Systematic Literature Review on social media in Employee Recruitment and Selection (2018-2022)

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ABSTRACT: The increasing use of social media in recruitment processes has sparked growing interest in academic literature in recent years. This systematic literature review synthesizes and critically evaluates articles published in indexed journals between 2018 and 2022, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of social media on the recruitment process, identify key trends, challenges, and opportunities, and establish a foundation for future research, and theoretical and practical implications. Platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter have become indispensable tools in the screening and selection stages of recruitment, leading to a fundamental shift in how employers identify, engage, and hire potential candidates. However, concerns related to privacy, bias, accuracy of information, and ethical and legal challenges need to be addressed. To maximize the potential of social media while minimizing risks, further research is needed to develop best practices for employers, recruitment professionals, and social media platform providers.

KEYWORDS: Social media, recruitment process, systematic literature review.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The widespread adoption of social media and advancements in technology have revolutionized the way organizations recruit and select employees (Alarcon et al., 2019; Frączek, 2020). The increased connectivity has made it easier than ever for companies to reach potential candidates, gather information, and make informed hiring decisions (Hosain et al., 2020). Consequently, the use of social media in recruitment and selection has grown significantly in recent years, with platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter becoming essential tools for many organizations, this development has fundamentally changed the hiring process and transformed the way companies find and select employees (Koch et al., 2018; Ariana Emanuela, 2018).

1.2 PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This systematic literature review aims to synthesize the existing literature to answer the following research questions: -What are the key trends in using social media for employee recruitment and selection between 2018 and 2022?

- What benefits and challenges do organizations face when using social media in recruitment and selection?
- How do social media platforms impact the candidate experience?
- What are the legal and ethical considerations associated with using social media in recruitment and selection?

By critically evaluating current research findings, this review identifies current research boundaries, gaps, and opportunities for future research, and provides theoretical and practical implications.

1.3 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This review focuses on articles from indexed journals published between 2018 and 2022, specifically addressing the use of social media in recruitment and selection. As social media platforms and their functionalities evolve rapidly, some findings may become obsolete swiftly. Additionally, the assessment only considers English-language articles, potentially omitting pertinent research in other languages. Despite the increasing interest in employing social media for recruitment purposes, a unified understanding of its effectiveness and optimal practices is yet to be reached (Murire et al., 2020). Some research has deemed social media a valuable recruitment instrument, while other studies have expressed concerns regarding privacy, bias, and the veracity of information from social media profiles (Alarcon et al., 2019; Hosain et al., 2020).

2 METHODS

2.1 SEARCH STRATEGY

We carried out a methodical review of scholarly databases, encompassing Ebsco, Elsevier, Emerald, and Google Scholar, utilizing key terms like "social media," "employee recruitment," "employee selection," "hiring," and "online screening." Additionally, we conducted manual searches of pertinent journals and reference lists from the selected studies. After examining 45 articles, we narrowed it down to 17 articles for the ultimate review, which served as the foundation for the findings to be explored.

2.2 INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

We included articles that met the following criteria:

- Published in the four chosen indexing databases between 2018 and 2022
- Focused on the use of social media in employee recruitment and selection
- Reported empirical research or systematic reviews

We excluded articles that:

- Not in English
- Published outside the specified date range
- Did not focus on the use of social media in recruitment and selection processes

2.3 DATA EXTRACTION AND SYNTHESIS

To address the research questions stated in section 1.2, we extracted data from the included studies. The data extraction process focused on collecting the following details:

- Author (s) and title.
- Publication year.
- Research design.
- Social media platforms investigated.
- The key findings.
- Research gaps.

By extracting this data, we aimed to critically evaluate the current research findings, synthesize the existing literature, gaps and opportunities for future research, providing theoretical and practical implications.

3 RESULTS

Table 1 provides a summary of the articles related social media in recruitment process published in the chosen databases from 2018-2022, along with their main findings and identified research gaps.

