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# **Whether and How does Facebook Facilitate Recruitment Practice**

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## **Abstract**

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With the advancement of the knowledge economy and information age, the traditional channels for information and knowledge exchange can not fulfill the increasing needs of companies' Human Resource Management (HRM) practice. Therefore, it has become a hot topic to find a new stage for transforming information and sharing knowledge. Meanwhile, Social Network Sites (SNS) have made great progress, and changed the way people interact. This research is trying to fill the gap between HRM and SNS, by studying whether and how the specific SNS—Facebook, facilitates the recruitment practice in HRM. In this study, we have bridged the three concepts SNS, Social Capital Theory (SCT) and HRM, by showing the relationship among Facebook, social ties and recruitment. Based on a literature review, we proposed a hypothesis that Facebook has the potential to facilitate users to accumulate social ties, while the social ties are playing important roles in recruitment practice. To verify our theoretical hypothesis, we conducted interviews with one company and four potential job applicants to collect empirical data. After comparing the theoretical and empirical study, we will answer our research question, and around our result, and regard to the potential problems, we will conduct a discussion.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

HR Human Resource

HRM Human Resource Management

SNS Social Network Sites

UX Users Experience

SC Social Capital

SCT Social Capital Theory

HRD Human resource development

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

In the big context of information age, both social network sites (SNS) and human resource management (HRM) has made great change and progress.

The development of HRM is increasingly demanded in order to add value to organizations. This contains the requirement of aligning and linking HRM to the organization's strategic goals and objectives (Garavan et al., 1999). These developing conceptions have inspired the changing role of the HRM practitioner. Firstly, they are facing more sophisticated problems than before such as reform initiatives that are not simply focusing on training programs. (Gilley & Gilley, 2003). There is no need for them to hold all of the related knowledge. They just need to be in a position where they can easily access information. Secondly, HRM has various requirements on the different stakeholders (Iles & Yolles, 2003). It calls for the ability of HRM practitioners to coordinate different interests. Thirdly, HRM must concentrate on boosting their trustworthiness of their function to be considered efficient and effective (Gold et al., 2003). All these changes above forced HRM practitioners to transform their traditional mind to access resource, information, and knowledge sharing. It also requires HRM practitioners to focus on relationships.

As mentioned in the above paragraph, with the continuing growth of knowledge economy and information technology, HRM has made great progress. In practical work, the traditional methods of accumulating information and knowledge sharing can hardly meet the growing needs of HRM (Gubbins & Garavant, 2005). Therefore, it has become a hot topic to find a new stage to transforming information and sharing knowledge, in order to meet the organizations' increasing demands for managing their human resources.



Based on previous literature, we found that there are a lot of studies illustrating the relationship between social capital theories and HRM, and some of them proposed that the accumulation of social capital (SC) can boost the work of HRM (reviewed in following chapter). However, few of them provide specific methods that can facilitate HRM practitioners to accumulate social capital. It lacks a study to directly lead HRM practitioners to exchange information and share knowledge, and foster their social relationships both internally and externally. The blank area happens to be an important field that needs to be researched. In this thesis, we are trying to explore a method which can facilitate the development of HRM, and discover how it affects the specific function recruitment, within the HRM field.

Nowadays, the social network infrastructures have been prevalently utilized by numerous corporations. With the emergence of this comparatively informal information channels, the way social individuals interact has been largely changed. SNS websites are designed to both facilitate the creative new relationships and maintain existing ties (Ellison et al., 2006). As the most popular SNS website world wide—Facebook, as of January 2011, has more than 500 million active users. (Facebook, 2011). Due to the huge user base, the value generated by the exchange of information cannot be over-estimated. Companies generally recognize the wisdom of utilizing the specific SNS website Facebook in their business area. However, some of them are not aware of the possible impact of using Facebook as a tool to improve their own management. Based on the characteristics of SNS, we suppose that Facebook can facilitate promoting HRM practices.

Our study is trying to bridge the gap between the study of SNS and HRM by investigating whether the application of Facebook has the potential to assist specific works in HRM such as the recruitment of staff.

## **1.2 Problem Area**

With the advancement of economic knowledge and the information age, the traditional organizational management tools cannot meet the needs of the development and the changing role of management practitioners which forces them to constantly refresh their management thinking. The growing needs for information forces the management practitioners to seek a

stage to exchange information and share knowledge (Gubbins & Garavant, 2005). As a branch of management, HRM also requires an appropriate tool for facilitating its work.

In this study, we explore the potential role of the specific SNS website Facebook in boosting the recruitment work in HRM, and we are intending to connect SNS and HRM. In the following chapters, we will use theoretical study and empirical study to support our research.

### **1.3 Research Question**

Whether and how does SNS facilitate HRM practices? Specifically whether and how does Facebook facilitate recruitment practice?

### **1.4 Purpose of Study**

Based on our literature review, we found that there are numerous previous studies on SNS and social capital, HRM and social capital. However, few of them explore the relationship between SNS and HRM. Our research will be focusing on this point. From the research of whether and how specific SNS website Facebook facilitates the recruitment practice of HRM, on the one hand we want to provide a reference to HRM practitioners to adopt SNS to improve their work efficiency and effectiveness, and then boosting the process of the overall management across the entire organization. On the other hand, from discussing the applications of Facebook, we also want to provoke thinking of the development of SNS industry about strengthening their users' experience (UX), enhancing their function beyond entertainment or business field to also include organizational management especially in HRM.

### **1.5 Research Delimitation**

Based on the literature review, we found that there is a lot of literature illustrating the relationship between SNS and Social capital, Social capital and HRM. However, the relationships involved only broad aspects. In this study, we will not concentrate on discussing the relationships among SNS, Social capital theory, and HRM. Instead we will focus on

discussing the interrelationship among the typical SNS website Facebook, Social ties theory in Social Capital theories, and the recruitment practice of HRM. Further, due to time span, in this study, we will not explore the specific functions of Facebook in detail.

## 2. Theoretical Baselines

Our research is about the relationship between the application of social network and human resource management. Because it is too broad for our research, we narrow it down and decided to focus on the most popular SNS website — Facebook and the specific recruitment practice of HRM.

With the development of information technology, the ways of obtaining social capital have changed. According to Gubbins & Garavan (2005), there are three key theories of social capital which are respectively Weak Tie Theory, Structure Hole Theory, and Social Resource Theory. In this study, we choose the perspective of social tie theory to construct our theoretical model. To adapt to the intensifying competitive environment, enterprises need to make corresponding adjustments to adapt. SNS can be a valuable tool in both recruitment and job hunting (Granovetter, 1982). Job applicants were able to hunt job much more effectively via their acquaintances, who are in their social tie lists, rather than through than the traditional job listing or employment agencies (Granovetter, 1982).

In this chapter, the theoretical framework presented in this research study is based on previous studies and existing literature, which is used for helping the audience to get a view of the phenomenon when reading the discussion section later on. To show a broader view of this research, the following theories and definitions are probably beyond the scope of the research results and discussions. We hope our research study can provide the basis for informatics application on recruitment within organizations. We also expect that our study can be used as a reference to CIOs and human resources practitioners in their strategic decision making.

### 2.1 Social Capital Theories

Based on existed definitions and theories of social capital from socialists and network theorists, we reference Adler & Kwon (2002)'s definitions of social capital which is related to both internal and external networks:

*"The sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit. Social capital thus comprises both the network and the assets that may be mobilized through that network."*(Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 5)

Another definition is provided by Woolcock (1998) "The information, trust, and norms of reciprocity inhering in one's social networks." (Woolcock, 1998, p. 153).

According to Gubbins & Garavant (2005), the three key theories of social capital are Social Tie Theory, Structure Hole Theory and Social Resource Theory. For providing an overall view of the Social capital theory, in the following paragraphs, we will briefly review the three theories.

### **2.1.1 Social Ties Theory**

According to Phulari et al., (2010), social tie includes two types: weak tie and strong tie. Granovetter (1973) also proposed two types of ties that individuals in a social group use to connect to the internal and external social group. According to Granovetter (1973), weak tie illustrate the phenomenon that individuals in a social group builds connections with external social circles; on the other hand, strong ties refers to the relationships that already existed among the individuals within a social group, and these relationships are typically emotionally intense and contact with each other is frequent. Strong ties usually involve various types of relationships like relatives, intimate friends, and associates. Comparatively, weak ties exist between individuals who belong to different social groups. Here emotion is not close, contact is infrequent, and it's limited one narrow form of relationship. Individuals can use weak tie to keep their inherent, existed social circle, and build a connection with others in internal and external social structure which is not directly associated with them (Granovetter, 1973).

Granovetter (1973) proposed that weak ties often play a role as bridges that connect unrelated social groups and therefore enlarge the network and enable to get benefits such as new

knowledge, information, ideas, and resources which are also less redundant. However, compare with weak ties, knowledge, information, ideas and resources in strong ties spread quickly and filled every corner within the social group, thus, it easily gets redundant, and is less conducive to updated information and knowledge. Because of the characteristics of strong ties mentioned above, strong ties are conducive to strengthen the cohesion and promote the efficiency when implementing a new policy and maintaining the trustworthiness within the social group (Coleman, 1988).

### **2.1.2 Structure Hole Theory**

According to Burt (1992), Structure Hole Theory illustrates the relationships among the social ties. A structural hole supposedly lies between two contacts which have no connection and exist in different networks, and the concept of structural hole explains the existence of ties. (Gubbins & Garavant, 2005). According to Adler & Kwon (2002), structural holes are more important during the early stage of network development as the essential assignments of the network are informational, but at the later stage of network development, more intensely linked, and stabilized, collaborative network connections become more important, because they enable a cost-effective method of obtaining a broader range of information resources. Structural holes are important resources for enterprises features and social foundation and valuable themselves (Ibarra & Smith, 1997)

### **2.1.3 Social Resource Theory**

According to Gubbins & Garavan (2005) the third theory of social capital is Social Resource Theory. Social resources symbolize people's wealth, status, power and social ties which connect them to different individuals (Lin et al., 1981). Social resource theory can help us to analyse whether the structure of the human resource network has the following benefits: increased agility and have greater ability to obtain different types of resources such as information, knowledge, idea, etc; and whether it has become more transparent and gained greater social efficiency and support. (Gubbins & Garavan, 2005). Social resources are essential elements of social capital because they are the resources and the ties that provide access to the benefits (Gubbins & Garavan, 2005). We have explained the theory of weak tie above, according to Lin et al., (1981) it is a fact that weak ties are more likely to enable a

contact to obtain or gain resources required by the crucial individual to execute particular assignments, expressed benefits.

#### **2.1.4 Reasons of Choosing Social Tie Theory**

According to Phulari et al., (2010), there are two dimensions of social capital which are bonding (strong ties) and bridging (weak ties). The first social tie theory has introduced two kinds of social ties which provide the fundamental of the other two theories (structure hole theory and social resource theory). This means that structure hole theory and social resource theory are based on social tie theory.

Based on our literature reviews, we found that social ties allows the HRM practitioners to form and maintain connections with people who come from different social group, therefore, it leads to the development of a bigger and more diverse social network (Gubbins & Garavan, 2005). SNS accumulate social capital through the social ties, which are easier than develop and maintain because of lower cost and convenience (Donath & Boyd, 2004). While, here we will not focus on discussing all the relationships among SNS, social capital and HRM, in the following text, we will present the linkage of social ties theory and specific SNS Facebook, social tie theory and recruitment practice in HRM.

## **2.2 Facebook and Social Tie theory**

By going through the following concepts, hopefully, our audience can get a clear view of the relationship between Facebook and social tie theory.

