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## **The Integration Of Artificial Intelligence In Global Talent Acquisition Solutions**

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Masters in International Management

Supervisor:

PhD, Renato Telo de Freitas Barbosa Pereira, Assistant Professor,  
ISCTE-IUL

May, 2024



BUSINESS  
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Department of Marketing, Strategy and Operations

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## **Abstract**

The rapidly evolving progress in Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology has various industries, such as global Talent Acquisition (TA). This study focused on the impact this new tool has on this industry sector and explored its advantages but also the challenges not only for industry but also for society that emerge consequently.

The purpose of this thesis was to research how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing the global Talent Acquisition (TA) department and give insight as to how it should be used efficiently and monitored responsibly.

The thesis used a qualitative approach of 9 semi-structured interviews with recruitment professionals from a consultancy firm. The gathered data was analyzed using the content analysis approach where themes and patterns are identified.

The results showed that Artificial Intelligence (AI) cannot be used in the entire end to end recruitment process and is mainly beneficial in sourcing and screening, it's main benefit being the automation of monotonous tasks. On the other hand, it presents a major challenge in the need for close monitoring due to quality issues as well as legal and ethical issues.

The findings proposed by this study provided a valuable insight for companies with guidelines regarding how to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) and a realistic warning about the challenges this technology brings with it. One of the main implications that was found was the future reduction in human interaction and reduction of employees needed.

**Keywords:** Global Talent Acquisition, Artificial Intelligence, Recruitment

**JEL Classification System:** M15 IT Management; M51 Firm Employment Decisions; Promotions



## Resumo

O rápido progresso da tecnologia de Inteligência Artificial (IA) tem afetado vários sectores, como o da Aquisição de Talentos (AT) a nível mundial. Este estudo centrou-se no impacto que esta nova ferramenta tem neste sector da indústria e explorou as suas vantagens e os desafios não só para a indústria, mas também para a sociedade que surgem consequentemente.

O objetivo desta tese foi investigar a forma como a Inteligência Artificial (IA) está a mudar o departamento global de Aquisição de Talentos (AT) e dar uma ideia de como deve ser utilizada de forma eficiente e monitorizada de forma responsável.

A tese utilizou uma abordagem qualitativa de 9 entrevistas semiestruturadas com profissionais de recrutamento de uma empresa de consultoria. Os dados recolhidos foram analisados utilizando a abordagem de análise de conteúdo, em que são identificados temas e padrões.

Os resultados mostraram que a Inteligência Artificial (IA) não pode ser utilizada em todo o processo de recrutamento e é principalmente benéfica no *sourcing* e na seleção, sendo a sua principal vantagem a automatização de tarefas monótonas. Por outro lado, apresenta um grande desafio na necessidade de um controlo rigoroso devido a questões de qualidade, como a questões legais e éticas.

Os resultados propostos por este estudo forneceram uma visão valiosa para as empresas, com orientações sobre como utilizar a Inteligência Artificial (IA) e um aviso realista sobre os desafios que esta tecnologia traz consigo. Uma das principais implicações encontradas foi a futura redução da interação humana e dos trabalhadores necessários.

**Palavras-Chave:** Aquisição de talentos global, Inteligência Artificial, Recrutamento

**JEL Classificações:** M15 Gestão de IT; M51 Decisões de Empregos; Promoções





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## Glossary of Acronyms and Symbols

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
AI	Artificial Intelligence
TA	Talent Acquisition
HR	Human Resources

# **1. Introduction**

The advancement of digital technologies has reshaped the modern workplace in the 20th and 21st century dramatically. A broad variety of innovations have been developed to facilitate and even automate many previously human performed tasks.

One of the most important fields of change is communication. Companies are using online communication tools to link employee teams and facilitate access to messages and files (Clayton, 2021).

Artificial intelligence (AI), because of the progression of technology, offers solutions to business challenges and has been increasingly integrated into organizational routines. Some of the advantages of implementing Artificial Intelligence (AI) are time efficiency and cost effectiveness. In Human Resource (HR) digital technologies play an important part and have positively impacted the relationships and interactions between employees.

## **1.1. Research Context**

In recent years the field of Talent Acquisition (TA) in global companies has undergone tremendous changes due to increasingly volatile job markets and due to new emerging technical tools available to talent acquisition professionals.

This dissertation delves into the fascinating realm of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in the context of global Talent Acquisition (TA), exploring the positive and negative impact of these technologies on recruitment processes and organizational outcomes. By examining the adoption of AI-driven solutions across industries and geographies, we aim to uncover the nuanced ways in which Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping the landscape of Talent Acquisition (TA) on a global scale.

## **1.2. Research Problem**

In today's dynamic global business landscape, the management of Talent Acquisition (TA) has become a critical determinant of an organization's success. International businesses face unique challenges when it comes to recruiting and retaining top talent, given for example the diverse cultural context in which they operate. Companies need to be able to respond to a high employee turnover and the increasing competition between companies to attract the right talent.

In response to these challenges, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Talent Acquisition (TA) solutions has emerged as a promising tool for optimizing the recruitment

process across international markets. It is essential to investigate the implications, opportunities, and challenges associated with the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Talent Acquisition (TA) solutions.

### **1.3. Research Relevance**

The research expands our understanding of how AI is reshaping Talent Acquisition (TA) practices globally and offers insights for future research studies.

In an increasingly globalized world, understanding how AI affects Talent Acquisition (TA) on an international scale is crucial. This research can help understand how these innovative tools alter the way organizations identify and attract talent and how they influence the intricate process of hiring across diverse cultures.

By examining the limitations and challenges as well as the opportunities, the research can provide insights into how the future of Talent Acquisition (TA) might develop while using AI tools.

### **1.4. Research Questions and Objectives**

The present research proposes to investigate challenges as well as positive and negative implications caused by using AI in the recruitment process. It will raise important ethical questions related to bias, and fairness. By addressing these concerns and proposing guidelines, the research contributes to the responsible and socially conscious implementation of AI in global Talent Acquisition (TA).

Furthermore, this investigation will delve deeply into the specifics of how AI is adding significant value to various processes and explore why it is increasingly playing such a vital role. We will examine how AI's transformative impact is reshaping processes and consider the advantages driving its widespread adoption.

Additionally, this dissertation aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of AI in shaping the future of global Talent Acquisition (TA) and in helping organizations to maintain a competitive edge in international Talent Acquisition (TA).

This research aims to answer the research questions as follow:

- How does the integration of Artificial Intelligence influence global Talent Acquisition solutions?

- What are the implications and challenges associated with this integration?

## **1.5. Dissertation Structure**

The first chapter of the dissertation provides an overview of the research project and explains the context behind Artificial Intelligence (AI) and global Talent Acquisition (TA). It will present the research framework, the problem statement and relevance of this phenomenon, as well as the objectives and research questions that will be addressed.

To develop this study and provide fundamental knowledge on the topic, the research will initially be based on a literature review that defines Talent Acquisition, global Talent Acquisition, online Talent Acquisition, Artificial Intelligence, and its general application in Talent Acquisition. Additionally, the literature review will delve into the current relationship between Artificial Intelligence (AI) and global Talent Acquisition (TA) and its impact. The findings of this chapter will be utilized in the discussion chapter together with the results of the research methodology and data analysis to answer the Research Questions and fulfil the Research Objectives.

The third chapter of the dissertation will focus on Research Design and Methodology. It will discuss the type of research, the method of data collection and selection and data analysis. For this research, the main methodology is a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews. The target sample is composed of 9 participants from the management consulting firm, Korn Ferry. Semi-structured interviews are then conducted to gather an in-depth insight into the relationship between Artificial Intelligence and global Talent Acquisition. In addition, the chapter will delve into the content analysis method chosen to identify themes and patterns from the interview's data.

The next chapter will elaborate on the Results and Discussion, where the primary research findings will be presented. The results will be presented in an objective way by illustrating the themes and patterns identified throughout the analysis process. Additionally, the data will be visually represented in graphs. As previously mentioned, within the discussion the results are interpreted and linked to the previous research done in the literature review section.

The final chapter is the Conclusion which will sum up the findings and elaborate on the limitations faced during this research. Additionally, it offers recommendations for future research and highlights the relevant findings of this thesis, in other words, the main contribution.





## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Talent Acquisition**

Talent Acquisition (TA) is a crucial part of the Human Resources (HR) department and is responsible for sourcing high quality candidates for specific job roles through various sources, while staying within tight deadlines (Srivastava et al., 2015).

As defined by Alashmawy and Yazdanifard (2019) “Talent acquisition is the process of finding and acquiring skilled human labor for organizational needs and to meet any labor requirement.”

The term “Talent Acquisition” is often used when talking about recruitment. It is important, however, to highlight the differences between these two areas. Talent Acquisition (TA) is a method to strategically approach the tasks of “identifying, attracting, and onboarding top talent to meet dynamic business needs efficiently and effectively” (Cepin, 2013).

On the other hand, recruiting is “more tactical” and normally focuses on filling roles with immediate results. The main tasks within recruitment are sourcing, screening, interviewing, assessing, selecting, hiring, and onboarding.

Elaborating on Talent Acquisition (TA), the main aspects are planning and strategy, workforce segmentation, employment branding, candidate audiences, candidate relationship management as well as metrics and analytics.

Summarized the main tasks of TA focus on understanding the labor markets, considering global aspects, grouping employees based on their competencies and skills, help define the company’s image and selling points to potential candidates, establishing specific sourcing strategies for different candidate audiences, maintaining a positive candidate experience, and using qualitative and quantitative data to improve recruitment decisions.

