

# Social media recruitment: the role of credibility and satisfaction

Social media  
recruitment

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The increased popularity of social media has been prompting the recruitment managers to use social media recruitment. Very little has been studied on the effectiveness of social media recruitment from the recruiter's perspective. Influenced by the diffusion of innovation theory, the study measures the usefulness of social media recruitment through various prehire and posthire recruitment outcomes. The study also used the media richness theory to examine the role of credibility and satisfaction as a mediating variable.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Data has been collected from the recruiters in the public and private sector of India. Available literature is studied to develop survey instrument validated through experts from industry and academia. Pilot study was conducted to test for any construct weaknesses. Data is analyzed using AMOS.

**Findings** – The study result proved that social media recruitment is significantly related to both prehire outcomes and posthire outcomes. The result also proved the mediating effect of credibility and satisfaction and suggests recruitment practitioner to emphasize on disseminating credible, relevant and sufficient information through suitable communication mode.

**Practical implications** – HR professional to be careful about the information provided through a social media recruitment method. Practitioner to establish credibility of the information to create a sense of satisfaction by the applicants toward the information. Thus, as the information becomes more credible, the attraction to the organization also increases, which in turn results in more applicants applying for the job.

**Originality/value** – This is the first quantitative study to examine effectiveness of social media recruitment under the influence of mediator – credibility and satisfaction considering the data from the recruiters.

**Keywords** Social media, India, Employee recruitment, Social recruiting

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Recruitment is a vital function for any organization to maintain and improve their competitive advantage in the fierce competitive era (Muduli *et al.*, 2016). It functions as a channel of discovering potential candidates and attracting them to make the right selection (Barber, 1998; Breaugh and Starke, 2000; Madan and Madan, 2019). In a study of graduate recruitment, Internet-based social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn were used by recruiters to attract talents by sharing the company culture and career opportunities-related information (Alf, 2013). For example, Microsoft has developed a specific website for recruitment, using Job blogs and life at work videos to provide relevant information to both active and passive job seekers (Joos, 2008). Similarly, Deloitte places employee testimonials on social media sites (e.g. YouTube videos) to allow potential job applicants to learn more directly from the insiders. Further, the company's decision to use social media for recruitment is easily seen through both efficiency and cost, as communication is often instantaneous and can reach a wide range of audiences. The downside of it is whether the job messages can get through to the target audiences. Attracting many applicants who may be unsuitable will end up wasting much time and resources for screening. A more ethically controversial dilemma is whether the social media recruitment (SMR) approach is discriminatory (Lam, 2016).



A core activity of recruitment is communicating information about jobs, working conditions, expectations, values and climate to persuade prospective employees to apply for the vacancies. Organizations choose a variety of communication media (advertisement, job fairs, referrals, social media, etc.) to communicate recruitment messages to potential applicants. Recruiters' decision to choose the right media depends on the capability of the media to provide sufficient and credible information in different communication context (Allen *et al.*, 2007; Feldman *et al.*, 2006). For example, in the context of the advertisement, Blackman (2006) observed that the information provided in the advertisement reduces uncertainty and increases satisfaction if the candidate received accurate information from the messages communicated during recruitment. No research has been conducted to study the capability of social media to provide credible and sufficient information from the recruiter's perspective.

To date, very few academic researches have been reported on SMR or effectiveness of social media as a recruitment method with a few exceptions (Aggerholm and Andersen, 2018; Chauhan *et al.*, 2013; Nikolaou, 2014). Most of the researches on SMR studied social media as a tool for gathering information about candidate (Zide *et al.*, 2014; Nikolaou, 2014; Roth *et al.*, 2016) and have used either secondary data source (Fisher *et al.*, 2014; Neuhofner *et al.*, 2015) or involving applicants only as a primary data source (Sivertzen *et al.*, 2013; Wazed and Ng, 2015). Very few studies have been conducted involving recruiters (Parry and Wilson, 2009; Gibbs *et al.*, 2015). And whenever conducted, the context and objectives were different from the current research. For example, Parry and Wilson (2009) involved recruiters to explore the factors affecting adoption of online recruitment methods such as websites and job boards. Furthermore, it is noted that mediating variables merit more attention than they have received because most of the researchers have assumed them rather than testing those mediating variables in the context of recruitment (Breugh, 2008; Rynes and Cable, 2003). Influenced by the media richness theory (MRT), the role of credibility and satisfaction (CS) as a mediating variable has been examined.

