered the market. Some companies have implemented digitalization in recruiting in a new way by launching applications that could help both job seekers and companies who are looking for new workforce. One of these applications is PIIK. Piik is a service where the job seekers and companies can connect anonymously. Both the company and the job seeker create a profile to the service. Once the profile is completed, the application tries to connect both ends by comparing skills, personality, and needs. The service also suggests new opportunities for both sides in real time. The core of the application is to encourage both seekers and providers for new possibilities. If the company and job seeker accept a "match," the identity is revealed, and they can discuss personally. (Piik 2017)

Another service which is related to the new kind of recruiting services is Pockethunt. The core idea of Pockethunt is slightly different than in PIIK. In Pockethunt employers seek for potential employees. Job seekers can create a "skill profile" to the service and stay anonymous until they find a potential job. They can reveal themselves when they are willing to. Job seekers can also like employers, and after this, the employer can see the job seeker's full profile. By describing their skills and having references the job seekers can earn "profile stars" that improve their listing when companies are looking for employees. The service is free of charge for job seekers, and for

employers, there is a one-month free trial after which the service is chargeable.

(Pockethunt 2017)

There is also a service called Treamer that provides for short-term jobs. For example, if a customer is looking for cleaning service or a babysitter they can use the Treamer service which is also available on application. The core idea of Treamer is that first the job opening is published, after which the employer chooses the worker for the job free of charge. Then the worker contacts the customer in need of service, and they can set up the details. Once the job has been completed, the payment will be made. The users of the service can also rate the workers. The more stars the worker achieves, the higher the potential that he/she will be chosen to do the job. Treamer also handles all the law requirements, so the customers do not have to, for example, fulfil tax notifications or other tax-related issues. (Treamer 2017)

All these above-mentioned services are quite new, although they have appeared in the news and received high ratings. This means that there is great potential in these kinds of services. They can provide plenty of help and lead into significant recruitment decisions, especially in the companies that do not have their own HR personnell. Furthermore, these services, as well all social media tools, are noteworthy for seeking "hidden" job seekers. The job seekers who are not actively looking for a job can still create a profile on to the services and yet stay anonymous and look for new opportunities in the job markets. (Valkonen 2016.)

According to an expert of social media recruiting, Tom Laine, in an article in Helsingin Sanomat, none of these applications has risen to a clear marketing leader. He also says the situation becomes harder for the job seeker every time the number of these kinds of applications rises. In addition, In Finland the market is so limited that any of the applications might not break through even in the future, therefore many available jobs are hidden in several distinct applications. For the companies, applications may provide free of charge visibility at the beginning, however, when the application starts to charge the company using it, the interest decreases. For that reason, it is difficult to get stabilized long-term users for the applications. However, Laine also says that job seekers can benefit from using the applications. If the position is only available at one application, there could be fewer applicants and this would mean a greater chance of getting the job. (Rissanen 2017.)

It is also interesting to see what kind of effects these types of services have on the HR jobs. According to an Oxford Martin's School study, in the USA 47% of the jobs are in danger to be replaced by automatization and technology in the next 20 years. It is believed that physical jobs, for example factory workers, will be almost entirely replaced by robots. However, it will also affect services, sales, and construction work. (Hope Rutkin 2013.) For the HR-related jobs, the author thinks that the key point is whether companies are willing to meet the potential workers traditionally in face-to-face interviews, and if they will go through the job applications with human eyes or let the automation do the work. It is popularly believed that these kinds of applications can potentially replace the manual work and companies could use more video interviews instead of actual face-to-face meetings in the future. On the other hand, using applications like the above-mentioned ones may not lead to a total replacement of HR professionals although it could affect the structure of their work duties. In the results chapter of the thesis, the current situation is shown in different sized companies in Finland. All things considered, the situation can be entirely different in the next 10 to 20 years.

3 Research methodology and implementation

In this chapter, the research approach used in the Thesis is explained, followed by data collection methods and data analysis, as well as the explanations. In the last part of the chapter, the details of the interviews are shown, after which there is an introduction of the interview questions and a short presentation of the interviewees.

3.1 Research approach and its justification

The aim of this thesis was to look for a relationship between recruiting and digitalization and to explain different aspects of the research problem, and the data was collected through individual interviews. To conduct the research, qualitative research method was used. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 171.) Because the research problems were unstructured and the answers were flexible and different among the participants, exploratory research was used in the research since exploratory research is said to be one of the most useful methods for qualitative

approach. (Ghauri, P. & Gronhaug, K, 2010, 106.) The methodology approach in the research was constructionism since the interviewees' positions in their work and their various experiences in the hiring process might have had an influence on different interpretations of the questions. This means that the author's role in the research was to understand the subjective reality of the interviewees to make sense of it and understand their motives. (Dudovskiy 2016.) To achieve the answers for the questions, in-depth interviews were used, out of which the results were gathered at face-to-face meetings.