Author (s)	Title	Publication Year	Research Design	Social Media Platforms Investigated	Findings	Gaps identified
Kevin E. Henderson	They posted what? Recruiter use of social media for selection	2018	Survey	Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter	Recruiters review applicants' social media (52.6%) for professionalism, work experience, skills, and resume discrepancies. Inappropriate behavior leads to rejection. 49% of recruiters who don't use social media feel it contains irrelevant information, or cite legal concerns and lack of resources.	There is a limited understanding of recruiters' criteria when using social media for screening, and it is unclear how this method fits with other selection techniques. Research is needed to assess the effectiveness of social media screening in predicting job performance, address potential biases and ethical concerns, and provide guidance for organizations to minimize legal risks and uphold ethical standards.
Helle Kryger Aggerholm and Sophie Esmann Andersen	Social Media Recruitment 3.0 Toward a new paradigm of strategic recruitment communication	2018	Reflexive Dialogical Practice	Facebook, LinkedIn,	open source recruitment and shifting employee focus from work to personal life. However, it presents challenges in control, ownership, and power dynamics, requiring organizations to	Further research is needed to confirm the study's findings since it's limited to a single case. Longitudinal studies are required to examine the long- term implications of Web 3.0 recruitment strategies and their integration with overall corporate communication. Additionally, more research is needed on the ethical implications of stealth marketing in recruitment communication.
Tal Ariana Emanuela	The Impact of Social Media on Recruitment	2018	Literature review	LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter,	Social media impacts recruitment in terms of cost, time, access to a large pool of qualified candidates, and competitive advantage. However, ethical and security issues are significant challenges.	More research is needed on the ethical implications of using social media for recruitment, as well as on the impact of social media on specific groups such as women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities. Additionally, research should explore the use of social media in recruitment in different cultural and legal contexts.
Tanja Koch, Charlene Gerber, Jeremias J. de Klerk	The impact of social media on recruitment: Are you LinkedIn?	2018	qualitative research	LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook	LinkedIn is a crucial part of the recruitment process in South Africa, while Twitter and Facebook are used less. Recruiters do not view social media as a cure-all solution to recruitment. LinkedIn is replacing	Study conducted only in South Africa Small sample size and limited to individual recruiters in recruitment companies Need for research on the use of social media by recruiters in corporate companies

Table 1.	Summary table of 17 chosen publications
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Elizabeth C. Alexander, Deanna R. D. Mader, and	Using social media during the hiring process: A comparison	2019	Survey	Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+,	candidates. However, the high volume of candidates from social media, especially LinkedIn, limits effective use of the pool. Recruiters and job seekers have different perceptions of social media content.	Study did not examine in detail the impact of recruitment through different social media platforms Further research needed on the effectiveness of training for recruiters on social media, especially Twitter. Further research is required to understand the users of social media for hiring, their evaluation methods, and job
Fred H. Mader	between recruiters and job seekers	2010	2×2	Instagram, Pinterest, MySpace, SecondLife	 Socially unacceptable behaviors are rated more negatively than acceptable ones. Recruiters may rate certain activities higher than job seekers. 	seekers' social media usage. The influence of industry, position, and organizational factors on post evaluation should be investigated, and guidelines for appropriate social media use for job seekers should be developed.
Marieke Carpen Hoye, and Qing	Recruitment: Communication Characteristics and Sought Gratifications		2x2 between- subjects experiment al	WeChat	and social presence on social media. 2. Relevant info on social media positively affects org attractiveness, but only when social presence is high. 3. Sought gratifications affect how communication characteristics affect potential applicants' attitudes.	External validity is uncertain. Limited generalizability to other contexts or countries. Communication characteristics in different recruitment stages not investigated. No examination of the impact of employees sharing vacancies through personal networks.
Delores Alarcon, Angela Valadez, Anna Waller, Sandra DeGrassi, Heather Staples		2019	Survey	Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn	interpersonal skills and person-organization fit. Positive social media use may be more important than qualifications in some cases. Social media can provide additional information for recruiters, supporting the image theory decision- making framework.	Study only included HR professionals, not providing a balanced perception of hiring. Use of scenarios is a limitation, future studies should focus on practical implementation. Regional bias may exist, future research should include participants from other regions and globally to explore demographic differences. Validity of using social media as a hiring tool, legal implications, and organizational policies require further exploration.

