



Digital Networking and Recruitment: Understanding the Influence of Social Media on Hiring Decisions

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Abstract

Digital technology is one of the factors that has greatly influenced recruitment processes and hiring procedures in the modern-day organizations. In this regard, platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, and X have been used to facilitate recruitment activities, which allow organizations to enhance their professional network and employer branding, as well as communicate more effectively with potential candidates. The emergence of digital networking as part of the recruitment process has enabled recruiters to identify talents easily and assess their professional presence. Furthermore, individuals have also embraced the digital recruitment process by creating a professional image and looking for employment opportunities through social media platforms. In this regard, this study aims to act on how social media influences the recruitment process and its contribution to the comprehensive hiring procedure of modern-day organizations. The study aims to use secondary data to ascertain how social media affects the hiring process. Concerns about using social media to find talent, privacy and online professionalism in hiring, the morality of digital screening, and the reliability of digital information are among the main topics that will be examined.

Keywords: Digital Networking, Recruitment, Social Media, Hiring Decisions, Talent Acquisition, Employer Branding, Human Resource Management.

1. Introduction

The emergence of AI-enabled recruitment techniques and the social media recruitment system have revolutionized modern-day recruitment strategies globally. Social media sites such as LinkedIn, Meta Facebook, Instagram, and X are now not only being employed for networking purposes but have been integrated into modern-day AI-driven recruitment systems to find suitable candidates and evaluate them [1][8][23]. The adoption of AI-enabled recruitment technologies has experienced rapid growth in both advanced and emerging markets. A survey conducted in Indonesia indicated that 95% of 541 HR professionals employ LinkedIn for passive recruitment purposes in 2023 [3]. Research carried out in Turkey in 2025 has shown that 62% of the recruitment specialists make use of social media sites for recruiting employees [4]. According to another study conducted in Poland in 2025, almost 40% of HR professionals have experience with cyber vetting, which is the practice of scrutinizing the online behaviour of the applicants on social media sites [20]. In addition to that, research done in China, Germany,

and Poland from 2023 through 2025 also discovered that many applicants regard cyber vetting and recruitment involving AI as highly invasive and unfair practices [17][19][29]. In fact, many of the respondents were concerned about the absence of transparency, their data privacy, and the use of algorithms that could not be comprehended [19]. Consequently, the increased adoption of artificial intelligence, machine learning algorithms, and recruitment platforms on social media raises an urgent issue of examining their impact on recruiting effectiveness, candidates' views, ethical practices, privacy protection, and organizational decision-making.

1.1. Research Problem

The use of social media in the hiring and selecting process has outpaced the creation of regulations, ethics, and proven techniques. More businesses are using social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to find, screen, and evaluate candidates; however, the reliability of the data gathered from these platforms, their tendency to



create biases, and the consequences for the applicant remain dubious. The effectiveness and moral implications of using social media into hiring procedures will be better understood thanks to this study.

1.2. Significance of the Study

This research review summarises information on social media screening, the practices, risks, and policy design for practitioners. This evaluation of the literature provides scholars with an overview of the field's current state of knowledge and clarifies for job searchers how internet profiles impact their employment prospects. LinkedIn alone connects 5.7 million personnel managers across 1.1 million companies, demonstrating the critical impact that online networking sites have played in the hiring process [1]. Furthermore, the proportion of American workers hired by companies via internet talent searches rose from 4.9% in 1991 to 14.3% in 2022 [2].

1.3. Objectives of the Study

- To determine the extent to which employers use social media for recruitment, candidate selection, and talent acquisition.
- To investigate how self-representation on social media influences candidate perception and ultimately, hiring.
- To evaluate the ethical, legal, and computational implications of social media screening for recruitment reasons.

1.4. Methodology

In this study, a descriptive approach to secondary research is used. Secondary research, as explained by Bryman (2016), involves the analysis and interpretation of information collected and presented by another researcher. Data secondary sources include journals, articles, papers, Human Resources reports, and other professional sources relating to digital recruitment and hiring on social media.