An organization’s success is defined by its competent workforce as this will give the company a competitive advantage. Attracting the right talent has become a big challenge for companies and the competition in TA has increased over the years and therefore companies need to give importance to this sector of Human Resources (HR) (Kanimozhi & Surya Prasad, 2022). “To have a sustainable competitive advantage, organizations should have a highly talented workforce” and they should be able to respond to sudden needs of replacing employees and finding new talent.

The process of TA is divided into four main steps, which are the following: Planning, Recruiting, Selection, and Induction (Paramita, 2020). In general, planning refers to identifying the job profile and requirements needed to fill the position, Recruiting and

selection refers to sourcing and screening the right candidates and finally the induction stage refers to onboarding the new employee.

### **2.1.1. Global Talent Acquisition**

Global TA involves a strategic emphasis on the attraction and retention of international talent, and the expansion of recruitment efforts into new locations to address specific business requirements (Johnson, 2022).

The concept of global TA has become more important because organizations went from operating on a national level to a worldwide level and therefore global talent management practices are increasing (Creelman, 2014). When speaking about global we are referring to attracting talent in different labor markets, building a more culturally diverse strategy, and searching for talent across borders.

Companies aim for global expansion where they are no longer dominated by their home country headquarters and talent is sourced from various countries. This development requires organizations to move in values such as diverse cultures and common processes.

Due to the need to be competitive in global marketplaces, multinational companies must increasingly use technological tools, that enable them to be connected globally and have efficient access to international talent.

### **2.1.2. Online Talent Acquisition**

The history of online Talent Acquisition (TA) can be traced back to the emergence of the internet in the late 20th century and as the internet evolved, so did the methods and tools used for TA.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, job boards and career websites became popular, allowing employers to post job listings and job seekers to search for opportunities online. More sophisticated online recruitment systems were implemented such as applicant tracking systems (ATS), making it easier for organizations to manage large volumes of applicants and track their progress through the hiring process.

Online tools began to be more valuable for organizations, by providing analytics and metrics and allowing employers to assess the effectiveness of the recruitment strategies (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009).

Using online assessment tools, companies can save time during the selection process and reach high quality candidates fast. If candidates apply on the organization's website, they can be screened efficiently which frees hiring managers to assess larger groups of applicants

(Attupuram, Sequeira & Gopalakrishnan, 2015). Furthermore, specific work-related screening questions help to rule out unsuitable candidates quickly.

However, there are drawbacks to online recruitment, such as legal consequences due to discriminatory language in ads (Tyagi, 2012). The vast pool of applicants can make it challenging to sift through resumes, often relying on keyword searches, which may lead to missing potentially suitable candidates. Additionally, many non-serious applicants may apply without understanding job requirements, making the shortlisting process more complicated.

Finally, online recruitment lacks the human touch, as interviews are often conducted remotely, making it challenging to decipher a candidate's personality accurately.

In conclusion, automating recruitment processes enable companies to implement best practices for hiring the best talent available, creating better employment opportunities through career websites and more effective recruiting tools. Online recruitment doesn't replace traditional methods but complements them, making the process faster and more efficient.

## **2.2. Artificial Intelligence**

John McCarthy, who is considered as the father of AI defined it as “to find how to make machines use language, form abstractions and concepts, solve kinds of problems now reserved for humans, and improve themselves. . . . For the present purpose the artificial intelligence problem is taken to be that of making a machine behave in ways that would be called intelligent if a human were so behaving” (Bach, 2020; Minsky et al., 1955).

There are various definitions of AI (Kok et al., 2009). For example, The New International Webster’s Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language, Encyclopedic Edition, alone gives 4 different definitions:

1. An area of study in the field of computer science. Artificial intelligence is concerned with the development of computers able to engage in human-like thought processes such as learning, reasoning, and self-correction.
2. The concept that machines can be improved to assume some capabilities normally thought to be like human intelligence such as learning, adapting, self-correction, etc.
3. The extension of human intelligence by computers, as in times past physical power was extended by mechanical tools.
4. In a restricted sense, the study of techniques to use computers more effectively by improved programming techniques.

Having first been defined by John McCarthy almost 70 years ago, our understanding of AI has changed with technological development and is being defined such as: “imitating intelligent human behavior”. In other words, AI simulates human intelligence in machines which are programmed to think like humans and imitate their actions (Salmon-Powell et al., 2021). It can be applied to devices showing human-like traits, such as learning and problem-solving (Frankenfield, 2021; Salmon-Powell et al., 2021).

The history of artificial intelligence (AI) is marked by significant milestones (Benko & Lányi, 2009). One of them was in 1949, when Donald Hebb presented a rule for changing the connections of artificial neurons, enabling learning. Marvin Minsky and Dean Edmonds built the first neural computer in 1951. AI officially took its name in 1956 when John McCarthy defined the term during a Dartmouth conference, marking a turning point for researchers. Today, AI is more focused on creating intelligent agents to enhance human efficiency.

### **2.2.1. Artificial Intelligence applied in Companies**

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) during the 20<sup>th</sup> century has experienced a fast advancement, creating answers to multiplex issues in the business world (Ruiz-Real et al., 2021). According to Guenole and Feinzig (2018) “Leading organizations understand the impact of AI on business models, workforce demographics, and the changing experiences expected by customers and employees alike”. Although AI tools in companies are being implemented slowly, there is no doubt that this technology is gradually gaining more importance and attracting interest from organizations as it contributes significantly to their competitiveness (Ruiz-Real et al., 2021). Consequently, the expansion of various business sectors competing in the modern age of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is relying on AI as a “vital element”. As a result, AI has become a solid support for companies’ operational processes and an important factor in all their tasks, the purpose being to improve performance and efficiency.

To better understand how the utilization of AI is evolving within a business context, this section of the literature review seeks to explore the main trends of AI affecting organizations.

**Robot Process Automation:** Monotonous, undemanding tasks have successfully been taken over or supported by AI. For example, “software-based robots are now handling basic tasks, such as filling out forms, generating diagrams, and producing documentation” (Aggarwal, 2020; Salmon-Powell et al., 2021). The advantage of this trend is that employees have more time to attend to more creative and inventive tasks such as developing new strategies, working on their soft skills and creative imagination.

AI in Data Accuracy: For companies to make vital business decisions they need accurate data (Aggarwal, 2020; Salmon-Powell et al., 2021). This is where AI plays a big role, because by rapidly processing vast volumes of data, AI algorithms can identify anomalies, correct errors, and maintain the integrity of data records in real time. As a result, AI algorithms ensure that the provided data is a reliable base for educated decision making.

Chatbots: One of the more recent trends in AI is chatbot (Adamopoulou & Moussiades, 2020). It is a program “designed to simulate conversation with human users”. It is mainly used over the internet and uses natural Language Processing (NLP) to communicate in human language. Chatbots are being used for example in education, health care and in business. In business they are being increasingly implemented to substitute human contact in the service industry, such as customer service or support. One of the main advantages is because they reduce costs and can handle many customers at the same time.

AI in Human Resources (HR): The authors Upadhyay and Khandelwal (2018) mark the year 2018 as an important milestone in the revolutionary development of AI as an upcoming trend in Human Resources (HR) (Johansson & Herranen, 2019). In the same year IBM stated that according to their experience AI can be applied in almost any area of Human Resources (HR), including candidate attraction, hiring, learning, compensation, career management, and Human Resources (HR) support (Guenole & Feinzig, 2018).

The consulting firm PwC has confirmed through a report and research about the use of AI in international companies, that 40% of HR functions of international companies are using AI tools (Michailidis, 2018). The main reason behind this new trend is to make the HR functions more efficient and effective. Two years after this initial research Tewari & Pant (2020) confirmed that since then many HR functions have been reshaped because of the evolution of AI in this specific sector. This is an impressive example of how fast AI is transforming corporate businesses. The tasks that are now performed by virtual assistants are recruitment, selection, training and development, performance management, workforce engagement (Tewari & Pant, 2020).

Through the integration of AI, the field of HR is developing in a way that automated processes as well as human work processes can be improved significantly. HR teams are being provided with decision-making tools to decide which candidate to employ and how to improve the efficiency of current employees (Nicastro, 2020; Salmon-Powell et al., 2021).

Additionally, procedures of training, onboarding and recruitment have been changed by this new technology. Leaders can find optimal matches between the job requirements and

potential candidates, retain candidates, and assess the performance of employees (Salmon-Powell et al., 2021; Velocity Global, 2019).

## **2.2.2. Artificial Intelligence applied in Talent Acquisition**

### **2.2.2.1. Recruitment and Selection**

By reshaping the HR sector, AI is improving the efficiency of the recruitment process, especially the activities of outreach, screening, and assessment (Baratelli & Colleoni, 2022).

As mentioned earlier, AI has the potential to completely automate mundane tasks within organizations, including many tasks of the recruitment process. The author Wilfred (2018) specifies that in particular “the repetitive, high-volume tasks” are likely to be automated, for example “sourcing, screening, assessments of the resumes and scheduling the interviews”.

Being one of the most interactive features of AI, Chatbots can adequately communicate with candidates through all the steps of the recruitment process (Tewari & Pant, 2020). The typical steps where Chatbots assist recruiters are candidate screening, establishing contact, scheduling meetings and interviews, and candidate engagement. In other words, a vast volume of candidates can be handled in a short time.

To understand where AI helps recruitment and selection, we will further investigate its implementation in each step of the recruitment process.

When trying to attract candidates in the initial phase, companies need to accurately identify suitable candidates, present themselves and the offered position in a way that is most attractive to those candidates and consequently motivate them to apply (Baratelli & Colleoni, 2022). AI plays a role in this process by designing the optimal presentation for a specific target group. The system learns and develops and consequently creates a way to present open positions for the optimal candidate response.