As interviews are time-consuming, it was crucial to plan the interviews carefully to save the participants' time and use sampling to avoid insurmountable workload. The homogeneous sampling technique was used as all of the participants were in charge of hiring processes or related to that. Hence, using this technique also meant that there had to be at least five interviewees, and the author got an approval for the interviews from five organizations. (Saunders etc. 2012, 283).

Data Collection

As mentioned above, the research was conducted by using qualitative design. In the study, the participant group consisted of professionals who had been in charge of recruiting processes in their companies. Since the members worked in different companies, group interviews were not possible, and for this reason, the survey was conducted with personal in-depth interviews. For the interview method, a semi-structured method was used, as the questions were planned beforehand but the author wanted to give the participants the possibility for open-ended answers and to share their thoughts and opinions. It was vital to achieve more than "yes or no" answers, as the sample wasn't very extensive.

As the research was conducted in several companies, it was essential that the interview was done anonymously to avoid any information getting into the wrong hands. However, the author was given the permission to tell the size of the company as the target was to reach participants from different sized companies to discover if there were any differences in the use of recruiting processes between small and large companies.

To avoid misleading information and answers from the participants, the interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission. This allowed the author to concentrate on questioning and listening, and enabled re-listening the answers and correcting if false notes during the interviews were made. (Dessler 2013, 396.)

Research ethics and plan for research quality

Research ethics were adhered to in this research. As Saunderson et al. (2012, 226) put it, "ethics refer to standards of behaviour that guide your conduct in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work, or are affected by it." In addition, JAMK University of Applied Science's ethical guidelines were followed (Academic Board, 2013) in this research. However, as Saunders et al. (2012, 229) wrote, usually university codes are written in an abstract format and researchers have to interpret standards and principles according to the context of the research. In order to secure the neutrality in the study and to avoid leaking confidential information to wrong people, the interviewees were referred to as Mr. X, Mr. Z, Mr. B, Mrs. A and Mrs. C in the study. However, their title, organization size and years of experience were exposed with a permission. In addition, the interviews were audio-recorded with each individual's permission, and they were given the chance of pausing the recording or to say if they wanted to leave something out of the answers. This chance aimed at guaranteeing honest answers. Moreover, the interviews were held in private locations, where there were no outsiders to hear the answers since it could have influenced their answers.

3.2 Data Collection

As stated in the previous chapter, the data was gathered via interview process. The interview process was semi-structured and in-depth, with planned questions and open-ended answers. The interview was conducted in Finnish because it was the native language of all the interviewees and using Finnish, the author was able to get detailed answers. The aim of the interview was to provide answers to the research questions listed in Chapter one: 1. What kind of advantages and disadvantages may digitalization have for recruiting processes? 2. What kind of role does digitalization

play in your recruiting at present and in the future? In order to attract the participants for the interviews, several managers and HR professionals were contacted based on the networks the researcher had from worklife. The key was to find persons who were either HR professionals or business managers. The aim of the research was to find different viewpoints in using digital tools, and thus, both HR professionals and managers were included in the interviews. HR professionals were assumed to be more knowledgeable of the new kind of tools that have come onto the market, and it was interesting to discover possible differences among the answers of HR professionals versus managers. In addition, the second reason why also managers were included in the interviews was due to the possible breach that digitalization creates for recruiting. If the interviewees thought that digital tools might have an effect on the need of some recruiting jobs, then the answers of the HR related professionals might differ from the managers' opinions. In addition, the wish was to include an interviewee of the younger generation to share his/her opinions as they could be different versus the more experienced professionals'. Furthermore, it was beneficial to include different sized companies in the research as the recruitment processes in them tend to vary, and in the research, the data of the used recruitment processes was also needed. Five of the professionals that were contacted fulfilled the above mentioned criteria and the participant group was selected.

Three of the participants were managers who had participated in recruiting processes, and two of them were Human Resource professionals. As one can see from table 1, all of the interviewees have a long experience in the business field. As mentioned, the aim was also to find an interviewee who would not have as much experience. In addition, the author was able to include different sized organizations in the study, and in the results part the differences between the recruiting processes of large and small organizations can be seen. Interviews were conducted by face-to-face method, and the author was allowed to audio-record them to ensure the most accurate analyses of the results. As already mentioned before, the interviews were held anonymously and confidentially.

Table 1. The overview of the interviewees

Experience (years):	28	28	17	15	24
Title:	Marketing Manager	Vice President	HR specialist	Concept Manager	HR Support
Organization size:	Micro	Large	Large	Small	Large
Company name:	X	Z	C	B	A
Name:	Mr. X	Mr. Z	Mrs. C	Mr. B	Mrs. A