### **2.2.1 SNS**

- **Social network**

According to Rheingold (2002), a social network is a social structure where each individual (person or organization) is a “node” with social “links” (communicate bridges and social ties)

to other individuals (person or organizations). Rheingold (2002) mentioned that “Nodes” and “links” are both essential elements of social networks. Garton et al., (1997) provide a similar illustration of social network, where according to him, a social network consists of a group of nodes (individual units) which are connected to other nodes (individual units) through certain social ties (relationships), such as family relationships, friendship, co-operation, knowledge sharing, or information exchange (Garton et al., 1997).

From the previous studies, it is clear that the social network cannot be separated from either “node” or “links”. According to Kolvenbach et al., (2005), the interrelationship of “node” and “link” in social networks is that “nodes” in a social network wish for gaining benefits by connecting with others and exchanging experiences. That is to say channels of communication and social relationships enable “social beings” to sharing knowledge and exchange information, and reach the goal of obtaining various goals through the interaction.

### ● Social network sites

Rheingold (2002) has provided a definition of social network sites from a technology perspective which states that:

“human activities that ride on technical communications infrastructures of wires and chips”. (Rheingold 2002, p. xviii)

The operation of social network is the interaction among its members. In the traditional style of social networks, the channels of communication are through face-to-face conversations, sending e-mails, faxing, or making phone calls. With the development of information technology and the diversification of the online social network software resources, the new forms of social network which based on the Internet has overcome the limitations of time, cost and space which the traditional methods (Kavanaugh et al., 2005). It constitutes a new method that enables people to communicate with each other and to gain and exchange the needed knowledge and information.

Nowadays, there are numerous online social network sites which are aimed at different user groups, such as Facebook, Friendster, LinkedIn, Xiaonei, MySpace and so on. Users can maintain existing relationships and start new social ties with others through online social



networks, it also enable users to establish their own page to display themselves and accumulate social capital through adding friends who can leave messages on their page. The online social network site discussed in our research, Facebook , is a typical online social net website to build and maintain social ties, where people can get more information, share knowledge and participate in groups based on similar interests and get to know more details about each other, such as personal, hobbies, etc. In the following section, we will briefly introduce Facebook.

### **2.2.2 Facebook**

Facebook was started in the summer of 2004. Recently, It was reported that it has over 500 million active users who have returned to visit the website in the past 30 days and users spend more than 700 billion minutes every month on the website until 2011 (Facebook, 2011). According to Hart et al., (2008) our daily life has been infused by Facebook, and the typical users browse the site about 20 minutes every day, further, two-thirds of users visit the website more than once per day. It was reported that over 2.5 million websites have built linkages to Facebook and the average growth of new websites integrating with Facebook is 10,000 per day since social plugins were initiated in April 2010. Another reason for its success is that it has special versions for high-school students, and forum aimed specifically at commercial enterprises (Phulari et al., 2010).

We chose Facebook as the representative of SNS websites in our research because of its large user cardinal number. Many of the present academic studies and papers about Facebook are mainly about identity performance and privacy protection issues (Lampe et al., 2007). Other recent research studies on Facebook refer to students' impression of instructors' attendance and self-disclosure temporal models of utilizing the connection between profile formation and friendship articulation (Phulari et al., 2010). According to Hart et al., (2008), Facebook is more popular in the students user group and has important impact on the accumulation of social capital.

### **2.2.3 Relationship of Facebook and Social Tie**

With the development of the Internet, many new methods have emerged with capability of changing the way people connect with each other. The new communication technologies would be more rapidly, convenient and cheaper than traditional channels of communication. They may strengthen the social tie by increasing the frequency of connection and providing supports through communication. Participants establish bonding social ties because of more and more users are willing to share their resources and interests. (Phulari et al., 2010)

According to Kavanaugh et al., (2005), social networks enable people to set up weak ties via different social communities and therefore obtain more social capital from information exchanges based on the establishment of social association. On Facebook, users can create different groups to fulfill the multiple needs of information deliver, emotional support, and file exchanging, and sharing users' status (Wellman, 2005).

The influence of users' friends may stimulate their wish to join social network sites. As a prevalent social network website, Facebook, it is possible to reinforce their social capital through connections with close friends or relatives and unfamiliar friends. The current users might invite their friends to join the community, and through this action they can enlarge their current social network, and increase its diversity in terms of information content. (Chou & Chou, 2009)

Researchers have stressed the significance of the connections built online for the structure of weak ties and strong ties, which are the foundation of accessing social capital (Lampe et al., 2007). New types of social capital and affiliation building could be arising through SNS websites since the connection could be bridged by technologies, such as searching capabilities, photo lists, automatically friends' recommendation (Resnick & Zeckhauser, 2001). Social capital could be gathered via such SNS websites, which strengthen social ties, thus to facilitate participants to build and maintain a larger and more diverse network (Lampe et al., 2007). Facebook is a typical social network site which allows users to keep in touch with others without face to face communication and accumulates social capital. Users might access potential of information through these connections and thus reinforce their social ties.

## **2.3 Recruitment and Social Tie**

In the following sections, we will provide an overall view of the relevant concepts, and finally show the relationship between recruitment and social tie.

### **2.3.1 HRM**

According to Taylor et al., (2008), Human Resource Management is widely defined as “the policies, practices, procedures, and systems that influence the behaviour, attitudes, values, and performance of people who work for the organization.” (Taylor et al., 2008, p. 7)

Storey (2007) illustrate in his article that HRM “seeks to achieve a competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce using an array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques” (Storey, 2007, p. 7). Further, according to Legge (2005), HRM is closely connected to enterprise’s targets, values and tactics and different from other organization’s sections which engages with mutuality, negotiation and maintenance of the characteristics of work. The most impressive feature of HRM is that its connection to the strategic goals of an organization, and this is why HRM is different from personnel management and the relationship among organizations (Heery & Noon, 2001).

### **2.3.2 Brief Introduction to Recruitment**

Recruitment is the practice of enterprise activities (such as selecting recruitment objects, developing the strategies of recruitment, and deciding who does the recruitment and when) that have effects on the number and types of applicants and their judgment on whether to accept job opportunities or not (Chapman et al., 2005). According to Gatewood et al., (2005), there are three primary purposes for recruitment: first of all, coming up with a proper number of candidates while at the same time keeping the cost of recruitment under control; secondly, making sure the enterprise fulfills its legal and social responsibilities with regards to its demographic of personal ; thirdly, assisting the success proportion of the selection work by cutting down the proportion of applicants who are either unqualified or do not have the right skills.

The process of recruitment could be divided into: recruitment objects, recruitment strategy, management of recruitment, and results of recruitment. Firstly, an enterprise needs to figure out the number of applicants they want to attract and the applicant’s skills need to be defined

or clarified. Secondly, they must organize the recruitment activities, arrange the time, place, and the recruitment objects. Then follows the crucial process of the recruitment: sources, personnel, administration, and content. The last process of recruitment is the results: the numbers of applicants, the skills of applicants, the diversity of applicants and how many applicants are final employed. (Gatewood et al., 2005)

### **2.3.3 Relationship of Recruitment and Social Tie**

The applications of SNS to the recruitment practice of HRM start with the basic assumption that nodes (the individuals or the organizations) have linkage to each other. Compared with the relatively formal and traditional channels of recruitment such as job listings and employment agencies, the SNS can be a valuable facilitator in both recruitment and job hunting, especially for high responsibility positions and high-paying jobs (Granovetter, 1982). Demonstrating the advantage of weak ties, job applicants were able to hunt job much more effectively via their acquaintances than the traditional job listing or portal, employment agencies (Granovetter, 1982). As mentioned in a previous paragraph, according to Granovetter (1982), compared with bonding relationships (strong ties), bridging relationships (weak ties) are less likely to be connected to one another. Weak ties come from a higher diversity and lower density network environment, which can offer comparatively less redundant information. However, an actor's set of strong ties would be more densely interrelated, and more possible to provide a higher degree of redundant information. Therefore, through weak ties, organizations can source more diversified candidates; meanwhile, individuals can increase their chances of getting a job.

According to Kanter (1977), weak ties could be effectively applied into a cross-occupational situation. Strong ties can be regarded as the mechanism of "homosocial reproduction" which means the similar actions and positions in organizations. As Kilduff (1990) mentioned, the similarity of actors could strongly influenced the development of social networks, and frequent interaction may lead to "similarity" of for example behaviors and attitudes. Strong ties are correlated to both. Kilduff (1990) found that people who are close to each other, become increasingly similar. Close friends who shared the similar backgrounds and experiences are more likely to become similar with regard to preference, behaviors, and attitudes; and they even tend to interview with similar or even same organizations. From the perspective of organizations, they may also build recruiting networks based on the similarity.

Previous hire acts can be bridges to source candidates with similar backgrounds, and be likely to facilitate the recruiting. HRM practitioners search for those whom they trust (previous hires or existing staff) and who would be suitable for their organizations; likewise, job applicants are also likely to be recommended by their classmates, or other strong ties.

## 2.4 Summary

In this chapter, we discussed the key theories which are relevant for our research. In the first part, we introduced the main three theories in social capital theory: social tie theory, structure hole theory, and social resource theory. And we motivated why we choose social tie theory for our research. Then we provided an overall image to audiences about SNS, and introduced the development of Facebook. Then we discussed the relationship between Facebook and social tie. In the end, we introduced the relevant concepts of HRM and recruitment practice. Then we discussed the connection between recruitment and social tie.

To provide an overview about the relationship among SNS, Social Capital Theory and HRM, Facebook, Social Ties, and recruitment practice, we built a model to illustrate the structure of our theoretical baseline.

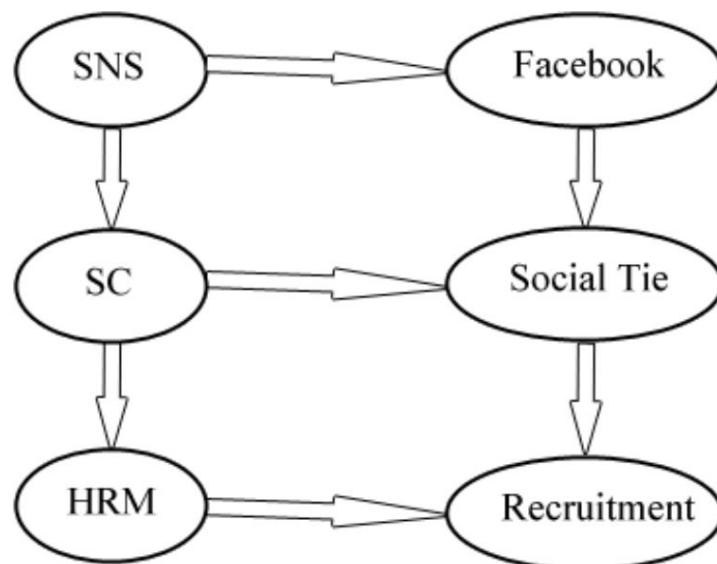


Figure 2.1 Theoretical model

From previous study, we know that a social network is one kind of social tie that connects individuals and groups. Facebook is a typical SNS website to build and maintain such ties, where people may get more information on for example job opportunities. A set of weak ties offer comparatively less redundant information as they are from a higher diversity and lower density network, through which job applicants can receive different job information. A set of strong ties usually have similarity, and companies can more easily source a candidate through recommendations from their staff or former colleagues. According to the theoretical baseline, we infer that SNS can be used as a valuable tool for facilitating the practices of HRM. We will further using an empirical study method to validate the relationship among them, which will be presented in the following text.