In the second stage recruiters need to screen the CV's and profiles of candidates and confirm if they meet the minimum requirements for the position. AI can easily take over this step when given defined fixed criteria from the recruiters for the perfect candidate (Baratelli & Colleoni, 2022; Campbell et al., 2020).

Typically, in a recruitment and selection process the third stage is focused on assessing and selecting the top candidates from the shortlist from the second stage. To give a concrete example of how this works we refer to the Unilever selection process. By implementing AI enabled interviews, where the system asks various questions, the company was able to narrow down the number of candidates from 45000 to 300 (Baratelli & Colleoni, 2022; Feloni, 2017). In this process the interview recordings were analyzed by AI in terms of content and quality

of verbal expressions, tone of voice and facial movements. These results were then compared to those of the company's most successful employees. Additionally, AI is being used to schedule interviews, run background checks, and provide immediate feedback (Barghi et al., 2022; Ergov et al., 2020).

#### **2.2.2.2. Onboarding**

Furthermore, AI can also take over tasks in the Onboarding Phase with Talent Acquisition (TA).

Onboarding is the final stage of the recruitment process (Barghi et al., 2022) and is the process of familiarizing new employees with the company (Tewari & Pant, 2020). For example, new joiners usually have specific induction sessions about policies, work culture and environment. Prior to onboarding the HR team must perform repetitive tasks such as drafting the final offer to the chosen candidates, putting together documents for the new employees, and requesting access to systems (Barghi et al., 2022). When there are too many new joiners, managing these repetitive tasks can be overwhelming for the HR team and this is where AI plays a useful role. AI can relieve the team of some other tasks such as giving guidance to new employees through chatbots and by answering their queries (Tewari & Pant, 2020).

New employees normally have a lot of questions regarding benefits, rules, policies which makes it very difficult for the HR team to give attention to each new joiner. This is where chatbots can provide a customized service and contribute to a positive experience for the new joiners.

Through the research of this section of the literature review, it has become clear that AI has been used in different stages of TA as summarized in Figure 1.

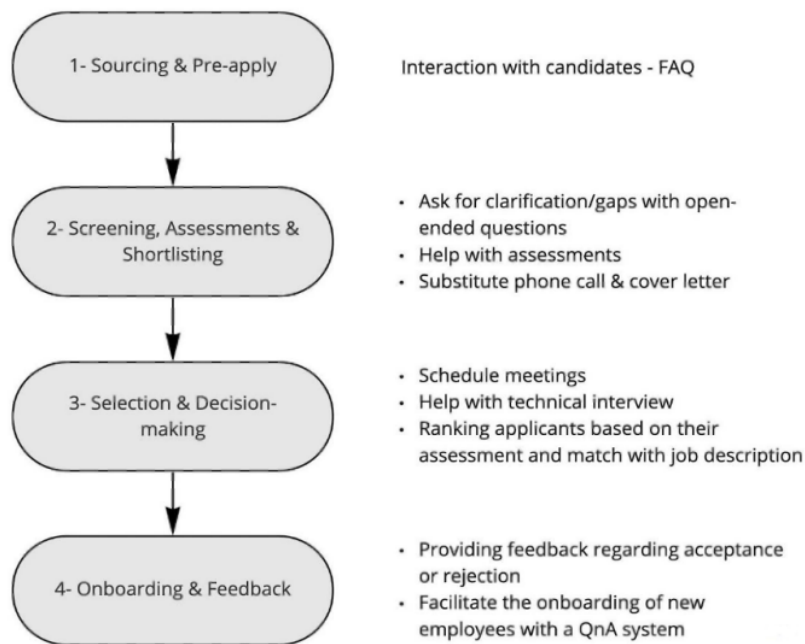


Figure 1 The role of chatbot in each stage of recruitment. (Source: Barghi et al., 2022)

### 2.2.3. Advantages of AI in Global TA

One of the consequences of digital recruiting is a higher volume of candidates, because more prospects can be reached (Yadav et al., 2023). To reach and secure top talent candidates, organizations need to be “agile and swift”. Digital screening procedures enable companies to select candidates faster and filter the high volume of candidates efficiently and beat competition in “the war of talent” (Barghi et al., 2022; Black & van Esch, 2020).

Modern global companies need to focus on the multinational aspect and diversity of their internal operations, meaning employing local talent at their various operating locations. This means emphasizing on cultural awareness and adaptation. Therefore, the TA department needs to ensure that they can guarantee a diverse and inclusive recruitment process. Showing the diversity of their workforce adds value to the companies branding and image. This is where AI can add value because through the adapted use of “algorithmic assessment platform” the human factor of biasedness is eliminated (Michailidis, 2018).

The author Wilfried (2018) confirmed the previous statement, that AI has a positive impact in the sourcing and assessment of a candidate’s abilities without the human inherit factor of biasedness. In other words, AI looks at a candidate’s profile in a more objective way, giving applicants a fair chance. Additionally, AI retains CVs that are publicly available on the web and finds the best match between the candidate and the respective job profile. This way CVs and profiles are being obtained from various sources not just the traditional ones such as LinkedIn.



Through virtual interviews, AI tools provide a factor of convenience and flexibility by saving “countless hours of scheduling” a face-to-face meeting (Baratelli & Colleoni, 2022). They offer candidates the possibility to choose their interview time within a “several days window”. This fact adds value in the initial phases of the recruitment process, such as the assessment phase.

Successful recruiting follows a strategy of “high volume and high touch”. This means that many candidates need to be engaged and updated along the process to keep their interest and to “keep them warm”. AI helps recruiters by interacting with the candidates, assists with communication and consequently avoids losing applicants (Tewari & Pant, 2020).

Yadav et al. (2023) state the following hypothesis “There is a significant impact of Artificial Intelligence on Talent Acquisition Process”. According to the authors research, it is inevitable for companies to use AI tools in the TA process, because not doing so, will have a negative impact on retaining candidates within a certain time frame. The researchers did not find any evidence to reject their hypotheses. Therefore, the source is being considered valid for this paper. The following table summarizes their findings.

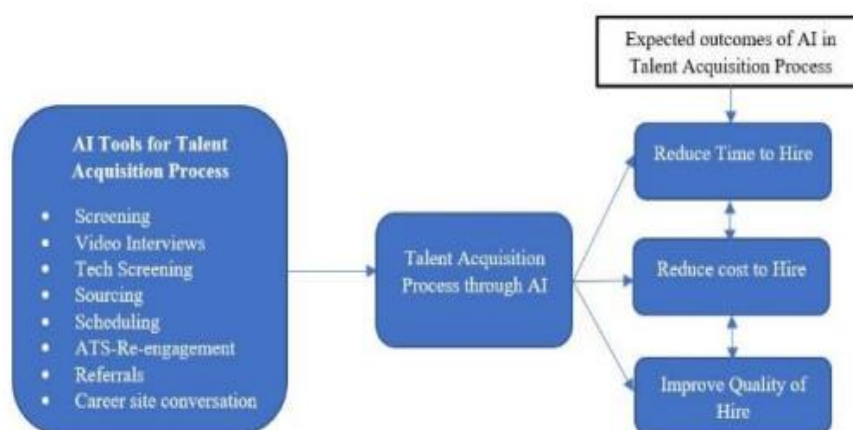


Figure 2 Research Model (Yadav et al., 2023)

Focusing more deeply on global TA with regards to diversity being a success factor of organizations, the following paragraphs will present the findings of George and Thomas (2021).

Diversity means no discrimination between culture, race, religion, gender, age, and ethnicity. Diverse hiring will ensure equal access to opportunities. Companies will have a “broader client database and better learning culture” (Cooke & Saini, 2012; Ely & Thomas., 2001; George & Thomas, 2021). Specific AI algorithms will guarantee that there is an equal consideration in the hiring process with respect to culture, gender, age, etc. (Cohen, 2019; George & Thomas, 2021).

The authors did point out certain limitations of their study, mainly the fact that their findings are based on a limited industry sector. Meaning that while the objective was to interview hiring managers from various industries, certain fields were not included such as education, healthcare, tourism, and hospitality. Therefore, their research cannot be generalized and cannot be used as fundamental proof that AI will ensure diversity in all industries.

#### **2.2.4. Limitations and Challenges of AI in Global TA**

There is no doubt that the automation of the recruitment process through AI has brought significant progress and changed the practice of hiring forever (Barghi et al., 2022). But at the same time, it has created problems that are closely linked to the fact that AI has no “moral compass”, no social conscience and no human awareness. Candidates are being evaluated by a machine and the experience of the previous years has shown that there are challenges to do with legal issues, technological weak spots, and lack of accuracy (Barghi et al., 2022; Laurim et al., 2021).

According to the conclusions of the research done by Hunkenschroer and Luetge (2022) it is necessary to invest into further research both theoretical and empirical, that will help to solve the discrepancy between business ethics and the way AI functions as a decision making in the recruitment process.

Applying AI to solve HR problems has different consequences than it has in other areas, this is because here decisions about people are being made (Tambe et al., 2019). AI might not apply the same values that society expects to be applied when dealing with individuals.

As stated by the authors Tambe et al. (2019) there are implications when an algorithm decides who is going to be hired. There are limits to the learning techniques of a machine, meaning that the machine will create an algorithm that is based on certain qualities in employees and the influence of these qualities on job performance. The problem with this practice is that AI is collecting information about job performance based on past hiring practices. Meaning, if in the past mainly white men were hired, discriminating women and candidates of other ethnic background, the algorithm might repeat this type of selection. Here a company would face severe legal and social problems if they would act on the decisions made by AI.