The interviews were structured in to three themes: the current recruiting process of the company, the use of digital tools and digitalization in the recruiting process, and the outlook of the recruiting processes. In the first theme the questions covered the way how a typical or the latest recruiting process was done in the company, and secondly, whether the company had their own HR department, and if they did, whether they had co-operation with different departments or whether the HR was completely in charge of the recruiting process. In the second theme, the author asked what kind of use digital tools were used in their recruiting process and if they were not, what was the reason behind it, and secondly, what were the positive and negative sides of digitalization in their opinion. In the third and final theme, the questions concerned the future: Firstly, the interviewees were asked how they personally thought the recruiting process would change in the next 5 to 10 years or whether they thought it was not going to change at all. Secondly, they were inquired whether they thought that digital tools, such as applications, would play a bigger role in the recruiting world in the future. If they answered 'yes', their opinion on the possible effect of it on the current positions of recruiting was asked.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis was completed by using qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is a research method for especially qualitative data. Qualitative content analysis has three main features, which made it a perfect analysis method for the study. To begin with, it reduces the data. This means that it requires the researcher to focus on selected aspects of meaning and this was done in the research by categorizing the interview into a theme-based interview. This meant that the data

was also analysed by the themes, which reduced the amount of data. Secondly, content analysis is systematic. This means that every single part of the material which is relevant to the research questions should be examined. For this reason, the importance of audio-recording the interviews was crucial, after which the relevant data was analysed. In addition, in content analysis, one has to check the coding for reliability and audio-recording helped greatly in this as well. Thirdly, the method is very flexible as the coding frame is adapted to the material. (Schreier, 2014, 170-176.)

Furthermore, no field notes were made during the interviews so that the focus was on the interview, and there was an option for additional questions if needed, and the interviewer was able to observe the interviewee. After each interview was completed, the audio recordings were analysed and transcribed one by one into separate word sheets. At this point, the only goal was to write down and translate the interviews from Finnish to English. This was a time-consuming process as the interviews lasted 25-40 minutes, after which the next procedure was listening to the audios, translating and writing the answers down simultaneously. However, the theme-designed frame helped greatly as all of the interviews were conducted with the same structure.

After the fifth and final interview was completed and analysed, the data was gathered from all of the interviews into the same word sheet. The next step included a deeper analysis of the answers. The goal was to find both similarities and differences among the answers and see if there were any conclusions to be drawn based on the answers.

Regarding data saturation, which could be seen as a critical point for validity and reliability of the research as there were only five members in the interview group, it has to be said that the study does not necessarily prove data saturation among the answers. However, as Saunders etc. state, five persons in a semi-structure interview is acceptable. (Saunders etc, 2012, 283.)

4 Results

The results were divided into three different themes: Current recruiting processes, The use of digitalization/digital tools in recruiting and Outlook for recruiting practices. The results are provided in a theme-based order.

4.1 Current recruiting processes

The first theme was based on the interviewee's company's current recruiting processes. The theme consisted of three different questions. The first two ones were the only "yes or no" questions of the study. The first question was about whether the company had their HR department and if it had an influence on the recruiting methods that the company used. Secondly, the interviewees were asked whether they had an HR department or not, and whether it was completely in charge of the recruitment process and if they had any co-operation with different departments. The third and final question of the first theme was to describe a typical or the latest recruiting process of the company, and how the process was conducted.

All of the three large companies had their HR departments, and the smaller companies had not. This was quite natural. Since smaller companies tend to have fewer resources and money, usually they do not have their own HR department, or there is only one person in charge of it. The small and micro-sized companies that participated in this interview involved their managers as the head of their recruiting processes.

The three large organizations that had their HR departments all had co-operation between different departments.

Mrs A told about company A's co-operation in the following words, "For example, if there are several open positions in the sales department, it is in charge of the screening and then in the interviews there is usually one person from the HR department and one manager from the department that the candidate is to be hired. Usually the managers know what kind of employees they are looking for, hence it is important to involve them in the interviews."

Mr. Z told that their methods were similar to company A's, "I think it's vital that managers are part of the process as well. Managers usually know the everyday tasks more specifically than the HR department, and Managers are in a significant role of finding the best person". Managers could also give valuable knowledge regarding the suitability of the applicant for the organization.

Mrs. C said that they also had co-operation between different departments, but for them, co-operation was divided into two stages: "Usually we have co-operation between different departments. For instance, typically the first phase of our interviews is completed by the frontman of the department. Then in the second phase, the HR will join the interviews."

As the answers above show, all of the large companies believe that usually the department managers know what kind of applicant fits into the department, and for that reason, the managers also have a significant role in the recruiting process. In these three companies the HR department plays a supportive role for the managers.

The reason why the study also focused on current or typical recruiting processes was related to the second theme, which was the use of digital tools in recruiting processes. The second target of this question was to determine what kind of role the HR department played in the organization, especially in recruiting processes. All of the interviewees had different procedures. Company B was the only one that handled the recruiting process without using actual Human Resource professionals. The Chain managers, together with the store managers, completed all of the steps themselves, starting from the job description, making the job adverts, going through the screening and finally interviewing the applicants.