1.5. Limitations to the Study

The study relies on secondary sources and published publications. The focus is narrowed down to only digital recruitment and may not include all traditional recruitment tactics. The findings may differ among industries and organisational settings and availability of current industry data may alter the breadth of the

investigation.

2. Literature Review

This section consists current understanding from five thematic areas. The themes investigate the frequency and patterns of social media use, as well as the practice of cyber vetting, self-presentation, personal branding, and candidate perceptions along with the analysis of algorithmic tools, bias, discrimination, and ethical considerations.

2.1. Presence and Trends of Social Media Consumption in Recruitment

In Indonesia, according to Tirtoprodjo and Sfenrianto (2023), 95% out of 541 HR practitioners use LinkedIn to find and recruit passive candidates [3]. Passive candidates can be defined as employed people who are not looking for new employment opportunities. In another survey by Si et al. (2023) among 427 HR practitioners working in the banking sector in Pakistan, social media was found to enhance recruitment communication, information provision, and hiring efficiency [10]. According to findings of a 2025 Turkish study, about 62% of recruiters regularly utilize social media for various recruitment activities, such as recruitment communication, screening candidates online, and conducting interviews [4]. A 2025 Polish study concluded that 40% of HR practitioners have firsthand experience in using cyber vetting techniques in candidate screening processes [20]. AI-based recruitment solutions are being increasingly used on those social media platforms. Artificial intelligence recruitment tools rely on algorithms and automate different aspects of the recruitment process, including resume analysis, ranking candidates, predicting job fit, and executing other repetitive recruitment tasks [23].

2.2. Self-Promotion and Personal Branding on Professional Platforms

Studies prove that digital self-presentation is one of the most important factors impacting recruiter perceptions and decisions [7]. Self-presentation involves an intentional representation of one's personal characteristics, skills, achievements, and professional identity on the web. Chiang & Suen have found out that recruiters tend to assess person-job fit and person-organization fit according to LinkedIn profile quality, professional description,



endorsements, and communication style [7]. Person-job fit implies the correspondence of candidates' skills to job requirements, while person-organization fit implies the correspondence of candidates' personalities to organizational culture. According to a survey conducted among Indonesian graduates in 2024, candidates actively create digital personal brands through LinkedIn, even those who have little professional experience [31]. Candidates noted that professional profile presentation was crucial for increasing employability and visibility before recruiters [31]. Another survey conducted among Generation Z job applicants in 2023 showed that young candidates opted for authentic rather than overly polished online representation [14]. Nevertheless, recruiters tended to perceive such an attitude as negative [14].

2.3. Cyber Vetting and Applicant Screening

Cyber vetting is the review of freely accessible candidate information on various social networking sites for the purposes of recruiting candidates [6]. Cyber vetting systems supported by AI software evaluate candidate behaviour, communication style, personality characteristics, and online interactions through automatic screening processes [15]. Chinese research performed in 2023 demonstrated that prospective candidates on WeChat, QQ, and Weibo had overall negative attitudes towards cyber-vetting techniques [17]. Most of the candidates felt that online screening methods infringed their privacy expectations and caused more discrimination during hiring [17]. A survey in Germany in 2024 demonstrated that candidates viewed professional online platforms including LinkedIn as relatively more acceptable screening options than personal websites such as Instagram and Facebook [29]. Research also indicated that any perceived invasion of privacy had a significant effect on reducing organizational attractiveness among candidates [29]. Modern recruitment organizations utilize various AI behavioural analytics platforms to perform candidate evaluations. Examples of such tools include HireVue where AI-assisted video interviewing technology analyses candidate communication behaviour and facial expression [23].