To give a concrete example for the previous statement, the following paragraph will elaborate on a problem the multinational e-commerce company Amazon faced in 2018. The management of the company found out that the algorithm for hiring had been designed according to previous job performance data. The data suggested that white men had been the

best performers, but the majority of the employees were white men at the time. Consequently, the algorithm gave preference to applications coming from white men. The company then excluded the information of the application sex to fix the problem but then information that can be associated with female candidates such as the mention of an education in “women’s studies” was used by the algorithm to rule out female applicants. The company, not being able to fix the problem, stopped using the system.

Furthermore, the author Dennis Wilfred, who has worked for over 18 years in the HR department, identified following concerns and challenges when integrating AI in the recruitment process. The statement that AI imitates human intelligence is only partially accurate, because it is still not possible to express emotional intelligence in an algorithm. When it comes to recruitment, this is an important factor in the selection process. An AI machine is programmed to make decisions based on the data that it has been given. When unpredicted situations occur, the program cannot make a correct decision, because it is impossible to program machines with intuition or moral values that are important factors to form judgment, in other words, to decide between right and wrong. AI is not able to evaluate from the data it has extracted from a CV if a person is honest or dishonest, lazy, or motivated. Another limitation of AI is that it will not manage in a chat to talk a candidate into taking the job offer. Human recruiters are necessary to take care of this important step. One can conclude that human factors such as emotional intelligence are as important in the recruitment process as AI.

Both the example from Amazon and the research from Willfred go back to 2018, 5 years ago. We need to take into consideration the validity of both examples, there might have been some changes over time, as AI is a technology that is rapidly evolving.

Due to the limitations found in the previous research, the next section will present more recent findings and conclusions.

The research carried out by Drage and Mackereth (2022) criticizes the following two statements which are used by AI powered recruitment companies.

1. “Recruitment AI can objectively assess candidates by removing gender and race from their systems.”
2. “This removal of gender and race will make recruitment fairer, help customers attain their DEI goals, and lay the foundations for a truly meritocratic culture to thrive within an organization.”

The authors Drage and Mackereth (2022) give four reasons for their criticism. First, gender and race as recruitment criteria are not isolated aspects that can easily be eliminated

from an AI system. Secondly if companies rely on AI to do their “diversity work”, they might become ignorant towards the problems of unfairness within their organization.

Additionally, the assumption that AI assessment is neutral does not take into consideration, that AI machines are being programmed based on demands and attributes that the current job market makes, and the character assessment is historically shaped by biasness. So even if the programs are not explicitly sorted according to gender, race and age, these factors play into the supposedly neutral assessment process. Finally, AI tools are being expected to “produce the ideal candidate that they supposedly identify by constructing associations between words and people’s bodies”.

The above reasoning has shown that it is essential for AI recruitment firms and their clients to look at how recruitment AI tools as well as the whole wider process of recruitment repeats and firmly establishes “racialized and genderized differences” between groups of candidates (Drage & Mackereth, 2022). The bias is deeply encoded in the system, and it is not a question of simply using “debiasing measures” to fix the problem. It is therefore not possible to replace a deep human engagement with AI tools when it comes to ensuring a fair candidate experience. Organizations have learned that ”neutral AI tools” are not as efficient as for example when candidates from different cultures are represented by recruiters based on inclusion not only regarding race and gender but also social differentiation such as age and ability.

Regarding Chatbots, using this tool has become more common, however some organizations are hesitant to use Chatbots (Barghi et al., 2022; Upadhyay & Khandelwal, 2018) because it will result in larger numbers of applicants, meaning the sorting process will be more demanding (Barghi et al., 2022; Black & van Esch, 2020) and also because recruiters consider digital tools as a direct competition and they fear for their employment (Barghi et al., 2022; Li et al., 2021; Vardarlier & Zafer, 2020).

Furthermore, some of the disadvantages are lack of empathy, limited language capabilities and limited decision-making capabilities (Barghi et al., 2022). Even though Chatbots are very advanced, they still are not able to understand nuances in human communication such as irony, humor, or other emotional reactions. Also, missing a broad understanding of language, Chatbots will be unable to adapt to each person’s individual communication style. This means that candidates must use a robotic language because they are communicating with a machine and as a result some might refuse to respond or communicate with chatbot. Lastly, the fact that Chatbots only work as well as the data that

they were provided, they will sometimes fail to understand a question or not be able to make decisions independently.

This paper cannot take into consideration the research by Barghi et al. (2022) without reservations, because their literature review was not exhaustive, and their findings need to be validated by experts in the hiring and technology field.

Looking at the research from Oswal et al. (2020) while some of their results are congruent with the findings from Barghi et al. (2022), they present some different considerations which will be elaborated on in the next paragraph.

There is a high risk that an ideal applicant with excellent capabilities will not be sourced simply because they failed to add certain keywords in their CV (Oswal et al., 2020).

Additionally, there is the aspect of body language and facial expressions which a recruiter can read and interpret during a in person interview. Also, AI is not able to evaluate soft skills and emotional traits.



## **3. Research Design & Methodology**

### **3.1. Research Approach**

This thesis started with the aim to answer the research question on “How does the integration of AI influence talent acquisition solutions?” and “What are the implications and challenges associated with this integration?”. To answer this question, this study follows a combination of deductive and inductive qualitative approach.

To conduct research the author can choose between three different approaches (Saunders et al., 2009; Valido, M. M. C. de M., 2019):

- Deductive research means, the researcher studies academic literature and creates a theory that is based on the content of the literature review. In the next stage a strategy is formed to test the theory (Johansson & Herranen, 2019; Thomas, 2006).
- With the inductive approach the researcher gathers data which is analyzed to build a theory.
- The third approach is a combination of the deductive and inductive approaches. The researcher applies a theoretical framework built from the findings in the literature review, this is the deductive element. Additionally, themes are being developed from the collected data, which is the inductive element. Finally logical conclusions are established by choosing an optimal explanation from competing sources or from interpretations of the data.

Considering the three research approaches, for this study the author chose a mixed method of deductive and inductive. The goal of this thesis is to gather information from a thorough literature review and understand the relationship between existing findings and the data collected by the researcher.

Consequently, the deductive approach was used as a foundation for the research paper. However, given the fact that AI is a new and rapidly developing phenomenon within TA, there is not enough competent and updated literature, the deductive research was not sufficient. To truly understand the impact of AI in global TA the author needed to gather primary data from other sources and then compare this to the theories from the deductive research.

After collecting the necessary data, the author used a mixed combination of exploratory and predictive research. The exploratory research focused on the literature review and

observations to identify patterns and discover their correlations and relationships. Predictive research was used to formulate future possibilities based on the analysis and patterns found.

### **3.2. Data Collection Method**

The researcher collected secondary data from various authors as well as primary data through structured interviews.

When talking about secondary data we refer to data that has been collected by other researchers for different purposes as opposed to primary data which is collected by the researcher specifically with the goal to answer the research questions (Saunders et al., 2009).

The researcher began by studying publications such as scientific articles, dissertations, and excerpts from books on the subject. This way a profound understanding and knowledge of the subject matter was gained.

In the next step, the primary data was collected via semi-structured in-depth interviews. The focus of the interview questions was to gather information on the use of AI in global TA and its implications, as well as gaining insights on traditional recruitment.

Given the complexity of the research, the author decided to conduct qualitative research through in-depth interviews. Saunders et al. (2009) defines in-depth interview as a technique that collects the participant's opinions and perspective on the research topic. Given the nature of this paper's research questions, it was necessary to get the insights of professionals working in the field of global TA through in-depth interviews.

According to Cresswell (2005), and Soiferman (2010) qualitative research is a method where the researcher becomes part of the data collection process by conducting their study in the normal everyday work setting of the participants. They gather the words of the participants and then analyze the content for common themes.

Qualitative research means that the researcher must spend a great part of the research time engaging with the participants and investing in the process of data analysis. The results being not quantitative they cannot be measured in numbers but must be interpreted as themes and keywords.

To guarantee confidentiality of the participants involved in this study, their details and identity will not be published in this dissertation.

### **3.3. Research Process Steps**

#### **3.3.1. Choice of Company**



Korn Ferry is a global organizational consulting firm that specializes in talent management and offers various services in leadership and talent development, such as executive recruitment, leadership training, employee assessments, and organizational consulting. The company excels in helping organizations identify talent to meet strategic business goals.

Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) is a service provided by companies like Korn Ferry in the HR and talent management field. RPO involves outsourcing an organization's recruitment processes, including candidate sourcing, screening, interviewing, and onboarding, to an external service provider. RPO providers, like Korn Ferry, leverage their expertise, technology, and resources to streamline recruitment, enhance efficiency, and attract high-quality candidates.

RPO supports clients from multiple locations, many projects within RPO work remotely with the clients, taking on the recruitment process for more than one geographical region. Functioning globally means, for example, that managers can be based in the USA but help source Talent for Europe.

Korn Ferry, working globally and using AI tools in the recruitment process, is considered an optimal choice for this study. Some of the RPO projects use Nimble, which is a comprehensive technology solution designed for efficient high-volume hiring. It utilizes AI and Korn Ferry intellectual property to create a positive and seamless process for hiring managers and candidates.

### **3.3.2. Sample Selection**

To analyze the use of AI and its implications within TA, the goal of this research is to gather the experiences and opinions of specialists in the area. Thus, the target group in this study includes professionals with higher level roles in the RPO department of Korn Ferry.

There are two types of sampling techniques to choose from (Saunders et al., 2009; Valido, M. M. C. de M., 2019).

- Probability sampling – this sampling involves a random selection by choosing a subset of participants from a population. Each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected, allowing the researcher to have a sample that is representative of the population.
- Non-probability sampling – the non-probability sampling involves a non-random selection based on convenience or other criteria, where you make a conscious decision on what the sample needs to include.

The sampling technique used for this dissertation was non-probability sampling, where a list was prepared of manager level employees from the RPO department to select the target group whose opinion is considered valuable within global TA.