The other smaller company in the interviews, Company X, had a different procedure in the recruiting process. Company X co-operates with Työ- ja Elinkeinokeskus and Elinkeino-, liikenne- ja ympäristökeskus. With this kind of co-operation, these above-mentioned services conduct the screening for Company X, which saves plenty of time and resources from them. These centers collect the CVs and with the help of consulting firms go through them, after which they send them to Company X. Next, Company X will go through the CVs once more, and send invitations to the most tempting candidates. Company X trusts on traditional face-to-face interviews instead

of video interviews and with this approach they can include mathematical tests that are critical to their business field. Even though this kind of procedure causes a rise in expenditure for Company X, they trust that professional help will assist them to make the right hire. “We are satisfied with the method that we have used. This saves a lot of time for us, and we can focus on everyday tasks that we have to perform to run the company”.

As mentioned above, all of the three interviewees who were from large companies had co-operation with HR and different departments. Mrs. A told that their HR department usually handled the screening process. Interviews were conducted together with one member of the HR department and one department manager. Mr. Z had a similar answer to this question since in their company the HR department also played a large part in the screening process. In their latest open vacancy, two HR members handled the pre-screening, and after this Mr. Z himself conducted a further screening and decided which applicants deserved a chance for an interview.

In Mrs. C’s company, HR and managers already worked closely together in the job description phase. They used the company’s databank for the job description, however, they always assessed whether it needed updates, and this was conducted with the help of the managers’ feedback. As in Company Z, Company C also handled the screening process together with the HR and department manager. What was radically different in Company C’s process from others was that the department manager usually handled the first interviews himself and in the second phase of the interviews, the HR department supported the department manager with different kinds of tests and observations. “In the aptitude test there is an HR person to complete them and in the second phase we also interview applicants in groups where the HR has a significant part in observing the candidates.”

All the companies studied had different kinds of approaches in their current recruiting processes. However, co-operation between HR departments and department managers had a central role in all of the large companies’ operations. Significant explanation for this was to expertise of a Manager’s on an open vacancy in a certain business field. The managers usually tend to know the capabilities and skills that are demanded in a certain vacancy. Company X also used HR professionals to support their recruiting process, while company B was the only one that handled

the whole process without the expertise of HR professionals. Company X utilized professionals regularly from employment agencies as they had had great experiences of that method.

What was similar to all of the companies studied was the use of worksites on their job postings. All of the five companies used the most popular work sites like mol, monster, and oikotie. However, there were differences in traditional job posting methods such as in the use of newspaper advertisement. Company Z used only Helsingin Sanomat, and the purpose was mainly to draw attention to the company's name and to attract so-called "sleeping candidates" who are not actively looking for a job. Company B used regional newspapers, and for example, companies A and X did not use newspaper advertisements at all.

In table two, one can find a demonstration which highlights the key aspects regarding the interviewees' answers of current recruiting processes. The table shows the most significant factors of each of the interviewees' answers and the target was also to show the similarities and differences of the recruiting methods of the participants' companies. As one can see from the table and as mentioned before, various kinds of co-operation were prominent and only one participant told that they do not utilize any kind of co-operation. Typical recruitment processes varied greatly based on the company. Especially the screening phase of the recruitment process, together with interview process, altered among the participants.

Table 2. Demonstration of current recruiting processes

Question:	Mr. X	Mr. Z	Mrs. C	Mr. B	Mrs A
HR department?	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Co-operation?	-Co-operation with government's employment agencies	-With HR and managers	-Co-operation between different departments	-No co-operation of any kind	-Yes, especially in the screening processes
Typical recruitment process:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different employment centers handle the screening - face-to-face interviews - makes the final hiring decision himself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plenty of effort into screening - pre-screening together with HR and manager - manager makes the final decision of a new hire - targets also sleeping candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st step of interviews handled by managers only, 2nd phase, HR comes along - HR & managers make the job description together - likes to include different kinds of test into interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no official HR professionals used - job description → job advert → screening → interviews → hire - the process is done by Chain manager with the help of a store manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HR handles the screening - Always has co-operation between HR & Department managers

4.2 The use of digitalization/digital tools in recruiting

The second theme was to focus on the use of digital tools and digitalization in the recruiting processes of the interviewees' companies. The author tried to discover their current use of these tools, and if not used, whether there were reasons for not using them. The author also wanted to discover the interviewees' opinions about the positive and negative sides of using these kinds of tools. What was meant by using digital tools and digitalization was the use of tools such as video interviews, social media, and the use of applications. There is a more detailed explanation of these tools in Chapter 2.4.

The smaller companies in the participant group had not used digital tools or digitalization in their recruiting processes. Mr. B said that for them there had not been an actual need to use them. Interviews had been held using the face-to-face method and usually they had not had such large applicant pool that they would have needed to cut down time by using video interviews. Mr. X mentioned several reasons why they had not used any digital tools. To begin with, they were not actual professionals in the recruiting world and they liked to rely on the help from the employment centres. Secondly, he believed that social media sites were not the most professional way to recruit candidates, however, he would be willing to reconsider them as part of the recruiting process in the future. He also saw that this kind of approach might lead into too many applications, and for them it was not the aim. He also said that related to this, he thought that the recruiter would have to specify their job advert really carefully which could also lead into the avoidance of potential candidates applying for the job. As Mr. X and the company were happy with their current recruiting process, for them the step into digital tools without the experience could be a wrong action.

