

## Talent Management: Leveraging the Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

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### ABSTRACT

*In this 21st Century, internet/ web based services provide easy access to various social networking sites (SNSs) that connects the people. Billions of users have their accounts on these social networking sites viz. Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+ and Instagram etc. So the affordances and reach of these inexpensive social networking sites have also attracted the employer. The purpose of the article is to assimilate the social networking sites and how these are useful in accessing the talent pool as well as issues related to it. To achieve this purpose, secondary data sources viz. articles from numerous journals and survey reports have been used. This research paper revolves around one main element i.e. usage of social networking sites in various talent management processes within the social capital and social relations framework. The finding of this research work implies that organizations are receiving benefits from these social sites in the form of: acquisition of passive workforce and untapped talent, creation of employer brand and cost and time effective advertisement, recruitment and screening processes but they should also be aware of the pitfalls related to these sites. Furthermore, we suggest integrating the SNSs practices with the organizational recruitment policies.*

**Keywords:** Talent management; Social Networking Sites (SNSs); Social capital; Social networks.

### INTRODUCTION:

Today the world has become one and the reason behind it is the globalization that put forward a lot of challenges among the different nations. With the dynamic and complex business environment, firms around the world are competing for sustainable growth. The core resource for the firms in this competitive climate is human capital. So in this complex business environment, work forces are at the forefront globally. Workforces have become more educated, diverse and mobile. For the sustainable growth globally, it has become discernable for the organizations to attract, hire, manage and develop the best talent and then to retain them. In the emerging economies like India, where the economic conditions in the last few years have been phenomenal and going to be consistent in the coming years despite the economic slowdown globally to 2.9% in 2019 from 3% in 2018 ( World bank, Global Economic Prospects report Jan, 2019). This is the reason that the practitioners view India as the fastest growing economy. In this optimistic environment, there is going to be increase in the demand for the talented workforce in the near future. But the employer felt that this is the biggest challenge to find the talented workforce because most of the college graduates lack the skills regarding communication, collaboration, team-work and complex thinking. Recently NASSCOM (Dec 2018) report presented that in the field of AI and Big Data Analytics, there is a talent demand- supply gap of approximately 62,000 in 2018 and that is further going to increase to around 1,40,000 by the year 2021. By looking at these facts and figures, the need has been raised to access the talented

workforce continuously and strategically. So the question here is: -

### **How the companies can access the talented workforce in the future?**

**Figure 1: Ways in which talented workforce can be accessed**

By acquiring the alternative workforce (contractors, gig workers and contingent workers etc).

Mobilizing the internal talent.

By strategically leveraging the technology driven social networking sites.

**Source:** Deloitte (2019). Leading the social enterprise: Reinvent with a human focus. Available at: <https://trendsapp.deloitte.com/global-human-capital-trends/>.

In this article, we have covered only the usage of technology driven Social Networking Sites. With the advancement of internet/ web based technologies, there can be seen a fad of social media sites viz. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp and LinkedIn. The usage of these social networking sites has been increased and these sites have created the opportunities for the employer to fill the various vacant positions in their firms by using these pre-existing social networking sites (Doherty 2010). So we can imply that businesses are highly impacted by these sites especially the talent management practices of an organization.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To explicate the social networking sites.
2. To study the significance of SNSs in accessing the talented workforce.
3. To study the issues associated with using the technology driven social networking sites while assessing the talent pool.

The article is structured in five sections that start with the first section covers the introductory part that defines why the study is needed and what are its objectives. The second section reviews the literature encompasses talent management and social networking sites that highlights the scholarly research conducted in these fields. The third section covers the research methodology and helps in assimilating the social networking sites. The fourth section articulates the role of SNSs in accessing the talented workforce and the issues while using SNSs and in the last section conclusion has been drawn.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

The existing literature has been reviewed for comprehending the research regarding the talent management as well as Social Networking Sites.