Furthermore, the sampling technique was a non-random sampling since the selection was based on criteria and was intentional.

The criteria of the target sample focused on managers from the RPO department who offer recruitment services to clients and work or have worked previously on transregional projects. The researcher chose professionals who have focused their career on recruitment and are aware of traditional recruitment, as well as new trends such as AI.

For the selected sample 34 invitations were sent out via e-mail to managers and other employees responsible for RPO projects to give their contribution to this study. From the group of approached professional 9 confirmed their availability and interest in participating in this research. The final sample contained 9 professionals from 4 different countries, as shown more detailed in Annex A. Out of the 9 participants, currently 5 participants oversee global TA projects while the other 4 participants have previously been responsible for recruiting globally.

### **3.3.3. Interviews**

9 semi-structured interviews were conducted with the aim to gather opinions and experiences about the impact of AI in recruitment from professionals within the field of HR.

The interviews were held conversationally with one participant at a time and being a semi-structured interview, it contained a combination of closed- and open-ended questions. Whenever necessary, a question was followed by a “why” or “how” question.

As opposed to formal interviews which are held according to a fixed list of questions, a semi-structured interview will concentrate on themes that are being discussed in a conversational style (Raworth et al., 2012).

The interview questions were predetermined and similar for each participant, while prioritizing on open-ended questions that would allow the researcher to gather the necessary quality and volume of data to answer the research questions. With the use of open-ended questions, the participant is invited to elaborate on the subject, describe it and define it in their own words (Saunders et al 2009). This format of questions will encourage the interviewee to talk freely without time restrictions and to modify and develop their answers while they speak in a conversational manner. Some of the keywords that define an open open-ended question are “what”, or “how”, or “why”.

The interviews were conducted via videoconference, due to different locations, countries, and time zones. More details regarding the method and duration of the interviews can be seen in Annex B.

**3.3.4. Questionnaire Segments**

Segments
Background
Thoughts about Traditional Recruitment
Use of AI
Thoughts about AI tools in TA
Closure

**3.4. Data Analysis Method**

The method that was chosen to analyze the data was the content analysis approach, meaning that data will be categorized in themes, patterns will be identified and words and phrases that have been used multiple times will be highlighted.

Content analysis is an approach that follows a defined systematic technique that will reduce transcriptions into compressed content categories, following explicit rules of coding (Berelson, 1952; GAO, 1996; Krippendorff, 1980; Stemler, 2001; Weber, 1990). This method uses a filter system that will extract the main ideas of a content (GAO, 1996; Stemler, 2001), therefor enabling the researcher to “discover and describe the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social attention” (Stemler, 2001; Weber, 1990).

Additionally, it allows us to identify trends and patterns by coding and categorizing the collected transcripts. One of the techniques is to count word frequency and define words of potential interest.

The author took the following steps for the content analysis. In a first step transcripts were read and re-read for the author to familiarize themselves with the content. Subsequently, relevant passages were labeled by highlighting relevant words and phrases as well as highlighting recurring words. Initial categories were identified, and keywords from the previous step were collected relevant to each category. To have a more visual and “cleaner” data presentation, keywords were filtered by eliminating the duplicates and combining similar

keywords. To verify the connection between the categories and keywords the author described the relationship between both as a quality check.

Finally in the result section, the discovered themes and patterns will be gathered and listed to formulate statements that describe the findings of the interviews.

### **3.5. Justification of the methodological choices**

For this research the qualitative approach seemed more effective to better understand the relationship between AI and global TA. A quantitative approach would not have allowed the author to delve deeply into the participants' opinions and experiences about the topic.

Although the qualitative method may not yield precise statistical results, it does give readers a more comprehensive understanding of the findings. In comparison to quantitative data, qualitative data together with a thorough analysis and detailed transcription, will provide better insights about the topic at hand.

## 4. Results & Discussion

### 4.1. Results

#### 4.1.1. Current Use of AI

Out of the 9 participants, 6 are currently using AI tools in their projects. Regarding the other 3 participants, 2 have used AI in previous client accounts and 1 has used psychometric tests that were AI powered; all 3 are aware and/or familiar with the use of AI in global TA. Most of the professionals mainly use AI in the initial stages, meaning sourcing and screening.

“The main benefits are in that initial part where you want to capture the candidate’s attention and just help them to have a quick and easy experience from an application point of view...”

Professional 1

Because AI is only used in the initial stages it is considered a hybrid solution. In other words, recruiters are working together with AI. From a process overview the current situation is, that AI takes part of the workload of attracting and screening off recruiters. Once it has found the candidates, the recruiter takes over and communicates with the candidates. In rare cases the AI tool will pre-screen the candidate and allow them to schedule an interview directly with the hiring manager. In most projects the position of an associate recruiter is still present in these initial stages but works together with AI for optimal results.

“It’s finding that sweet spot, where a recruiter leverages it (AI) in order to make them better [...] if we allow AI to do the front-end-work, but we still have our hands into it, the recruiter will flourish.” Professional 7

“[...] the chatbot takes a sourcer and recruiter out of the mix. But our team is on the back end, instead of having a team of recruiters we have a team of support specialists for candidates who have any trouble with the chatbot or for hiring managers that have any trouble.”

Professional 5

The participants using AI tools agreed that currently they only use it for high volume positions, where there is a large number of candidates that need to be processed efficiently. The tool sifts through numerous resumes, identifying candidates who meet specific job requirements.

“[...] it does screen the profile of the candidate and gets them scheduled for a hiring manager interview. [...] it must be a job that a client needs a high volume built, for example 500 customer service representatives. It must be a simple job profile.” Professional 5

#### **4.1.2. Benefits of AI tools and Chatbots**

The benefits that were emphasized by participants during the interview were, that AI makes the recruitment process faster and gets the candidate to the interview with a hiring manager in less time, which ultimately means that the time to hire reduces as well. 8 of the 9 participants also mentioned that AI can make the recruitment process more efficient. This refers mainly to the sourcing phase, which is part of the initial stages.

“[...] the cycle time for recruitment will be a lot less.” Professional 6

Most participants did not only agree that AI is more time efficient, but also that it can be more cost efficient in the long run. AI automizes manual work, which means it takes on part of the workload that traditionally was handled by employees who were being paid a salary.

“It's not cheap to set up the chatbot, but once it's in place, you're not paying for a recruiter [...] You're paying to set up a tool that's going to pay for itself in the long run. It's a lot more cost effective in the long run for the roles that it works for great.” Professional 5

Because of the automated, standardized initial stages, any unnecessary communications or tasks are eliminated. The process is streamlined and reduced to the necessary steps. The fact that this process is strictly being followed without exception guarantees consistency.

3 participants who are currently using AI for high-volume positions mentioned that the tool makes the application process quick and simple. The chatbot communicates with the candidate throughout the process, guiding and encouraging them, and answering any questions they might have. The steps are very easy for candidates to follow and do not require a lot of energy and initiative from their side. One participant pointed out that candidates can even apply on their smartphone.

“The main benefits are in that initial part where you want to capture the candidate's attention and just help them to have a quick and easy experience from an application point of view before they even get to an interview.” Professional 1

Most participants agreed that AI can help with creating a more diversified candidate pool, because they believe that AI can reach profiles from everywhere.

“Of course, the far reach for an AI is way more than probably what an individual can, and bringing such diversity and inclusive culture in the organization is good, irrespective of whichever countries and regions we are in. It's a global dynamic outlook which AI is giving us.” Professional 8

#### **4.1.3. Challenges of AI**

After hearing various opinions during the conducted interviews, the author concluded that AI is a new tool that still needs some development and at this moment is only of limited use to companies, while presenting a high initial time and financial investment. Companies need to be prepared for the high cost of setting up the tool and must diligently teach the tool to ensure optimal results.

You've got to put the working out front to teach the tool to make sure that it's bringing back the results [...]. Professional 7

Looking at the quality aspect, AI doesn't always source the candidates which have the necessary requirements for the position, meaning it doesn't screen the candidate as thoroughly as a person would. There were instances with Korn Ferrys clients where a candidate who was unsuitable was forwarded to the hiring manager interview.

On the other hand, suitable candidates might not get forwarded to an interview because the tool is very data-driven, so if a candidate doesn't mention all their capabilities or if they answer a question incorrectly or unspecific they won't get a second chance.

Most participants agreed that AI is fast and can handle quantity, but not quality, meaning when professionals with a very specific profile are required, AI is not the ideal solution for finding these rare candidates.

“I believe it will be important to keep recruiters for higher level positions versus maybe production, for example those types of positions in factories manufacturing.” Professional 2

“It's not good for situations where you're having a sourcing issue.” Professional 5

Because the tool cannot be trusted 100% just yet, there is still a need for recruiter intervention. All the participants agreed that AI cannot take over the full recruitment process and that it's essential to have a person overseeing the process.

“I would not replace the entire recruitment process with AI because as a project manager, I would like some bits to still be with the TA team. To assess and evaluate the candidate and to be in touch with the candidate as well.” Professional 8

Although legal and ethical challenges were mentioned by only 3 participants, the author concludes from the overall content of the interviews that it is important to mention this challenge. In terms of legal, there must be governance involved in AI, assuring that data privacy principles are being applied and that the algorithms are being monitored. One of the ethical issues that was mentioned is that candidates must be informed that AI is being applied.

“[...] we're already seeing hearings here in the states. At least around what can we do to put more governance around the use of AI to help protect people's information and data.” Professional 5

#### **4.1.4. Future of AI**

All participants agreed that in the future, AI will be increasingly integrated into the recruitment process. Furthermore all 9 participants said that AI will mainly be used in sourcing and screening and 6 participants were convinced that the function of a sourcer who is responsible for the initial stages of the recruitment process will be completely replaced by AI. In conclusion all participants emphasized that AI cannot take over the full recruitment process.