Mrs. C admitted that even though they were a company that invested highly into digitalization, they had not applied it into recruiting processes as much as they had hoped. "The problem that we have noticed is that, for example, when we put job advertisements on Facebook for the summer jobs, we receive more applications than

usual, and this is not the most optimal situation.” She also told that they had used video recruiting occasionally when it was logistically challenging to bring the applicant for an in-depth interview.

Companies A and Z were the most active ones in using digital tools. In Company Z they had had many benefits of using digital tools. “In our company, a lot of weight is put on the applicant’s LinkedIn profile. Especially when we are headhunting and targeting on “sleeping candidates” that we would like to hire, LinkedIn has a valuable role. We also use video interviews quite frequently since we are a global company and in many situations, it is logistically easier to organize a video interview.” Mrs. A told that they have similar kind of use applied to their recruiting process as Company Z. “Video recruiting is one way that we are currently utilizing. We tend to have large applicant pools and using it saves plenty of time. It also helps logistically in those cases when we receive applications from other parts of Finland. We also use social media sites to tell about our open positions, and I think it is an efficient way to reach at least younger applicants.”

Company Z was the only one that actively used LinkedIn and other social media platforms in their job posting. Company C had experimented with it in some vacancies, but the experiences were still not at a satisfactory level. In the next part, there are detailed opinions of the positive and negative sides of these digital tools.

Mr. Z had the most positive reaction among the participants. “Actually I cannot think of any negative sides in it. All the tools will work fine if the tools are used effectively and if the value of them is understood correctly.” Mr. Z believed that when used correctly, these tools could accelerate the progress and make it more versatile.

The other interviewees had slightly more reserved opinions. Mrs. C said that “To sum up, I think some digital tools can make recruiting more efficient but the companies using them have to be sure that these tools are used correctly.” She also said that for a large company like them, it might be harder to apply these kinds of tools since, for example, the use of social media in job posting brings a lot more applications which leads to more time and money used into the recruiting process. Mrs. A also mentioned the negative side of video interviews, which was related to technical difficulties. “In the worst case technical difficulties can ruin your whole day’s

schedule". Despite this she said that video interviews had had a positive effect on the efficiency of their recruiting process. Mr. B also had a divided opinion. He referred to the use of social media platforms as a positive side. Especially when the open position was a basic job without too detailed criteria, he could use them in the job posting. He also said that the use of video interviews could cut down so-called additional interviews. "Many times the person is not the same on the phone and in the actual interview. Thus, with video recruiting we could cut down these unsuccessful interviews and also cut down costs." However, he also mentioned the downside of video interview as for some people video recruiting could be a method that does not deliver the best qualities in the candidate.

The most critical opinion belonged to Mr. X. He said that digital tools were not really for them as they could lead into too many applications, and he believed it would require plenty of time and effort to use these tools correctly and therefore it was not suitable for their company.

To summarise, the interviewees, as seen from (figure 4), had diverse opinions of the positive and negative sides of the digital tools and digitalization. It was interesting that even those companies who were heavily developing their digitalization in their business still did not use it much in their recruiting processes. Out of these companies, Company Z could be stated as a forerunner of these tools and Company X, on the other hand, did not use or believe in them at all. None of the companies had used applications, such as PIIK, in their recruiting processes, mostly due to the fact that in Finland none of them have made a real breakthrough and there is no clear leader in the applications market (chapter 2.4).