2.4. Algorithmic and AI-Assisted Hiring Assistance Tools

AI hiring processes enhance the efficiency of recruiting but may pose dangers of algorithmic discrimination [8][23]. The issue of algorithmic discrimination refers to the ability of AI to negatively impact certain demographic groups through biased databases and flawed algorithms [23]. A fairness-aware ranking method was introduced by Geyik, Ambler, and Kenthapadi for LinkedIn Talent Search as a way of achieving better demographic representation in recruiting searches [1]. The tool helped to achieve three times higher demographic representation without harming recruiting efficiency [1]. The 2024 multidisciplinary study into the use of algorithmic solutions for recruiting stated that AI hiring is likely to reproduce biases inherent in the organizational recruiting history [23]. One notable example is the Amazon recruiting AI system that discriminated against resumes including the word "women's," since the algorithm learned from biased hiring patterns of the past [25].

2.5. Bias, Discrimination, and Ethics Concerns

The application of AI for hiring processes poses various ethical, legal, and organizational concerns. Recruiters who use social media profiling could accidentally gather data about job seekers that have nothing to do with their productivity, such as political views, religious orientation, race, gender identity, and marital status [28]. The use of such data is prohibited in most countries because it goes against discrimination policies and violates procedural justice norms [24]. According to procedure justice theory which stipulates that an individual assesses whether the process is fair, unbiased, open, and consistent, irrespective of the result itself. For instance, in the hiring process, the theory states that the acceptance of hiring results depends on whether the candidates consider the process to be an ethical, accurate, non-discriminating, and respectable. In simple terms, the person hiring should be transparent, predictable, free of bias, and ethically justifiable [9]. In Poland, research carried out in 2024 proved that privacy concerns greatly affected the perception of organizational justice during cyber vetting [16]. It has been shown that candidates tend to distrust



companies using AI-based recruitment techniques because of the lack of predictability and transparency in the process [19].

3. Analysis and interpretation

Based on the reviewed literature, digital networking has greatly affected how organizations recruit and hire employees. From merely being a means of communication, social media has become a powerful recruitment tool for identifying talented people, evaluating professional suitability, and creating an employer brand. The insights from the previous studies show that social media affects not only talent recruitment but also recruiter judgments and candidate employability. This part focuses on how digital networking impacts recruiting through thematic review of the reviewed literature.

3.1. The Use of Social Media in Recruiting and Talent Acquisition

Social media recruitment is described as the process of using social media platforms including LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and X to recruit people to work for an organization. As opposed to traditional modes of recruitment, which were mostly reliant on newspaper ads, consultants, and job applications, digital recruitment allows companies to expand their pool of applicants, save money, and facilitate faster communication [22]. There is empirical proof of considerable global adoption of social media recruiting practices, not only in developed countries but in developing countries too. For example, according to a study in the US, employer-driven proactive searches for talents doubled in numbers over three decades from 4.9% in 1991 to 14.3% in 2022 due to digitalized recruitment systems [2]. Likewise, based on surveying 541 HR professionals in Indonesia, almost all HRs (around 95%) make use of LinkedIn to recruit passive talent through social media platforms [3]. The recruitment process in developing nations has also incorporated the usage of social media platforms. In Pakistan, about 70% of those surveyed among HR professionals working in banks indicated that social media helped improve communication efficacy, candidate engagement, and informative hiring processes [10]. In Turkey, research was carried out in 2025, and it was found that 62% of recruitment professionals use social

media platforms while recruiting people, especially in communication with candidates and behavioural assessments [4]. Similarly, about 40% of HR professionals in Poland admitted participating in cyber vetting using LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram [20]. Further, the findings indicate that LinkedIn continues to remain the preferred social media platform due to its professional nature, along with the incorporation of AI-enabled search tools. Organizations are making increasing usage of AI-based recruiting applications to find out whether a candidate would fit the position being offered. This shows that social media recruitment is now a technology-based talent acquisition practice.