### **Theoretical background and research model**

The proposed research model argues that recruiter's decision to use social media (SMR) may depend on the expected benefits from the use (prehire and posthire recruitment outcomes (ROs)). The model also proposes CS (toward the information) as mediating recruiter intention and expected benefits.

SMR is an underresearched area, and hence, we need to turn to literature outside of this area to provide a theoretical framework. While we are interested in the organizational adoption of SMR, it could be argued that the intention to adopt this method is primarily driven by an individual such as the head of recruitment. It may, therefore, be appropriate to examine the literature on individual decision-making. A model that has been used to explain the decision of individuals to act in a particular way is the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). This model proposed that the intention to perform a particular behavior may be based on attitudes and beliefs about that behavior. Individuals who hold favorable attitudes toward a given behavior will hold a favorable attitude toward performing that behavior, while a person who has negative attitudes toward behavior will hold unfavorable attitudes toward performing it. TPB may also have face validity as a framework for the explanation of the adoption of SMR as individuals who have positive attitudes toward SMR, may intend to adopt social media methods within their organizations.

Further, the diffusion of innovation theory (DIT) can be relevant and useful to provide a framework for accepting SMR by the recruiters. Rogers (1995) described a generic set of five factors affecting adoption/diffusion: (1) relative advantage: the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being better than the idea it supersedes; (2) compatibility: the degree to which

an innovation is perceived as consistent with the existing values, past experiences and needs of potential adopters; (3) complexity: the degree to which an innovation is perceived as relatively difficult to understand and use; (4) trialability: the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis; and (5) observability: the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others. Thus, influenced by the DIT, we propose that recruiters' decision of adoption of SMR can be influenced by the five important factors.

In recruitment research, communication media (written advertisement, advertisement on the company website, employee referrals, job fairs, social media, etc.) play an important role in attracting potential applicants. The recruiter may face a dilemma to choose the best communication media as all media may not have equal capacity to communicate to the applicants. This matches with the MRT, which suggests that communication outcomes depend on the match between media capacities and communication requirements (Rynes and Boudreau, 1986). Thus, influenced by the MRT, CS has been proposed as to play an important role in SMR.

Influenced by the aforementioned theoretical framework, the research framework suggests that SMR is posited to have a direct and indirect association with pre- and posthire ROs. In detail, the model explains that SMR is related to both prehire and posthire ROs. Further, it is also hypothesized that the relationship between SMR and ROs is mediated by CS.

## Hypotheses

### *Social media recruitment and recruitment outcomes*

Social media are media of free participation, which can allow communities to participate and try to build a genuine relationship (Narvey, 2009). Social media can be roughly referred to as a group of Internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011).

SMR can be preferred by recruiters owing to its relationship with ROs. Recruitment practitioner has been emphasizing the significance of SMR by refereeing to various prehire ROs (easy accessibility, genuineness of resources, active processing, helping to generate more favorable responses, meet timeframes, cost savings) and posthire ROs (efficiency and cost-effectiveness for recruiters, recruitees' performance, retention of recruitees etc.). Girard *et al.* (2013) observed that by using SMR, a talent that is not currently available with job portals/ placement consultants is also accessible, and genuineness of resources is easy to identify. A Web-based comparative cohort study including 18–45-year-old Danish women concludes that online recruitment methods specifically SMR are superior to offline methods in terms of both efficiency and cost-effectiveness (Christensen *et al.*, 2017). More than 40% of the studies found that SMR can be the most effective method compared to traditional methods to recruit research participants for medical research (Topolovec-Vranic and Natarajan, 2016). Researchers have studied brand activity and its impact on student recruitment and found that students tend to perform positively when universities are utilizing social media as a recruitment method (Rutter *et al.*, 2016). Carrillat and Alain (2014) found that managers seeking to gain an edge in recruitment should use SMR as it stimulates more active processing and has high entertainment value helping to generate more favorable responses toward the employer for recruiters. Fisher *et al.* (2014) observed that SMR had become part of a more cost-effective recruitment approach and a faster way to get employment opportunities posted to meet timeframes that the recruiter controls. Recruiters can send and resend job opportunities as often as deemed necessary while minimizing spending on more traditional, complementary ways of recruitment (e.g. job boards). Ballweg *et al.* (2019) investigated the prevalence and influence of social network website (SNW) content on job applicant reactions

to their prospective immediate supervisor and toward applying for the job. A survey by [Jobvite in 2010](#) on the use of social media by corporate recruiters suggests that 83% of respondents currently or in future are planning to use social media ([Madia, 2011](#)).

*H1.* Recruiter's intention to adopt SMR is significantly related to ROs.

*H1a.* Recruiter's intention to adopt SMR is significantly related to prehire ROs.