## 3. Research Method

The goal of this chapter is to explain the methods we have used for gathering data for the research study. Through the methods, we will convince the reader about the validity of our research. There are many different methods which could be useful for this study. We compared the different methods and made our decision cautiously.

### 3.1 Research Method Selection

There are two methods of research: the qualitative research approach and the quantitative research approach (Cresswell, 2007). A qualitative research approach depends on a scientific description (Kvale, 1997). Since we wanted to get more in-depth answers and information to answer our research questions and according to Kvale (1997), the adoption of qualitative research method is appropriate as it can bring out more information about motivation and emotion.

Our research question is “Whether and how does the specific SNS website Facebook facilitate the recruitment practice.” We intend to getting much more detailed messages and mining much deeper information from our interview with respondents. According to Mason (2002), a qualitative researcher is a proper method in conducting with complicated problems because it can get much more detailed information from the respondents.

Again, our research study begins with the question “Whether and how does the specific SNS website Facebook facilitate the recruitment practice.” Then we came up with a hypothesis that there exists an interrelationship among Facebook, social ties, and recruitment practice.

Creswell (2007) shows the process of designing a qualitative study. It always starts with an issue or a problem. Next, like literature is read which is in some way related to the problem, which leads to the development of a hypothesis. Data is then collected and analyzed and

finally the report is written. It follows the traditional research approach: problem, question, approach, findings (Creswell, 2007).

According to the reasons and evidences above, we decided to conduct our research study using a qualitative approach.

### 3.2 Research Approach

According to Kloos (2006), to reach the goal of our research study, it can be useful to build a research model as a diagrammatic sketch to illustrate our research objective and show the steps of the process of our research work.

This research model illustrates the relation between the theoretical baseline and the empirical study. The literature study introduced the concepts and definitions of the specific SNS website Facebook, social tie theory in social capital theory, and the recruitment practice of HRM. And then we explained the interrelationship among them from the perspective of the theoretical study. An interview with both a company and potential job applicants helps to refine and test the result from two aspects, which explains whether and how Facebook can facilitate the recruitment practice in a real situation.

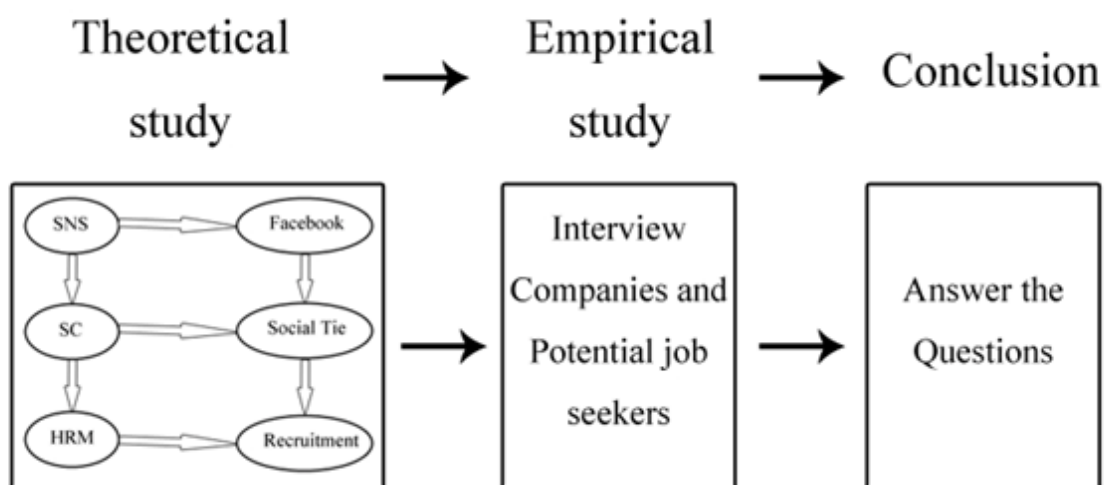


Figure 3.1 Methodology model



### **3.3 Data Collection**

In this study, we intend to link the concept of SNS and HRM through figuring out whether and how Facebook can facilitate the specific recruitment work. To reach this goal, we decide to choose “interview” as our way of data collection. Our purpose is to gain some empirical information from the interviewees who are familiar with HRM and SNS. In the beginning, we planned to conduct the interview via telephone. After taking into account some specific issues such as cost, time, and the possibility of reduce errors when recording the data, we decided to do the interview via E-mail.

#### **3.3.1 Interview Structure**

To enhance the validity of the study, we chose to interview some individuals to gain detailed information (Kvale, 1997).

According to Preece et al., (2002), there are mainly four types of interviews structures: unstructured, structured, semi-structured, and group interviews. The first three types are named according to the degree of the interviewer’s control during the conversation. This research is surrounded by the question of whether social network can facilitate human resources management or not. The interview is going to be used to get an overall impression of this.

In this research, we have chosen to use the structured interview method from which we can obtain empirical information to verify our theoretical hypothesis. In this way, we can follow up the specific questions which are surrounding the topic. The categorized questions are further designed to correspond to the theoretical part. Through this approach, the respondents can gradually further provide in-depth to provide explanations about the relevant question, but not diverge to non-related topics. Hopefully, through the use of a structured interview, we can demonstrate our study in a more systematical, effective and logical way.

#### **3.3.2 Constructing the Interview Questions**

We catalogued the interview questions into 6 parts. Firstly, we designed “personal profile” questions to get a general idea about the background of our interviewees, and ensure our interviewees can provide valuable information to us. Secondly, we designed several questions to get insights from interviewees regarding their opinions about Facebook. Thirdly, the design of interview questions from recruitment perspective is aiming at getting to know the interviewees’ understanding about recruitment practice, and the existing recruitment methods, and job information channels that they use. Fourthly, we hope that by designing questions from the social tie perspective, we can find out our interviewees’ cognition of social ties. That is to say, how they view the relationship between Facebook and social ties, social ties and recruitment. Fifthly, we designed a group of questions to ask interviewees’ direct idea about the relationship between Facebook and recruitment, their opinion of whether Facebook can facilitate recruitment practice. In the end, we hope they can freely provide their own opinions about their vision of the future. (see 3.4 Question Tables)

### **3.3.3 Interviewees**

In this research, we have interviewed two kinds of interviewees, one type is recruitment companies, and another type is potential job applicants. In the first beginning, we interviewed two companies. However, only one company’s data is valid for our research. To address the disadvantage of only having one company interview, we are trying to mine as much information from the interview as possible. We hope that from interviewing these two types of objects to obtain the information, we need to facilitate our research in a comprehensive way.

#### **Company**

Vault is a private-equity firm focused on communications established in 1996. Vault is a content company which provides career information for high-potential professionals and students and also provides rankings of companies/firms (Interview with Vault). The company has about 50— 60 employees (Interview with Vault). Vault.com is the most important part of the company. It is a crucial resource, for over 2.5 million consumers which include both free and pay content. It contains specific information about the job and how to position yourself to maximize your chances. On the website, you can find comprehensive information about the company you want to join and the description of the job. It includes employer profiles,

rankings, industry blogs and news, message boards and education information. Through these profiles, potential job applicants can find the best available career opportunities for themselves. (Vault, 2011)

The mission of Vault is one of the main supplier of information and solutions for professionals and students who are going to find high position careers. To achieve this goal, the website post recruitment information in time and offer advice to candidates which allows them obtain personal success. Vault assists companies in meeting valuable candidates.

### **Potential Job Applicants**

Our interviewee “Person A” who graduated from the college in November 2004, has worked in the ICT industry in Pakistan till 2010, and is now doing his masters in Lund University, majoring in Information Systems. Person A is familiar with SNS, has used Facebook for several years. And now he is facing the employment issue.

“Person B” who has received two bachelors and one master degree in Finland, and has 3 years PHP programmer experience in European countries. Now, he is also a master student in Lund University, familiar with SNS, a Facebook user, and is planning to apply for a job.

“Person C” is now a student at Lund’s University, at the department of informatics. Right now she is doing her master thesis for the master program. She is a frequent Facebook user, and familiar with SNS industry, although she has no work experience in IT field. She has had some working experience from working as a waitress and a bartender in a restaurant. She plans to hunt a job after her graduation.

“Person D” has a BA in Information and Library Management from Manchester Metropolitan University from 2006. She joined the Information System master program at Lund University in 2010. In between she has worked for 4 years, first as an Analyst at a business process outsourcing company and the last 3,5 years as a Research Analyst and later Data Quality Assistant at a global executive recruitment consultancy. She is also planning to hunt a job.

## **3.4 Question Tables**

Table 1 shows our research topics, research questions and interview questions which is designed for interviewing the companies. Table 2 represents the questions to interview the potential job applicants. The following tables will be helpful for readers to clearly understand our research work.

**Table 3.1 Questionnaire for companies**

| <b>Research Categories</b> | <b>Interview Questions</b>   |
|----------------------------|--|
| Company Profile            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the main business orientation of your company?</li> <li>● How many employees work in your company?</li> </ul>   |
| Facebook Perspective       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the purposes of your company building official page in Facebook?</li> <li>● How about the status of the official page? (Can you please briefly introduce your official page on Facebook?)</li> <li>● How about the frequency of the information update in your Facebook page?</li> <li>● What kind of information do you release on Facebook?</li> <li>● How about the interaction between your company and followers on Facebook?</li> <li>● According to feedbacks you received, what kind of information is most welcomed by followers?</li> <li>● By which way, do you think your followers found your page in the beginning?</li> </ul> |
| Recruitment Perspectives   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What channels and methods does your company use in recruitment practices?</li> <li>● How about the frequency of recruitment in your company? (For every year)</li> </ul>  |
| Social ties Perspectives   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do you think the accumulation of social capital can facilitate HRM practitioners' practical work? Can you provide your reasons?</li> <li>● Do you think the application of Facebook can help companies to accumulate social capital? Can you provide your reasons?</li> <li>● In practical work, does weak tie and strong tie important in the process of your recruitment?</li> </ul>  |
| Facebook and Recruitment   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do you think Facebook can facilitate companies' recruitment work?</li> <li>● What the advantages and disadvantages do you think using facebook to facilitate companies' recruitment work?</li> <li>● How about the effectiveness of recruitment with the help of facebook?</li> </ul>   |
| Future                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are you going to do about the application of SNS (social network sites) on HRM? What do you think of other organizations? What's the next action they will take?</li> <li>● Would you like to add anything further concerning the use of Facebook in organization's human resource management?</li> </ul>  |

**Table 3.2 Questionnaire for job applicants**

| <b>Research Categories</b> | <b>Interview Questions</b>  |
|----------------------------|---|
| Personal Profile           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can you please briefly introduce yourself? (education background, work experience)</li> <li>● Can you explain your job expectation?</li> </ul>   |
| Facebook Perspectives      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do you use Facebook? How much time do you spend on it per week?</li> <li>● What are the motivations do you use Facebook?</li> <li>● Do you follow any company on Facebook? (can you explain your reasons?)</li> <li>● What kind of information do you want to receive from the companies' page on Facebook?</li> </ul> |
| Recruitment Perspectives   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What channels do you use to search a job?</li> </ul>   |
| Social ties Perspectives   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do you think the accumulation of social capital can facilitate</li> <li>● Do you think social relationships or social ties can facilitate you to get a job?</li> <li>● Do you think Facebook can help you to get more social ties or social relationships?</li> </ul>  |
| Facebook and Recruitment   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do you ever notice the job information on Facebook?</li> <li>● Do you think the job information on Facebook are reliable?</li> <li>● Do you think the Facebook can facilitate you to hunt a job?</li> </ul>  |
| Future                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Would you like to add any further concerning about the application Facebook in job recruitment?</li> </ul>   |

### 3.5 Data Presentation and Analysis

Before our analysis work, firstly, to ensure the quality of our empirical information, we screened out the invalid data. (But we kept the complete records in appendix part.) During the screening process, we kept the point of view from our respondents, but removed the redundant data; send emails to our respondent to clarify the inconsistency part. Then, we transcribed and condensed the information into a summarized text. At this stage, we transcribed the data selected from the screening process. While doing this, we found that the text became too extensive. To make the text shorter and clarify the main points, we

condensed the text. Thirdly, we compared and combined our summarized theories and empirical data. Thus, the original empirical data can be processed into valuable information.