3.2. The Impact of Self-Presentation and Personal Branding on Hiring Decisions

Self-presentation entails a process whereby people actively control how they are represented to others in social and professional settings. Personal branding involves the construction of a professional profile using the internet and includes things such as content creation, accomplishments, networking, communication techniques, and online activities. Recruiters in digital recruiting systems often make assessments of candidates' online profiles prior to interview processes [8]. Evidence suggests that self-representation online plays a considerable role in recruiters' assessment of candidates concerning employability, professionalism, leadership, communications, and organization fit. According to Chiang & Suen, recruiters consider factors related to both person-job fit and person-organization fit through profiles on the website [8]. Person-job fit implies the match between candidates' competencies and job requirements while person-organization fit denotes match between candidates' values and the organizational culture. Candidates who possessed professionally designed profiles complete with summaries, certificates, internships, and industry involvement received more favourable recommendations [8]. LinkedIn profile analysis also provides evidence of recruiters' tendency to evaluate personality of candidates through online behaviour and profile organization. According to Van de Ven et al., it is possible to make accurate estimates concerning an applicant's level of extraversion,



communication confidence, leadership skills, and interpersonal effectiveness through analysing his or her LinkedIn profile [12]. In addition, graduates from Indonesia used LinkedIn as a tool for overcoming lack of work experience [31]. The significance of self-presentation is also elevated since there are recruitment systems that employ artificial intelligence to assess the candidate's profile through their algorithmic ranking system. The assessment includes completeness of the profile, keyword matching, endorsement, networking habits, frequency of activity, and other factors. Online identity therefore can be measured through an employment indicator.

3.3. Cyber Vetting and Digital Screening Trends

The term cyber vetting is used to describe the process whereby employers obtain, analyse, and assess information about candidates from social networking sites with an intention of making hiring decisions. Companies often use cyber vetting to gauge professionalism, communication style, behavioural traits, cultural fit, and possible risks associated with recruiting applicants [6]. According to studies, cyber vetting has emerged as a common recruitment technique across different industries. Nearly 40% of HR experts in Poland admitted having personally engaged in cyber vetting when recruiting or selecting employees [20]. LinkedIn is regarded as the most acceptable site for professional assessment since it deals with career-related information only, while Facebook and Instagram raise more ethical concerns since they deal with personal information. An issue related to the use of cyber vetting relates to the procedural justice theory. Procedural justice theory refers to the idea that an organization's decision-making process needs to be seen as unbiased and consistent for all members of the organization. It has been shown by Vosen that social media screening usually fails procedural justice standards since most organizations do not have consistent procedures regarding how they collect, analyse, and evaluate information from social media websites during the recruitment process [9]. In addition, cyber vetting may lead to the informational imbalance between recruiters and applicants. A study conducted on university students showed that most candidates did

not realize how extensively their social media activity was scrutinized during recruitment [23]. In contrast, HR managers stated that they used social media websites to assess candidates' professionalism, communication skills, ethics, and interpersonal skills.

3.4. AI-Assisted Recruitment and Algorithmic Hiring Software

Artificial intelligence enabled recruitment entails the employment of machine learning models, predictive algorithms, natural language processors, automatic ranking applications, and algorithm-based filters that assist in recruitment and selection processes. Companies have turned to using AI-powered technologies to minimize recruitment costs, enhance recruiting process speeds, and increase the effectiveness of talent-matching endeavours [22]. One of the latest innovations in algorithmic recruitment is the fairness-aware ranking algorithm created by Geyik, Ambler, and Kenthapadi at LinkedIn [1]. This algorithm was developed in order to minimize algorithmic bias without hindering recruiting effectiveness. Algorithmic bias involves discrimination against particular demographic groups when AI algorithms produce discriminatory outputs due to bias in the training data or flaws in algorithm design. LinkedIn's fairness-aware ranking algorithm reportedly generated nearly three times as many representative recruiting results by demographic criteria while retaining recruiter efficiency and happiness [1]. The well-known example concerns the Amazon recruitment experiment where AI tools were found to discriminate against candidates with resumes including "women's" since it was programmed based on discriminatory historical data. This is a vivid example demonstrating that discrimination in AI algorithms may occur due to biased training data [28]. According to Chen, algorithmic discrimination occurs due to the human bias that is present both in data used for training as well as in organizational structures [28]. Explainable AI is the term used to describe AI-based systems that can be audited and their decision-making logic can be explained to humans. Increasingly more organizations are being advised to conduct algorithmic audits and use AI decisions only when combined with those made by humans.