Mushfiqur Rahman, Erhan Aydin, Mohamed Haffar, Uzoechi Nwagbara	The role of social media in e- recruitment process: empirical evidence from developing countries in social network theory		Mixed- methods literature review, triangulate d and qualitative research	Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Myspace	applicants and businesses. E-recruitment in developing countries may use social network theory to manipulate applicants and create barriers.	Further research is needed to examine the negative aspects of e-recruitment in various countries and investigate how institutional theory and social network theory can inform the role of technology and its effects. Additionally, exploring different organizational contexts can provide a more comprehensive understanding of e-recruitment processes.
François L'ecuyer and Claudia Pelletier	Exploration of Social Media Capabilities for Recruitment in SMEs: A Multiple Case Study	2020	Multiple Case Study	Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram	SMEs frequently overlook social media for recruitment and lack structured usage. Recruitment through social media is often informal, involving marketing staff. SMEs face challenges in knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to social media recruitment. The ICEM model can assess SMEs' social media recruitment capabilities.	There is a need to incorporate social media knowledge in recruitment criteria and provide training. Social media usage should be structured in SMEs to benefit from its advantages. Further exploration of the topic in a broader range of SMEs is needed to avoid premature generalizations.
Obrain Murire, Chinyamurindi,	Challenges faced by employers when using social media for recruitment and selection purposes	2020	Systematic Literature Review	Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter	Employers encounter challenges when using social media for recruitment, such as privacy invasion and lack of data supporting information accuracy. Five critical success factors can help overcome these: developing a social media policy, ensuring compliance with laws, training HR personnel, identifying a social media champion, and developing policies for recruitment.	More research is needed on the challenges faced by South African graduates when using social media for employment purposes and how to educate them on the impact of social media in their job search process. Qualitative studies can help gain a deeper understanding of graduates' perspectives, and future research can explore effective methods of education and preparation.
Md. Sajjad Hosain, Abu Hena Mohammad Manzurul	E-recruitment: A Social Media Perspective	2020	Literature Review	Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Snapchat	Integration of social media in e-recruitment	More research is needed on e- recruitment using social media, as this is an under-researched area in HRM. There is a need for further investigation into

Arefin, and Md.					candidates, cost-	the practical implications of this
Altab Hossin					effectiveness, and efficient and timely communication. Pitfalls	integration.
					include potential legal and ethical issues, privacy concerns, and difficulties	
					in managing candidate data. Recommendations for effective and negative	
					consequence-free utilization include	
					developing a comprehensive social media policy, ensuring	
					compliance with legal requirements, training recruiters on best	
					practices, and regularly monitoring and reviewing recruitment practices.	
Adriana Frączek	Social Media in the Employee Recruitment Process	2020	Survey	Facebook	Social media is a popular and increasingly used source of recruitment, with internet users setting up accounts on social networking sites with recruitment purposes in mind.	Study limited to Poland, limiting generalizability to other regions. Self-reporting bias and limited insights due to the use of survey method. No exploration of the impact of other recruitment sources on the effectiveness of social media recruitment.
Nuno Melãoa, João Reisb, c,d	Social networks in personnel selection: profile features analyzed and issues faced by hiring professionals	2021	mixed methods Survey and semi- structured interviews	Facebook, LinkedIn,	non-job related	limited understanding of the specific profile features that selectors assess when using social networking sites (SNS) for hiring decisions, and the lack of insight into the challenges selectors face while utilizing SNS in personnel selection. The study aims to address these gaps by investigating the profile features that influence hiring decisions and identifying the key issues faced by selectors when using SNS for personnel

Robyn Brouer, Rebecca	Social media and	2021	Experiment	LinkedIn	Inconsistent diversity	Few studies have combined
Rebecca Badawy, Michael Stefanone	recruitment: examining (counter) productive diversity messages		conducted		signals had negative effects on perceived organizational attractiveness and organizational agreeableness, leading to a lower likelihood of participants applying for the job. Signaling diversity-related values on corporate websites may backfire for	communication theories with recruitment to examine the link between diversity signals and inconsistent information gathered via social media. Future research can consider other social media platforms and overcome limitations related to assumptions about individuals paying attention to signals from other sources.
Ashutosh	Social media	2021	Empirical	Facebook,	organizations that actually lack diversity. Social media recruitment	Study limitation due to its
Muduli, Jignesh Trivedi,	recruitment and culture: an		study	Twitter, LinkedIn,	is related to pre-hire and post-hire outcomes, and	geographic location, which may not be generalizable to other
Sameer Pingle	empirical study			Instagram	processing, favorable responses, meets timelines, and saves costs. The study found that Indian culture, characterized by high power distance, femininity, collectivism, long-term orientation, and high uncertainty avoidance, supports the adoption of social media for recruitment.	areas. Only measured the perception of recruiters and not the recruitees. Future research can include a comparative effectiveness study of available social network sites. More nuanced approaches can be applied to achieve balanced outcomes in the public sector. Future research can consider both the recruiter and the recruitee to gain a more comprehensive understanding of social media recruitment effectiveness.
Salma Waheed, Abdul Waheed Abdul Majeed	Impact of Social Media on Effective E- recruitment and Selection in Construction Industries of Pakistan	2021	Survey	Facebook, LinkedIn, Rozee.com, Career.co m	SNSs are increasingly used in E-recruitment and selection in Pakistan's construction industries, with Facebook being the most popular social- oriented site (52% of applicants) and LinkedIn, Rozee.com, and Career.com being the most popular business- oriented sites (48% of applicants). The scope of networking is a predictor of effective E-recruitment and selection, with significant influence on	The study is limited to the construction industry in Pakistan, which may not be generalizable to other industries or regions. The research design relies on a survey method, which may introduce self-reporting bias and limit the depth of insights. The study does not investigate the potential impact of other popular social media platforms on E-recruitment.

3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature reveals a growing importance of social media in recruitment and selection processes. Numerous studies have been conducted on various aspects of social media usage in recruitment, focusing on its advantages, challenges, and the different platforms used for this purpose. These studies encompass a range of research designs, includi ng surveys, interviews, experiments, and content analyses. They primarily focus on the use of popular social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter for recruitment and selection, but also explore emerging platforms like Instagram.

3.2 Key Trends

Some key trends identified in the literature include:

- Increasing use of social media for recruitment: More organizations are integrating social media into their recruitment strategies as a means to reach a broader audience and improve efficiency.
- Impact on candidate experience: social media has transformed the way candidates search for jobs, engage with
 organizations, and evaluate potential employers, making the candidate experience more interactive and
 transparent.
- Growing importance of privacy and legal concerns: As organizations increasingly rely on social media for recruitment, privacy and legal issues have become more significant, prompting the need for clear guidelines and policies.
- Integration of social media screening into the selection proces s: Many organizations are now using social media profiles to screen candidates, which has led to ethical and legal debates about privacy and discrimination.

• Emergence of new social media platforms and practices in recruitment: Innovative uses of platforms like Instagram for employer branding and engaging younger job seekers are becoming more common.

3.3 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS USED IN RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Popular platforms for recruitment and selection include LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. LinkedIn is primarily used for professional networking, job advertising, and sourcing passive candidates. Facebook and Twitter are often employed for employer branding, candidate engagement, and job postings (Koch et al., 2018; Ariana Emanuela, 2018). Emerging platforms like Instagram are gaining popularity for showcasing company culture, engaging younger job seekers, and connecting with candidates in creative industries (L'Ecuyer & Pelletier, 2020).

3.4 BENEFITS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Social media offers several benefits for recruitment and selection:

- Cost-efficiency: Advertising job openings and engaging with potential candidates on social media is often more cost-effective than traditional methods, reducing overall recruitment expenses.
- Time-saving: Social media enables recruiters to quickly identify and engage with passive candidates who may not actively apply for jobs through traditional channels.
- Wider candidate pools: Social media allows organizations to reach out to a larger and more diverse audience, enhancing the overall quality of the applicant pool.
 Competitive advantage: Companies that use social media effectively can gain a competitive edge in attracting top talent and building a strong employer brand.
- Better candidate fit: Social media can provide additional information about candidates that may not be available through traditional methods, allowing recruiters to better assess candidate fit for the organization.
- Enhanced candidate experience: Direct communication and engagement through social media can create a more personalized and positive candidate experience.

3.5 CHALLENGES AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The use of social media in recruitment and selection also presents challenges and ethical concerns:

- Privacy concerns: Screening candidates based on their social media profiles may raise privacy concerns and potential discrimination based on non-job-related factors.
- Potential biases: Recruiters may unintentionally form biased opinions about candidates based on their social media profiles, leading to unfair and potentially discriminatory hiring decisions.
- Lack of standardization: The absence of standardized guidelines for social media usage in recruitment can lead to inconsistencies and potential legal issues.
- Reliability and validity of information: The accuracy of information presented on social media profiles can be questionable, making it difficult for recruiters to assess candidates fairly and objectively.
- Ethical and security issues: Organizations must navigate ethical dilemmas and security risks associated with using social media in recruitment and selection.

3.6 IMPACT ON THE CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

Social media has a considerable influence on candidates' experiences during the recruitment process:

- Enhanced accessibility: Social media provides job seekers easy access to postings, employer information, and engagement opportunities, expanding their options and helping them find suitable positions. Improved transparency: Candidates gain insights into company culture, values, and environment through social media, enabling informed decisions about potential employers and career-aligned organizations.
- Expectation for privacy: With social media prevalent in recruitment, candidates expect employers to respect their privacy and avoid invasive screening or inappropriate use of personal information.
- Positive engagement: Direct communication and personalized information create an engaging, positive candidate experience, strengthening employer branding.
- Negative experiences: Factors like inconsistent diversity signaling and intrusive screening can deter job seekers. Companies should ensure fair, transparent, and privacy-respecting recruitment practices.

3.7 LEGAL ASPECTS AND CONCERNS

The use of social media in recruitment and selection raises several legal concerns:

- Invasion of applicant privacy: Accessing candidates' social media profiles without their consent may violate privacy laws, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union.
- Compliance with existing laws: Organizations must ensure that their social media recruitment practices comply with relevant anti-discrimination regulations, such as the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) guidelines.
- Development of social media policies for recruitment: Establishing clear policies and guidelines for social media usage in recruitment can help address privacy and legal concerns, ensuring a consistent and fair approach across the organization.
- Proper training for HR personnel: HR professionals must be trained on the legal implications of using social media in recruitment and selection, as well as best practices for mitigating potential risks.
- By understanding the advantages, challenges, and legal aspects of using social media in recruitment and selection, organizations can effectively harness the power of these platforms to improve their recruitment processes, create better candidate experiences, and ultimately hire the best talent.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 BEST PRACTICES FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Based on the findings from the literature, several best practices can be identified for using social media in recruitment and selection processes:

- Develop a comprehensive social media strategy: Organizations should create a well-defined social media strategy that outlines the platforms, content, and engagement tactics to be used for recruitment and selection. This strategy should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure alignment with the organization's goals and changing trends in social media usage.
- Prioritize transparency and respect for privacy: To address candidate concerns about privacy and potential discrimination, organizations should be transparent about their social media screening practices and respect candidates' privacy. This may include obtaining consent before accessing social media profiles, focusing on jobrelated information, and avoiding intrusive screening techniques.
- Use multiple platforms to reach a diverse audience: To maximize the potential of social media in recruitment and selection, organizations should leverage multiple platforms to reach a wider and more diverse candidate pool. This may involve using professional networking sites like LinkedIn, as well as other popular platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, depending on the target audience and industry.
- Train recruiters on ethical and legal considerations: To ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements and minimize the risk of unconscious bias, organizations should provide training and guidance for recruiters on ethical and legal aspects of using social media in recruitment and selection.
- Monitor and adapt to emerging trends and platforms: social media is constantly evolving, with new platforms and features being introduced regularly. Organizations should be up-to-date with emerging trends and platforms to ensure their recruitment and selection strategies remain effective and relevant.

4.2 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future research in the area of social media in recruitment and selection could focus on the following topics:

- Investigating the effectiveness of newer social media platforms in attracting and engaging job candidates, particularly in specific industries or for specific job roles.
- Exploring the impact of social media algorithms on the visibility of job postings and the diversity of candidate pools, as well as potential strategies for optimizing job postings to reach a wider audience.
- Examining the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in automating and enhancing social media screening processes, including the potential benefits and challenges associated with these technologies.
- Investigating the long-term effects of social media use in recruitment and selection on organizational performance, employee retention, and employee satisfaction.

• Evaluating the effectiveness of different strategies and interventions to address ethical, legal, and privacy concerns in using social media for recruitment and selection.

5 CONCLUSION

The growing importance of social media in recruitment and selection processes has been emphasized through a systematic literature review between 2018 and 2022. Social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter offer numerous benefits to organizations, including cost-efficiency, access to larger and more diverse candidate pools, enhanced employer branding, and increased organizational attractiveness. However, the integration of social media in e-recruitment also presents challenges, including privacy concerns, ethical dilemmas, and potential biases.

To maximize the potential of social media in recruitment and selection while minimizing risks and enhancing the candidate experience, organizations must adopt best practices such as developing a comprehensive strategy, prioritizing transparency, using multiple platforms, and providing training for recruiters on ethical and legal considerations. Future research directions should focus on the effectiveness of new social media platforms, the role of AI and machine learning in the recruitment process, and the long- term effects of social media use on organizational performance and employee satisfaction. Additional research is needed to address ethical and legal concerns, as well as to understand the impact of social media on specific groups and different cultural and legal contexts.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS:

The growing importance of social media in recruitment and selection processes highlights the need for theoretical frameworks that address the benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations associated with social media usage in hiring practices.

The impact of social media on the candidate experience and its influence on the recruitment process warrants further investigation, potentially leading to the development of new theories or models that account for the evolving role of social media in recruitment and selection.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS:

Organizations should develop a comprehensive social media strategy for recruitment and selection that outlines the platforms, content, and engagement tactics to be used, and regularly review and update this strategy to align with their goals and changing trends.

Prioritize transparency and respect for privacy by obtaining candidate consent before accessing social media profiles, focusing on job-related information, and avoiding intrusive screening techniques.

Leverage multiple social media platforms to reach a wider and more diverse candidate pool, adapting to emerging trends and platforms to keep recruitment strategies relevant and effective.

Provide training and guidance for recruiters on ethical and legal aspects of using social media in recruitment and selection, ensuring compliance and minimizing the risk of unconscious bias.

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