## **3.6 Research Quality**

It is important to check the work that we have done, and to make sure that the plan had been executed step by step. To reinforce the reliability of our work, we will ensure the validity and focus on the ethics of our research.

### **3.6.1 Validity**

To make sure the validity of our collected data, the work of our interview process needs to be checked again. Firstly, we have read the interview material several times, to make sure that we did not miss any information or misunderstand our respondents when transcribing our data. If the response is ambiguous, we have interviewed them with more supplementary questions, to ensure that their reply is comprehensive and clear.

In this research, we will ensure our validity using the “pattern matching” method. According to Yin (2003), if the pattern of the empirically collected data matches with predicted patterns, the validity of the research could be enforced. The literature shows the theoretical opinion, while the interviews provide the points of actual operation. The method of pattern matching used to check whether the research outcome is similar to the theoretical views or not.

### **3.6.2 Ethics**

As our research uses interviews as the main data collection method, it is important for us to realize the potential ethics issues. According to Israel & Hay (2006), ethical behavior has the benefits on protecting individuals, communities and environments, and offers the probabilities to increase the sum of good.

According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2009), for researchers, four fields are important in ethical guidelines: informed consent, confidentiality, consequences, and the researcher’s role.

Informed consent: it involves the responsibility of informing the researchers about the whole purpose of the research and the main characteristics of the design, the potential risks and benefits and the right to quit the study. In our interview, we sent emails to our interviewee about who we are and informed them about the purpose of our research. After they agreed to accept our interview, we sent them our interview questions and explained the main terms, such as strong tie and weak tie. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)

Confidentiality: it means that private data which identifies the participants will be excluded from the report. Our interviewees agreed to publish the information even if it could potentially identify them. In our interview, we took the way of anonymity to the identities of our interviewees anonymous, even if they agreed to publish the information. Anonymity is a double edged sword in the field of confidentiality. It could be used that keep our interviewees away from being identified sensed on personal information of the data but it also could enable us interpret our interviewees' statements without being denied. Because the requirements of the interviewed company, we have to state the name of their company in our research. Thus, in our thesis, we will only mention the name of the interviewed company. In the interviews of job seekers; we will use A, B, C, and D instead of their names. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)

Consequences: the potential harm and expected benefits from the participants should be addressed. The potential harm to our interviewees should be cut down to minimum. The sum of expected benefits of interviewees and the importance of the knowledge gained needs to be more important than the risk of the harm to the interviewees. It engages our responsibility to the potential consequences for our interviewees and for the larger group they represent. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)

Researcher's role: In this research, the role we played is that we came with the research idea, and proposed the hypothesis. To verify our hypothesis, we conducted a theoretical study and an empirical study. For maintaining the objective of our research, in the process of theoretical study and empirical study, we accurately record the results of our study, and put aside our own subjective bias. Finally, we synthesized and compared the theoretical study and empirical study; and discussed the objective conclusion of our study. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)

## **4. Empirical Information**

In this chapter, we have illustrated the outcomes of our empirical data collection. Considering our research question — whether and how Facebook affects the practice of recruitment, we have built our theoretical model which is about the relationship among Facebook, social ties, and recruitment. For collecting empirical data, we have contacted a U.S company which is professional in the recruitment field, and also interviewed four potential job applicants. In the following sections, we will review our interview outcomes.

### **4.1 Interview with Vault**

The reasons why we chose Vault as our interviewee are that they are experts in the field of applying the SNS on HRM practice. They are familiar with the process of recruitment, have many different information channels and have cooperated with many companies. Vault has a Facebook page aiming at reaching a wider audience online and attracting more users to return and buy memberships to the website (Interview with Vault).

#### **4.1.1 Facebook Perspective**

When Vault first built their official Facebook page, the company tested what kinds of headlines and articles audiences would be attracted. The company has been successful with regard to increasing the followers through contests and promotions. The content of the articles and blogs that Vault released are about career and recruiting advice or industry news (such as banking, accounting and consulting). The most popular information for the audience is topics



involving a hot current event or “Top 10 list of job information”. For the interaction aspect between the audience and Vault, most of the audiences are passive consumers. There are two ways for the audiences to find out about the website: primarily from newsletters and probably from their friends who “likes their page” on Facebook. (Interview with Vault)

#### **4.1.2 Recruitment Perspective**

Vault had investigated that many companies about the channels and methods of recruitment in United States. In our interview, we have asked them about two dimensions of their understanding of recruitment, one from their own company’s recruitment practice experience, another dimension from their investigation of their cooperation companies’ recruitment practice. The informant we interviewed said:

*“campus recruiting is a very important channel for finding candidates in certain industries: banking, consulting, and law are a few examples. There are traditional job boards: referrals from current company/firm employees, their website. One of the questions that we asked on our survey of companies is how they share information with candidates. The most popular responses were their own websites, career centers, social network sites, general job boards.”*

Potential job applicants obtain recruitment information through organization’s websites, career centers, and social media sites and so on. This information can be introduced by referrals through social tie. Regarding to the frequency of recruitment, the interviewee said “Vault recruits on an ad hoc basis—whenever we need to fill a specific slot”. It depends on the requirements of the company.

#### **4.1.3 Social Tie Perspective**

Regarding to the aspect of Facebook on accumulating social capital, the interviewee said “some companies are having success connecting with prospective employees on Facebook, but it is limited to a few specific companies”. Because some candidates think Facebook is their personal space rather than professional, and companies may judge their candidates by their Facebook profile/pictures/etc (Interview with Vault).

The accumulation of social capital does have benefits on HRM practitioners' practical work, but it also brings a series of complications and additional work. As the interviewee said "*The top three reasons that recruiters listed for using social media were: First of all, Promote their organization's employer brand. Secondly, advertise specific job opportunities, and thirdly source potential candidates.*" At the moment, most companies use Facebook for the purpose of promoting their employment brand, or their reputation as an employer. (Interview with Vault)

Both social tie and weak tie are important in the process of recruitment. The interviewee said "*much of recruiting is done through referrals—someone recommending someone else they know through their network (be it a weak tie or a strong tie)*".

#### **4.1.4 About Relationship Between SNS and HRM**

In terms of figuring out the companies' understanding about the direct relationship between SNS and HRM, we proposed a series of questions. In the interview with Vault, we knew that one of the reasons for the connection between recruitment and social networking is the power of information transmission. The impression of the company may be changed by the comments on Facebook. (Interview with Vault) The interviewee said "*Facebook can be used effectively in creating an employer brand and to generate buzz about the company as an employer. However, in terms of sourcing (i.e., finding candidates), I do not think it's the best resource.*" Facebook is beneficial when increasing an organization's reputation, but it also brings troubles to companies. The interviewee said "*Many companies also run into problems with Facebook when they use it as a screening tool. It can create a lot of liability issues—they can be accused of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, marital status, political and/or religious affiliation, etc.*" The informant of the company that we interviewed thinks that Facebook is not a good tool for recruiting compared to LinkedIn. Facebook is used more when recruiting university students and when communicating among students, and it also used for internship programs (Interview with Vault). The communications among students provide potential job applicants' information about what is going on with the company—news, information about highlights of working there, new job openings, and so on. (Interview with Vault)

#### **4.1.5 Future concerns**

Vault has researched other organizations about the next step of the application of SNS on HRM. The interviewee said

*“they're going to try to figure out ways to get candidates to participate in the conversation more rather than being passive consumers of the information...they will be hosting chats via Facebook...they are and will continue to use it for real-time hiring...they will look on Twitter and other sites to find bloggers that have generated a following in their relevant fields...companies will increasingly create formal policies around social media and its use in recruiting to avoid some of the liability issues...Many already have”.*

Considering the current situation of the application of Facebook on organization's HRM, the interviewee said *“companies should not use it haphazardly. They should know what their goals are and create a defined strategy around their goals. To the extent possible, they should try to develop metrics that will help them measure their level of success”.* (Interview with Vault).

## **4.2 Perspective From Potential Job Applicants**

The reasons of choosing person A, B, C, and D as our interviewees are as following:

- All of them are familiar with SNS industry. Because all of them are Informatics master students, they may possess relevant knowledge about this area, thus they can provide comparatively professional opinions around our topic, and could give us more valuable advice.
- All of them are Facebook users. They have used most of the functions on Facebook, so they are able to share their experience with us about the relevant questions around Facebook.
- All of them have work experience. That means they have the experience of applying for a job, and they might be familiar with different job information channels, so that they can share their job application experience.
- All of them have a general idea about social capital and social ties. During the process of our interview, we found that all of our interviewees hold their own opinion about social capital and social ties. This provides a good basis for our research.

- All of them are potential job applicants. In all of their personal profiles they show that they are intending to find a job, and thus they may care about more diverse channels of job information resources.

Based on the reasons above, we believe that our interviewees can provide us comparatively rational and valuable empirical data.

#### 4.2.1 Facebook Perspective

Through our interviews, we know that Person A and Person C spend more than 3 hours per day on Facebook, while Person B and Person D spend less than 1 hour per day. All of them have different degrees of understanding Facebook.

When asked about the motivation they use the Facebook, Person A said *“I use Facebook to meet my friends and family members and get updated about their current status. One more thing which is very interesting is that, the use of Facebook also updates you about the interests of other people.”*(Person A) Both Person C and Person D use it to keep touch with my friends. Person B has no special specific purpose to use Facebook. (Person B)

Both Person A and Person B do not follow any company on Facebook, their reasons of not following companies on Facebook are respectively:

*“Actually Facebook is more likely a place to meet new friends and many professionals use other social media like LinkedIn or Twitter for professional networking or following some companies.”* (Person A)

*“I think facebook is not developed for business use, companies can hardly present themselves properly. For example, consistent product information, services. Navigation is not suitable for business use.”* (Person B)

While Person C and Person D follow a few companies on Facebook, their reasons of following companies on Facebook are respectively:

*“I’m interested to see if they are going to have student events, after works where the students are invited, interesting lectures or if they are looking for new coworkers. It is an easy way to be updated.”* (Person C)

*“I recently liked ICA because well, I’ve always really liked them, I shop there every day. It’s really a cultural institution, their commercials on TV have been the funniest around for at least 6-7 years.”* (Person D)

During the interview, Person A and Person C suggested companies should release different information which can attract more followers, especially job information. *“first of all I will be happy to have information about the job openings at the company, secondly the information about their offerings or the service will be of some use and lastly I will also be interested in knowing the clientele of that company if it is an ICT based and works in the area of product or project development.”*(Person A) *“Information if they have student events, after works where the students are invited, interesting lectures or if they are looking for new coworkers.”* (Person C)

Both Person B and Person D think organizations could post their product information on Facebook, but they have different opinion about the kinds of information organizations should post. *“I think company should maintain their complete information on facebook, I have found many companies only advertise some new products by putting some pictures. Actually people would like to know more about it.”*(Person B) *“I suppose it could be useful if they had product promotions there...If I want information about a company I go to their webpage.”* (Person D)

#### **4.2.2 Recruitment Perspective**

Through asking questions covering the recruitment aspect, we know that our interviewees are using different channels to apply for a job. All of them prefer to use job portals and organizations’ websites when searching for jobs. Person A prefers to apply for jobs through job portals, and visits the corporate websites of different targeted companies to look for job openings. He said the information in professional job portals is classified and much easier to search. While Person B prefers to apply for a job through job agencies or job portals because they can provide much more resources and information (Person B). Person C also uses her

contacts, friends and family working in different companies when searching for job opportunities. Person D sometimes checks Google's jobs.

### 4.2.3 Social Ties Perspective

In this group of questions, we investigated the interviewees' cognition of social ties. It mainly involved their opinions about the relationships between Facebook and social ties, social ties and recruitment. When we asked them "Do you think social relationships or social ties can facilitate you to get a job?" All of their answers are positive, even if their life experience about social ties facilitate recruitment are various. "... *I have an experience when a company was hiring internally. I did apply through one of my social contacts and succeeded to get a job.*" (Person A) Person B does not agree with the opinion that social relationship means more job opportunities. Person C thinks it is a good way for organizations to announce that they are looking for someone and reducing the amount of work for the recruiters.

However when it comes to the question "Do you think Facebook can help you to get more social ties or social relationships?" our interviewees held different opinions on this question.

Person A offered the positive feedback "*Yes, it does. In my opinion, it definitely helps to find out new friends and in some cases some former colleagues. These former colleagues would have been working in some different companies and then there is an opportunity in the context of searching a job through these colleagues.*"(Person A)

Person B and Person D offered a neutral answer. "*Yes, but limited. I think Facebook maintains weak social ties; such social ties are not reliable. So it is better to put energy on correct channels.*" (Person B) "*I wouldn't say get more, but keep the ones you make.*" (Person D)

Person C gave a negative answer. "*No, I don't think so. I think that the website LinkedIn is better in that way. I'm not sure that I want my future employer to see my whole life on facebook, pictures from parties and what my friend have written on my wall and so on.*" (Person C)

### 4.2.4 Facebook and Recruitment

During the interviews, we found that Person A, Person B, Person C and Person D hold different opinions about the questions about the reliability of Facebook. Person A, Person C and Person D agree with the statement that the information on Facebook is reliable. *“The job information on the Facebook should be reliable because it is the question of the repute of Facebook.”*(Person A) *“If a company has a Facebook site and if they add information about job recruitment I trust it, but if it is add together with ads about for example liposuction and such thing I would not trust it.”* (Person C) *“It probably could be, if there is any. I'm not sure how it works but I'm fairly sure major companies have some kind of certification process with the Facebook staff like on Twitter...”* (Person D)

While Person B holds the opposite point of view, he does not think that the information on Facebook is reliable, as he said *“I think job opportunities are rare. People would have to fight for it. So if it is a good job, it would not be there for everyone.”*(Person B)

The interviewees also held the different point of views when they answered the question “do you think Facebook can facilitate you to hunt a job?”

Person C offered the positive feedback *“Yes, in order to get information where to find the jobs. From both companies and friends.”* (Person C)

While Person A and Person D offered a neutral answer *“Somehow it could help but as I did not use it for this purpose so I could not say anything about it confidently.”*(Person A) *“Not really. Like I said, most of my Facebook friends would not be looking for someone with my skills. Maybe indirectly. But to be honest you don't usually add your boss, you add your colleagues. So the person who might be hiring is not on there, in your circle, anyway.”*(Person D)

Person B answered *“No, I cannot imagine any way facebook can facilitate my job searching since it is not specialized in job searching. Information would be limited to the number of your friends. Job portal would be more practical.”*(Person B)

#### **4.2.5 Future Concerns**

In the end of the interview, our interviewees added additional concerns about the application of Facebook in job recruitment.

*“I have just gone through Facebook for the Jobs and I found there are some groups having job offers and these are managed by individuals. Facebook should develop and manage a central database for the jobs as per region. The main regions could be the continents and then these should be subdivided into countries etc”* (Person A)

While Person B added *“If facebook can develop such functions that facilitate job hunting and for job searchers, that would be very nice. I would guess it challenging.”* (Person B)

*“To me, FB is somehow separate from work. I only add colleagues while I'm working somewhere if I already hang out with them anyway and so they are part of my social life. This was more common in the UK for example, where you go to the pub with your colleagues. In Sweden I feel that the border between personal and work life is a bit stricter. I only added some colleagues at my last employment in Denmark after I left the company.”* (Person D)

## **4.3 Empirical Results**

Based on the collected data we presented above, we have generalized and integrated the data, based on these results of our empirical study; the outcomes will be showed in the following sections.

### **4.3.1 Perspective from Companies**

From the interview material of Vault, we knew that nowadays, the most popular channels to get job information are organizations' websites, career centers, social network sites, and general job boards. The traditional recruitment channel is referrals by current organizations' employees. To some extent, the application of SNS assists the accumulation of social tie. SNS could offer opportunities for referrals to enlarge their personal network.

According to the interview with the informant of Vault, the top three reasons for recruiters posting their job information on SNS are: first and foremost, promoting their organizations'



employer brand, secondly, advertising specific job opportunities, and thirdly, sourcing potential candidates. The application of Facebook assists organizations in improving their reputation, promoting their new products, reaching wider audience online. However, it also brings liability problems, in that organizations can be reproached for discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, marital status, political, religious affiliation and so on. One of the best advantages of social network is its ability to spread news quickly. Complaining or raving from the connections can impact users' impression of the organizations. If this gets out of control, the rumor could generate bad reputation for organizations. However, it is not a good choice to delete or ignore any criticism of their organizations as it might arouse users' rebellious spirit and result in unexpected events.

The benefits that the application of SNS brings to recruitment also include reducing cost and saving time. Posting recruitment information through SNS websites is different from career fairs as it takes the full advantage of personal relationships through the network. When the recruitment information has been released, it will spread via the recruiter's connections quickly and the recruiter can also introduce proper candidates. If the recruiter posts the job information on Facebook, his or her connections will receive this message and may share the information. Therefore, more potential job applicants receive the information, which means more opportunities for the organization to reach the proper candidate. However, it also brings a series of complicate and additional task to the selection process. If the candidates are introduced by companies' employees, SNS recruitment can save time for the HRM department. Compared to the candidates sourced from career fairs, the credibility of referrals, experience, skills and the matching degree for the position is higher. Referrals by current organizations' employees assist in reducing the amount of work in the selection process, which improves the efficiency and quality of recruitment job.

SNS plays a connecting role between organizations and prospective employees. Some organizations had been succeeded in connecting with potential job applicants on Facebook, but it is limited to a few specific industries. Facebook can be a useful tool for prospective candidates to observe information about what's going on with the organization and new job opportunities. Facebook is also a good place to post recruitment information and get to know about organization profiles and cultures. However, Facebook is not the best choice for finding candidates, LinkedIn and other websites do a better and more professional job in this area.

Facebook has an advantage with regards to campus recruiting as many university students have their own personal Facebook page. It is used more as a recruitment marketing tool and a method to communicate with university students. It is more likely to improve an organization's reputation among students. However, candidates do not like to share their Facebook page with organizations as they take it as their personal space rather than professional, or they do not want to be judged by their Facebook profiles.

#### **4.3.2 Perspective from Potential Job Applicants**

From interviewing the potential job applicants, we found the following points:

Facebook is a successful SNS website, which owns the largest users base in the worldwide. It has already attracted thousands of companies and organizations to build their official page on Facebook. Evidence showed that organizations and companies have generally recognized the potential marketing on Facebook. However, it's potential with regards to the performance in business and companies' management area still need to be explored. Through our interviews, we found that two of our interviewees are not satisfied with the companies' official page on Facebook; both the two interviewees thought the content on companies' pages on Facebook is quite boring and useless. As they suggested, Facebook should strengthen their cooperation with professional organizations and companies. Companies need to pay more attention to their Facebook page, complete their profile, update the information regularly, and provide more valuable and diversified information.

When it comes to the relationship between Facebook and social tie, only one personal interviewee is entirely sure that Facebook can help him to accumulate social ties. However, our company interviewee and two person interviewees thought the accumulation of social ties from Facebook is limited. As the company respondent mentioned, the user objects of Facebook are very limited, it is mainly oriented to young people, the accumulated social ties are mainly from college or university students, and youth. As one of our person interviewees said, they do not want to expose their privacy (personal life) to any company or colleague. She thinks that Facebook is a place only for entertainment, and prefer to accumulate social relationships on other Social network sites.

Both the theoretical perspective and our collected empirical data shows that social tie (both weak ties and strong ties) plays an important role in recruitment. Through our interview results, we found that our company interviewee and three-quarters of our person interviewees hold the opinion that social ties (both weak tie and strong tie) can definitely facilitate companies to source applicants, and help applicants to apply for a job. The remaining one person interviewee thought social ties can facilitate recruitment to some extent. However, he pointed out that the limited social ties can provide very limited job information and chances.

Users share information on Facebook with their friends (social ties) to some degree, and this helps potential job applicants to hunt comparatively reliable job information. However, it seems to be not enough and not professional. In the interview, both company respondent and three-quarters our person interviewees mentioned, compared with professional job agency or job portal, information on Facebook is not rich and easy to search. Our interviewees prefer more systematical and more detailed classified job information.

Three of our personal interviewees mentioned that sometimes the job information on Facebook is not reliable. One of our interviewees mentioned she is bothered by spam on Facebook.

## 5. Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, we will firstly conclude and compare the theoretical and empirical study results. Based on the analysis results and reflections, we will continue a discussion.

### 5.1 Comparison of Theoretical and Empirical Study

In this part, we will synthesize and compare the theoretical study results and empirical results.

**Table 5.1 Comparing of theoretical and empirical study**

|               | Facebook  | Recruitment  | Facebook & Social ties   | Social ties & Recruitment   | Facebook & Recruitment   | Comments   |
|---------------|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Theory</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facebook is a Social network sites has more than 500 million users.</li> <li>2. Focus on identify performance and privacy issues</li> <li>3. Popular among student</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing proper number of applicants.</li> <li>2. Optimized structure of labor.</li> <li>3. Examine applicants' labor skills</li> </ol>                              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facebook can facilitate maintain and accumulate social ties (both weak tie and strong tie)</li> </ol>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Social tie(weak tie and strong tie) can facilitate companies source the applicants.</li> <li>2. Applicants can be referral by their social ties to hunt job.</li> <li>3. Applicants can get information through social ties.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Based on the theoretical study, we can infer that Facebook can facilitate recruitment practice indirectly.</li> </ol>  |  |
| <b>Vault</b>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Release career recruiting advertises, industry news.</li> <li>2. The most popular information on their page are hot current and "top10 list</li> </ol>                        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Campus recruiting.</li> <li>2. Referrals from current employee.</li> <li>3. Career center.</li> <li>4. Social network sites.</li> <li>5. General job board.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facebook facilitate accumulati on social ties but limited to specific company.</li> <li>2. Promote companies' employer brand.</li> <li>3. Advertise</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Much of recruiting is done through referrals</li> <li>2. Someone recommendi ng someone through networks(we ak tie or strong tie)</li> </ol>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Power of information transforming .</li> <li>2. Interview university students.</li> <li>3. Used for internship program recruitment. Release job information</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a lot of liability issues -- they can be accused of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, marital status, political and/or religious affiliation,</li> </ol> |

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|   | of job information".   |  | specific job opportunities.<br>4. Source potential candidate           |   | on Facebook   | etc.  |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| <b>A</b>  | 1. For meet friends.<br>2. Get updated information from friends  | 1. Prefer job portals<br>2. Visit corporate websites | 1. Facebook definitely facilitate the accumulation on social ties      | 1. Social ties can facilitate applicants to hunt a job  | 1. Maybe Facebook can facilitate applicants to hunt a job                 | 1. Companies need to release more job information.<br>2. Facebook should develop and manage a central database for the jobs as per region.                  |
| <b>B</b>  | 1. No special purpose for using Facebook.  | 1. Job agencies.<br>2. Job portals                   | 1. Facebook facilitate the accumulation on social ties but limited     | 1. Social ties can facilitate applicants to hunt a job in specific opportunity, but not directly proportional | 1. Facebook can not facilitate applicants to hunt a job                   | 1. Companies should complete the information.<br>2. Information on Facebook is not reliable.<br>3. Hope Facebook can develop functions for job searching.   |
| <b>C</b>  | 1. For keeping in touch with friends<br>2. Follow companies' page.<br>3. Follow the events and activities. | 1. Search job opportunities form social ties         | 1. Facebook can not facilitate the accumulation of social ties         | 1. Social ties can facilitate applicants to hunt a job  | 1. Facebook do facilitate applicants to hunt a job                        | 1. Companies should release more variable information.<br>2. Job information released by the company is reliable.<br>3. Facebook existing privacy problems. |
| <b>D</b>  | 1. For keep in touch with friends.<br>2. Follow companies' page  | 1. Check Google's jobs                               | 1. Facebook maintains social ties, but not facilitate accumulate them. | 1. Social ties can facilitate applicants to hunt a job  | 1. Maybe Facebook can facilitate applicants to hunt a job, but not really | 1. Companies need to release more job information.<br>2. Facebook existing privacy issues.  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Grey zone means the empirical data agree with theoretical study results.</li> <li>● Red zone means the neutral opinion</li> <li>● Yellow zone means contrasted opinion.</li> </ul> |  |  |  |   |   |   |

We can clearly see from the table the view points respectively from previous literatures study, company, and four potential job applicants. In this table, we focused on comparing the colored sections. In the column of “Facebook and Social ties”, there are only two sections which agree that Facebook definitely facilitate the accumulation of social ties, three sections

hold conservative views that Facebook can assist users to accumulate social ties, while, one section holds a contrasted opinion that Facebook cannot facilitate the accumulation of social ties. Summing up, we can draw a conclusion that Facebook can facilitate the accumulation of social ties, but the influence is limited.

In the column of “Social ties and Recruitment”, five sections absolutely agree with the fact that social ties can play an important role in recruitment practice. While, the left section in this column acknowledged that social ties can facilitate recruitment, however, this influence is limited, and limited to specific fields. Summing up, we can draw a conclusion that social ties can facilitate the recruitment practice both from the perspective of company and from the perspective of job applicants.

After discussing the relationships between Facebook and social ties, social ties and recruitment, we directly come to our main section relationship between “Facebook and Recruitment”. In this column, we can see three sections agree that Facebook do facilitate the recruitment practice. Two sections hold the opinion that Facebook can facilitate the recruitment practice in specific situation, but the influence is limited. While, only one section does not think Facebook can assist recruitment at all. Summing up, from this study we can draw a conclusion that Facebook can facilitate recruitment practice, but referring to the dissatisfaction of the application of Facebook into recruitment use, we will supply some suggestion in the following section.

As we inferred in our theoretical study part, Facebook assists the accumulation of social tie, the accumulation of social ties benefits the process of recruitment. By combining our theoretical model with our empirical study, we found that some people hold the opinion that Facebook do facilitate accumulation of social ties while some people hold the opposite opinion. For the connection of social ties and recruitment, it is the same with theoretical model. To sum up our findings, we updated our theoretical structure model into the above model:

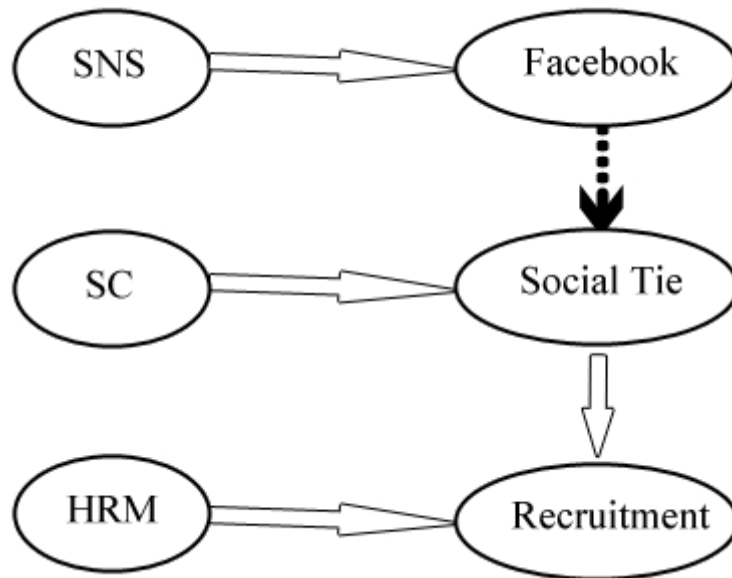


Figure 5.1 Conclusion model

The model reveals the results of our research that the specific SNS-Facebook can facilitate accumulating social ties in a limited situation. While social tie plays an important role in recruitment practice. The final result to our research question is that the application of Facebook can facilitate the recruitment practice, however, there are some problems and some areas require further attention. In the following section, we will conduct a discussion.

## 5.2 Discussion

After presenting the result of our research, in the following section we would like to conduct a discussion, and provide our recommendation on three aspects which are representatively: Facebook, and two types of subjects in recruitment practice: companies, and job applicants.

- From perspective of Facebook

Our empirical study has shown that both our company respondent and our personal interviewees pointed out that Facebook is not the best choice for professional use. Although it holds the largest users base in the SNS area, the first question which needs to be considered is

that how to improve the application of Facebook in professional use, especially in facilitating recruitment practice.

Facebook could strengthen the functions of application in companies' human resources management area. What Facebook needs to do is not only to improve its information management and classification, but also to cooperate with job agencies, which can provide more professional services, resources and advice. We believe that the combination of Facebook's advanced user interaction and huge user base together with the help of professional job agencies can achieve win-win situation.

Facebook can also attract and strengthen the collaborations with companies by developing business functions and providing tools for human resources management. The collaborations could also benefit the job seekers by eliminating the false recruitment information.

It seems that the privacy problem is already an old topic in the Facebook research area. During our theoretical study, we found that there are a lot of literatures around the security and privacy problems in Facebook. There existing a potential safety hazard that others can easily invade your privacy from your social ties on Facebook. According to our respondents, it makes them feel insecure that their private life might be judged by the companies they have applied to. However, it is still a long journey for Facebook to find a solution which guarantees users security and privacy while utilizing the potential positive uses of social networks.

Another critical concern mentioned in our interview is that there are some liability issues in Facebook, such as discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, marital status, political and/or religious affiliation, etc. According to informant X, the application of Facebook on recruitment practice can easily lead to such liability issues. We do think it is a social responsibility of SNS websites to utilize their social resources to releasing public service advertisements, and awaken people's awareness of justice and fairness.

- From the perspective of companies

It is still a brand new topic for companies that "Whether the SNS can facilitate their HRM practice?" therefore it is easy to see through our empirical study that the application of Facebook in companies is still in its initial stage. A lot of companies still do not put enough



effort on research and developing the application of Facebook. We suggest that companies should be aware of the value of SNS websites, not only from a marketing perspective, but also from their human resources management aspect.

Then, for attracting more followers, companies should complete their profiles on their SNS official pages such as Facebook, and provide more useful information. In order to improve the interaction with followers, companies need to share and exchange information with users, so as to accumulate companies' social capital.

Our interviewees mentioned that there is a lot of spam on Facebook, which makes them doubt the reliability of the information released by companies. Based on our research, we think the commercial promotion or recruitment activities of a company should be built on its good reputation. Just as with other SNS websites, Facebook provides a good opportunity for companies to cultivate and develop their social relations, and enhance their corporate image through a sophisticated network of social relations. In the mean time, from our interview with Vault, we are pleased to see that companies have recognized that it is wisdom to use Facebook to promote their organizations' employer brand, advertise specific job information, and source potential candidates.

However our interviewee from Vault has also mentioned the concerns that the applications of SNS is like a double-edged sword. Because of the features of SNS, companies could also face the rumors, false information, mischievous, and malicious peer competition, so and so forth. It depends on their ability of promoting their company image in a good way and dealing with negative issues as and if they arise. Companies should be aware of such negative impacts from applying Facebook.

For eliminating the liability issues, efforts should come not only from Facebook, but also from the recruiters. As our companies' informant suggested, companies should develop policies to avoid discrimination.

- From the perspective of job applicants

To better seize the opportunities to hunt jobs from SNS websites, job applicants could complete and detail their personal profile, such as work experience, job description, skills,

expertise, education, experience, honor awards, hobbies and other personal information.

While at the same time, they should be aware of the security issues, and care more about their privacy.

Job applicants can follow the companies they are interested in or organizations' pages recommended by their friends, and pay more attention to the events and activities on Facebook released by companies. Through SNS websites, they can interact with recruiters much easier and more conveniently than when using traditional methods.

## 6. Conclusion

At the beginning of the study, based on our literature review, we found that there were a lot of studies showing the relationship between SNS and social capital, social capital and HRM. However, few academic research studies directly reveal the relationship between SNS and HRM. In this study, our purpose was to bridge the gap between them by discussing the relationship among specific SNS-Facebook, the fundamental theory of social capital theory-social tie theory, and the recruitment practice in HRM.

As we mentioned in chapter 2, through our in-depth literature study, we built a model of our theoretical baseline, which reveals the relationships among SNS, Social capital, HRM, Facebook, social tie theory and recruitment practice. According to our model, it is clear to see that as one of the most typical SNS website, Facebook has assisted users to maintain and extend their social ties, while social ties plays an important role in recruitment practice of HRM. Therefore, we boldly infer that the specific SNS website, Facebook, indeed facilitates the recruitment practice of HRM.

To further test and verify our theoretical model, we conducted an empirical study. We used the method of interviews to collect empirical data, and then we analyzed and mining the information from the interview material. With our theoretical model in mind, we designed a series of questions, and interviewed one company which is familiar with the process of posting recruitment information online and four potential job applicants who have work and job apply experience. All of them are familiar with SNS and Facebook. According to our empirical information, Facebook plays an important role in expanding organizations' reputation, reaching a wider audience online, and promoting products, reducing cost and saving time. It also plays a connecting role between organizations and prospective employees. However, it also brings potential troubles to companies, such as liability problems, complaining or raving comments, complications and additional work. To some extent, users'

social ties can help them to broaden their information channels to hunt a job. However, there also exist some potential problems, such as security problems, privacy problems. Further, many job applicants do not feel comfortable sharing their personal life with recruiters. At the same time, Facebook is not a professional websites like other professional job portals. In our empirical study, we found that the influence of Facebook on social tie is limited to specific situations. However, social ties play an important role on the recruitment practice both from perspective of the companies and job applicants.

Through combining and comparing our theoretical and empirical results, we draw a conclusion to our research question “Whether and how does SNS facilitate HRM practices. Specifically whether and how does Facebook facilitate recruitment practice?” Our conclusion is that Facebook could facilitate the recruitment practice through accumulation and cultivation of social ties. However, in the process of the application of SNS on recruitment, there exist many problems. Therefore we have conducted a discussion and provided our recommendations against the problems we have found in our research as in the discussion part (5.2). In the discussion part (5.2), against the problems founded in our research, we conduct a discussion and provide our recommendation.

The research provides a theoretical basis for the informatics application on human resource management. We expect that our study can be used as reference to further human resource development researchers and human resources practitioners in their strategic decision making. We hope that our discussion about the applications of Facebook will provoke our readers to consider the development of SNS industry, and further that organizations will pay more attention on how to strengthen their UX and enhance their function not only in entertainment or business field, but also in HRM.

## **Appendix 1 – Interview with Vault**

### **1 Company profile**

1. What is the main business orientation of your company?

We are a content company that provides career information for high-potential professionals and students. We also do rankings of companies/firms.

2. How many employees work in your company?

We have about 55-60 employees.

### **2 SNS (social network sites) perspective**

1. What are the purposes of your company building official page on Facebook?

We use Facebook primarily to try to reach a wider audience online, and to drive traffic back to our website

2. How about the status of the official page? (Can you please briefly introduce your official page on Facebook?)

Our Facebook page can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/Vault>. At first, we were just experimenting. We had to play around with what types of headlines and articles people would click on and which ones were not as successful. And we've done a few contests and promotions to try to increase the number of followers we have on Facebook, which have been successful. I'm not sure what type of impact it has had on our sales (other people in my company would have that type of information), but ultimately our goal would be for the people who come back to our website after seeing a headline on Facebook to buy a membership to our site. Some of our content is free, like the articles we post on Facebook, but a lot of it is behind a pay wall. Ultimately our goal is to create a pipeline of people, some of whom will ultimately buy memberships to our website.

3. How about the frequency of the information update in your Facebook page?

Our page gets updated several times a day. One thing I should note is that we coordinate our efforts on Facebook with our Twitter posts. Our goals with Twitter are similar to our goals for Facebook, but both have been important in driving traffic to our site and connecting with our audience

4. What kinds of information do you release on Facebook?

Mostly links to articles and blog posts on our website regarding career/recruiting advice or industry news for the main industries we cover (i.e., Law, Banking, Accounting, and Consulting). We will also live blog events that we're having like career fairs. By live blogging, I mean tweeting what is going on in real time. Or we'll have a live stream of a speech that we're giving

5. How about the interaction between your company and followers on Facebook?

I think we would like to see more participation and commenting from our audience. Most of our audiences seem to be passive consumers of the content we post. Sometimes they'll ask questions regarding an article we post or "Like" something on Facebook

6. According to feedbacks you received, what kind of information is most welcomed by followers (members)?

I am not the person who administers or evaluates the success of our social media efforts, but anecdotally I can say that anything involving a hot current event (e.g., Charlie Sheen a few weeks ago, the recent events regarding Osama bin Laden, etc.) or Top 10 lists

7. By which way, do you think your followers found your page in the beginning?

I think primarily through our newsletters. Possibly from their contacts who "Liked" us on Facebook.

### **3 HRM (human resource management) perspectives**

1. What channels and methods do companies use in recruitment practices?

In the US (and probably outside the US, but we only surveyed US companies), campus recruiting is a very important channel for finding candidates in certain industries: banking,

consulting, and law are a few examples. There are traditional job boards: referrals from current company/firm employees, their website. One of the questions that we asked on our survey of companies is how they share information with candidates (this would be to build a pipeline of applicants). The most popular responses were their own websites, career centers, social media sites, general job boards.

2. How about the frequency of recruitment in your company? (For every year)

In reference to the previous question: Some also use career fairs and other recruiting events. Vault recruits on an ad hoc basis -- whenever we need to fill a specific slot

#### **4 The cognitive of SCT**

(Social tie include: weak tie and strong tie. Weak ties: loose connections between individuals which may provide useful information or new perspectives for one another. Strong ties: strong connection between individuals. Usually emotionally close relationships, such as family and close friends.)

1. Do you think the accumulation of social capital can facilitate HRM practitioners' practical work? Can you provide your reasons?

Yes, it can help facilitate their jobs, but it can also provide a lot of complications and additional work. The top three reasons that recruiters listed for using social media were: 1. Promote their organization's employer brand, 2. Advertise specific job opportunities, and 3. Source potential candidates. I have to say, most don't use Facebook. For all of those, they use Facebook mostly for promoting their brand. For sourcing, they are more likely to use LinkedIn. For advertising job opportunities, often it's Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Sorry, when I said "They use Facebook mostly for promoting their brand," I meant their employment brand, or their reputation as an employer. Basically building buzz around working at that company

2. Do you think the application of Facebook can help companies to accumulate social capital? Can you provide your reasons?

I think some companies are having success connecting with prospective employees on Facebook, but it is limited to a few specific companies. Often, candidates are turned off by

using Facebook specifically because they see it as their personal space, rather than professional. Companies have to be careful about how they use it and they have to build trust with candidates because many candidates are suspicious that they will be judged by their Facebook profile/pictures/etc. Whereas on LinkedIn, it is known as a professional site and people tend to present a cleaner image of themselves on that site.

3. In practical work, does weak tie and strong tie important in the process of your recruitment?

Both types of relationships are certainly important in recruiting. The whole function is based on relationships. As I mentioned yesterday, much of recruiting is done through referrals -- someone recommending someone else they know through their network (be it a weak tie or a strong tie). In terms of how that relates to social networking:

I think one of the biggest benefits of social networking is the ability to spread things through word of mouth. If you see one of your connections complaining or raving about their job on Facebook, that could impact your opinion of the organization as an employer.

Employers have been getting more involved with social media in part to get in on the conversation that people are having about their companies -- both as a provider of goods/services and as an employer.

Some companies do this well and are proactive about creating their image on social media sites. Other companies are reactive and wait until there is a problem to try to manage their images on social media sites. Another mistake that some companies make is to try to censor or be dismissive of any criticism of their companies. That can really backfire on them.

## **5. View of the relationship between SNS (social network sites) & HRM (human resource management)**

1. Do you think Facebook can facilitate companies' recruitment work?

I think -- when done correctly -- it can be used effectively in creating an employer brand and to generate buzz about the company as an employer. However, in terms of sourcing (i.e., finding candidates), I do not think it's the best resource. I think LinkedIn and other similar niche sites are much better for that purpose.



Many companies also run into problems with Facebook when they use it as a screening tool. It can create a lot of liability issues -- they can be accused of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, marital status, political and/or religious affiliation, etc.

2. What the advantages and disadvantages do you think using facebook to facilitate companies' recruitment work?

As I said, it can be useful to give prospective candidates information about what is going on with the company -- news, information about highlights of working there, new job openings, etc.

The disadvantages are the liability issues that I mentioned, and also making assumptions about things that OTHER people have posted on candidates' walls that the candidate has no control over.

3. How about the effectiveness of recruitment with the help of facebook?

Each company has varying levels of success, but in general, I don't think it's considered the best tool. Companies seem to have more success with LinkedIn. One factor is that it depends on your audience. Facebook is used much more frequently in campus recruiting (recruiting university students), and much more so as a recruitment marketing tool and a way to communicate with students -- not to source students. It's also used frequently for internship programs, which is an important recruiting tool. But again, that is aiming at the university population.

## **6 Futures**

1. What are you going to do about the application of SNS (social network sites) on HRM? What do you think of other organizations? What's the next action they will take?

We do not use it for recruiting purposes. For other companies, I think they're going to try to figure out ways to get candidates to participate in the conversation more rather than being passive consumers of the information. My impression is that they've been experimenting -- just trial and error -- and seeing what catches on. One person in our survey wrote that they will be hosting chats via Facebook. They have frequently asked questions or questions and answers (FAQs and Q&A, respectively). I think they are and will continue to use it for real-

time hiring. In other words, when there is an opening that pops up (especially an unanticipated one), they will post it on Facebook or Twitter to try to get a quick response. I think they will look on Twitter and other sites to find bloggers that have generated a following in their relevant fields. Candidates are increasingly creating their own "brands" or personas online, establishing themselves as experts in their fields via their social media "voice," and I think employers may increasingly start to find people that way. I also think that companies will increasingly create formal policies around social media and its use in recruiting to avoid some of the liability issues I've mentioned. Many already have.

2. Would you like to add anything further concerning the use of Facebook in organization's human resource management?

The only thing I would add is that companies should not use it haphazardly. They should know what their goals are and create a defined strategy around their goals. To the extent possible, they should try to develop metrics that will help them measure their level of success. Many companies use number of followers, number of comments, etc. Others have taken it to the level of measuring the number of hires that they have made through social media. And know who your target audience is. Use the correct social media to reach that specific audience

## **7 Closing session**

In the end, we would like to thank you for your time to answer all these questions.

## **Appendix 2 – Interview with Person A**

### **1 Personal profile**

1. Can you please briefly introduce yourself? (education background, work experience)

I am doing my Masters in Information Systems. After my graduation in November 2004, I worked in ICT industry in Pakistan till 2010.

2. Can you explain your job expectation?

I want to join academia and for that very reason I am looking for either a PhD vacancy or a lecturer ship. I hope that with my Masters degree I would be able meet that expectation.

### **2 Facebook perspectives**

1. Do you use Facebook? How much time do you spend on it per week?

Yes, I do use Facebook and it is almost 25 hours per week.

2. What are the motivations do you use Facebook?

I use Facebook to meet my friends and family members and get updated about their current status. One more thing which is very interesting is that, the use of Facebook also updates you about the interests of other people.

3. Do you follow any company on Facebook? (can you explain your reasons?)

No, I do not. Actually Facebook is more likely a place to meet new friends and many professionals use other social media like LinkedIn or Twitter for professional networking or following some companies.

4. What kind of information do you want to receive from the companies' page on Facebook?

I did not ever notice any job related information on Facebook. If it is there then, first of all I will be happy to have information about the job openings at the company, secondly the information about their offerings or the service will be of some use and lastly I will also be interested in knowing the clientele of that company if it is an ICT based and works in the area of product or project development.

### **3 Recruitment perspectives**

1. What channels do you use to search a job?

I mostly use job portals to search a job. But I also visit the corporate websites of different targeted companies to look for job openings.

### **4. Social ties perspectives**

1. Do you think social relationships or social ties can facilitate you to get a job?

Yes, such types of relationships do facilitate. I have an experience when a company was hiring internally. I did apply through one of my social contacts and succeeded to get a job.

2. Do you think Facebook can help you to get more social ties or social relationships?

Yes, it does. In my opinion, it definitely helps to find out new friends and in some cases some former colleagues. These former colleagues would have been working in some different companies and then there is an opportunity in the context of searching a job through these colleagues.

### **5 Facebook and recruitment**

1. Do you ever notice the job information on Facebook?

No. I didn't think that on Facebook I could find job advertisements

2. Do you think the job information on Facebook is reliable?

I think the job information on the Facebook should be reliable because it is the question of the repute of Facebook.

3. Do you think the Facebook can facilitate you to hunt a job?

Somehow it could help but as I did not use it for this purpose so I could not say anything about it confidently.

## **6 Future**

1. Would you like to add any further concerning about the application Facebook in job recruitment?

I have just gone through Facebook for the Jobs and I found there are some groups having job offers and these are managed by individuals. Facebook should develop and manage a central database for the jobs as per region. The main regions could be the continents and then these should be subdivided into countries etc.

## **Appendix 3 – Interview with Person B**

### **1 Personal profile**

1. Can you please briefly introduce yourself? (education background, work experience)

Two bachelors and one master degree

3 years PHP programmer

2. Can you explain your job expectation?

Good salary, company should be internationally famous, clear job position and description, opportunity to be promoted.

### **2 Facebook perspectives**

1. Do you use Facebook? How much time do you spend on it per week?

Yes, 1 hour per day maximum. I don't use facebook very much since I think real friends should contact each other in real life not only online.

2. What are the motivations do you use Facebook?

No special purpose

3. Do you follow any company on Facebook? (can you explain your reasons?)

No, I think Facebook is not developed for business use, companies can hardly present themselves properly. For example, consistent product information, services. Navigation is not suitable for business use.

4. What kind of information do you want to receive from the companies' page on Facebook?

I think company should maintain their complete information on facebook, I have found many companies only advertise some new products by putting some pictures. Actually people would like to know more about it.

### **3 Recruitment perspectives**

1. What channels do you use to search a job?

Job agencies or job portals

### **4 Social ties perspectives**

1. Do you think social relationships or social ties can facilitate you to get a job?

Yes, sometimes people share job information to each other, in this meaning social relationships can facilitate the job searching. But I am doubting dose more social relationship means more job opportunities

2. Do you think Facebook can help you to get more social ties or social relationships?

Yes, but limited. I think Facebook maintains weak social ties, such social ties are not reliable. So it is better to put energy on correct channels.

### **5 Facebook and recruitment**

1. Do you ever notice the job information on Facebook?

Yes, but only from other nice friends who are willing to share the information

2. Do you think the job information on Facebook are reliable?

No, I think job opportunities are rare. People would have to fight for it. So if it is a good job, it would not be there for everyone.

3. Do you think the Facebook can facilitate you to hunt a job?

No, I cannot imagine any way Facebook can facilitate my job searching since it is not specialized in job searching. Information would be limited to the number of your friends. Job portal would be more practical.

### **6 Future**

1. Would you like to add any further concerning about the application Face book in job recruitment?

If face book can develop such functions that facilitate job hunting and for job searchers, that would be very nice. I would guess it challenging.



## **Appendix 4 – Interview with Person C**

### **1 Personal Profile**

1. Can you please briefly introduce yourself? (education background, work experience)

I am a student at Lund's University, at the department of informatics. Right now I am doing my master thesis for the master program. I have no experience from working within the IT-field, however I have some working experience from working as a waitress and a bartender in a restaurant.

2. Can you explain your job expectation?

I'm not sure if I had so much expectation ... Since I am young and have no experience within this specific field it felt like I needed to accept the job I can get, and not to be too picky. But when I started to apply for different jobs I realized that market is very, good when applying for jobs right now. I did not expect that, but that's is really good. I also thought that the salary was quite good and since IT is a big field there's many different job opportunities.

### **2 Facebook perspectives**

1. Do you use Facebook? How much time do you spend on it per week?

I use facebook very much, a few hours every day I would say. I have facebook in my phone so it is easy to just log in and see if something new has happened or get in touch with someone. I would say that I am online 12 hours a day, but I'm not using facebook the whole time. I'm using facebook active 2-3 hours a day perhaps. (Online around 84 hours a week and active on facebook 17hours or something)

2. What are the motivations do you use Facebook?

In order to get in touch with my friends. Since most of my friends live in Stockholm and in my hometown I can't see them as often as I wish, then facebook is very good because I can see what they are doing, both through their status updates and pictures, and also talk to the by using the chat, writing on their wall or send a message.

3. Do you follow any company on Facebook? (can you explain your reasons?)

I'm following three or four companies because I'm interested to see if they are going to have student events, after works where the students are invited, interesting lectures or if they are looking for new coworkers. It is an easy way to be updated.

4. What kind of information do you want to receive from the companies' page on Facebook?

Information about the thing I stated in question 3. Information if they have student events, after works where the students are invited, interesting lectures or if they are looking for new coworkers.

### **3 Recruitment perspectives**

1. What channels do you use to search a job?

I use everything! I have looked for jobs on different employment/recruitment services online, for example [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com), <http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/> (the Swedish Public Employment Service) and on different companies own websites, they always have a page where they announce if they are searching for someone, available positions and I have tried to use me contacts, friends and family working in different companies.

### **4 Social ties perspectives**

1. Do you think social relationships or social ties can facilitate you to get a job?

Yes of course! I believe it is a good way for companies to announce that they are looking for someone. However I don't believe in applying for a job directly on Facebook. Facebook should just be a way for the companies to use in order to market their available positions.

2. Do you think Facebook can help you to get more social ties or social relationships?

No, I don't think so. I think that the website LinkedIn is better in that way. I'm not sure that I want my future employer to see my whole life on Facebook, pictures from parties and what my friend have written on my wall and so on. But Facebook is a good way to follow your favorite company/companies without them knowing everything about your personal life. So it's more a one-way relationship, from me to the company and not from the company to me. I don't know if this makes any sense...

## **5 Facebook and Recruitment**

1. Do you ever notice the job information on Facebook?

I only notice the information if a company I'm following has made a status update with information about job information, nothing else...

2. Do you think the job information on Facebook are reliable?

If a company have a facebook site and if they add information about job recruitment I trust it, but if it is an add together with adds about for example liposuction and such thing I would not trust it.

3. Do you think the facebook can facilitate you to hunt a job?

Yes, in order to get information where to find the jobs. From both companies and friends.

## **6 Future**

1. Would you like to add any further concerning about the application Facebook in job recruitment?

No, I think I have said my opinion.

## **Appendix 5 – Interview with Person D**

### **1 Personal profile**

1. Can you please briefly introduce yourself? (education background, work experience)

I have a BA in Information and Library Management from Manchester Metropolitan University from 2006. I joined the Msc Information Systems program at Lund University in 2010. In between I worked for 4 years, the first 6 months as an Analyst at a business process outsourcing company and the last 3,5 years as a Research Analyst and later Data Quality Assistant at a global executive recruitment consultancy (ie we hired CEOs, CIOs etc. Only companies were clients, not individuals. Individuals could however send their CVs to us and get them entered in our database).

2. Can you explain your job expectation?

I have a rather weird niche of jobs I'm looking for. I don't have programming skills so I'm either looking for some kind of IT/business analyst job, or something related to ERP but entry level where they don't expect specific IT skills and are willing to train you. I also look within the data quality field but as this is quite narrow I also look for information management roles. At the moment I'm looking in Sweden but as I've lived and worked abroad for many years I would move elsewhere. Apart from in Sweden I'm only actively looking at work in the UK though. Especially if I'm going to be based in Sweden I would like to work at a global company where I would have colleagues abroad, and possibly get the possibility to travel some. Salary is not the most important thing for me, I want a challenging job that I will like. However I would not like to work in the public sector, not only because of the low salaries but because of the culture. I have been thinking about maybe doing a PhD as well.

### **2 Facebook perspectives**

1. Do you use Facebook? How much time do you spend on it per week?

I use Facebook a lot. I check it often but don't necessarily spend more than a couple of minutes each time. Maybe 5 hours a week in total.

2. What are the motivations do you use Facebook?

Both to keep in touch with friends where I live now to maybe organize meeting up, events etc IRL. But also a lot to keep in touch with my many friends abroad. Most of my FB friends are in places where I no longer live, and quite spread out geographically. I look and comment at photos, message them, chat through people's statuses etc. Basically trying to keep in touch.

3. Do you follow any company on Facebook? (can you explain your reasons?)

Only one, and that's recent. I usually avoid 'Like'ing on FB, because then it shows up in your feed and for me FB is about friends, I don't want other stuff showing up in my feed. I know a lot of people Like organizations for somehow business reasons, for example interest organizations, research organizations etc. But that's really not my thing. What you Like shows up on your profile and I use it to profile my personality, which is limited to music, TV, etc, not organizations. I recently liked ICA because well, I've always really liked them, I shop there every day. It's really a cultural institution, their commercials on TV have been the funniest around for at least 6-7 years. It's basically a mini soap opera that's been running. And recently they have this song which is just hilarious, so I caved in. But I would never Like a company without a very good reason, and if I didn't feel like I could stand for this if someone asked me.

4. What kind of information do you want to receive from the companies' page on Facebook?

Well, I only have one example, but I suppose it could be useful if they had product promotions there. I already receive a magazine from them as I have an ICA card though so it's not necessary. I do however like their commercials and they post them there, so I like that. Quality initiatives etc is also written about in the magazine. I think it would be best used for content that is interactive, like contests or media clips. For information purposes there is the magazine. I don't use other companies pages, I can't recall having ever looked up a company on FB. If I want information about a company I go to their webpage.

### **3 Recruitment perspectives**

1. What channels do you use to search a job?

I use Monster for all locations. For Sweden I sometimes use AMS, which is the official employment agency's database. In the UK I use the member organization who covers my area info & library mgt which is called CILIP and have their own database of these jobs. I also use

a portal by a private recruitment company called TFPL which specializes in information mgt jobs and through whom I got my last job. Sometimes I look at a company's webpage if I particularly want to work with them, for example I sometimes check Google's jobs.

#### **4. Social ties perspectives**

1. Do you think social relationships or social ties can facilitate you to get a job?

Maybe in the sense that a former colleague would think of me if they are looking for someone or know someone who needs someone in my area. In terms of FB, then perhaps they'll more easily remember me because we're still in touch on FB. However I think it is unlikely. Most of my FB friends would not be looking to fill the kind of position which I could fill. For references, however, I think it's good to be in touch through FB. I think this would make it easier to approach someone I haven't worked with for some time if I needed a specific reference for some specific skill. I mean, Facebook essentially reflects all my old colleagues who I got on with well, and who would recommend me. So social relationships and FB in this case is kind of the same thing. If I don't have them on FB, I usually have them as connections on LinkedIn, if they use that.

2. Do you think Facebook can help you to get more social ties or social relationships?

I wouldn't say get more, but keep the ones you make. I have very very few people on FB that I haven't made friends with IRL. If I add someone on there that I haven't met in person it's quite unusual, I have to trust them then because of some other reason. But I think it helps maintain social ties. For example, if I go to visit Stockholm or London then I may make plans with my closest friends, but then I post in my status that I'm going. And then it happens that you decide to meet up with people that you haven't actively spoken with, because I'm somehow aware of them because they post pictures, or we make comments on each other's statuses. And then somehow you can meet up with these people too when you get the chance. Friendships are kind of held 'on ice' longer in the sense that you don't actively speak to them often but I would still visit them for example if my job took me somewhere. And I do use FB for advice, for example if I have a problem with my phone, then I post it and there is usually someone who's had the same problem or who is a tech nerd who can help you. I wouldn't necessarily approach them directly to ask for help but this way makes it less direct.

#### **5 Facebook and Recruitment**

1. Do you ever notice the job information on Facebook?

No. Not really. I don't Like companies as a rule so if anything were to show up it would probably be in the advertisement column, which I ignore for the most part.

2. Do you think the job information on Facebook are reliable?

It probably could be, if there is any. I'm not sure how it works but I'm fairly sure major companies have some kind of certification process with the FB staff like on Twitter (where famous people have to get their accounts certified with a tick so you know it's them, and not some imposter). So if there is a Unilever with 200,000 followers then that probably is genuinely Unilever and the information legitimate. But I haven't really seen any.

3. Do you think the Facebook can facilitate you to hunt a job?

Not really. Like I said, most of my FB friends would not be looking for someone with my skills. Maybe indirectly. But to be honest you don't usually add your boss, you add your colleagues. So the person who might be hiring is not on there, in your circle, anyway.

## 6 Future

1. Would you like to add any further concerning about the application Facebook in job recruitment?

To me, FB is somehow separate from work. I only add colleagues while I'm working somewhere if I already hang out with them anyway and so they are part of my social life. This was more common in the UK for example, where you go to the pub with your colleagues. In Sweden I feel that the border between personal and work life is a bit stricter. I only added some colleagues at my last employment in Denmark after I left the company.

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