3.5. Ethical Issues, Biases, and Privacy Issues

While digital recruiting enhances effectiveness and convenience, it also entails various dangers related to monitoring, discrimination, violation of privacy, and unethical use of algorithms [28]. Privacy violations are among the key ethical issues posed by social media recruiting. Candidates can be subjected to scrutiny of their photographs, political affiliations, religion, marital status, behaviour, and communication despite the fact that all of the above is irrelevant to their job. Studies have found that while recruiting using professional social networks such as LinkedIn is acceptable for the candidates, recruiting on personal platforms such as Facebook or Instagram is viewed negatively by the candidates [29]. Discrimination and biases also form important considerations for recruitment via social media. Acquisti and Fong showed that contact with demographic markers on social media could impact the recruiting decisions and lead to discriminatory hiring [26]. The Similarity-Attraction bias, which is a preference for those similar to oneself, either in terms of gender, ethnicity, background, or interest, often impacts recruiter decision making while using digital recruitment platforms [18]. A study conducted in Poland showed that invasion perception had a significant impact on how the applicants viewed organizational and procedural justice [16]. Those applicants who perceived themselves to be heavily monitored in their personal online activities did not have much trust in the organization and viewed the organization as less appealing. A lack of transparency, accountability, and fair auditing will allow these recruiting systems to increase inequality rather than eliminate bias. In summary, these studies all point out that organizations need to have transparent recruiting practices, establish ethical boundaries for the screening process, engage in fair auditing procedures, and have humans oversee the use of AI recruiting software.

4. Findings and Conclusion

4.1. Findings of the Study

Objective 1

To determine the extent to which employers use social media for recruitment, candidate selection, and talent acquisition. Findings Based on the study

findings, the trend is growing whereby firms from both the developed and developing world are incorporating social networks in their recruitment processes. LinkedIn was established as a leader in this domain due to its provision of professional profiles, visibility in networks, endorsements, and AI-assisted talent search engines. Literature review revealed that organizations have been using such social networks in recruiting not just as advertising tools but also for passive candidate sourcing, applicant behaviour evaluation, and even employer branding. Indeed, statistical analysis provided substantial evidence for the identified trend. According to the survey data collected, the share of workers recruited by proactive searches grew from 4.9% in 1991 to 14.3% in the United States in 2022 [2]. Also, 95% of the surveyed 541 Indonesian HR professionals used LinkedIn to source passive candidates [3]. Another study conducted among 427 Pakistani HR professionals has shown that social media has substantially increased the efficiency of recruitment communication [10]. Similarly, 62% of respondents working in Turkish recruitment confirmed their employment of social media during the process [4]. Lastly, another study conducted in Poland found out that almost 40% of respondents experienced the use of cyber vetting [20]. The results have highlighted significant disparities between regions when it comes to platform usage. The use of professional platforms such as LinkedIn is seen as being more credible when recruiting because they carry information related to careers, as opposed to personal platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. It is becoming common practice to recruit through social media and automated recommendations from AI.

Objective 2

To investigate how self-representation on social media influences candidate perception and hiring. Findings The results show that employability and recruiter perception are significantly impacted by one's online self-presentation. Candidate profiles are increasingly seen by recruiters as markers of organisational suitability, professionalism, confidence, communication skills, and leadership potential. Social media profiles now serve as



supplements to conventional resumes as a result. According to Chiang and Suen's research, candidates with well-organised LinkedIn accounts were given more favourable hiring recommendations since recruiters linked competence and preparedness for the workplace to thorough self-presentation [7]. Recruiters might deduce personality traits like extraversion and confidence straight from profile content and engagement style, according to studies looking at LinkedIn profile evaluation [12]. The most recent research concerning generation Z job seekers showed a tendency towards using more natural digital personas rather than overly polished personal brands. The reason why candidates favour authenticity is that now their employers seek consistency and reliability rather than the illusion of perfect image construction [10]. Another study carried out among Indonesian graduates has shown that candidates actively utilize LinkedIn profile, certificates, internship experiences, and portfolio descriptions to make up for lack of professional experience [31]. The conclusions of the paper reveal that recruiters do not have positive opinions about job seekers with incomplete profiles. The latter may include lack of professional information, unprofessional photos, inappropriate publicly available information, and low levels of platform activity.