Positive and Negative opinions regarding digital tools

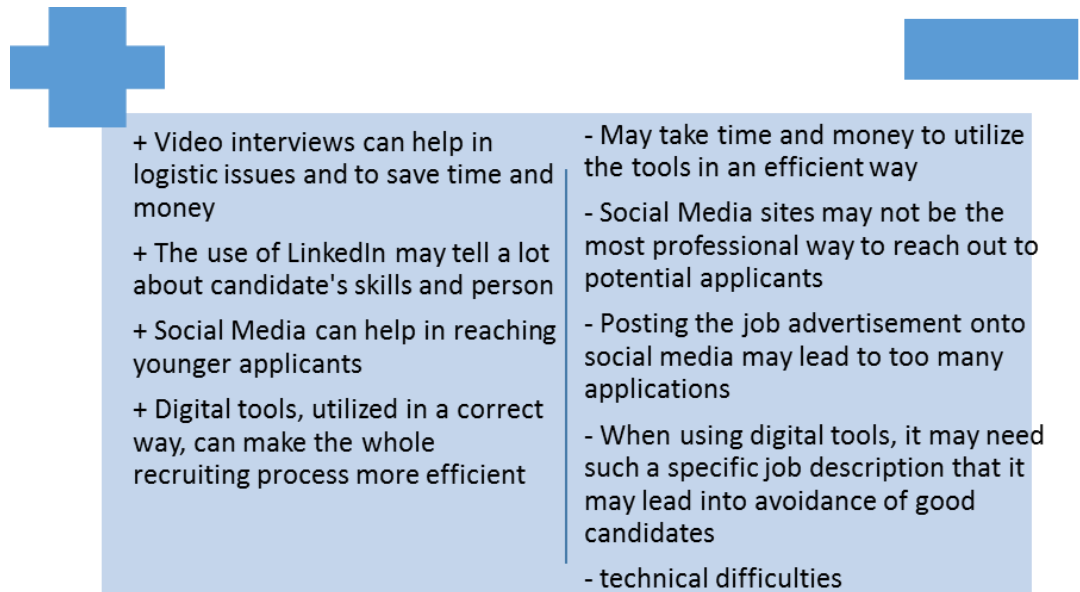


Figure 4. The Positive and Negative opinions regarding digital tools (Interview results)

4.3 Outlook for recruiting practices

In the third and final theme, the author asked for the interviewees' opinions of the outlook of recruiting practices. The interviewees were asked how they believed the recruiting process would change in the next two to five years or whether they believed it would remain the same. The author also inquired whether the interviewees believed that digital tools, such as applications, would take a bigger role in the recruiting world. In the case of an affirmative answer, it was asked whether they thought it could have an effect on the positions of the recruiting personnel.

All of the participants gave the same kind of assumptions about the near future of the processes which were related to recruiting processes. All of them believed that the percentage of video interviews versus face-to-face interviews would grow. "I believe video recruiting will be more and more common in the future and so-called introducing yourself on video accompanied with a CV will be a more common method to apply for a job." "I believe in 5 years the percentage of video interviews will grow significantly". "I think video interviews will become more popular as it cuts down costs and time. In addition, as the world continues to be more and more

globalized, I think video interviews will have an essential part in the recruiting.” The other common statement was that the screening process of applications would be supported or replaced with digital tools. “Also going through the CVs in the first phases of recruiting process could be transferred to a digital process”.

Mr. Z believed that the most significant factor affecting the recruiting processes was the way how the job markets would act. “Is it going to be employers’ market or employees’?” He also believed that the competition would be harder. “There will be more applicants with several degrees and the basic level is not enough. Applicants have to find ways to reach the top 3”. Mr. Z also believed that since nowadays everything is transparent it is important to act professionally on social media accounts when applying for a job. Mr. Z said that he believed an increasing number of people would change their jobs rapidly and digital tools could be the answer for the challenge in this trend. Mrs. A agreed that this kind of rapid change between the jobs would be more common. However, she said that it was already a known fact, and it was important in current recruitments to find employees who were willing to stay in the company. In agreement with this, Mr. Z commented that employers appreciated applicants who displayed clear career development and who did not change their jobs often.

All of the interviewees believed that there would not be any radical changes in HR professionals’ work. Some of them said that digital tools could reduce the weight of HR professionals’ job and it might lead into smaller HR departments. Mr. Z said that in his opinion, it was not the digital tools but the superiors’ effort on recruiting processes that could reduce the HR professionals’ work. “I think the right hires are the most important part of the company’s work. Many superiors think that it is easier to leave the recruiting for HR, but it teaches greatly to the managers as well.

Furthermore, I believe it is peculiar if the superior is not willing to identify who works for him/her. In my opinion, this should be the future of the recruiting process, and if it is, I think it will take out the workload from the HR people, and it may also reduce the size of the HR departments.” Additionally, a potential threat for HR professionals could be the companies that offer part-time-workers. According to Mr. X, he regarded them as a more considerable threat than digital tools.

Mrs. C made an interesting point about digital tools playing a greater part of the recruiting process, "If the tools can bring more efficiency to cut down the sorting work in the future, it might decrease the amount of staff in the HR departments. However, I think HR professionals could also develop into professionals to use these kinds of tools. Nowadays HR mostly handles the software that we use in our recruiting processes, so this could make sense." This meant that she believed that the workload might not reduce, but the job description of an HR specialist could be different in the future.

As for the new kind of applications that have been released to the markets, Mrs C said that these could be more suitable for smaller companies. The representatives of smaller companies that participated in the interviews had a different kind of opinion of this. Mr. X said that he recognized many risks in applications. New kind of services might be useful, however, he would be willing to try them only after thorough understanding how to use them and how to avoid potential loopholes. He also believed that as they did not have to recruit very often (once a year or twice at the maximum), he would leave the use of these kinds of applications to professionals. Mr. X believed that if he used these sort of applications it would take plenty of time because he would have undergo the learning process every time there was an open position in their company. He also had some prejudices against using these kind of applications since, in his view, they could lead to poor decisions when choosing the applicant and for this reason, he preferred traditional methods.

Conversly, Mr. B believed that these applications could be useful. "If we are talking about our company's recruiting, I believe I could fulfil the lack of my recruiting skills with these kinds of tools rather than use HR professionals to support me."

The large companies were inclined to think that these applications were not suitable for them. However, they would consider using them in some vacancies that did not have very many competencies. Mr. Z believed that the highest positions like general managers' would be the last ones to transform to digital platforms. "There are so many competencies that I think it will be hard to specify them into digital criteria."