*H1b.* Recruiter's intention to adopt SMR is significantly related to posthire ROs.

### *Social media recruitment, credibility and satisfaction and recruitment outcomes*

Recruitment is the primary tool for attracting applicants ([Pahos and Galanaki, 2019](#); [Rynes and Boudreau, 1986](#)). Recruiters attract potential applicants by sending messages containing information about the organization, job, career advancement, company culture and so on through various communication media. MRT ([Frasca and Edwards, 2017](#); [Daft and Lengel, 1986](#)) provides a useful framework for understanding the effects of communication media on organizational communication. Its major premise is that effectiveness depends on the match between communication requirement and media richness. Richer media possess the capacities or channels needed to communicate information that is high in volume, complex, ambiguous, susceptible to multiple interpretations or unfamiliar to receivers ([Daft et al., 1987](#); [Frasca and Edwards, 2017](#)).

Social media can be used by the recruiters as a platform to inform applicants about the type of opportunities available, the skill and competency required for the job and nature of the workplace. Tools such as Google analytics/Facebook analytics have been used for producing and posting relevant contents to the target audience. By doing this, recruiters can satisfy the need of the applicant regarding content and volumes of information ([Wazed and Ng, 2015](#)). The fast speed of communication and the wide reach are also important characteristics that make social media very different from other prior forms of communication ([Lam, 2016](#)). Further, recruiters can also use social media to establish the credibility of the information sought by the applicants. Organizations have been using their existing staff to share information about the role of their company on their achievement. Also, existing employees may create their groups on separate platforms for networking and sharing photographs with fellow employees that are not controlled by the organization. Sites also exist to post views on employers, for example, Glassdoor and Rate My Employer, which may help the employer in establishing the credibility of the information to be provided to the applicants ([Neuhofer et al., 2015](#)).

*H2.* CS will mediate the relationship between SMR intention and ROs.

### **Methodology**

This section describes the population and sample, measurement instrument, procedures used and data analysis.

#### *Population and sample*

The target population was the recruiters from the manufacturing and service sector of India; the available population was the managing partners and HR partners/managers/directors working in different companies of Gujarat, a state of India. The state of Gujarat, India, has been considered as it has been consistently rated as industrially advanced and hence the recruiters may involve in frequent recruitment activity using advanced recruitment methods such as SMR. The sample was selected from the recruiters engaged in SMR especially through LinkedIn as it has been rated as most preferred SMR forum ([Koch et al., 2018](#)). Further, as identification of recruiters using SMR was not easy and hence may fall within the

category of “hard to reach” sample, we choose to rely on social networking sites (Web 2.0) especially LinkedIn. While doing this, we are more influenced by [Baltar and Brunet \(2012\)](#) as the researchers suggested social networking sites (Web 2.0) such as Facebook, LinkedIn as more effective for collecting data from “hard-to-reach” populations. Although the traditional snowball sampling is preferred to collect data from “hard-to-reach” populations, we used ‘virtual networks’ sampling techniques as snowball sampling is criticized as biased as it is not random ([Baltar and Brunet, 2012](#)). The “virtual networks” sampling techniques allowed us to randomly select the recruiters who are using SMR from a virtual network (LinkedIn).

Around 400 recruiters were targeted considering 1: 20 ratio between number of items (20 items) and sample (400 respondents). The decision to consider the 1: 20 ratio is to achieve the threshold ratio level of 1:10 as suggested by [Hair et al. \(1998\)](#). For example, [Hair et al. \(1998\)](#) suggested that as a general rule there should be at least ten times as many observations as there are variables to analyze and that a higher ratio may even be preferable. From the 400 administered questionnaires, 282 were returned; 42 were rejected as incomplete, leaving 240 that were useable (ratio 1:12 and hence acceptable), for a response rate of 60%.

### *Procedure*

This is a survey-based study. The survey instrument has been designed following previous research ([Gibbs et al., 2015](#); [Parry and Wilson, 2009](#); [Allen et al., 2007](#); [Hong, 2005](#)). SMR intention instrument has been designed influenced by [Gibbs et al. \(2015\)](#). RO instrument has been designed following [Parry and Wilson \(2009\)](#) and CS instrument has been designed following [Allen et al. \(2007\)](#) and [Hong \(2005\)](#). All the measurement instruments were further refined with the help of a HR senior director of a reputed software firm, as well as university HR professor who had served in recruitment practices. Further, a pilot study was conducted to test for any construct weaknesses and for weaknesses in the research design ([Collis and Hussey, 2003](#)). A sample of 30 (10 from the public sector and 20 from the private sector) HR managers were administered with the measurement instrument and responses collected to further refine the instrument. As all the variables passed the threshold Cronbach alpha reliability score (0.7), they all are considered without any modification.