Objective 3

To evaluate the ethical, legal, and computational implications of social media screening for recruitment reasons. Findings These findings have shown that although using AI-assisted recruitment tools speeds up and automates the recruiting process, there are significant concerns about procedural justice, privacy, transparency, and algorithmic prejudice. The fairness and consistency of the recruiting decision-making process is referred to as procedural justice. When evaluation procedures are transparent, unbiased, and moral, candidates typically view hiring procedures as more reputable. Multiple international studies have shown that the attitude towards cyber vetting practices becomes increasingly negative. Studies carried out in China have demonstrated that, due to privacy and ethical issues, candidates searching for jobs via platforms such as WeChat, QQ, and Weibo tend to view cyber

vetting unfavourably [17]. Likewise, studies from Germany and Poland suggested that cyber vetting via personal social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram was seen as more intrusive than via LinkedIn [20]. From the literature, it becomes clear that AI hiring algorithms might unintentionally continue reproducing historical hiring discrimination patterns. As Chen explains, the biased training of these systems would make them hire or discriminate against candidates depending on their gender, race, and social status rather than their abilities [8]. For example, Amazon tried creating its own recruitment system but faced issues after its experimental hiring algorithm began to lower scores for resumes including the phrase "women's" since the system was trained using historically biased data. On the other hand, the literature shows how the AI-based fairness framework helps mitigate issues related to bias. The research conducted by Geyik et al. revealed that fairness-aware ranking used in LinkedIn helped produce results twice more likely to represent a diverse pool of candidates without reducing efficiency [1]. In addition, some organizational constraints in relation to digital recruitment have been revealed. The legal constraint is that it could be a violation of anti-discrimination legislation for employees to obtain sensitive data regarding religious beliefs, race, marital status, or political views. Privacy constraint is created because most candidates are not actively agreeing to their social profiles being reviewed. The constraint with data reliability is created because recruiters cannot authenticate all the data available on online platforms.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the research shows that social networks and AI-based recruitment methods have played a significant role in altering modern recruitment systems. The process of identifying qualified candidates has transformed into a data-driven and networking-driven task characterized by AI-based analysis. From the findings, it is evident that LinkedIn is the most effective professional recruitment platform because of its well-structured profiles, networking opportunities, and compatibility with recruitment tools driven by AI. This assertion is supported by the results obtained from studies



conducted in the USA, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, China, Germany, and Poland which all show that digital recruiting practices have been embraced globally regardless of the economic standing of each country. The study also shows that an individual's online self-presentation significantly impacts recruiters' opinions. Positive online professional identity, well-structured profiles, certifications, endorsements, and active online presence enhance one's perception of employability while the opposite can negatively impact employment. This development suggests that employability is not just about qualifications anymore; it has extended to one's digital identity and branding. However, at the same time, the results have demonstrated that cyber-vetting and artificial intelligence face many ethical and technological barriers in recruiting processes. For instance, problems of privacy violation, procedural justice, discrimination, and transparency were not adequately resolved by recruiting organizations. Artificial intelligence software, based on discriminatory historical recruiting datasets, will still yield discriminatory outcomes if not used within fairness-aware approaches. Conversely, the obtained information suggests that there are several concerns associated with the use of social media recruiting in terms of legality, technology, and management. First of all, companies should verify their compliance with the legislation preventing discrimination and secondly there should be guarantees of the transparency of the evaluation of potential employees. To summarize, the results have shown that artificial intelligence paired with social media creates various advantages for recruiting, such as effectiveness, broad spectrum of candidates to choose from, and rapid recruiting processes. At the same time, the sustainable use of AI in recruiting should consider both technological achievements and ethical considerations.

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