As the answers showed, it was hard to give perfectly accurate answers to the outlook of recruiting processes. However, there were general assumptions shown by the fact

that none of the interviewees believed in the complete disappearance of HR work. Many of them believed that the workload might decrease, and it could result in some changes in the current duties. Equally, the evolving job market, rapid changes of jobs, and younger generations entering the job market would all have an influence on the HR work.

5 Discussion

5.1 Conclusion

The aim of the thesis was to find answers for the following research questions: *What kind of role does digitalization play in recruiting at present and in the future? And What kind of advantages and disadvantages may digitalization have for recruiting processes?* Due to careful planning of the interview questions and an equally careful selection of the participants, it was possible to form a general understanding of the current use of digital tools in the recruitment processes. The attitudes were also discussed in the thesis, but some participants' lack of knowledge might have affected their attitudes negatively. As the results part shows, the larger the company, the more frequent the use of the digital tools was. However, the research group consisted only of five professionals from five different companies so that this was only a general finding. As introduced in the digitalization chapter, in the United States social media recruiting is quite common, whereas in Finland it does not seem to be as popular. Three of the five companies had been using some digital tools in their recruiting, but the small companies in this study had not. The most popular tools were posting the job in social media (three out of five) and the use of video interviews. As all of the large companies had their own HR department, it might be fair to say that they also had more resources to utilize digital tools. It seemed that the actual HR professionals had a better knowledge of the digital tools and the small companies that did not have an HR department were not very familiar with the digital tools. Another significant finding regarding the use of digital tools was the size of the job applicant group. The small companies in the study usually had small applicant pools as well. This means that it is easier and not as time-consuming to deal with the applicant pool. As the applicant pool becomes larger, more time and

money will go into the recruiting process. Consequently, all of the large companies had used different digital tools to make their recruitment process more effective to decrease the time and money spent on it.

The general attitude towards digital tools was positive. One participant did not find any negative sides in it, while the others were more reserved but still thought that the tools could provide benefits for their future recruiting processes. Even the most reserved participant said that digital tools could make the recruiting process more efficient in the future than it currently was. Another general belief was that video recruiting would be more common in the future than it was now. In general, the participants hoped and expected that the screening process would be more efficient in the future with the help of digital tools. With regard to the negative sides of digital tools, some participants mentioned the technical difficulties and the occasional high number of applicants that using social media might attract. Moreover, some participants said that social media might not be as professional a hiring method as the traditional ones are. However, the general feeling was positive.

One of the main focuses of this study was on the thoughts regarding the use of recruiting applications. In the answers, some of the larger companies' representatives told that they believed that these applications were more suitable for smaller companies. It was interesting to see how different the answers were from the small companies. One was excited to use these applications in the future and thought that the applications would be a major help in their future recruiting. However, another one wanted to leave these applications for the Human Resource professionals as he felt that the applications might be too difficult to use. He continued that their current recruiting process had been successful, and as they did not recruit so frequently there was no need for these applications. As the answers were differing, it would have been interesting to receive more opinions from the small companies in order to find the "winning" opinion.

5.2 Assessment of research process and quality

Reliability and Validity

To establish quality research one has to ensure the study's reliability and validity. Reliability refers to consistency, that is, if the study was re-conducted, the results would be the same. In addition, if the researcher were some other person, the results would still be the identical. There are different kinds of threats that the researcher may face regarding the reliability of the study. To begin with, a feature called participant error means that factors such as having a lunch break right after a complex questionnaire is completed may rush the participant, and the answers may not be as thorough as they could be. Secondly, participant bias may also be a threat to reliability. The researcher should conduct the interview in a closed space instead of an open one, as the participant might give more positive answers when some other person might be able to hear his/her answers. Thirdly, researcher error refers to any factor which alters the researcher's rendition. For example, when conducting an interview it is important to record the answers to avoid this. Additionally, the researcher may also be tempted to allow his own views or characteristic affect the way of interpreting the answers. (Saunders etc. 192).

Validity, on the other hand, refers to the other factor of quality research. There are various forms of validity that have been identified to ensure quality research. Construct validity means that the research measures what it actually should be measuring. Moreover, internal validity refers to the causal relationship between two variables, and external validity tells whether the findings of the research could be generalised to other groups or settings. However, all these three before mentioned validity criteria usually refer to quantitative research. (n.a., 193-194).

Stenbacka (2001) explains more closely the reasons why reliability and validity are not suitable for qualitative study. The concepts used in quantitative study, reliability and validity, are not generally applicable in qualitative research. As qualitative study has the purpose of generating understanding, the use of irrelevant quality concepts lead to unnecessary limitations and to false conclusions of social phenomena. "The basic validity question is whether "the intended object of measurement actually is measured". When using this basic definition, the validity issue has already proven itself useless, according to Eneroth (1984), simply because the purpose in qualitative research never is to measure anything." (Stenbacka 2001.) However, the question remains how to achieve a valid study when conducting a qualitative study. Stenbacka

gives a resolution to this as well. If the purpose is to generate understanding of a social phenomenon it requires two values to be valid. The study is valid, when firstly, the informant is part of the problem area, and secondly, he has the freedom to talk freely according to his own knowledge. (Stenbacka 2001). This means that by interviewing five professionals that have dealt with recruiting and who have shared their opinions freely about the digital tools, the study is valid. The only limitations in the study have been the predetermined questions, however, that is the nature of a semi-structured interview.