### *Measures*

The survey instrument consisted of *SMR intention* (3 items), *RO* (12 items) consisting of prehire (9 items) and posthire outcome (3 items) and *CS* (5 items), for a total of 20 items. Each component is described next. The Likert-type scale of 1–5, 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree,” was used to measure the items.

*Social media recruitment (SMR) intention*: SMR intention refers to the intention of the recruiter to adopt SM for employee recruitment. Influenced by the TPB ([Ajzen, 1991](#)), we propose that recruiters’ intention to use social media may influence their decision to adopt social media for employee recruitment. Influenced by past research ([Gibbs et al., 2015](#)), SMR intention has been measured through three questions. Sample items include “Social media should have a central role in the hiring process,” “Social media has been considered important in the industry.” The alpha reliability of SMR was 0.92.

*Recruitment outcome (RO)*: RO refers to the expected benefits that the recruiters perceived to get by using social media. RO has been measured considering two aspects of RO, that is, prehire outcomes and posthire outcomes. Influenced by [Parry and Wilson \(2009\)](#) and the DIT ([Rogers, 1995](#); [Archibald and Clark, 2014](#)), we measured RO (prehire and posthire) using the five factors as suggested by the theory of adoption/diffusion of innovative technology: (1) relative advantage: the degree to which SM in recruitment is perceived as being better than the idea it supersedes; sample items include “It helps to get better candidates than other methods,” “SM is better in communicating ideas than others.” (2) Compatibility: the degree to which use of SM recruitment is perceived as consistent with the existing values, past

experiences and needs of potential adopters. Sample items are “It is desired practice now,” “It is compatible with company culture.” (3) Complexity: the degree to which SM recruitment is perceived as relatively difficult to understand and use. Sample items include “SM is popular because it is simple to use,” “Even complicated issues can be handled through SM.” (4) Trialability: the degree to which SM in recruitment may be experimented with on a limited basis; and (5) observability: the degree to which the results of SM in recruitment are visible to others. Sample items include “It saves cost,” “It helps assess intelligence.” The alpha reliability of RO was 0.83.

*Credibility and satisfaction (CS):* Recruitment and information sharing are closely related to each other. The attraction of candidates requires the recruiters to communicate and disseminate information, which is not only relevant but also reliable. In the context of job advertisement, [Allen et al. \(2007\)](#) and [Hong \(2005\)](#) found that providing genuine and relevant information can enhance CS, which in turn can attract better talent. Influenced by [Allen et al. \(2007\)](#) and [Hong \(2005\)](#), the CS scale has been developed to measure the recruiter’s perception on the capability of SMR to communicate credible and satisfied information. CS has been measured by five items. Sample items are “It can help me to communicate trustworthy information to the applicants”; “I am satisfied with the amount of information provided through this method.” The alpha reliability of CS was 0.81.

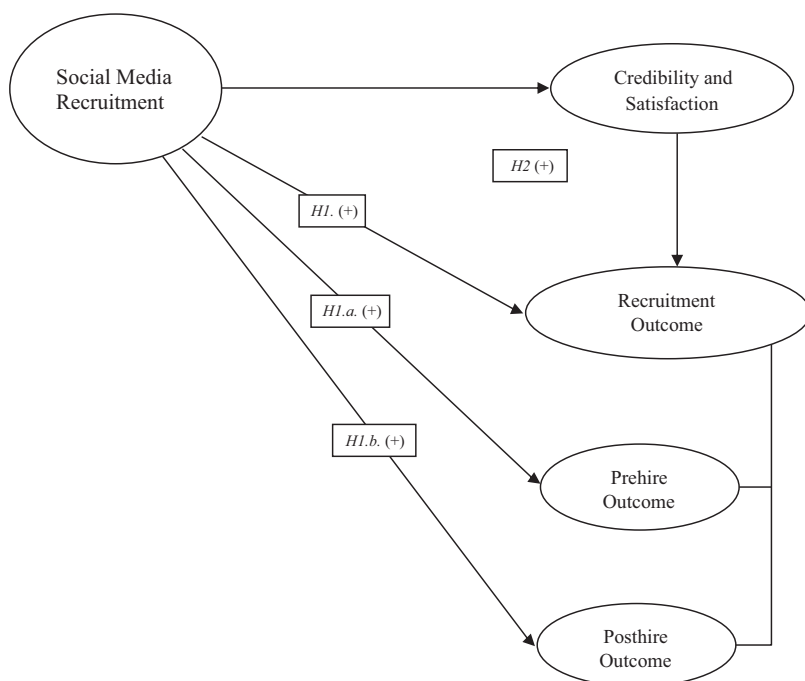
#### *Statistical techniques*

Structural equation modeling (SEM) (Amos 16) was used to test the hypothesized model ([Figure 1](#)). SEM is a family of statistical models that seek to explain the relationship between multiple variables and are more effective when testing models that are path analytic with mediating variables and contain latent constructs measured with multiple indicators ([Hair et al., 2006](#)). Because our model contains several latent variables (using subscales) and involves mediating variable (based on subscales), and based on the review of the empirical evidence supporting the hypothesized relationships, SEM was considered appropriate.

SEM researchers propose a two-step procedure when testing theoretical models. The first step is to examine and validate the measurement model; the second step tests the structural model and conducts hypothesis tests ([Garver and Williams, 2009](#)). Following [Garver and Williams \(2009\)](#), at the first step, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to refine and validate the measurement model. CFA, rather than EFA (exploratory FA), was used as the items included in the survey had been used and validated previously. This helped us to evaluate the contribution of each item to the construct (latent variables). The measurement model also provides an assessment of convergent and discriminant validity, while the full model provides an assessment of predictive validity. Further, the structural model was tested to determine the strength of the hypothesized relationships between the constructs.

#### **Measurement model: validity and reliability**

CFA was used for a simultaneous assessment of overall and specific elements of measurement validity and reliability. CFA showed that all factor loadings and path coefficients were statistically significant. The *t*-values were above the required value of 1.96. Convergent validity is good as all the items and variables have high and significant factor loadings (greater than 0.60 as suggested by [Bagozzi and Yi \(1988\)](#)). Discriminant validity was measured by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted to the correlation between constructs ([Braunscheidel and Suresh, 2009](#)). As indicated in [Table 3](#), each construct was higher than the corresponding interconstruct correlation estimates, suggesting good discriminant validity. Moreover, the correlation coefficients among the constructs do not exceed 0.85, indicating that multicollinearity is not a problem ([Kline, 2005](#)). Reliability estimates (Cronbach alpha) for the three scales exceeded the 0.70 cutoff value suggested by [Hair et al. \(2006\)](#), providing evidence of scale reliability (SMR – 0.92, CS – 0.81 and RO – 0.83)



**Figure 1.**  
Hypothesized model

(Table 1). CFA helped us in assessing common method biases (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). CFA helped in extracting three factors with eigenvalues >1.0.

The combined variance accounted for was 77.52%. The first factor accounted for 27.27% of the variance, while the second for 25.38% and third factor for 24.87%. Common method bias is less of an issue if more than one factor are identified, and none of the factors account for the majority of the variance explained (Patel and Conklin, 2012). The overall fit statistics of the CFA are  $\chi^2 = 83.107$ ;  $df = 76$ ;  $p = 0.084$ ; CFI = 0.815; GFI = 0.817; RMSEA = 0.076; CMIN/df = 2.358; RMR = 0.034; and NFI = 0.938 (see Tables 2 and 3). The model fits perfectly with the data, and all the indices were within the recommended ranges.

### Structural model and findings

Before the path coefficients can be assessed, the fitness of the structural model must be evaluated. As shown in Table 4, the goodness-of-fit statistics indicate a good fit to the data. The  $\chi^2$  statistic was nonsignificant ( $\chi^2 = 103.347$ ;  $df = 75$ ;  $p = 0.01$ ), indicating an acceptable fit (Kline, 2005). Each of the remaining model fit indices shown in Table 4 (CFI, GFI and NFI) exceeds the acceptable fit level of 0.90 (Kline, 2005). The RMSEA does not exceed the

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha
Social media recruitment	0.92
Credibility and satisfaction	0.81
Prehire outcome	0.76
Posthire outcome	0.79
Recruitment outcome	0.83

**Table 1.**  
Cronbach's alphas

acceptable fit measure of 0.08 (Browne and Cudeck, 1993), nor does the RMR exceed 0.05 (Kline, 2005). The probability value that the model is a close fit is convincing at 0.950 as the threshold can be >0.50 (Kline, 2005).

Additionally, all of the path estimates were significant and in the expected direction. As shown in Table 2, SMR intention was found to be significantly related to RO ( $r = 0.49, p < 0.01$ ). In more detail, SMR intention is significantly related to RO in the form of *prehire outcome* ( $r = 0.51, p < 0.01$ ) and *posthire outcome* ( $r = 0.47, p < 0.01$ ). With this, H1 and H1a to H1b are accepted.  $R^2$  was equal to 0.362, that is, 36.2% of the variance in RO was explained by SMR.

To examine the mediating effect of CS on SMR intention and RO, we tested three conditions using AMOS analysis (Little et al., 2007). First, the independent variable (SMR intention) must be related to the mediator (CS). Results show that SMR intention has a significant positive direct relation with CS ( $\beta = 0.236, p < 0.05$ ) (Table 5). Then, the relationship between the independent and dependent variable shows that SMR intention has a positive and direct relationship with RO ( $\beta = 0.175, p < 0.01$ ), supporting the second condition. In the third condition, CS is significantly and positively related with RO ( $\beta = 0.738, p < 0.005$ ). This proves partial mediation of CS with SMR intention on RO. The path coefficient is mentioned in Figure 2.

**Result and discussion**

Recruiter’s intention to use SMR may depend on the expected benefits from the use (RO). The research also studied the role of CS (toward the information) on recruiter’s intention and RO.

**Table 2.**  
Correlations among variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1 Social media recruitment	1			
2 Credibility and satisfaction	0.675**	1		
3 Prehire outcome	0.512*	0.326**	1	
4 Posthire outcome	0.471**	0.246*	0.356*	1
5 Recruitment outcome	0.492*	0.228*	0.424*	0.428**

Note(s): \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$

**Table 3.**  
Measurement fit model

Overall model measure	Model score	Acceptable model fit	Acceptable range
CFI	0.815	Passed	>0.90
GFI	0.817	Passed	>0.90
RMSEA	0.076	Passed	<0.10
CMIN/DF	2.358	Passed	<3
RMR	0.034	Passed	>0.05
NFI	0.938	Passed	>0.90

**Table 4.**  
Measurement structural model

Overall model measure	Model score	Acceptable model fit	Acceptable range
CFI	0.917	Passed	>0.90
GFI	0.957	Passed	>0.90
RMSEA	0.082	Passed	<0.10
CMIN/DF	2.568	Passed	<3
RMR	0.025	Passed	>0.05
NFI	0.819	Passed	>0.90

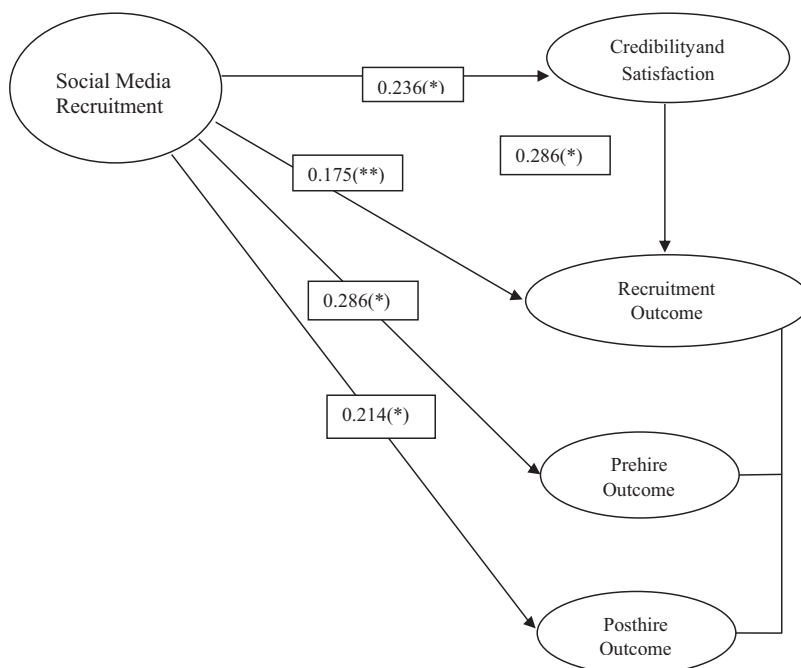


The study result suggests that SMR intention is significantly related to prehire outcomes ( $r = 0.18, p > 0.05$ ). Consistent with previous research (Chauhan *et al.*, 2013; Nikolaou, 2014; Madera and Chang, 2011), the result proved that recruiters intend to use social media as it helps in easy accessibility to quality applicants, ensures genuineness of resources, enables active processing, helps to generate more favorable responses, meets timeframes and ensures cost savings. Recruiters use social media as they are relatively better than other recruitment methods as they provide easy accessibility to quality applicants and help to generate a more favorable response by initiating two-way communications between the recruiter and the applicants. Similarly, in terms of compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability, SMR is more compatible, less complex and ensures better trialability and observability. Recruiters may intend to use SMR as it provides ample scope to try and experiment without causing more risk and financial liability. The result also agrees with the facts and figures available in Indian context, which has 200m WhatsApp users and 240m people in Facebook; 450m plus on Internet; and more than 121m between the ages of 18 and 22. India has the

	Credibility and satisfaction		Prehire outcome		Posthire outcome		Recruitment outcome		
	Direct	Total	Direct	Total	Direct	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total
Social media recruitment	0.236(*)	0.236	0.136(*)		0.214(*)		0.175(**)	0.286(*)	0.461
Credibility and satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.738(*)	-	0.738

**Note(s):** \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$

**Table 5.** Summary of effects



**Figure 2.** Path coefficients model

world's largest youth population and the country with the largest numbers on social media. And these guys are everywhere – LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and several other portals. Further, the survey result that 79% of job seekers use social media to find new jobs where as 43% of Indian companies are leveraging social networks to source talent proves the compatibility of SMR in the Indian context. (<http://www.hexagonsearch.com/2017s>). Hence, recruiter may use SMR.

Secondly, the research result also proved that SMR intention is significantly related to posthire ROs. In other word, recruiters intend to use social media as they help in hiring better talent in terms of performance and ensure more talent retention. Agreeing with previous research (Rutter *et al.*, 2016; Christensen *et al.*, 2017), the current study proved that SMR is cost-effective, attracts better talents and retains them. For example, in the context of student, Rutter *et al.* (2016) found that students perform positively when universities are utilizing social media as a recruitment method (Rutter *et al.*, 2016). Christensen *et al.* (2017) found that SMR is superior to offline methods in terms of cost-effectiveness (Christensen *et al.* 2017).

Finally, the study result proved the positive significant mediating effect of information CS between SMR intention and ROs. The result proved that SMR is capable of generating significant ROs only when recruiters focus on disseminating credible, sufficient and relevant information. The result supplements recruitment theory and practice by emphasizing an additional feature called “credible, sufficient and relevant information” and hence suggests recruiters to explore suitable communication medium such as audio-visual, two-way interactive communication and so on to establish information credibility, sufficiency and relevancy for better ROs. Consistent with past research on social media (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016; Raab *et al.*, 2016), the result proved the capability of SMR to provide credible and relevant information for attracting talents. For example, in the context of customers’ purchase intention, Schivinski and Dabrowski (2016) found that social media communication has positive influence on brand attitude, which further influences purchase intention. The researcher proved that firm-created social media communication has been viewed as credible and reliable and hence attracted more customers. Similarly, in the context of hotelier, Raab *et al.* (2016) found hotelier social media communication style and information quality positively relate with customers’ loyalty. The friendly dimension of social-media-based communication style along with interactive and professional display of social media communication increased the information credibility and extended satisfaction leading to enhanced customer loyalty. This unique capability of social media may encourage recruiters to rely on SMR as the information shared through this is more powerful in establishing an emotional bonding with potential applicants. This is because SMR can create a socialization environment through frequent interaction and engagement of recruiters and applicants by responding to applicant’s question, allowing their present employees to share their positive opinion, sharing videos and so on.

### **Implications of the study**

The result also has important implications for managerial practice.

Firstly, the result that SMR positively relates to prehire outcome suggests managers to use SM for easy accessibility to quality applicants, availability of genuine data about the applicants, generating more favorable responses from applicants, meeting the timeframes for recruitment and cost savings. For example, social media sites such as Facebook can be used to maximize the number of applicants. Designing an employer’s fan page on Facebook can help to build a pipeline of potential applicants who may be available for internship, summer and postgraduate opportunities. This can help the recruiters to drive traffic to their pages on Facebook through their corporate career sites (Seeing out talent. . ., 2016). Further, this can be more effective in targeting passive job seekers who are not actively looking for employment.

Employers can also drive applicant traffic using Facebook ads in a specific Facebook tab. Visitors to the page can be attracted through incentives in kind such as a resume writing video in return for a Facebook like. As someone likes a fan page on Facebook, employers will then have the opportunity to reach out to all of their friends through promoted posts, which in turn helps build employer brand awareness over a very short period (Wazed and Ng, 2015).

Secondly, the result that SMR can help in better posthire outcome suggests managers optimize SM, especially for talent retention. Better talent retention may require the managers to use their employees who can share successful stories about the company on their social media channels. However, managers need to be selective on choosing the right employees as disengaged employees may not be comfortable in their employment status enough to share it with their colleagues and friends. Further, the managers also need to devise a policy for recognizing and rewarding these employees who acted as the brand ambassadors. HR practices such as employee referral programs can be adopted, and the concerned employees can be rewarded to sustain positive performance.

Thirdly, the result suggests that unlike traditional recruitment methods (e.g. advertising), SMR can help in attracting the dream candidates by providing credible, reliable and sufficient information. To provide credible, reliable and sufficient information, managers need to emotionally involve the candidates by engaging them in objective, direct and frequent conversation through social media. The inherent strength of the social media to provide a platform for engaging the candidates in proactive conversation about the company, the benefits and opportunities related to the company can help the managers in developing trustworthiness of the information with the candidates. Managers should ensure that the conversation is supported with useful and interesting information in different format such as videos, blog posts, images, photography and so on. The information can be viewed as more credible and reliable if it is provided by fellow employees through separate platforms. Managers can encourage existing employees to create their groups on such platforms for networking and sharing photographs with fellow employees that are not controlled by the organization. For example, existing employees can be encouraged to post their comment and views about the organization at Glassdoor and Rate My Employer, which may help in establishing information credibility.

Finally, the implementation of SMR requires the human resource department to understand that social media complement rather than replace traditional means of recruitment. The HR department should ensure that the corporate website is up to date and able to handle additional volumes of applicants generated through social media. Ensuring adequate resources and providing timely responses appropriate to the concerned medium can help in preventing failure in SMR implementation. Producing a video and using YouTube for dissemination can be adopted as it may allow a business to project the desired image and informs potential job seekers of company culture and so on. (Madia, 2011).

### **Limitations and future scope**

Although adequate precautionary measures were taken, the study has some limitations. First, obtaining data from a single geographic area limits the generalizability of the findings to other geographic areas. The study is confined to a single province of India (Gujarat, India), and hence, the findings may not be generalized to other geographic areas. To enhance external validity, future research should obtain data from broader geographic regions.

Second, our results might have been inflated by common method variance (CMV) since the same respondents completed all survey items (Organ and Ryan, 1995). However, as suggested by Podsakoff and Organ (1986), factor analysis is used for assessing common method bias. The result extracted three factors with eigenvalues  $>1.0$ . The combined variance accounted for by the three factors was 62.23%. The first factor accounted for 13.08% of the variance,

while the remaining factors accounted for 49.15% of the variance. Common method bias is less of an issue if more than one factor are identified, and none of the factors account for the majority of the variance explained.

Third, the statistics that among social media sites LinkedIn remains the network of choice, with 86% of respondents citing this as a top choice for recruitment and the leading source for successful hires, but Facebook and Twitter have joined the ranks of viable recruitment channels (Jobvite, 2010) suggests that future study may include a comparative effectiveness study of all the available social network sites.

Finally, in the current study, the effectiveness of recruitment methods has been measured considering the perception of recruiters only. We have not considered the recruitee, whose perception can be equally important. However, as the majority of recruitment research has been conducted considering the recruiters (Breugh, 2013), the present study can have an unique contribution as it is one among those few studies that have considered recruiters. However, considering a hybrid approach, future research can be planned considering both the recruiter and the recruitees.

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## Annexure 1

### Questionnaire for managers

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about the use of *Social Media Recruitment* for searching and attracting applicant for the vacancy in your organization.

Please mark your responses in a five-point scale ("1-strongly disagree" and "5-strongly agree").

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Sr. No	Items
<i>Social media recruitment (SMR) intention</i>	
1	Social media should have a central role in the hiring process
2	It has been considered important in the industry
3	The access of the method among our target applicants is high
<i>Social media recruitment outcome</i>	
1	SMR helps to get better candidates than other methods
2	It is better in communicating ideas than other methods
3	Social media improves the diversity of applicants
4	SMR is a desired practice now
5	It is compatible with company culture
6	Our HR systems are readily compatible with the use of this method
7	SMR is popular because it is simple to use
8	Even complicated issues can be handled through SMR
9	SMR can be tried as it is less riskier (selection mistakes)
10	It can be experimented with the existing resources of my organization
11	It saves cost
12	It helps assess intelligence
<i>Credibility and satisfaction</i>	
16	SMR provides trustworthy (reliable) information about the candidate
17	SMR helps me in getting in-depth information about the candidate
18	SMR satisfies me with the amount of information provided about the candidate
19	SMR satisfies me with the specificity of the information provided about the candidate
20	SMR satisfies me with the overall information provided about the candidate

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