“The actual recruiting job, [...], is going to get a lot more soft skills based, not so much sourcing. [...] Influencing skills and consultative skills, those soft skills are going to be more needed. These skills I don't see AI taking over right away.” Professional 5

“It will reduce the number of people that are required in the end-to-end process.” Professional 9

Another stage of the TA process that will be increasingly handled by AI is the onboarding. None of the participants are aware of clients that are currently using AI in



onboarding; however, 5 participants believe that eventually AI will be more present in the onboarding, helping new joiners with questions and guiding them through the initial training.

As a conclusion, all participant agreed that AI will improve the TA process. They believe that the tool is still new, continuing to grow and together with the benefits it brings it will make recruitment more efficient and bring candidates faster into the process.

#### **4.1.5. Human interaction is still needed**

As previously mentioned, AI cannot take over the end-to-end recruitment cycle, and it is essential to have people involved in some of the stages. Some strong points, brought up during the interviews, were that AI is not able to build a relationship or engage candidates, it is not sophisticated enough to handle the recruitment for high end positions, and it does not have soft skills, which are needed in various stages of the process, for example in the final stage of winning over a candidate.

“We all want to be seen, we all want to feel like we're valued and that somebody went out of their way to recognize that. You still must have that human interaction, [...], and that it's not just an automated machine reaching out to 1000 people hoping that they get 10.” Professional 9

“You'll have a lot of things happening which require less recruiters and the TA team. But they would always be those important and pivotal points where you would want a human touch to be there, [...].” Professional 8

“It doesn't replace the recruiter job because it is so important to have that person-to-person connection that recruiting is about building relationships and you can't use AI to do that.” Professional 4

#### **4.1.6. Biasness**

6 participants agreed that there are ways in which AI can help eliminate biasness. The fact that the AI tool transcends borders, cultures, and languages will work towards diversity and inclusion. However at least one participant warned that this can only be achieved if the tool is monitored accordingly.

“I think there's always fear that there could be bias in AI tools especially [...] In sourcing or screening there could be some bias there. But at the same time, there are ways for it to

eliminate people bias. [...] it needs to be monitored carefully because it absolutely has the potential to bring more diversity into the pipeline.” Professional 4

Although most participants agreed that AI can help reduce unconscious biasness, they were not convinced that AI can eliminate biasness.

“AI is created by humans and so no matter what you're always going to have some sort of slant somewhere. It's never going to be 100% objective.” Professional 5

2 participants pointed out the advantage of AI capacity to neutralize job descriptions, because no unconscious biasness will enter the content. AI specific tools for job descriptions, such as Textio, can help eliminate biasness by detecting and removing bias language. The algorithm is set to eliminate phrases that might exclude certain groups of people, ensuring diversity and inclusion in the text.

“[...] you neutralize the language in the JD to make it not more subjective to gender bias or any ethnicity biases. It removes all kinds of discriminatory remarks and gives a more neutral approach in the JD.” Professional 8

Not all participants mentioned the word consistency but referred to this fact in various ways. Because the AI powered recruitment process is standardized, it guarantees consistency in two ways. One the workload is the same and two the sourcing criteria are the same. This means the best fit candidates are being sourced by analyzing their profiles and matching them to specific job requirements. This way the consistency of candidate job alignment is guaranteed throughout the entire recruitment process.

#### **4.1.7. Benefits and Challenges of Traditional Recruitment**

##### **4.1.7.1. Benefits of Traditional Recruitment**

All participants referred to certain benefits of traditional recruitment, emphasizing the advantages humans have over a machine in respect to negotiating skills, soft skills and building relationships.

Having a recruiter reach out to a candidate personally will make them feel special and can increase candidate engagement, by establishing and maintaining a positive relationship throughout the recruitment process. Not only is it essential to build relationships with

candidates to find top talent, but also as consultancy firm it is also important to build a relationship with the client.

“Finding someone the old-fashioned way, whether it's through networking or connections, just makes it more personal. This can lead to deeper conversations as well as candidates feeling like they are special [...] For example, when you reach out to candidates personally you have a higher chance of converting them.” Professional 2

Additionally, recruiters use their soft skills to liaise between candidates and clients, convince, if necessary, a hiring manager to consider a candidate and vice versa. In this context, recruiters have the negotiation skills needed to finalize a placement.

“[...] and the ability for a recruiter, who knows the account well, to be able to talk to the candidate and pique their interest in a position.” Professional 2

“The actual recruiting job [...] that's going to get a lot more soft skills based [...] interviewing candidates, persuading candidates as to why this is the right job for them. Persuading hiring managers who might be on the fence. Influencing skills and consultative skills, those soft skills are going to be more needed.” Professional 5

#### **4.1.7.2. Challenges of Traditional Recruitment**

All 9 participants believe that traditional recruitment is in a phase of transition and changes are necessary to respond to the main challenges.

Even by using social media and sourcing tools, such as LinkedIn and LinkedIn Recruiter, the overall process from sourcing to onboarding is very time consuming and lengthy. Traditional recruitment involves many stages and in all these stages personal contact and communication is needed. Recruiters spend a lot of time sourcing and attracting candidates and might invest many hours communicating with a candidate only to find out that the candidate in the end is not interested or available for the position.

“[...] we use a lot of our time to engage with the candidates even when we are not 100% sure if they are serious about the position we are offering.” Professional 3

Continuing the thoughts of the previous paragraph, finding a candidate the traditional way is more time consuming. Recruiters don't always use all the available tools, meaning they have limited success in finding the right candidate.

Adding to this problem is the fact that currently there is external pressure on companies to ensure DE&I and traditional recruitment do not provide easy access to a diverse candidate pool.

“[...] making sure that we are getting the right candidates and that we're getting diverse candidates as well. So that's always been the biggest challenge [...]” Professional 4

Traditional recruitment is very labor intensive because it involves extensive documentation and manual work.

Another challenge that was mentioned is the element of human error, which can be strong, because humans are involved in every step of the process. One of the main mistakes that happens is that the recruiter presents the wrong person with the wrong skill set for the position.

#### **4.1.8. Opinions from Clients and Candidates**

Kon Ferry, being a consulting company, naturally works closely with their clients, receiving frequent feedback and offering recruitment solutions including AI tools. During the conducted interviews most participants reported positive feedback from their clients. Additionally, 3 participants said that their clients are excited about the possibilities which AI offers. The main reasons why clients would want to have AI tools as part of the recruitment service are speed and cost efficiency.

“Usually what we hear from clients is that they want more tech as part of our process. [...] Usually, the companies that are choosing this type of application process know that they need to implement some-thing that helps candidates get to the interview stage a lot faster.”  
Professional 1

Meanwhile one third of the participants pointed out that there is some hesitation from clients. One participant described the reaction as sceptic; two participants said that especially clients who are not in the technology industry are intimidated and cautious.

“I think there's always skepticism, especially like in the US we really look at diversity. And there is some concern that AI could have a negative adverse impact to diversity.” Professional 4

“We get some discomfort sometimes in the sales process when AI is brought up as a solution.” Professional 5

Although none of the participants reported candidates having had a negative experience with AI, concerns from candidates were mentioned. The main concern being that AI will unfairly reject their application and consequently candidates still want a recruiter present in the process. The conclusion was that AI drastically reshapes the way in which candidates present their skills forcing them to focus more on having the right keywords in their profile to be selected by the AI.

“It will shape the way candidates or people have their skill set out on the Internet. [...] I think it will make it even more important for people who are actively looking for jobs to make sure that they have the right words in their resumes. The right words in their social media profiles.” Professional 2

## **4.2. Discussion**

This study aims to offer a thorough overview of how AI is influencing global TA. To achieve this purpose the researcher conducted interviews with 9 professionals and will answer the present research questions:

- How does the integration of Artificial Intelligence influence global Talent Acquisition solutions?
- What are the implications and challenges associated with this integration?

The study demonstrated that AI has revolutionized the global TA process, having a mainly positive impact on the recruitment procedure but also presenting new challenges. The implementation of AI tools streamlines the recruitment process by automating repetitive tasks, such as resume screening, candidate sourcing, and initial communication, by eliminating unnecessary steps and by minimizing human intervention. It has dramatically reshaped TA functions meaning less recruiters are needed in the process. Especially in the initial stages it is

no longer necessary for recruiters to be actively involved. This leads to higher efficiency and better handling of high-volume applications. By reducing the human factor AI tools can help reduce human error and biasness.

While the literature review claimed that candidates are being reviewed objectively and fairly, the primary data does not completely support that statement.

The results from the interviews clearly demonstrated that AI cannot take over the full recruitment process because it lacks certain human traits that are needed, such as negotiation skills to name only one.

Some of the more significant downsides of AI tools in global TA are the high initial financial investment and the required time to teach and monitor the algorithms. The literature review revealed that if algorithms are not constantly monitored negative impacts occur, such as involuntary bias in the candidate selection, leading to severe legal and social problems.

#### **4.2.1. Interpretations**

The purpose of this section is to join the findings from the primary data and the previous research. This will involve identifying common themes, patterns, or contradictions across the data sources.

#### **4.2.2. Application of AI tools in Global TA**

The findings of the research have confirmed that AI plays a significant role in today's global TA and that in the future global TA will rely more and more on these tools. The results from the primary data suggest that AI is very efficient in the initial stages of the process, but there was little evidence that AI is being used in the other phases. The interviews revealed that AI is not yet being implemented in the two stages of selection and decision making and onboarding and feedback.