#### **Talent Management:**

According to Heinen & Neill (2004), Talent management is a process of identification, acquisition, development, motivating and retaining the talented and skilled human resources in an organization. Talent management is coupled with the various processes viz. recruitment, selection, career development, performance management, leadership development, recognition and reward and if these processes are integrated, these will help in maximizing the performance of the company. Talent management processes must be firm specific and integrated with the organization business and human capital strategies. They have also considered the ten key factors based on the Mercer's research on talent management. These key factors played an important role in the success and development of talent management processes. One of the key factor that explained by them in their research is leveraging the web based software that leads to success. Web based technology makes it easier for the HR to automate the various talent management processes. It helps the manager in accessing the various online performance related credentials of employees.

In the literature, Lewis & Heckman (2006) proposed their definition that is closely linked with the strategic talent management to define a systematic definition of talent management drawn from the strategic human resource management literature. In their research, TM has been defined as a new term for HR practices, it imply to the

practices of succession planning and referred generically to the management of talented employees. So in their research paper, they proposed these three views of describing the talent management after reviewing the problems related with the existing talent management literature. TM linkage in the strategic framework, development of a systematic talent model and theoretical improvement in the concept helps in improving the talent related decisions in an organization.

Further Collings & Mellahi (2009) in their paper made an attempt to theoretically clarify the meaning as well as development of a model for strategic talent management. They proposed a theoretical model for strategic talent management on the basis of existing literature. The talent management model comprises of various stages with the first stage in strategic talent management process is pivotal positions identification in the organization, next came the talent pool from internal as well as external sources that fill the pivotal positions in the organization and adoption of various HR functions like motivation, development and commitment for the incumbents of talent pool and last the positive relationship between the strategic talent management and the organizational performance. Talent management has gained strategic importance for the organizations.

### **Social Networking Sites:**

In the literature, Burt (2000) associated a link between the social capital and the network mechanisms and proposed two network structures that are responsible for social capital. These are the network closures (that realizes the values buried in the holes) and the structural holes (source of value added) of social capital. Network closures in a closed group provided access to the information as well as trust between the people in that group whereas the structural holes argument of the social capital emphasizes weak connections between the groups. So an individual whose relationships span across the holes are in the competitive advantage than the others. These individuals act as a broker in the network. They have indirect access to vast information of various groups. Sociologist Granovetter (1973) also supported the weak ties connection between the groups in a structural hole. These can transmit the non redundant information and develop the innovative perspectives.

Adler & Kwon (2002) in their research articulated the social capital theory and its utility in organizational theory, synthesis of theoretical research regarding social capital in the various disciplines like sociology, economy and political science have been made and a conceptual framework have been developed that identifies the sources, benefits, risks and contingencies of social capital that affect the value that individual or groups acquire from it. They have considered the Social Capital as the goodwill for individuals and groups that encompass the internal as well as external ties. Its sources lie in the actor's (like individual, groups etc) social relations present in the structure and the content and affect the flow of information, influence and solidarity of an actor. So they have expressed the importance of social network exchanges in their research.

Further in the literature, interpersonal, inter-unit and inter-organizational network relationships have been developed by Brass et al. (2004) and they implicated the existence of social relationships at different level of analysis with the enormous consequences like performance, innovation, attitudes, knowledge, leadership, power etc.

Nayak et al. (2017) in their paper explained the usage of social networking sites within the framework of social capital and social network explained in the literature above. In their paper, they further develop the social capital and social network relation by extending the networking theory of strong as well as weak ties that benefits the organizations and implied that social capital is developing internally as well as externally. Besides they empirically suggested the improvement in the talent management processes with the help of leveraging the social networking sites. Employers from the different firms can use the technology driven SNSs to bridge the gap between talent demand-supply.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

In this article, secondary sources associated with talent management and social networking sites have been used. For this purpose, the data from various journals as well as the reports of NASSCOM, World Bank, SHRM, Deloitte and various magazines have been reviewed.

### **Social Networking Site (SNS)?**

Social Networking sites can be defined as internet/web-based services that allow the individual to construct a profile, articulate the list of other users with whom they want to share the connection and navigate self as well as other's connections within the bounded system (Boyd & Ellison 2007). These sites can be describe as the chat rooms, community-based web sites, online forums, blogs and various other online social spaces that connect the people on the internet. In this digitization world, people are connecting on various social media platforms through the Social networking apps like Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Google+ and LinkedIn etc. Worldwide social

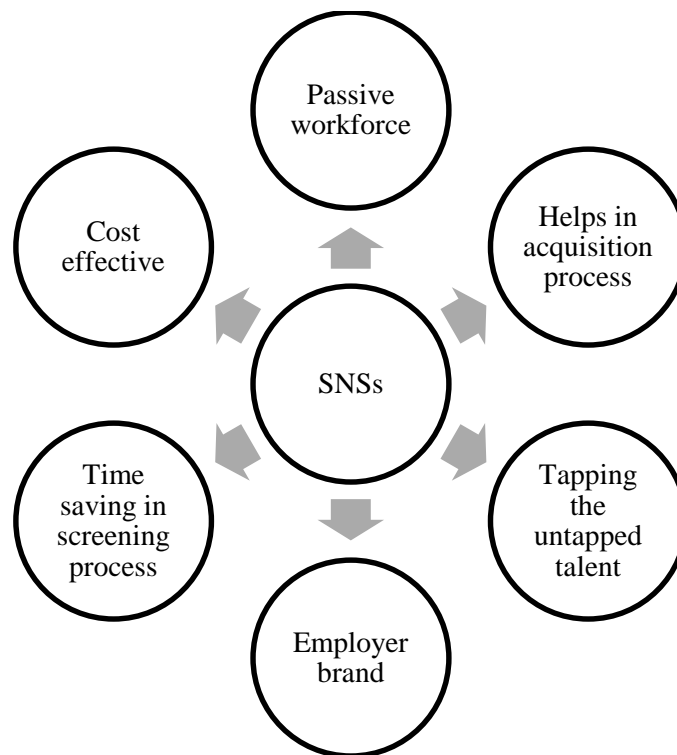
media users are increasing and with the increase in mobile connectivity this number is going to mount further. In the year 2017, there were 2.46 billion users active on these social networking sites and this figure is going to enlarge to 3.02 billion users by 2021 (Statista 2019). Social Networking sites have the diverse features that make it unique.

- a) All the sites have fairly consistent key technological features that makes it user friendly and help the users share their views and experiences with others.
- b) It connects the people of pre-existing social relations (offline) to connect on the network (online).
- c) It also brought the strangers having shared interests together on the network.
- d) These sites provide the facilities of photo sharing and audio/video sharing.
- e) It also provides the users the information regarding their contacts and events or pages in which they are interested (e.g. Facebook provides this information in its Newsfeed).
- f) Users can create their own pages and groups on these sites to share the articles, information regarding events and seminars etc.

**Role of Social networking sites in accessing the talented workforce:**

Gone are the days when the information regarding job opening used the ad and classifieds in the newspapers, magazines and billboards etc. AI driven social networking sites plays a significance role in the various TM processes. In the Global Human Capital Trend 2019 survey, the worldwide 61% respondents agreed that finding the qualified experienced talent is one of the biggest challenges of talent acquisition process and most of the respondents agreed that technology will play an important role in the recruiting process of the firms in the coming three years. With the advancement of the internet/web based services, shift can be seen in the talent hunt processes. Social networking sites are the modern tools that help the companies to tap the top talent available in the market.

**Figure 2: Role of social networking sites in accessing the talented workforce.**



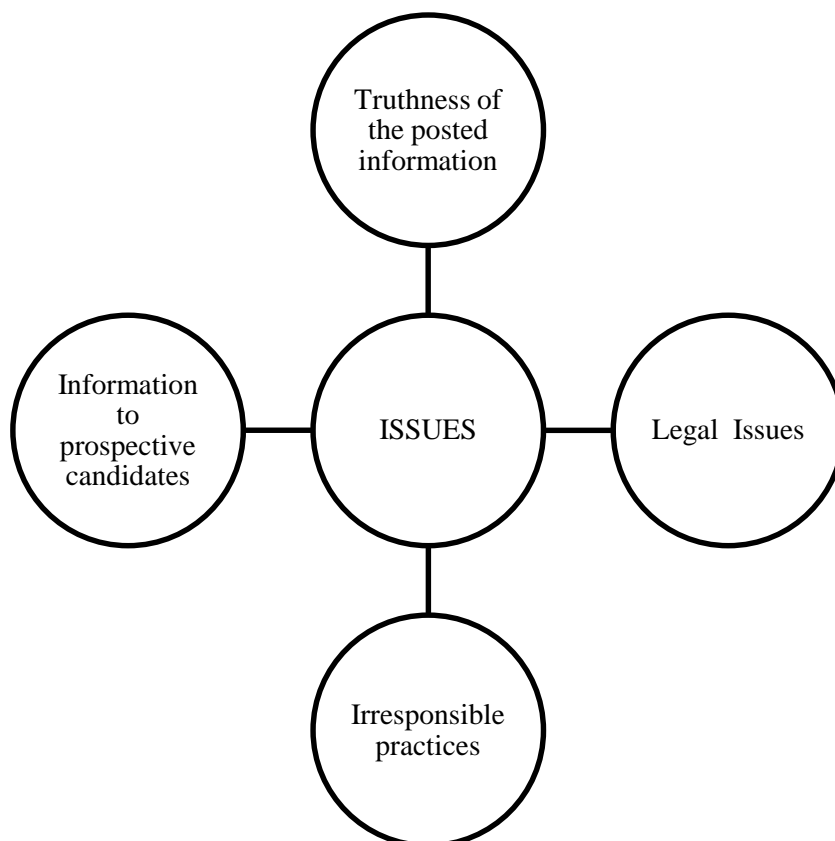
- a) **Passive workforce:** SNSs help in tapping the passive workforce available in the market. Passive workforces are those workforces which are currently employed but are open to the more career opportunities. For example: LinkedIn is one of the most popular social sites for recruitment. SHRM 2016 survey finds that 96% of the respondents used social sites to recruit the jobseekers. The researcher like Nayak et al. 2017 describes the importance of passive workforces, which can be acquired with the help of SNSs. In a survey report posted by SHRM 2016, 82% respondents consider the social media as an important recruitment tool to tap the passive workforce.

- b) Helps in advertisement and screening processes:** Recent statistics revealed that about two million jobs are advertised monthly on various social networking sites viz. Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus and LinkedIn and the employers are utilizing these sites to hire the talent. Managers are checking the social media pages of the job applicants for the screening (Bohnert & Ross 2010). They are examining whether the information given on these social sites matches with the information available on their resumes.
- c) Helps in tapping the untapped talent:** Various SNSs like LinkedIn are providing their users the opportunities to grow in their careers by maintain their LinkedIn accounts that comprises of Name, Qualification, Age, Interests etc. SNSs help in finding the untapped potential available in the market. For example, Pymetrics, a new AI based social networking tool that helps the Unilever to further expanding its recruitment processes and helps them hiring the workforce that don't have the best college degrees but have the ability, are conscientious and have the potential to compete and ultimately help the company to succeed.
- d) Helps in creating the employer brand:** With the help of these sites, companies can build their own brand by standing out in this technological era (Doherty 2010). Companies can access the various top talents and bring down the attrition rates by conveying the brand image among the social users. LinkedIn is one of the most professional social sites that help the companies to communicate their corporate culture through the pages they have created on the social media platform.
- e) Reduction in screening time of the applications:** About 75% and 81% respondents agreed that the use of SNSs helps in selection as well as faster talent acquisition processes (Nayak et al. 2017). For example, Mya one of the AI based chat boats helped the firms to decrease the screening time of applicants by 30-50 percent or more.
- f) Cost effective:** SNSs usage has brought down the cost of recruiting for the employers (Nayak, Bhatnagar & Budhwar 2017). Employers access the information regarding the job applicants through their social web pages. So the SNSs have been considered as inexpensive while gathering the information regarding the applicants.

### Issues associated with using social networking sites while assessing the talent pool

In the Global Human Capital trend survey 2019, only 6% respondents reported that they had strong technological processes in their firms regarding the recruitment functions. A separate study by Bersin<sup>TM</sup>, only 12% and 9% respondents reported that they had strong sourcing and screening technology respectively.

Figure 3: Issues associated with using social networking sites while assessing the talent pool.



- a) Truthfulness of the posted information:** It is an issue for the employer how to predict the truthfulness of the posted information. On the professional social sites like LinkedIn employees might post the true and reliable information while on the other sites like Facebook and Twitter etc., they just want to impress the others even if it is with the fake information. In advertisement, screening and hiring, employers agreed that they have taken the help of SNSs in the process of reviewing the background check of the employee online but how to ensure that the information is accurate, only few employers have put the policies in place in their organizations as low as 5% (Clark & Roberts 2010). Employers should set the guidelines for online checking of background information of the applicants. They should also keep in mind the accuracy and reliability of the online information because this information can also misguide them while taking decisions.
- b) Information to the prospective candidates:** One of the concerns of using SNSs is whether the information regarding the job opening is reaching to the prospective candidate or not. For example: If the company posted the job opening on the Facebook, it will receive the response from a lot of candidates but they might not be the prospective applicants. On the other hand, if it had posted the job vacancy on the professionally managed LinkedIn app, it can receive the responses from the potential candidates. So the companies should tactically plan the posting of the job vacancy on those sites where its target candidates are located.
- c) Legal issues:** Employers should also consider the legality of using these sites for hiring, firing and branding decisions. Even if by using the information on these sites, there is no harm to the civil rights of the candidates but still it violates the privacy of the candidates. Employers should put in practice a policy guide which will guide them when and how to check the information online of an employee. Researcher provides the guidance regarding the employer usage of SNSs. He proposed that do the background check because of job demand, keep the information confidential, notice to the employee before the background check, accurate and complete information should be collected and outdated information should be discarded. So it is wrong on the part of employers to check the social web pages of the applicants unless the legitimate job decisions have to be taken.
- d) Irresponsible practices by the employer:** Researchers like Clark & Roberts 2010 and Davison et al. 2011 considered the background check of the employee through SNSs as irresponsible practices. With the information available online, employers informally check the social web pages and took their hiring decisions (Brown & Vaughn 2011). Even some employers have their own facebook accounts and through the actor's profile or through some another links check the more personal details of the applicant. Employers don't hire the applicant and terminate the current employees on the basis of their social profile posts. For example a CNN's producer was fired because he had posted on the blog off-work, even though his identity was not known to anyone. Employers should not be involved in these kinds of irresponsible practices.

## CONCLUSION:

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that social networking sites usage has been increased, and it is going to increase further in the coming years in practice. But the theoretical and empirical researches regarding social networking sites are sparse in the literature. It can be said that the organizations have put forth the practices to access the talented workforce by leveraging the social networking sites but they should also have kept in mind the talent pool that is not using these sites because it is not good for the organizations to lose this talent group. SNSs play an important role in various talent management practices like advertisement, acquisition and screening of the workforce. SNSs usage has not only saved the cost and time (in the screening process) of the employers but also provides them with the advantage of hiring the untapped and passive workforce. However, there are certain issues that need to be addressed as explained above. Employers are using these sites without considering the issues related to them. These sites can be of utmost importance and can be "friends" if handled appropriately otherwise these will act as "foes" for HR professionals. (Davison et al. 2011). For the successful implementation of SNSs practices, these should be integrated with the organizational existing recruitment processes and issues should be addressed while leveraging the social networking sites (Doherty 2010).

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