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# Employer Attractiveness Through Social Media: A Phenomenological Study

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## Employer Attractiveness Through Social Media: A Phenomenological Study

### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to gain insights into the subjective experience and perception of job seekers about the extensive use of social media as a source of recruitment and selection by the employers and its influence on the overall employer attractiveness. Four focus group interviews were conducted, audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed by following the procedure of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) laid down by Smith and Osborn (2007). By employing IPA, the themes which emerged under the study are: ease of information; navigational usability and user friendliness; person-job fit and person-organization fit; reliability and timeliness; positive and cost effective marketing; value creation for the employers; and privacy concern. The present study posits to assist the human resource managers in formulating strategies pertaining to social media recruitment and selection so as to create an image of attractive employer. Although IPA has been predominantly used within health psychology, it has been uncommon in the recruitment literature so far. Since IPA is a phenomenological account of an individual's personal experience and perception about an object or event, it allowed determining the richness of job seekers' perception and the extent to which it is similar or different across each participant groups. Also, the current study is one of the pioneers in uncovering the perception of job seekers about social media recruitment and selection process in the Indian context.

### Keywords

E-Recruitment, Selection, Employer Attractiveness, Social Media, Job Seekers, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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## **Employer Attractiveness Through Social Media: A Phenomenological Study**

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*The purpose of this paper is to gain insights into the subjective experience and perception of job seekers about the extensive use of social media as a source of recruitment and selection by the employers and its influence on the overall employer attractiveness. Four focus group interviews were conducted, audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed by following the procedure of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) laid down by Smith and Osborn (2007). By employing IPA, the themes which emerged under the study are: ease of information; navigational usability and user friendliness; person-job fit and person-organization fit; reliability and timeliness; positive and cost effective marketing; value creation for the employers; and privacy concern. The present study posits to assist the human resource managers in formulating strategies pertaining to social media recruitment and selection so as to create an image of attractive employer. Although IPA has been predominantly used within health psychology, it has been uncommon in the recruitment literature so far. Since IPA is a phenomenological account of an individual's personal experience and perception about an object or event, it allowed determining the richness of job seekers' perception and the extent to which it is similar or different across each participant groups. Also, the current study is one of the pioneers in uncovering the perception of job seekers about social media recruitment and selection process in the Indian context. Keywords: E-Recruitment, Selection, Employer Attractiveness, Social Media, Job Seekers, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*

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In a highly competitive market scenario, being able to attract high-quality human resource is considered as a true competitive advantage for an organization (Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlager, 1993; Turban & Greening, 1997). One way of doing so is via online recruitment, a method of attracting job seekers via internet (Cullen, 2001). In this regard, corporate websites have gained popularity in the last decade, making it essential for employers to grab the opportunities it offers in terms of reaching potential candidates and attracting them to apply for a given job position (Pfieffelman, Wagner, & Libkuman, 2010; Walker, Feild, Giles, Bernerth, & Short, 2011). The effectiveness of corporate website facilitates the companies in differentiating themselves from their competitors, which in turn leads to overall organizational attractiveness (Cober, Brown, Levy, Cober, & Keeping 2003; Maurer & Liu, 2007; Scott & Lane, 2000; Van Birgelen, Wetzels, & van Dolen, 2008). However, on a contrary, recent study on e-recruitment suggests that there has been a decrease in the use of corporate websites by employers since late 2007 due to the paradigm shift towards social networking sites (Bradwell & Reeves, 2008). One of the main reasons for this changing trend

can be attributed to the features of social networking sites which enable the recruiters to maintain constant connectivity and long term conversation with the job seekers (Bondarouk & Olivas-Lujan, 2013; Wandel, 2008). Furthermore, the advantage of using social networking sites lie in the ease of identity sharing, which can be utilized by the employers to develop and effectively communicate their own organizational identity (Smith & Kidder, 2010). In this regard, a survey conducted by Jobvite (2012) revealed that around 92% of employers in USA are currently using or planning to use social media recruiting, 43% of recruiters who use social media recruiting saw an increase in candidates' quality, 73% have successfully hired a candidate through social media recruiting, and 31% of recruiters using social media recruiting have seen a sustained increase in employee referrals. Additionally, Facebook officials declared the presence of more than 500 million users and 1 million companies and entrepreneurs from around 180 countries across the globe ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) followed by LinkedIn which has more than 75 million professionals exchanging information, ideas, and opportunities with each other ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)). Similarly, a large number of Indian organizations have implemented social media recruiting due to the escalating usage of social networking sites by the job seekers throughout their job search process (Kumar & Suneja, 2015). According to a survey conducted by Ma Foi Randstad in 2011, 82% of Indian job seekers are extremely focused on using the social media such as Facebook and LinkedIn to reach their employment goals quickly and more efficiently, 87% use the social media to find information about an organization's work culture, 75% track movements and events of their favorite companies to update themselves and prepare for job interviews, and 75% would hesitate joining a company, if their current employees have given negative reviews about the company. These figures suggest that social media platforms are no longer restricted to recreation purposes, but are extended to serve the organizations as an appropriate cyberspace to promote and connect themselves with current and prospective employees (Doherty, 2010; Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2012). Organizations use their Facebook profiles to announce job openings, LinkedIn to search for potential applicants, and advertise on blogs, Twitter or YouTube regarding the events and activities undertaken by them (Beer & Burrows, 2007; Dearstyne, 2007). Moreover, social media has also created the opportunity for organizations to enhance their image as an employer (cf. Smith & Kidder, 2010) due to these sites being most commonly used by students, job seekers, and professionals (Henderson & Bowley, 2010).

Accordingly, the popularity of promoting an organization through social media has provided opportunities for Human Resource (HR) professionals to get involved in activities beyond their traditional HR tasks. Recruitment becomes more interesting and efficient by tweeting a job opening or head hunting through vast number of Linked profiles (Guillory & Hancock, 2012). It also facilitates employees to blog about their experience of working in an organization, which further may lead to enhancement of the organizational image followed by increase in the number of applicants interested in that company (Ellison, 2007; Henderson & Bowley, 2010). Furthermore, recent studies have found that social media has not been used solely to disseminate information about job openings or attracting the potential candidates, but employers have also started screening the candidates through different social media tools like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter (Caers & Castelyns, 2010). As the existent literature maintains that social media usage by employers have elevated in the last few years, equipping organizations with the power of sharing information, networking, and identity building, studies are warranted to explore the linkage between social media and different HR practices (Davison, 2011). Additionally, organizational attraction has been frequently measured in the e-recruitment context (cf. Chen, Lin, & Chen, 2012; Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003; Van Birgelen et al., 2008; Williamson, King, Lepak, & Sarma, 2010), but studies measuring the same in social media recruitment context are still at premature stage. Besides, although research has been conducted to understand the perception of job seekers about internet recruitment (cf.

Teoh, Tan, & Chong, 2013), there is paucity of research which uncovers the perception of job seekers about social media recruitment (Madera, 2012) and selection process as a whole (Berkelaar, 2014). Consequently, objective of the current study is to gain insights into job seekers' perception about social media recruitment and selection process and the influence it has on the overall employer attractiveness. Since, qualitative research design is considered as a suitable approach to study perception and feelings shared by a homogeneous group of individuals (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Patton, 2005; Ritchie & Spencer, 2002), the present study takes up a phenomenological approach to uncover the underlined perception of job seekers in India.

## **Literature Review**

### **Social Media**

“Social media is defined as ‘a group of Internet-based applications build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content’ (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Perdue (2010) noted that the enormous growth of social media, especially in terms of users, carries many implications for transforming businesses; encouraging the organizations to be engaged in more and more activities via social networks (Correa, Hinsley, & De Zuniga, 2010). In the United States alone, 86% of the top 100 companies use at least one social media platform (Coon, 2010), and websites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter have become one of the prime sources for attracting and acquiring job applicants (Cooper, 2007). Nevertheless, social media has also reduced the efforts on the part of applicants and allows them to apply for a job position by a few mouse clicks (Chauhan, Buckley, & Harvey, 2013). Consequently, recruitment firms have also began to use social media as a tool for searching desired candidates, making it worthwhile for the job seekers to have presence on these websites (Cooper, 2007).

### **Social Media Recruitment**

Use of social media to communicate about the job openings and attracting the potential candidate to apply for a given job position is what constitutes of social media recruitment (Henderson & Bowley, 2010). In this regard, Smith and Kidder (2010) suggested that companies should make use of social networking sites to enhance their organizational identity. The authors further stated that in contrast to the corporate website, which generally provides background information, an organization's Facebook page offers variety of options like creating and publishing calendar of events that can be viewed by all the users. Such events may include recruitment, on-campus interviews, corporate social performance, or any other event that an organization may wish to host. Furthermore, Facebook pages are completely free, which reduces the burden and cost of constantly updating and maintaining the organization's website (Smith & Kidder, 2010). Similarly, LinkedIn offers great opportunities for the HR professionals to recruit from the numerous profiles, followed by Twitter and YouTube, which allows public relation departments to communicate and promote their organizations by making use of the free advertisement space (Tuten, 2008). Moreover, since social networking sites are informal source of recruitment (cf. Zhao & Rosson, 2009), it is likely to provide positive, negative, and more detailed information to prospective employees than the formal sources, which in order to attract job seekers, may contain the positive aspects only (Breaugh & Mann, 1984). Additionally, the existent literature suggests that people trust social media, trust the people in their network and not only do they seek and share opinion but “they also act on the opinion they receive” (Jansen, Sobel, & Cook, 2010, p. 3858). The true power of social media

in terms of recruitment lies in the trust that is built into an employer recommendation from one acquaintance to another (Cooper, 2007) which is lately termed as the ‘word of mouse’ (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2007). Although, the benefits of social media could be of major interest for companies willing to establish an image of attractive employer, it involves a risky environment where employers need to be transparent and honest while communicating with the job seekers (Jones, Temperley, & Lima, 2009); failing which may deteriorate an employer’s image in the job market (Cable & Turban, 2001; Riordan, Gatewood, & Bill, 1997). Resultantly, developing an understanding of job seekers’ perception about social media recruitment is relevant in the present digital scenario and the current study is one of the pioneers in this realm.

### **Social Media Selection**

With the visibility of personal information on the social media platforms and usage of these information by employers for personnel screening and selection has led to the emergence of digital social contract, a new proactive transparency expectations from organizations to workers (cf. Berkelaar, 2014). The employers have reported to be using the online information to evaluate job candidates during personnel selection (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2014; Berkelaar, Scacco, & Birdsell, 2015; Jeske & Shultz, 2016). Another study by Caers and Castelyns (2010) reported that employers review the personal information on sites like Facebook and LinkedIn for screening the candidates, which in turn, creates the risk of selection biases even before the first round of interview. The privacy concern within social networking sites (cf. Dwyer, Hiltz, & Passerini, 2007) and violation of online privacy (cf. Bauer et al., 2006) by the employers for personnel screening and selection has been a noteworthy agenda for research in the last decade (García-Izquierdo, Aguinis, & Ramos- Villagrasa, 2010; Lievens & Anderson, 2002). However, what influence the social media selection may have on attractiveness of an employer is a question yet to be addressed in the literature from job seekers’ perspective. The present study, therefore, takes up the lead to bridge this gap by examining the perception of job seekers about social media recruitment and selection and the resultant impact on the overall organizational attraction.

### **Research Gaps**

The extant literature on e-recruitment has majorly focused on the contents, stylistic features, and timeliness of the corporate employment websites, which leads to the formation of positive attitude towards the website and in turn leads to employer attractiveness. Also, most of the studies have been conducted in the US and European context and there is paucity of studies capturing the perception of job seekers about the electronic sources of recruitment in the emerging economies, like India. Similarly, although, scholarly attention has started shifting from the corporate employment websites to the social media based recruitment, and more recently towards the social media screening and selection practices, there are paucity of measures to capture the perception and attitude of the job seekers towards this paradigm shift. India, with a large young population base and most of its population in the working age group, has to potential to supply ample amount of workforce in the global job market. However, little is known about how the job seekers in India are making sense of the linkages between social networking sites and HR practices such as recruitment and selection. Similarly, how the job seekers perceive about the employers making use of social media tools for recruitment and selection is a question unanswered in the recruitment literature.

## **Research Objective**

In order to bridge the research gaps, the present study takes up a qualitative approach to gain insights into the perception of job seekers about the use of social networking sites for recruitment and selection and whether or not they feel attracted towards the employers making use of these social media tools. A qualitative inquiry is the suitable approach when one is trying to make sense about the lived experiences of the target population and aims to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon experienced by a homogeneous group of individuals. It also provides enough scope to the participants so as to share their lived experiences and perception about a particular event or phenomenon in question.

## **Method of the Study**

### **Researchers' Background**

We would like to present our background so as to enable the readers to build a perspective for making inferences about our findings. The first author of this paper is a doctoral scholar in the area of Human Resource Management in a business school in South India, where she is actively conducting research work in the areas of e-recruitment and job search from last 4 years. The second author of this paper is an associate professor and was formerly working with the same business school in the Department of Human Resource. He has successfully guided PhD students in the areas of e-recruitment sources and employer branding. The third author of this paper is a doctoral scholar in Department of Finance and has been trained in conducting focus group interviews. All the authors have previously published articles using qualitative research methods.

### **Participant Selection**

Purposive opportunistic sampling (cf. Willig, 2013) was used with an objective to find the appropriate sample to address the research question of the present study. Smith and Osborn (2007) have also recommended purposive sampling for IPA studies so as to find a more closely defined group of participants for whom the research question will be significant. The target samples, therefore, were the final year job seeking students from some of the renowned educational institutions located across two major cities in India namely; New Delhi and Hyderabad. Selection of the cities was based on the ease of accessibility to a large student population, representing different parts of the country.

### **Data Collection**

After seeking permission from the institutional review board, comprised of senior faculty members at our university, and deans of the other educational institutes identified for data collection, first and third authors conducted a total of 4 focus group interviews consisting of 8 students in each group. Out of the total number of participants, 13 were females and 19 were males. Focus groups are identified as the 2nd most extensively used method of data collection in IPA studies, after semi-structured interviews (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Selection of participants was based on a two-fold exercise. We first asked all the final year students across different disciplines about their average social media usage per day and whoever found to be spending more than two hours a day were then asked about their usage of social media for the purpose of job search. Finally, we approached the respondents who reported to be spending at least 30 minutes a day on social media for job hunting and requested

them to participate in the focus group interviews. We briefed the participants about the purpose of this study and assured them about the confidentiality of their responses. All the focus group interviews were subject to be audio-recorded for the purpose of further analysis and we obtained participants' consent for the same. The time duration for each focus group was approximately 40 minutes. As theoretical saturation was evidenced after 4th focus group, the data collection exercise was called off. The demographic details of the focus groups are presented in Table 1.

**Table-1: Focus Group Demographics**

Focus Group Numbers	Gender composition		Mean Age
	Male	Female	
1	3	5	23.13
2	6	2	23.25
3	5	3	22.13
4	5	3	22.38

### Data Analysis

We used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore the perception of selected participants regarding recruitment and selection through social media and how they perceive about the employers making use of different social media tools for the same. IPA involves detailed examination of the participant's personal perception regarding an event or an object (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Accordingly, IPA is a suitable approach when one is trying to find out how individuals are perceiving the particular situations they are facing and how they are making sense of their personal and social world. Research questions in IPA projects are usually framed broadly and openly and the aim of the study is to say something in detail about the perceptions and experiences of the participants under study. The analysis of present study was based on the guidelines by Smith and Osborn (2007). First and second authors transcribed each focus group interviews and generated significant statements from the same. We removed similar statements after extracting all significant statements from the four transcriptions. Subsequently, we derived meanings out of the significant statements by reading the transcription again and again. These were further organized into clusters of themes which emerged from the participants' discussions and were common to all the focus groups. The step-wise task description of data analysis is presented in Table 2.

**Table-2: Step-Wise Detail of Data Analysis**

Step	Task	Task description
1	Transcription	The interview tapes were transcribed in order to learn about the perception of the job seekers. It also included noting down of significant nonverbal and paralinguistic communications.
2	Looking for themes in the first case	The analysis commenced by reading and rereading the first transcript, numerous times, to fully get acquainted with the text. These were then coded into seven main themes.



3	Connecting the themes	This step involved compilation of themes and discovering connections between them. The clustering of minor themes into major themes was done from the first list and a 'master list' was created from the previous compilation of themes.
4	Continuing the analysis with other cases	The remaining transcripts were coded by using the 'master list of themes' as a guideline for the subsequent transcripts.
5	Writing up	Summary of the interviews were written by incorporating the themes that have been elicited from the data.

## Results

Following are the seven themes which emerged after conducting the analysis.

### Theme 1: Ease of information

A large number of participants were of the view that social media helps them to gather relevant information about the prospective employers within no time through sources like company's Facebook page, LinkedIn, and YouTube videos. Unlike traditional recruitment techniques or the corporate websites, social media with its global reach and real-time adaptability has the potential to connect the job seekers with the organization in the first stage of their information search process with better and more appropriate information. The ease of long term conversation, constant connectivity and instant feedback by the employers enable the potential applicants to gather all the desired information about the organization and the job.

Through social media it has become very easy for us to interact with the prospective employers from India and abroad and unlike the company's website, it's more of a two-way communication between the employers and job seekers [laughs]. We need not wait to get our query satisfied [...] and fetch the [required] details at any point in time. (Participant from group 2, female, 22 years)

Furthermore, in addition to the information and videos shared by the organization on its Facebook page or YouTube, social media platforms like LinkedIn also allows the job seekers to connect with the recruiters and current employees of the organization and obtain job preview. As a result, the features of social networking sites move beyond the information provision (cf. Teoh et al., 2013) of the corporate websites and help the organization to enhance its image by catering to the informational needs of the job seekers.

Social media based recruitment provides the possibility of getting a sense of a typical day at work [...] we can get connected with the recruiters and other employees [currently working in the company] on Facebook, LinkedIn, or twitter and get all the information we are looking for. (Participant from group 1, male, 24 years)

### Theme 2: Navigational Usability and User Friendliness

Majority of the participants opined that the familiarity with the social networking sites makes it convenient for them to navigate through pages in pursuit of information (cf. Chen et

al., 2012). The participants reported to be scanning through the post, videos and images shared by the company, reading the comments, and keeping in touch with the recruiters without facing any difficulty pertaining to the use of social networking sites. They further stated that social media has enabled them to compare one employer with another just by browsing through the profiles available on the sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Jobster etc. Besides, few participants also reported that availability of videos and images on the social media reduces the boredom and makes the job search process interesting for them.

When I talk about social media recruitment [...] one word which comes to my mind is user friendliness. Searching for job related information on the websites you are not familiar with makes the job search process a tedious one [...] but since the organizations [have] started using social media channels for recruitment, as a job seeker I feel like returning to these pages as and when required. Yeah [...] also just by easily flipping through pages with a few mouse clicks on websites like LinkedIn and jobster.com we [as job seekers] have access to a long list of companies wherein we can apply by checking all the details. (Participant from group 1, male, 25 years)

### **Theme 3: Person-Job Fit and Person-Organization Fit**

Person-job fit and person-organization fit (cf. Carless, 2005) emerged as one of the significant theme under the study. More than 60 % of the participants stated that information provided on the social media, especially, through the blogs where the existing and former employees post about their job experience, helps job seekers to ascertain whether there is a fit between the organization and their own interest. Also, it enables them to appraise the compatibility between their competencies and the task to be performed.

The experiences shared by the existing and former employees of a company helps in getting a clear picture about the job description, career-related opportunities and even small details about the organization, [...] which are generally [in most cases] not available on any company website. Social media helps us in determining whether the job suits our interest and matches our skill sets. (Participant from group 4, female, 22 years)

### **Theme 4: Reliability and Timeliness**

The participants opined that social media facilitates in speedy and timely communication and provide a platform to the employer to share relevant, accurate, and timely information with the prospective employees. The chances of any delays in sending or receiving the information are ruled out as the company needs not to communicate with each applicant individually. Moreover, the job seekers are no longer dependent on company's owned website to obtain information, which mostly provides positive insights only. Furthermore, the job seekers reported to be have trust in the information provided by the current employees or acquaintance on the sites like LinkedIn and Facebook which enables them in making an informed decision about job pursuit in a particular organization.

By using social media, resumes and applications can be received from prospective employees within seconds and employers can respond [revert] to the applicants with equal efficiency [...] and [...] these social networking sites will not provide the eye-catching information only but would share the true and

reliable picture of an organization too. Hmm [...] it [social media] helps because while checking the blogs posted by existing employees or by consulting them on LinkedIn or Facebook we can get accurate and true information about the job conditions and working environment of the company. (Participant from group 4, female, 26 years)

### **Theme 5: Positive and Cost Effective Marketing**

All the participants were found to share the common belief that social media are the less expensive and cost effective method of recruitment and it also helps in positive marketing for the company as an employer. This belief also supported the earlier definition of social media given by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). The participants also stated that the continuously flashing links about the job opening or any other events hosted by a company catches their attention while browsing through the social media platforms and creates awareness about the company and the various activities associated with it, which in turn, makes the company popular.

Social media reduces many costs for the company by enabling various campaigns through different social networking sites. Hmm [...] it [social media] also helps us [job seekers] in developing familiarity with the company through various links and pages on Facebook and by subscribing to these pages we can also get latest updates about the company and its events on day to day basis. Yeah [...] it makes the company popular among us [job seekers]. (Participant from group 3, male, 25 years)

### **Theme 6: Value Creation for the Employers**

The participants reported that social media helps to create value, create an image of desirable employer and strengthen the organizational culture-value proposition. Companies make use of blogs, Twitter, Facebook and instant messages so as to continuously keep current and future employees updated with regard to the value proposition of the company including the corporate social performance, non-monetary benefits offered to the employees, career development opportunities, achievements and awards etc. It helps in attracting potential employees towards the organization, and leads to the job pursuit intentions. Moreover, it also helps in retaining the existing employees in a long run.

Organizations [employers] are using the social media to showcase their business ethics, employee friendly policies, [...] CSR [corporate social responsibility] initiatives, [...] and other awards and achievements [...] in addition to the videos that shows us [job seekers] the attractive premises of the company and introduces us [job seekers] to the set of happy employees and customers associated with the company. Such information creates a positive outlook [viewpoint] towards the company [employer] and helps the organizations to attract talent towards them. Hmm [...] definitely it helps the employers to build a favorable image in the job market, adding to the number of job seekers applying for the company. (Participant of group 2, male, 14 years)

## Theme 7: Privacy Concern

Although, majority of the participants were found to be holding positive views about recruitment through social media, few participants also expressed their privacy concern and reported about the negative impact of social media usage by the employers for screening the candidates. They were of the view that social media should not be used to gather personal information about the candidates for screening and selection purposes. The employers, therefore, should be cautious before selecting or declining the candidates based on the personal details, posts, and pictures on their Facebook and other social media profiles. As reported by the participants, such steps, if taken by the employers, will allow the potential applicants to perceive negatively, which in turn, will adversely affect the image of an organization in the competitive job market. In this regard, findings by García-Izquierdo et al. (2010) also suggested that use of such personal information through online mediums during screening and selection process is discriminatory and unfair, intrusive, and invasive of applicants' privacy.

Attracting potential employees through social media channels has not harm [...] but its usage should be restricted to recruitment and marketing [employer branding] only. I have read about an employee who was fired [terminated] by his employer based on the post he had shared about his working experience on his Facebook profile, [...] there is an instance where an applicant was denied a job due to details of some personal conflict shared by him on social media. This is bad [unethical], the employers are not supposed to dig [probe] into the personal details of their potential or existing employees or peep [spy] into the personal lives of the applicants while selecting them. [...] certainly it will spoil their image as an employer. (Participant of group 3, female, 24 years)

## Discussion

The findings of the current study provide valuable insights into how the social media involvements by the employing organizations are being perceived by the young and potential job seekers. From all the emerged themes in the study, it is evident that organizations which make use of social media and invest time and resources for taking advantage of the available mediums are perceived positively by the job seekers. According to the young job seekers, going online through social media and reaching a larger mass of potential applicants can help the organizations in forming a virtual image of a favorable employer. Also, these social media platforms are perceived to be extensively used by the organizations for recruitment and screening purposes. However, in order to take the maximum advantage of social media for attracting potential applicants, it is necessary for the HR managers to make sure that what they promise and propose as an employer is valid and long-lasting. Nevertheless, employers should also take a note of applicants' negative reactions on social media usage for screening and selecting the job applicants. Moreover, such steps also violate the privacy norms associated with these websites and further leads to damaging the image of an employer (Bauer et al., 2006). Consequently, the employers are required to ensure transparency and promote fairness in the screening and selection process. Therefore, findings of the present study posit to assist the HR managers in formulating recruitment and selection strategies with respect to social media and cater to the pre-employment information needs of the potential applicants in an effective manner; so as to create a virtual image of an attractive employer in the competitive job market.

## Limitations and Direction for Future Research

Sample of the present study includes final year job seeking students only, and does not capture the perception of other potential candidates. In the future research, it would be interesting to see how the employed and unemployed job seekers (cf. Wanberg, Basbug, Van Hooft, & Samtani, 2012) perceive about the role of social media in recruitment and selection process. The study can also be taken forward by collecting data from the HR managers of different organizations, who make use of social media as a tool for recruiting and screening the desired candidates. Such study will provide a clear understanding of the opportunities and threats of using social media as a part of recruitment and selection process by the organizations. Furthermore, quantitative studies can be conducted to understand the influence of perceived privacy risk (Yoon Kin Tong, 2009) and fairness perception (Truxillo, Steiner, & Gilliland, 2004) on employer attractiveness in the social media recruitment and selection realm. Future studies can also take up a scale construction exercise to measure the attitude and perception of job seekers towards different social media usage by the employers. Additionally, employer attractiveness is not restricted to attracting the potential employees only, retaining the existing pool of talented employees is equally important for every organization (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Resultantly, another direction for future research could be investigating the effectiveness of social media as a tool for workplace learning (Thomas & Akdere, 2013) in talent management context.

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