Reliability is explained as a measurement of the method's ability to produce the same research result over and over again. Stenbacka (2001) strongly disagrees that reliability is related to qualitative study. "The basic distinction that makes reliability irrelevant is the notion of "measurement method", which is not relevant in qualitative research. Repetitive correctness has value only in research settings dominated by the deductive demand for unconditional intersubjectivity." (Stenbacka 2001.) Thus, instead of using reliability as a measure of quality research, Stenbacka suggests that a thorough description of the whole research process, enabling conditional intersubjectivity, represents high quality research. Saunders etc. also believe that the standard reliability criteria are not suitable for qualitative research. Especially, when conducting an in-depth or semi-structured interview, the value within these interviews relies on the flexibility of the interview structure. Therefore it is not realistic to expect that other researchers would get the same results. (Saunders etc. 382).

Regarding intersubjectivity, the chief constituent in this study was to keep an open mind concerning the results and not to have any prejudices towards the opinions of the interviewees. Furthermore, the fact that all of the interviewees had a long experience from the business world highlights the reliability of the results. However, as the participants consisted of only five interviewees, the results have to be regarded as general findings, and as stated in the data analysis chapter, the data saturation was not achieved. In addition, as the research process lasted almost 18 months, the answers could be different at this date, as the digital tools have become more common. Even though the results are general findings, conclusions can be made about the current status of digital tools used in the recruiting process in

Finland. In addition, it can be deduced that there is a difference between the use of digital tools between small and large companies, and especially the ones that have their own HR department although the results may vary according to the company and the field they represent. (Stenbacka 2001.)

It can be said that this research fulfilled its objective, which was to discover answers to the current status of digital tools used in the recruitment process in Finland. Since there have not been many studies conducted on the subject previously, the research also aimed at discovering some positive and negative influences that these tools may have on recruiting processes. As explained in the chapter above, the reliability and validity measurements are fulfilled in the study, despite some minor concerns. For one, generalizability can be seen as a concern in this study. Due to the fact that the participants' group was modest, the data saturation was not at a satisfactory level. However, as the results show, there were similarities and resemblances in the answers of the participants.

Assesment of Research process and ethics

As mentioned in the previous chapter there are certain factors that weaken the validity, reliability and generalizability of the research. To begin with, the interview group should have been larger as the research failed to achieve full data saturation. Secondly, the topic could have been narrower as the participant group was small and from different sized companies. Thirdly, as told, the process took longer than expected which may affect negatively on the reliability of the results, however, the interviews were conducted as late as during the year 2017. Nevertheless, as the interview process was conducted in a closed space and private location, the answers should be honest which gives credibility to the validity and reliability of the study. In addition, similarities and resemblances could be found in the answers, which indicated possible data saturation. Also, the research was conducted with an open mind and without prejudices or attempts to affect the opinions of the interviewees.

5.3 Suggestions for further studies

Suggestions for further studies is to conduct the research with a more homogenous participant group. It could be interesting to compare the recruiting methods of

companies that are in the same business field, and consequently, the research could also be more comparable. The other suggestion could be to conduct the research from the opposite view point. As these digital tools hopefully keep improving in the future and there will probably be more options in the markets, it could be engaging to conduct research from a job seeker's point of view to see how the job seekers use digital tools, which tools tend to be the best, and which tools are the most challenging ones to use. Furthermore, it could be fascinating to discover which of the applications have led into the future workplace and which not. All things considered, after ten years the answers could be entirely different with the same kind of topic that the author has, and the digital tools could be every company's everyday tools in recruitment. Hence, future research could contain which tools are the ones that are most utilized at that time.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview format

Interviewee information:

Title:

How many years of experience in the field of business:

Organization size:

1.Current recruiting practices (Theme 1)

-Do you have your own HR department in the company?

-Is the HR completely in charge of recruiting? Do you make co-operation between different departments?

-Can tell me about your typical recruiting process?

2.The use of digitalization/digital tools in recruiting (Theme 2)

-What kind of positive and negative sides do you see in digitalization applied into recruiting process?

-Do you utilize any digital services in your recruitment process? If yes in what phases, if not what is the reason behind it

3.Outlook for recruiting world practices (Theme 3)

-Can you tell me about your opinions, how the recruiting process will change in the next 5 to 10 years, or is it going to change at all?

-Do you believe that digital tools, such as applications will take a bigger role in the recruiting world? If yes, is it possible that it could effect on current positions in terms of recruiting positions?

Extra comment: