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**FACTORS AFFECTING POTENTIAL CANDIDATES DECISION
TO WORK FOR A COMPANY**

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I hereby declare that I have compiled the paper independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors has been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading.
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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to identify whether employer brand, self-development opportunities and social media visibility have effect on potential candidates decision to work for a company and what is the most attractive channel for jobs. In addition, the research combines employer branding, social media, and job channels and has value for employees in their marketing and recruiting process.

Research question is: How does employer brand, self-development opportunities and social media visibility affect potential candidates decision to work for the company and what is the most attractive recruitment channel?

Research uses mixed research methods and data is gathered through online survey. Respondents were highly educated potential candidates from Finland and are part of younger generation. Results are discussed and will show that employer brand, social media visibility and self-development opportunities have an effect on potential candidates decision to work for a company. In addition, social media is found as the most attractive channel for finding information about jobs.

Keywords: Employer brand, recruitment, social media visibility, self-development, potential candidate.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing is no more aimed only for customers only, it is also aimed for potential and current employees. Companies can use marketing tools to attract candidates from the job market. We live in a society where companies fight for attention and developing their employer brand to a direction they want to. In addition, the level of competition between companies for potential candidates is getting more fierce. Companies want to get the best potential candidate for a job. Employer brand is a factor that helps companies in attracting potential candidates and to maintain competitive level in the field. When companies will attract top talent they need to be developed with long-term plans to retain them in the company and to get the best possible performance out of each employee also in the future. Employer branding can be considered as one of the most important marketing tools for a company. Companies want to create and develop an employer brand that has a great perception. Perception is important because it connects the employer brand with people. There are three important factors to successful branding: The product or service must work, customers must believe in the brand and emotional connection with the brand (Thomas, Housden 2017). Marketing and HRM departments are in key role to make this process work. They must work together to create the employer brand and to develop the recruited talent. There are multiple methods in Marketing and HRM but in this research the methods that will be introduced are: Recruiting, Self development opportunities, Employer Branding and Social Media visibility.

The main purpose of the study is to identify what is the importance of different factors when selecting a company to work for. Factors to be investigated are recruiting, employer brand, social media visibility and self-development opportunities. This study will help companies understand importance of these factors and how to be more attractive option in the job market. This information is highly valuable for companies that are recruiting potential top quality candidates. Companies have to know what potential candidates value so they can plan self development opportunities, brand themselves properly and design social media visibility to support employer brand and recruiting

To achieve this the research question is: How does employer brand, self-development opportunities and social media visibility affect potential candidates decision to work for the company and what is the most attractive recruitment channel?

This thesis consists of three parts. The first part of the paper includes literature review, and the second part of the paper consists of empirical study. The third part includes results and conclusion. The literature review covers relevant information about self development opportunities, employer brand, recruiting and social media visibility. Also, previous researches will be introduced. The second part introduces the research method. The data is gathered through internet survey. In addition, it was done by the author and participants answered anonymously in English. The survey was aimed at females and males from Finland who are highly educated and are part of younger generation. The target group consists of persons who are potential candidates and just graduated from university or university of applied sciences or are at the end cycle of their studies from previously mentioned schools. The participants were randomly chosen. Overall 63 people chose to participate. The survey included open ended questions, and closed questions. Finally, the results and conclusion will be given.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

When potential candidate is looking for a job, there are many factors that are affecting the decision to work for the company. For the companies, it is important to learn how to promote the company in a better way to be more attractive for potential candidates. The idea is that companies get the candidates they want and will not lose them to the competition. Marketing is not only aimed for the customers; it is also aimed at potential candidates. Companies must be able to hire top talent candidates to be as competitive as possible. Sometimes, when compromises are made, it might not be beneficial for both of the parties.

From potential candidates perspective, it is important that they understand how the recruitment process works and see the efforts companies are making to hire them. To get better understanding from these factors this literature review will go through: recruiting, employer brand, social media visibility and self-development opportunities. This review will explain each factor separately explaining what these factors are and why these factors are important for employer and potential candidate.

1.1. Recruitment

The competition gets tougher each year and companies wonder how to compete and be more attracting option for potential candidates (Simonen 2011). This means that companies have to focus on being attractive option for potential candidates. HR and Marketing strategies need to be designed properly to avoid recruiting mistakes. Hiring employees that do not have the required skills will have effect on the company's performance. At some point, every company needs to recruit employees to work for them. Recruitment is a critical process for companies which want to hire the best possible candidates. The main purpose for hiring is to increase company's labor force or replace a former employee (Behrenz 2001). According to Bratton and Gold (2003, 221), "Recruitment is the process of generating a pool of capable people to apply for employment to an

organization.” The importance of recruitment process is enormous because at worst, it will only create costs for the company. Poor decisions make the company suffer, when the whole recruitment process must start again. However, if the company follows a recruitment method, the risk is lower (Bratton, Gold 2003, 139).

Recruitment process starts with human resource planning which means that company needs to know what the staffing needs are. There can be internal or external recruiting options; whether to select a candidate from inside the company or to use external candidates. In addition, whether to use internal or external candidates it builds the employer brand. If the company decides to use external candidates, they select a channel where to set up the recruitment.

Companies have to decide in which channels they want to connect with potential candidates and how recruitment affects employer brand. Between the different job channels, companies should choose the job channel that is the most suitable for their needs. The main aim with the chosen job channel is to increase the probability to hire candidates that match with the company’s requirements. In addition, when companies are looking for different candidates, they might switch to an alternate job channel to find something different. Moreover, there are different costs with different job channels (Behrenz 2001). “The image of certain industry or business sector has also strong pull or push factor in the eyes of potential candidates.” (Simonen 2011) Selecting the proper recruiting channels will be vital for companies because in the wrong channels they do not attract the wanted potential candidates.

When potential candidates who belong to the younger generation want to find a job, they most likely will use corporate reputation as a source of information (Cable, Turban 2003, in Sivertzen et al. 2013). Reputation consists of multiple factors and recruiting channel is one of them. Potential candidates are looking for jobs in different platforms (Sivertzen et al. 2013). The options of how to find younger potential candidates are social media, newspaper, job portals, personal offer or having connections to candidates.

Social media is very desired platform for jobs. Social media reaches more talented and qualified candidates than any other channel. Social media can provide much needed boost to employment and also boosts company’s brand awareness. Building a positive image and building a strong employer brand is the aim of social media marketing. Marketing and Human Resource departments have to work together to set up a strategy that they will reach results in terms of finding and hiring

top talent and positive publicity for the company (Sivertzen et al. 2013). Social media is one of the most cost-effective hiring solutions because its free and saves a lot of time (Furu 2011, in Sivertzen et al. 2013). Social media as a recruitment tool needs maintenance and it has to be up to date. Consistency is required because regular updates are helping in attracting new talents. Expectations from potential candidates are higher than in other recruitment channels (Madia 2011). “LinkedIn is a smart choice for most companies, particularly those just starting out in social networks.” (Madia 2011, 22) Using social media gives a signal to the public that company is moving forward and trying to keep up with the future. If companies are not using social media, it might give a signal to the public that there is a risk of being left behind and they might miss out on top quality candidates. Recruiting through social media is a long-term approach. Companies have to consider the usage of social networks as building blocks for a long-lasting online community for finding new talents. This community is more targeted and is serving both proactive and responsive recruiting purpose (Madia 2011).

Newspaper recruiting still has its place as a recruitment method. Newspaper recruiting is a formal method of recruiting because it uses intermediate between the employer and potential candidate (Boxman 1992, in Henkens et al. 2005). Companies that are using newspaper as a recruitment channel are most likely looking for a candidate with years of experience because mostly older people read newspapers. Newspaper recruiting has its perks because it can be used to hire candidates from a certain area, it offers customizable adds and convenience for potential candidates. On the other hand, newspaper recruitment has negative sides to it and these are that less people are reading newspapers, companies are not reaching the wanted candidates and the effort it takes to release the advertisement (Boxman 1992, in Henkens et al. 2005).

Job portal is very popular channel to post job vacancies. It is very fast and easy to post a job opening. The use of online recruitment and job portals have increased, and online recruiting is accepted as a method of recruitment by applicants and employers (Parry, Tyson 2008). Job portals have job posting from almost all industries. The ability to search for job in all industries and all levels of positions is good for candidates. The volumes are high with applicants and with jobs and this is where there are some negatives. There are many candidates applying for the same jobs and the selection process gets more difficult. There are also a lot of companies posting so competition is fierce (Parry, Tyson 2008).

Friends and personal networks are an informal recruitment method (Boxman 1992, in Henkens et al. 2005). This method of recruitment is used in internal recruitment. When selecting a person from pool of potential candidates opinions and recommendations matter. Problem in hiring through connections is that there might be other candidates that are not connected and will be left out from the process. This is a situation where the company might lose important performance. In addition, in some cases when companies know who they want to hire to fill the position, personal offers are made. This especially considers managerial positions. The job offer is custom made specifically to attract the certain person.

After the candidates are selected, company has to figure out a system how to select a candidate to hire. The selection is not easy when behavioral characteristics and attitudes cannot be measured. The fact that choosing the right candidate is crucial, does not make it easier. “Organizations have become increasingly aware of making good selection decisions, since selection involves a number of costs: the cost of the selection process itself, including the use of various selection instruments, the future cost of inducting and training new staff, the cost of labour turnover if the selected staff are not retained.” (Bratton, Gold 2003, 234) The most used way in selection is interview. Interview gives the company impressions of the candidates and gives the company an opportunity to test candidate’s knowledge and skills. Often, the interviewer knows exactly what the company is looking for, therefore meeting the candidates make the selection easier. Nevertheless, selection interviewing can also give poor results if the interviewer asks wrong questions, holds stereotypes, or judges the candidate by first impression (Bratton, Gold 2003, 237). Candidate’s performance can be assessed later and based on results, it can be decided if a new hiring is required to improve performance and the process starts all over again.

1.2. Employer brand

“Employer branding is an activity where principles of marketing in particular the “science of branding” are applied to HR activities in relation to current and potential employees.” (Edwards 2010) Employer brand is a mix of feelings which comes together in how employee sees the company. Employer branding should concern both current and future employees. When organizations manage their employment experience it will create value and will affect the employer brand (Edwards 2010).

Uniqueness is something that companies want to achieve with employer branding because having something that others do not have, will create more value for potential candidates (Edwards 2010). “Central element to employer branding involves the identification of elements of the character of the organization itself; features such as the organization’s key values and the guiding principles underlying how it operates as collective entity.” (Edwards 2010) Companies can modify their employer brand by setting certain values to follow. These values will present what the company is about and what they are aiming to do and therefore will build the wanted employer brand. People have different opinions, and this will never change, but all the opinions can be concluded to employer brand (Edwards 2010). The purpose of employer brand is to build a reputation that helps to attract and retain top talent and to gain competitive advantage (Niskanen 2013). Ambler and Barrow (1996) argue that employer brand is based on functional, economic and psychological benefits. The functional benefit is that employees are working in the company, economical as of salary and psychological is in the feeling of belonging (Ambler, Barrow 1996).

When the competition level is high, employer brand helps to create a distance between companies. This is needed to attract top talent to the company. Employer branding represents the image of the company and the image has been carefully planned and executed. In addition, when employer branding is done correctly, many potential candidates have heard from the brand, have positive experiences or has a positive image and therefore are eager to work for the company. Creating the best possible experience is essential for future employees. Even if there are no vacancies available, there is demand for work. Potential candidates can select from multiple companies where to apply to in the same field and therefore building brand is important. Employer brand will be a factor in the selection process when comparing where to work (Montonen 2014). It takes years to build employer brand, however it is easier to lose the status than building it. Building brand requires multiple actions that will create a positive influence. Actions have more impact than words and in terms of employer brand, actions done in the past have significant impact (Taskinen 2011). Positive impact on employer brand can be attained for example through trainee programmes. Giving training and educating potential top-quality candidates creates an image that the company wants to develop new employees potentially in the long term (Taskinen 2011).

More publicly visible companies have better reputation and therefore are able to create employer brand with more positive attributes and increase the probability of recruiting potential candidates (Montonen 2014). “Potential recruits are more likely to apply for a job at a particular organization that has an existing positive company reputation. The greater a company’s reputation, the more

attractive it tends to be seen by potential recruits.” (Edwards 2010) Profitability can be seen as positive influence on employer brand and every piece of information that will show company’s success or profitability should have positive influence on employer brand. Although profitability and success are key factors in making better employer brand, they are not the only factors. Environmental policies, quality, community and public image are key factors that makes company more attracting to potential candidates (Edwards 2010). Like Edwards suggests, when company wants to be more attractive as an employer, they have to increase corporate advertising (Edwards 2010). This increase in advertising can be done through social media.

Building an employer brand is a sensitive process which must include all company communications, also those which are not targeted at potential candidates. This means that communication which is aimed towards potential customers has to be included in advertisements of company’s products or services in TV or social media (Montonen 2014). Social media is great tool to build employer branding. Most of the potential candidates are present in social media and this means companies have to be present to reach potential candidates (Taskinen 2011). Companies know that effective employer branding will make it easier to keep current employees and to attract younger potential candidates (Backhaus, Tikoo 2004, in Sivertzen et al. 2013). Employer branding is aimed at internal and external audience which means that branding has effects on current employees and potential candidates (Foster et al. 2010, in Sivertzen et al. 2013). The main idea of employer branding according to Sivertzen et al. is to increase employer attractiveness and to improve company’s reputation (Sivertzen et al. 2013).

1.3. Social Media Visibility

Social media is full of advertisements and videos. Its user base is huge which opens up multiple possibilities for companies. Many advertisers are moving more budget to social media marketing (Thomas, Housden 2017). Social media has become the most powerful communication channel. Considering the power of social media companies that are not using social media channels might be left behind in competition. Social media marketing has become one of the most powerful tools to promote company and build its employer brand. Social media changes constantly which means companies have to monitor the situation often. Being able to be part of social media, companies should support change and learn how to adapt to constant change (Montonen 2014). Social media marketing enables companies to find their target audience in recruiting process. They can use

platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram or YouTube to promote vacancies and to build employer brand. These platforms are becoming a must have for companies and it has proven through multiple success stories (Andrews 2012, Hensel, Deis 2010, Jones et al. 2009, in Montonen 2014). “If Facebook would be a country it would be the largest in the world.” (Thomas, Housden 2017) These platforms are the main playing field in social media marketing and presence in all platforms should not hurt companies building their employer brand. Not all use each channel, some potential candidates might use just different combination of these channels. Companies have the opportunity to be present in each of them for free and in best case scenario companies can earn money by promoting themselves. Building employer brand through social media by content creation is effective based on Thomas and Housden because consumers are more likely to trust recommendations rather than promises of advertisers (Thomas, Housden 2017).

Search marketing, social network videos and ads, online displays, blogs, vlogs, email, mobile marketing are tools that social media marketing offers to companies to use. Companies should set up own social media channels to promote their brand. Social media is free to use, and it allows companies to set up their own account easily. Profiles can be set public that everyone is able to see the profile and content within the profile. Social media also enables both companies and potential candidates to find each other. Companies can reach multiple potential candidates and candidates can easily compare companies in social media. This can make the difference in potential candidate’s decision-making process because candidate might find the information, they are looking for from company’s social media account (Thomas, Housden 2017).

As previously mentioned, social media is getting more popular and is expanding. This means potential candidates can look for information about potential jobs. If companies use social media visibility correctly it makes the process for potential candidates very easy because they do not necessarily do not even have to look for the company because the company has found the candidate using social media visibility. There are four factors which are considered as important in social media marketing. These principles are: give out a clear promise, gain trust when promise is delivered, improve your promise and gain competitive advantage by being different (Barwise, Meehan, 2010 in Montonen 2014). These factors guide companies to successful employer branding in social media and therefore will find potential candidates.

1.4. Self-development opportunities

Younger potential candidates' work experience has an effect on what they are looking for when they are applying for a job. Employees with little work experience value different things than those who have longer work experience. Monetary and short-term benefits are things that younger generation tend to value. Instead, employees with longer work experience tend to value career advancement or training (Edwards 2010, Wilden et al 2010, in Montonen 2014). Self-development opportunities are great way to demonstrate that companies want to design the jobs in a way that potential candidates feel motivated to work (Bratton, Gold 2003). Using systems that develops employees shows that companies are seriously invested in employees. These factors are helping companies to retain and develop current employees and to attract new potential candidates (Bratton, Gold 2003). Development opportunities are in important role when building employer brand. Employees tend to tell others how great opportunities they are experiencing, and this means that it has effect on employer brand. Also keeping same employees in the company for a long period of time can be beneficial because companies can develop the employees, the way they want to. This means that the company most likely will use internal recruitment because employees are developed in a certain way so they will move to better positions in time. The aim of the development is to improve employees understanding, time management, problem solving, decision making and taking advantage of opportunities (Bratton, Gold 2003). These qualities are critical in being successful and maintaining a competitive level.

Self-development opportunities help employees to unleash their full potential. In addition, development should improve the future performance. Developing employees should help them in the present and prepare them to the future (Bratton, Gold 2003). Current performance is important, but companies should also plan for the future (Bloisi 2007). Development of employees offers companies competitive edge as a potential employer. Not all companies invest in development opportunities and this might be the deal breaker for potential candidates. Employees are company's most valuable asset and it would be harmful for the company not to develop employees. Gathering different set of skills is valuable asset for a company. This asset should be developed in a way that helps the company in the long run. Signing top talents is the goal and then developing that talent in a way that helps the company and the employer in the future (Dressler 2002).

There are some steps that are included in the process of developing employees and this is called four-stage training model. It starts on the first stage which is analyzing what kind of training needs

the employees have. It is important that development activities are done in the right place where there is room to improve. Assessing current employees training needs is process of pointing out that there is room to improve (Dressler 2002). When company knows where developments needs are, they have to design the development activities, this is the second stage. After the designing phase comes the third phase which is implementing phase where designed activities are implemented in real life. When activities are implemented and done the fourth and last phase is evaluation. By evaluating after implementation companies know if the designed activities were working or not (Bratton, Gold 2003).

1.5. Previous studies

When potential candidates are looking for a place to work, they face a situation where they have multiple companies to choose from. Therefore, it is important to research which factors affects the decision to choose the company. Also, it is important to study which channel is the most attractive for young candidates from Finland. These factors are important to investigate because by using them correctly, companies can compete against others in being more attractive option for potential candidates. These factors are recruiting, employer brand, social media visibility and self-development. The effect of previously mentioned factors indicates if companies should focus on building employer brand using tools like social media, self-development and recruiting. This way, the company will be more attractive option. Thus, investing in employer brand is beneficial (Sivertzen et al. 2013). However, there is a lack of studies in social media within recruiting (Davinson et al, 2011; Madera, 2012; walker et al., 2011 in Sivertzen et al. 2013).

Social media visibility has been studied as a part of building employer brand. The effect of social media visibility as a factor for potential candidate when selecting a place to work has been investigated. The result shows that social media campaigns can help the companies to build a better reputation and social media is a tool that can build employer brand. In fact, multiple factors have positive impact on employer brand and employer brand has connections to attracting potential candidates. In addition, the use of social media affects positively on employer brand. This shows that social media is effective tool in employer branding and recruitment. Employer brand is connected with the decision to work for a company. This supports the results that there is connection between employer brand and potential candidates decision to work for the company. In addition, social media visibility does not help if there is already a positive connection between

employer brand and intentions to work for the company. However, more research has to be done to make results clear (Sivertzen et al. 2013).

In Finland, companies use social media as tool to develop employer brand. Companies use multiple social media channels in different ways to boost their employer brand and attractiveness as a company for potential candidates. Companies are careful that the messages they are sending are connected with facts. Using multiple channels was popular among companies and these channels were part of the plan to boost employer brand and attractiveness. However, potential candidates thought that social media is a great place to find information about companies and employers. For some, there were no significant difference if the company was visible in social media when deciding where to work and it did not make companies to stand out from the competition. It is possible that some candidates find social media visibility irrelevant, but they all knew what it was about (Montonen 2014).

It is important to study more about the impact of these factors, because competition gets tougher for companies and potential candidates every year. Companies have to know how to invest in these factors to be more attractive option for potential candidates. In addition, research about what is the most attractive recruitment channel, is critical for companies to know. They want to find the best possible candidates and therefore companies have to know where to find them.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Methods

Researches can be done in three ways; quantitative research method, qualitative research method and mixed research method (Johnson, Christensen 2016, 84). Quantitative research method is used when research is broader, group is randomly selected and larger. Quantitative research methods use numbers and statistics to prove the point in the research. A part of quantitative research methods is to test the set hypotheses. The opposite of quantitative research methods is qualitative research methods which uses words instead of numbers (Brannen 2005). In addition, it uses smaller sample sizes and more deep analysis of understanding about motives and desires. In qualitative research methods, using interviews is preferable because the sample sizes are smaller. Often in qualitative research methods, the target group is selected by specific standards. The last research method is mixed research methods. This method is combination of both qualitative research methods and quantitative research methods. It takes advantages of the strengths of both methods (Johnson et al. 2007, in Wisdom et al. 2012). This research uses mixed research methods, because qualitative methods is used to get deeper understanding about the topic and likert scale is used to get a numerical result. Target group can be broad, but it is narrowed down to small number of participants.

2.2. Sample

The sample in this research is part opportunity sampling.” Opportunity sampling takes advantage of whatever unfolds as it unfolds” (Patton 1990). The convenience sampling method was used. The survey was posted on closed social media chat rooms. The chat rooms will remain unnamed in this research. Since this questionnaire was posted on chat rooms where most of the members are highly educated, this means that participants have graduated or studies at university or

university of applied science. The main field of studies for participants were business related. Survey was open for seven days and it gathered 63 anonymous answers. From the respondents, 43 were male and 20 were female. Goal was to reach at least 100 responses with different education backgrounds from respondents who are from Finland and are part of younger generation. Young generation in this study consists of people who are from 20 to 35 years old. The goal was only partly reached as 63 responses was gathered with all participants from Finland with at least education level of university of applied sciences. Most of the participants are educated in the field of business. This enables to study more specific group of potential candidates. Having more participants from different educational backgrounds would have given more depth to the gathered data and research.

2.3. Data gathering

The purpose was to gather information for companies what potential candidates value when they are selecting a place to work. This includes importance of employer brand, social media presence of the company, recruitment channel and development opportunities. Participants were not directly chosen but places where the survey was posted was carefully planned because the most important factor was to reach audience who have education and are part of younger generation. It was important to reach wanted target group. This target group was selected because it is important to gain information about younger generation and their values in job finding process. Companies will get information about what potential candidates value in the company when looking for a job and participants. Younger generation was selected because they are most likely potential candidates at this moment. Members of other generations are still too young and data wouldn't be relevant or too old and perhaps not potential top-quality candidate. Companies prefer just out of or almost out of school candidates with master's or bachelor's degree.

This research included a survey which had 12 questions and the survey was made by the author. There was multiple choice questions and open-ended questions. Language of the survey is English, and participants were required to have knowledge of English (Appendix 1).

First part of the questionnaire considers most attractive channels of getting information about job offers and how much employer brand affects the decision to work for the company. The second

part of the questionnaire focuses on social media presence and employer brand. Third part considers development opportunities and how participants want to develop at work.

Lastly, the demographical information was asked in the fourth part, including gender, age, education and current occupation. Because the members of the target group have to be members of younger generation and highly education, the survey was shared to specific social media channels where most of the members belong to the target group of this research. Like figure 1. shows, from the participants, 10 were 20-22 years old, 18 were 23-25 years old, 29 were 26-28 years old, 5 were 29-31 years old, and only 1 was 35-37 years old. In addition, 32 participants study or have studied in Universities, and 31 study or have studied in University of Applied Sciences. Finally, when the participants were asked about the occupations, the results showed that majority of them are students. 31 participants answered their occupation to be students, and 23 are students and employed. Only 7 participants are employed, and only 2 people are unemployed.

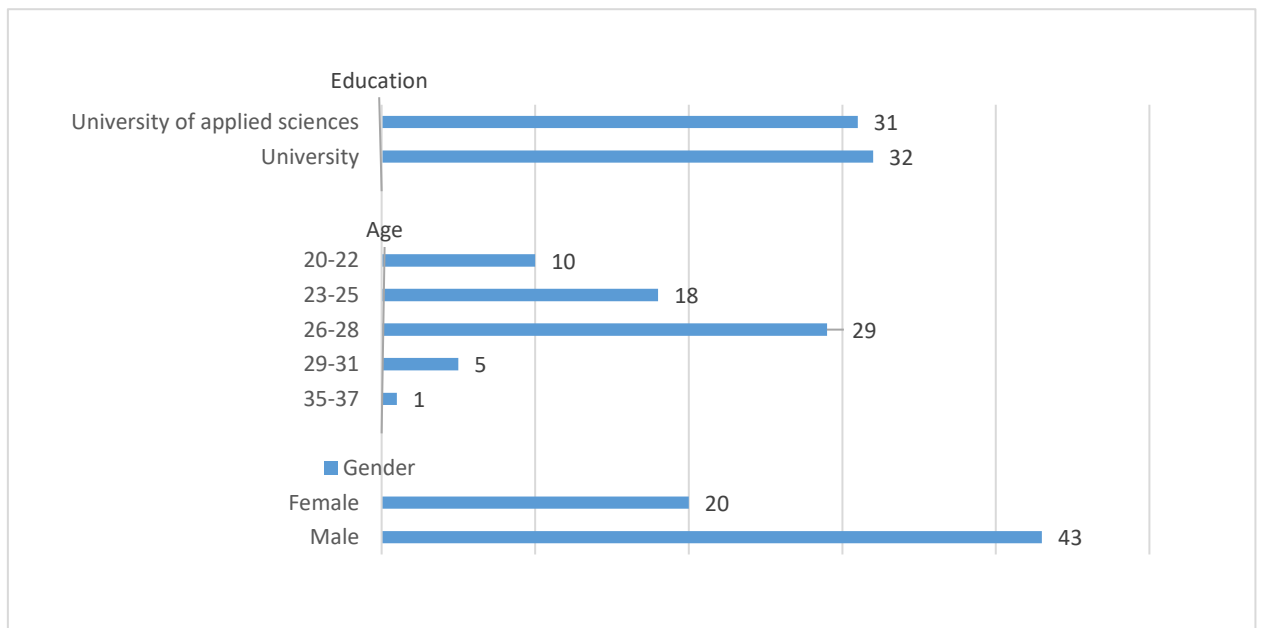


Figure 1. Demographical information
Source: Author's online survey

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study we will research the effects of employer brand, social media visibility and self-development opportunities on potential young candidates decision to work for a company and the most attractive channel for jobs. The effects have been measured with online questionnaire. These factors have been researched to help companies to be more effective and attractive option for potential young candidates as an employer. The results will be shown and discussed in the following

3.1 Results

In the first part of the questionnaire the questions were about attractive channels of getting information about job offers. Respondents would know which channels are preferred by the majority and can focus their hiring through certain channels. This also gives information to candidates which channels are popular and where to look for a job. Results were interesting for this research and shows the dominance of social media. Like Figure 2. shows, there were multiple options including newspaper, job portal, social media, friends or personal network and personal offer by employer. Results show that almost half of the participants, 26 people, thought that social media is the most attractive channel. Job portals were the second most popular channel to get information about job offers with 14 of answers. The least favorite channel is newspaper with 3 answers.

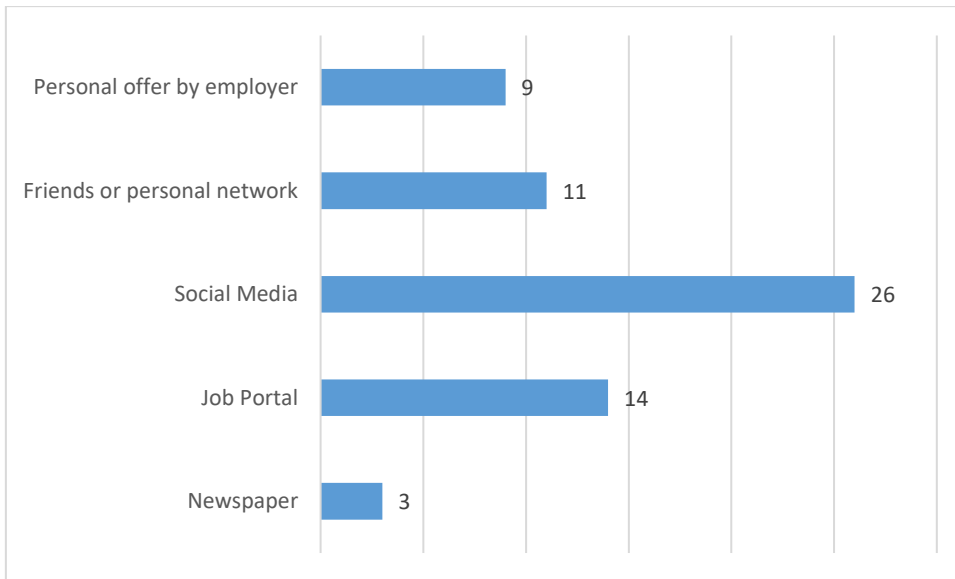


Figure 2. What is the most attractive channel to find information about job offers?
 Source: Author's online survey

Second question was, “Does employer brand affect your decision to work for the company?” This question is in key part in the research and gives answers to both, employee and potential candidate, whether companies should invest and develop employer branding. Figure 3. shows that participants mostly value employer brand and it affects their decisions, but the overall opinion is that it matters, but not that significantly. 10 participants strongly agreed that employer brand effects their decision to work for the company, when 9 participants are not affected at all by the employer brand when they are making the decision to work for the company. Instead, 17 participants feel neutral about the employer brand. The result shows an interesting result: the difference between strongly disagree and strongly agree was only one answer. The results show that most of the participants felt that employer brand affects their decision, but it is not the most important factor.

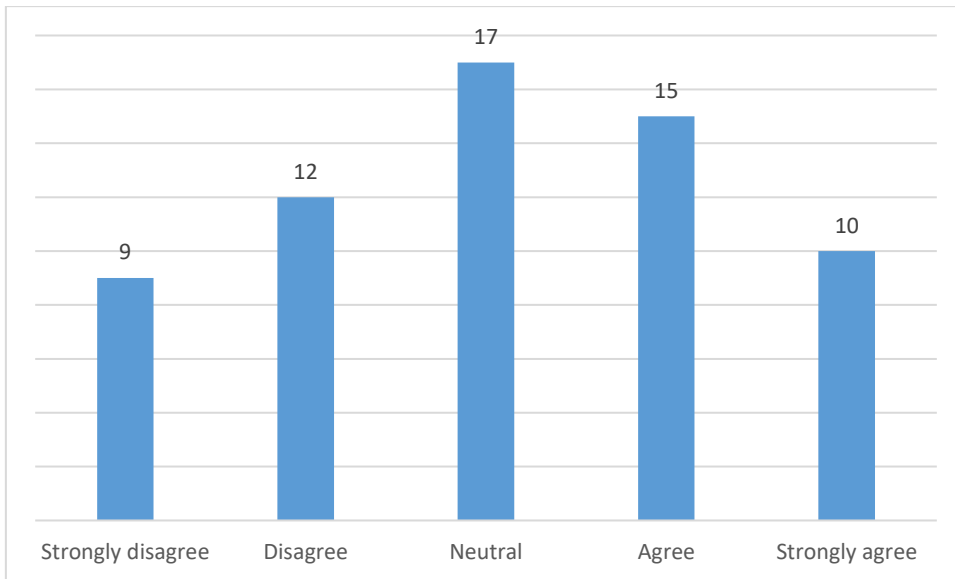


Figure 3. Does employer brand effect your decision to work for the company?
 Source: Author's online survey

In third questions, the respondents were asked does company's social media visibility influence their decision to work for the company. This is key question in the research and measures how potential candidates' value social media visibility. This shows companies if it is worth investing time and resources to building and taking care of social media channels. Like Figure 4. shows, 10 respondents admitted company's social media visibility affect their decision strongly. Vice versa, another 10 respondents are not affected by the company's social media visibility, when they make decision to work for the company. In addition, even 16 people feel neutral about company's social media visibility. Answers clearly show that majority of respondent's value social media visibility. The answers did not have a significant difference between another. As a conclusion, most of the respondent's value social media presence and visibility of the company as a factor in selecting a job.

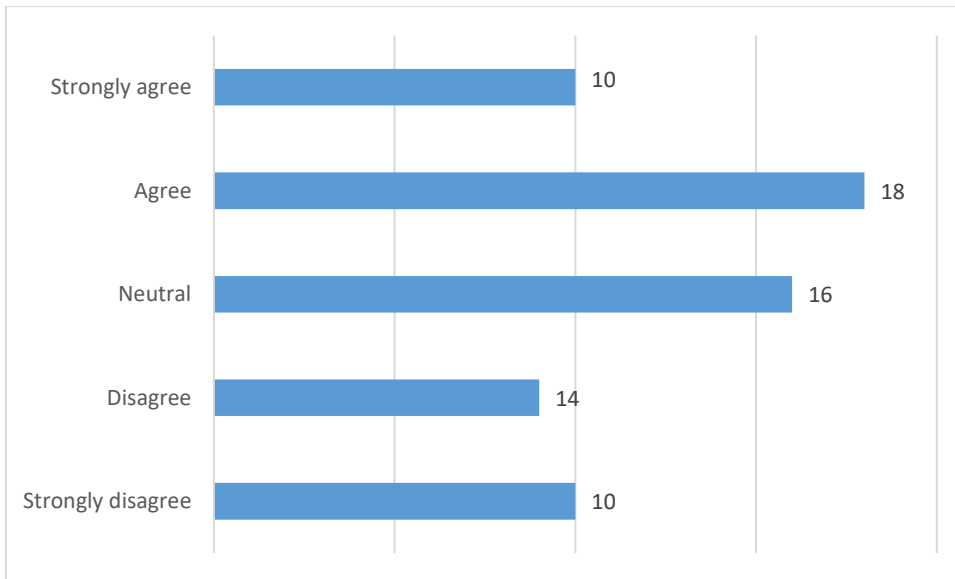


Figure 4. Does social media visibility affect your decision to work for the company?
Source: Author's online survey

In the fourth question, the participants were asked if they think working for a big brand helps them to build a better career. The question was asked to find out the connection between big known brand and employer brand. In other words, the goal was to understand how the size of the company affects employer brand. The answers were divided fairly evenly. 14 participants strongly agree, that working for a big brand helps them to build a better career. 16 participants agreed that bigger brand is important and more desirable option, 15 were neutral and do not exactly know or do not care about the size of the brand and 13 disagreed with the question. However, 5 participants strongly disagreed that big brand helps them to build a better career.

Fifth question was "Do you think self-development opportunities will help you build a better career?" The figure 5 shows that 22 respondents are strongly agreeing that the self-development opportunities help them to build a better career. In addition, 21 people are agreeing that it does help them. However, 10 people feel neutral about its impact, and 7 disagree that it helps them to build a better career. Finally, 3 respondents strongly disagree, that self-development helps them to build a better career.

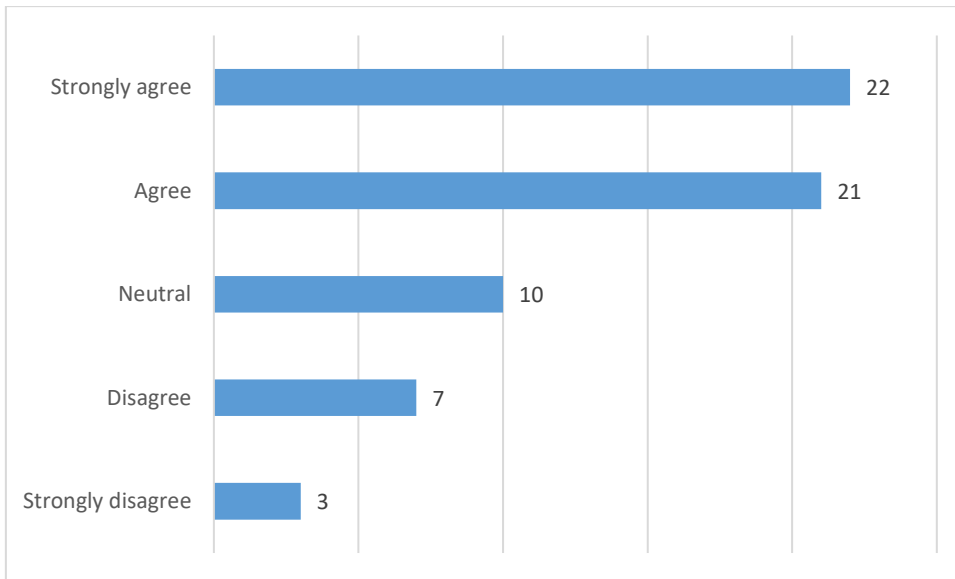


Figure 5. Do self-development opportunities affect your decision to work for the company?
Source: Author's online survey

Sixth question was “How important factor is self-development at work?”. The question was asked to find answers for the companies about how to develop jobs. If the people value self-development, the companies know to plan jobs to attract potential candidates. The result shows unanimous answer: self-development is an important factor. 27 people agree that self-development is very important factor, and 19 people agree that it is important. Only 8 people do not know whether it is important or not. Finally, 9 people do not think it is important.

In the seventh question, the participants were asked how likely they are going to choose a job based on self-development opportunities. Even 25 participants agreed that they are choosing a job based on self-development opportunities, and 11 are strongly agree. 13 of the participants feel neutral about self-development opportunities' impact on choosing a job, when 10 participants disagree, and only 4 are disagree with its impact.

The participants were also asked; how do they want to develop themselves. The question gives important information for companies, to find out how they can plan the jobs for potential employees after they know how they want to develop themselves. The question was open-ended, so that the participants were able to express their feelings. Of course, because the question was open-ended, the answers were totally different. However, a few things stood out. 5 participants wanted to learn to be more patient in customer service. 8 participants want to be more precise at work and make less errors. 6 answered that they want to learn to be more active. 22 wanted to

learn leadership skills, which was the most common answer of all answers. In addition, 10 wanted to learn more professional skills meaning to get more skillful in the job.

3.2. Discussion

We have studied in this research the effects of social media visibility, employer brand and development opportunities on potential candidates decision to work for the company. Also, we have studied the most attractive channels to find jobs. This research has used questionnaire to find out how potential candidates value previously mentioned factors. These factors will help companies in terms of social media marketing, recruiting, human resource development and employer branding. Research questions got answered and also literature review mostly supported the findings. This will be discussed in the following.

Results show that the most attractive channel to find information about job offers was social media. With 26 answers out of 63 respondents, this is a big part of the responses. It is not surprising that these were the results. Job portals was the second most attractive channel. Both of these channels are known to have many users. This can be explained by the fact that social media is very desired platform for jobs because it can easily reach many potential candidates. Relating to the theory results agree that social media is the most attractive channel for jobs. Sivertzen et al. (2013) who supports the fact that social media is the most attractive platform is has similar results than this research. Montonen (2014) had almost similar result in this matter. Montonen found out that companies in Finland like to use multiple channels to post information about the company not only social media because it's the most popular.

Respondents were not clearly disagreeing or agreeing with employer brand affecting their decision to work for a company, this indicates that respondents might not know what employer brand is because the results were not clear. From the results it can be seen that employer brand has an effect, but the opinion is not clear. There is no clear opinion because the answers were divided quite evenly between strongly agreeing and strongly disagreeing. Most support had the neutral option with 17 votes. This means that respondents were not sure does it have an effect on their decision. It was surprising that the answers were so evenly spread out. This indicates that companies should not focus only on employer branding. Sivertzen et al. got results where employer brand was affecting potential candidates decision and Montonen got differing results which were similar than

in this study. His results were more evenly balanced and in Sivertzen et al. they had more clear results of the effect. There were participants who felt that employer brand has no effect on their decision, and it did not make companies to stand out from others.

Social media visibility was considered as a factor that has effect on the decision, but answers were not so clear. Previously when asked which channel is the most attractive for jobs the clear winner was social media and it was expected that the importance of social media visibility would be highly valued. Respondents mostly agreed but there were participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed. Theoretical data supported that social media visibility has effect. In this study we can see that social media is a factor with effect on the decision, but it is not as important factor as others. Montonen also had similar results in his research, stating that in Finland for some employees social media visibility had no difference on the decision choosing where to work. These results support Montonen's results.

The effect of self-development opportunities was considered as the most important factor of all that were included in the study with 22 participants strongly agreeing and 21 agreeing, this is 43 out of 63 responses. It shows the high value of self-development opportunities at work. Based on these results it is clear where companies should focus on. Companies should use self-development opportunities in marketing purposes because it is so highly valued. When comparing results to theoretical data there were some differences. Montonen suggests that younger generations with no working experience tend to value short-term benefits and monetary value, but the results of this research are not similar. Questionnaire of this research did not measure work experience and therefore it is difficult to connect these two results. This suggests that more research has to be done with taking work experience into consideration.

CONCLUSION

This research was done to study what factors affects potential candidates decision to work for a company and which channel is best for information about jobs. For companies this information is valuable because the competition between companies in the job market is getting fierce. The competition for the best possible candidates in Finland is tough and companies have to stand out. The results of this research can be then used by companies to build employer brand and recruiting process in a way that is attractive option for potential candidates.

The aim of the study is to identify what is the effect of employer brand, self-development opportunities and social media visibility on potential candidates decision to work for a company. The research of Sivertzen et. al supports that there is an effect between the potential candidates decision and on previously mentioned factors. In addition, this research will find out what is the most attractive channel to find jobs. It is important to research the topic to help companies understand how they can compete better and be more attractive option for potential candidates.

The main research question is: How does employer brand, self-development opportunities and social media visibility affect potential candidates decision to work for the company and what is the most attractive recruitment channel?

The results shows that employer brand has an effect on potential candidates decision to work the company. Results were slightly in favor of having an effect but there were responses also that employer has no effect on their decision. Although, the results were split quite evenly and neutral opinion had the most answers with 17 out of 63 it can be said that having an effect was more popular opinion. Therefore we can conclude that these results gives answer to the research question: Employer brand affects potential candidates decision to work for a company.

Self-development oppourtunities had significant effect on potential candidates decision to work for a company. Total of 43 out of 63 answers agreed that it has an effect on their decision to work for

a company. Results were expected and not surprising, this indicates that potential candidates from younger generation appreciates jobs where they are able to develop their personal skills. Thus, this answers the research question.

Social media visibility was seen as an factor that has and effect on their decision to work for the company. Respondents valued social media visibility but not that clearly, There were total of 24 answers out of 63 that disageed with social media having an effect and 16 were neutral and had no specific opinion. Results show that social media visibility is an effect which affects potential candidates decision.

When the participants were asked what is the most attractive channel to find information about job offers, the results were clear as expected. Social media was the preferred channel for jobs. Social media had 26 answers out of 63 and the second most attractive was job portals with 14 votes. Social media has become an channel that has been accepted both by candidates and employers to use as a recruitment tool. It was also expected that newspaper was the least popular channel with only 3 answers. It can be concluded that social media is the most attractive platform to find information about job offers.

To conclude the study it is important for companies to understand the effects of these factors. Potential candidates from younger generation prefers social media as a platform to find information about jobs. This is where companies based on the results of this study should be hiring potential candidates from. These factors all have effects on potential candidates decision and companies should not overlook these factors.

For further research, work experience should be included to the study. In this study work experience was lacking and the study found out that work experience also has a place in this kind of research. It is important to study the effect of work experience to be able to find out what the potential candidate values when looking for a job based on their work experience.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

1. Most attractive channel of getting information about job offer

- Newspaper
- Job portal
- Social Media
- Friends or personal network
- Personal offer by employer

2. Does employer brand affect your decision to work for the company?

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

3. Does social media visibility affect your decision to work for the company?

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

4. Do you think working for a big brand helps you to build a better career?

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

5. Do self-development opportunities affect your decision to work for the company?

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

6. How important factor is self-development at work?

1 2 3 4 5

Not important Very important

7. How likely you are going to choose a job based on self-development opportunities?

1 2 3 4 5

Not likely Likely

8. How do you want to develop yourself at work

Long-answer text

9. Gender

- Male
- Female

10. Age

- 20-22
- 23-25
- 26-28
- 29-31
- 32-34
- 35-37

11. Education and field of studies

Short-answer text

12. Current occupation

- Student
- Student and employed
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Entrepreneur