According to the research AI tools are mainly used for the sourcing and screening stages where they filter and select fitting candidates fast, and in rare cases pre-screen candidates. Although a few participants mentioned that AI will schedule the interviews between candidates and the hiring manager, this is not a reality for most projects within Korn Ferry at this moment.

In comparison to the primary data, the previous research provides information that AI already plays a role in all the stages; however, most findings agree that AI is being mainly implemented in the outreach, screening, and assessment (Baratelli & Colleoni, 2022).

While the results of both data were not exactly congruent, both reveal that AI is not implemented in the full recruitment cycle.

The research suggests that not only are there limitations to the use of AI in certain stages of recruitment but also regarding specific positions. The primary data clearly states that AI tools should mainly be used for high volume positions where there is a high number of applications for more simple positions, i.e. manual labor.

Although the authors did not explicitly exclude the possibility of using AI in recruitment for highly specialized positions, there was also no mention in the literature of this possibility and furthermore the previous research emphasized that AI is beneficial for high volume positions (Black & van Esch, 2020).

In conclusion, it can be said that based on the collected data and ideas brought up by previous researchers, AI technology can be beneficial to the recruitment process when implemented in the right sections.

#### **4.2.3. AI complements traditional TA process**

This study shows that AI has become a support for companies as a helping tool to achieve objectives, especially in the context of finding targeted profiles. One of the essential purposes of the AI tool is to take over tedious and repetitive tasks from recruiters. The authors Aggarwal and Salmon-Powell et al. already stated in 2020 and 2021 that monotonous, undemanding tasks have successfully been taken over or supported by AI, referring mainly to basic administrative tasks, such as filling out forms.

Most participants would agree that AI tools are a hybrid solution; 3 participants who use AI for sourcing, pre-screening, and scheduling, mentioned that they still offer recruiters as part of the service package. The main reason being the need for a recruiter to escalate to during pivotal moments within the process whether from the hiring manager's side or the candidate's side. The author Wilfred (2018) elaborated on this, pointing out the limitations of AI compared to human abilities and proving the statement that there are many scenarios that AI cannot handle and where human intervention is needed.

One of the most common patterns identified in the research is that AI at this point cannot replace recruiters but is increasingly essential for the process and recruiters must learn to work with this tool.

#### **4.2.4. AI is reshaping TA functions**

Building upon the findings of this study, the author concludes that AI is already firmly implemented in numerous areas of the industry and without a doubt this trend will continue.

There is, however, some uncertainty regarding the impact this development will have on specific professional groups. Drawing from the findings, the profession of a recruiter is already changing and there are concerns about becoming obsolete.

This research established that AI can be applied in almost any area of HR and that the HR functions are changing because of this (Guenole & Feinzig, 2018). As previously discussed, Adamopoulou and Moussiades (2020) explain that AI is being increasingly implemented to substitute human contact in the service industry, such as customer service or support. In the field of TA, we are witnessing this trend in candidate communication.

Looking at these phenomena there are concerns about how this will impact on the recruiter position. This research has proven that the role of the sourcer will no longer be needed in the recruitment process. Consequently, the author wonders which jobs will disappear and how will the remaining positions reshape.

Based on the results from the interviews one of the main benefits of traditional recruitment are the people. Personal connection and human contact remain important to the process. The author Wilfred (2018) stated that AI cannot completely imitate human intelligence, because algorithms cannot express emotional intelligence. In recruitment, one example of this limitation is that AI will not manage to convince a candidate into taking the job offer. Human recruiters are necessary to take care of this important step.

The author of this study has learned from the findings that AI is impersonal and cannot build relationships with the candidates. The focus will shift towards recruiters perfecting their soft skills to build relationships and establish a positive candidate engagement. This is an important part of recruitment, especially in the negotiations stage.

Not only will the industry observe changes in the focus of the recruiter's role, but additionally entire job functions will become obsolete, leading to a reduction in the number of employees involved in the end-to-end process. There is valid cause for concern that certain professional groups within TA will lose their employment.

#### **4.2.5. AI tools are indispensable, and they are the future**

Looking at the changes in global TA and the demands this brings, it is impossible for companies to perform without the help of AI technology. In today's competitive job market and "war of talent", the recruitment process needs to be faster and candidate pools need to be larger. Additionally, there is increasing pressure on companies to be diverse and inclusive, which means their TA department must aim for a wider reach.



Drawing from the interviews, the use of AI tools is growing, and the technology is gaining attractiveness. AI has become an established part of the day-to-day recruitment process and AI is transforming efficiency.

All participants agree that AI will be increasingly implemented in the future due to the benefit it brings. The researcher retrieved from the content of the interviews that at this stage, AI is not inevitable, meaning the possibility to perform all tasks manually still exists, but to meet clients demands, it is in fact indispensable. This point was confirmed by the author Yadav et al. (2023) who basically stated that AI is a must have for companies because without AI tools it would be so much harder to find candidates fast. Currently companies are at a stage where they could potentially go back to a traditional recruitment procedure, meaning the logistics of the process still allow it. However, the reality of doing so would have such a negative impact on the businesses' survival that it is in fact no longer an option. During the interviews, the participants did not elaborate on the negative aspects of working without AI, however they stressed the fact that working with AI is becoming the reality. Clients clearly want to see more AI in the process because it's fast. The industry has reached a point of no return and AI is in fact the present and the future.

Another important aspect that the author believes should be deepened is how AI-powered solutions have become indispensable for organizations aiming to secure top talent across diverse cultural and geographical contexts. In global TA it is important for companies to provide a diversified candidate pool meaning they need to assure that they are hiring people from different backgrounds. The diversity of their workforce adds value to the company's branding and image and to reach this objective, TA departments need to guarantee a diverse and inclusive recruitment process. As previously mentioned, the author Michailidis (2018) agreed that AI is valuable in this regard because by eliminating the human factor in the initial profile assessment, biasedness can be avoided.

Concluding from the findings of this research the author also believes that the use of AI will spread over to more stages of the recruitment process in the future. During the interviews, participants predicted that apart from the initial phase, AI will additionally be implemented in the onboarding. The authors Tewari & Pant (2020) gave the example of AI being helpful handling large volumes of new employees by using Chatbots to answer their queries in the onboarding process.

#### **4.2.7. Advantages of AI in Global TA**

As proven via this study, there are numerous advantages of using AI tools in global TA.

AI automizes manual work, reducing the workload for recruiters and making the process faster. In the interviews, the participants referred to this point mainly in regard to the initial stage while the literature focused also on the fact that AI can take on the task of communicating with candidates, such as through chatbot communication.

The authors Tewari & Pant (2020) elaborate on this aspect by stating that communication with candidates is an important key to successful recruitment and that AI has the capacity to keep a constant flow of communication with a high number of people at the same time. The result of this is that companies will manage to keep a large number of candidates engaged and avoid losing applicants.

The technology also streamlines the application process for the candidate. One of the participants explained during the interview how AI provides a quick and simple application process, making the task easy, for example by helping the candidates to schedule their interviews with the hiring managers using the tool. The authors Baratelli & Colleoni (2022) stressed how AI adds value to the initial phase of the application process by offering the possibility of virtual interviews which adds convenience and flexibility and saves hours of scheduling face-to-face-meetings.

One strong point that was made clear during the interviews was the suitability of AI for high volume. Not only does it find candidates fast, but it can filter through a large number of profiles, speeding up the screening process and creating a candidate pipeline. For roles with straightforward resume requirements or where large numbers of applicants are typical, AI recruiting software can help to pre-screen candidates to get the recruiter's job done faster. This point is backed up by the authors Black & van Esch (2020) who say that the digital screening procedure gives companies an advantage in the competition for talent by adding speed to a high-volume selection process.

As previously mentioned in this study, having a diversified talent pool is crucial for companies. Based on the literature AI tools contribute to creating this diversity. The authors George & Thomas (2021) and Cohen (2019) illustrate this aspect by affirming that using specific AI algorithms a fair assessment through equal consideration regarding culture, gender, age etc. is guaranteed.

Furthermore, diversity is accomplished by AI's capacity to reach candidates globally, taking CVs from various sources and enabling recruiters to have a wider reach. Using technology, recruiters can gather information on potential candidates from across different networking sites. The author Wilfried (2018) also emphasizes this advantage stating that AI

obtains CVs from various sources, such as CVs being publicly available on the net, not only the traditional ones.

#### **4.2.8. Challenges of AI in Global TA**

Drawing from the research it became clear that there are various limitations to AI tools which will compromise its autonomy, consequently AI cannot take on the full recruitment process and human intervention is necessary. In the following paragraph the author will demonstrate that not only is AI unable to take on the full recruitment process, but the tool also cannot be trusted 100% and needs to be monitored closely.

The interviewed professional referred to lacks accuracy and quality in the selection process. One of the reasons being is that there is too much focus on keywords. Recruiters might miss out on suitable candidates because the technology is not able to “read between the lines” on CV’s and applications. This premise is backed up by previous research from the author Oswal et al. (2020), who claimed that an ideal candidate might be overlooked simply because they did not add certain keywords to their profile. On the other hand, unqualified candidates might be forwarded faultily to the next stage, because the tool might fail to detect incorrect information in the candidates’ CVs and during the pre-screening.

Another critical point that needs to be addressed are the legal and ethical concerns that the technology presents. The interviewees expressed doubts as to the non-biasedness of the tool. This suspicion goes in line with the finding of Tambe et al. (2019) who warned about the consequences of having an algorithm decide which candidate to select. He sees a danger in this practice because the tool will create an algorithm based on past data and consequently previous discriminations might be repeated by the algorithm.

Addressing the importance of inclusion in global TA, the literature mentions certain implications when using AI. Drage & Mackereth (2022) found that human interaction is needed to guarantee a fair treatment of candidates. Because the tool is programmed to be “neutral”, it might not be ideal to ensure that candidates from different backgrounds such as cultural, social, racial or candidates with different attributes such as gender, age, ability, are presented.

During the interviews another point that was brought forward is that AI is not sophisticated enough to keep candidates engaged and build a relationship that goes further than the initial contact.

The authors Barghi et al. (2022) and Laurim et al. (2021) sum up these limitations by explaining that the experience of past years have shown that when a machine evaluates

applicants, there will be implications based on “legal issues, technological weak spots, and lack of accuracy”.

## **5. Conclusion**

### **5.1. Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the conclusion to the topic of this research and to address the two research questions.

Concluding from the findings it became clear that AI has become an established part of the TA process and its role in this field will continue to grow. The recruitment procedure and the role of the recruiter have been changed by this technology. One of the most significant conclusions of this research is that the integration of AI in global TA brings with it a reduction of human interaction and consequently less recruiters are needed in the process. The AI tools make certain stages of the procedure faster and more efficient, especially the first 2 stages, sourcing, and screening. AI tools are efficient at finding candidates and creating a large candidate pool. Additionally, it can handle a much larger application volume compared to traditional recruitment.

However, there are numerous limitations and challenges associated with the AI tools which organizations should take into consideration before deciding to implement and while working with the tool.

The main implication is that companies are not advised to rely 100% on the tool and accept that close monitoring is needed to avoid mistakes, lack of quality as well as legal and ethical issues. Additionally, it needs to be pointed out that the tool is not useful in the last 2 stages of the recruitment process where human engagement is essential.

If these challenges are addressed properly and consciously, the future of AI in global TA can be expected to bring positive changes for all involved parties. The application process for candidates will continue to become more user friendly. The role of the recruiter can be more sophisticated and creative due to freed up time. The AI tools, while monitored accordingly can ensure a wide reach, selecting candidates from various backgrounds providing further steps towards inclusion and diversity.

### **5.2. Limitations and Delimitations**

Concerning the limitations of this research, the results cannot be generalized due to the sample chosen and size. Since the primary data is gathered only from one company currently using AI in recruitment or has used in the past, the findings might not be generalizable to all organizations or industries. The results from the interviews are based on a consulting company and not on organizations using AI for their in-house recruitment.

Additionally, there also might be some bias in the data collected since it's gathered from a company where many projects are still run by recruiters. Most of the projects rely heavily on the recruiter's role and use AI to a limited extent. It's also important to highlight that Korn Ferry is a consulting firm and the results might be more biased towards the need for and importance of human contact in the process. The company has capitalized and based their success on human service and might not be inclined to defending the efficiency of a strictly automated process.

Korn Ferry works with multiple organizations in various industries. Therefore, given the nature of the sample, a certain degree of generalization is applicable.

Despite the limitations of this study, the researcher believes that given the demographics of the sample chosen and the information about their experiences and opinions, the data obtained offers valuable insights particularly regarding the positive impact of AI in global TA and potential challenges. The findings from the primary data of this research were congruent with findings of previous studies and confirmed past results.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

The author believes that given the rapid development of the subject it is necessary to continue further research at close intervals, i.e. in one year from now the results might look very different.

Furthermore, it might be advantageous to broaden the field study. This could involve the study of companies that are still operating in the traditional way to provide a conclusive comparison.

A strong recommendation should be to focus future studies on the issue of bias, fairness, and inclusion. This could involve the study of candidates' experiences by using a quantitative approach. Regarding the legal and ethical issues, there should be an investigation into how companies continue to address this issue and their experiences.

A further focus of studies should be how society and governments deal with these challenges, looking into reported court cases and changes in the legislation, such as developments in GDPR.

### **5.4. Relevant Findings**

This thesis was conducted to investigate the application of AI in global TA and its implications. The researcher gathered insights from TA professionals with global recruiting projects and this

allows the use of the extended insights of this thesis in any other research relating to the application of AI tools in recruitment.

It helps researchers and managers to consider at which stages of the recruitment process AI can be applied positively, and where it can be used to maximum advantage.

Furthermore, the results of this study showed the novelty of AI as a usable recruitment technology and explored the hesitations that still exist within the industry, especially as there are a considerable number of companies that still work traditionally. This thesis provides useful information to companies that are either at an early stage of implementing AI or considering whether to implement it at all. It discussed the benefits, challenges, and implications and therefore companies that are interested in using AI tools in their recruitment can benefit from the findings of this thesis.





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## Annexes

### Annex A: Information and Demographics of the Interview Participants

Interviewee	Position/Title	Experience in TA or Recruitment (#years)	Gender	Location of the Projects	Office Location
Professional 1	Project Director	17	Female	US, LATAM and EMEA	Argentina
Professional 2	Project Manager	26	Female	US	USA
Professional 3	Project Manager	18	Female	Global, mainly recruiting in India	India
Professional 4	Project Manager	13	Female	NA	USA
Professional 5	Implementation Manager	8 1/2	Female	Global and NA	USA
Professional 6	Quality Assurance Lead RPO	25	Female	Global, 3 different regions	UK
Professional 7	Project Manager	16	Female	USA	USA
Professional 8	Implementation Manager	11	Female	Global and Regional	India
Professional 9	Senior Project Manager	12	Female	Global and NA	USA

### Annex B: Method and Duration of the Interviews

Interviewee	Method of the Interview	Date of the Interview	Duration (min)	Transcription (#pages)
Professional 1	Teams Meeting	23rd November 2023	33	4
Professional 2	Teams Meeting	1st December 2023	28	3 1/4
Professional 3	Teams Meeting	21st November 2023	22	2
Professional 4	Teams Meeting	29th November	35	4
Professional 5	Teams Meeting	28th November	43	4 1/2
Professional 6	Teams Meeting	23rd November 2023	30	3
Professional 7	Teams Meeting	29th November 2023	25	3
Professional 8	Teams Meeting	29th November 2023	28	3 1/2
Professional 9	Teams Meeting	7th December 2023	32	3

## Annex C: Interview Questions

Segments	Questions	Notes
Background	What is your role or title at Korn Ferry? Do you have projects or clients for various locations?	This segment has for aim to get a better understanding of the individual's professional background
Thoughts about Traditional Recruitment	1) What do you think are the current benefits or challenges with traditional recruiting?	This question aims to understand TA without AI
Use of AI	2) Are you currently using AI withing your recruitment projects such as Seekout or have you used them at one point in the past?  3) In which function of the recruitment process are you implementing AI software? (Pre-screening/pre-selection, communication with applicants, organization during recruitment etc)  15) Regarding onboarding, do you have clients using AI in the onboarding process?  16) If yes, do you know how AI helps with onboarding?  14) Considering that AI collects CV's and profiles from different countries, do you see that you are reaching more candidates from other parts of the world and having a more diversified candidate pool?	This segment digs into the main application and purpose of AI
Thoughts about AI tools in TA	4) Why is the project using AI?  5) How do clients feel about Korn Ferry using AI?  6) In your experience have you noticed if candidates had any issues or negative experiences with AI handling the recruitment process?  7) How has AI based recruitment shaped and changed the so called 'traditional recruitment'?  8) What has been the most remarkable or important change if you can name one?  12) What is your opinion of the current use of AI technology? Is it sufficient? Is something missing?	This segment aims to get a deeper understanding of the individual's overall thoughts about AI

	<p>13) Do you think AI can make recruitment more effective in terms of faster more accurate recruitment?</p> <p>1) What do you think are the benefits of using AI in the recruitment process?</p> <p>2) What do you think are some challenges of using AI in recruitment process?</p> <p>3) There are written articles about unconscious biases in traditional recruitment, for example job candidates' age, gender, background, and recruiter's own opinions. Do you think AI based recruitment can solve these biases?</p>	
Closure	<p>9) How do you think AI will shape recruitment jobs in the future?</p> <p>10) Do you think that AI will substitute or replace some functions of recruitment job completely? What part and why? If not, why not?</p> <p>11) Do you believe there are functions where AI cannot replace recruiters? If yes, which functions?</p> <p>4) How do you see the future of the application of AI within recruitment change? Will it be implemented more or less?</p> <p>5) In which functions of TA will AI be used the most in the future?</p>	This segment aims to understand the interviewees thoughts on the future and development of AI

## Annex D: Content Analysis for open-ended questions

Content Analysis steps

**1<sup>st</sup> step:** Read transcripts

**2<sup>nd</sup> step:** Label relevant words or phrases and create initial themes and keywords

Categories / Themes	Current use of AI	Benefits of AI Tools and Chatbots	Challenges of AI	Future of AI	Human interaction is still needed	AI and Global TA	Biasness	Benefits and Challenges of Traditional recruitment	Opinions from Clients and Candidates
Keywords / Codes	Initial stages of recruitment  Attraction process, sourcing, application, pre-selection, pre-screening, and scheduling  For Job descriptions  Simple positions  High-volume positions  Hybrid solution  Still new	Quick and simple application process  Easy for candidates to apply  More traffic and applications  Helps streamline the process  Faster process  Create talent pool quicker  Automation of manual work  Reduces cycle time for recruitment	Lacks quality  Needs to be legal and ethical  Finding the right candidate  Wrong profiles forward to interview stage  Initial high financial investment  Cannot rely only on AI	AI will continue to change TA department  AI will be used more  AI will mainly be used in screening and sourcing  AI will force candidates to be more aware of keywords and skill set  AI will replace recruiters in sourcing	Humans essential  AI cannot replace humans  AI cannot build relationships  Human interaction is needed  Human touch cannot be eliminated  Candidate engagement  Senior/Executive Positions	AI reaches candidates globally  No language barriers  AI adds to diversity  Higher outreach	AI can remove some biases  AI cannot eliminate biasness  AI can help with biasness  Neutralizes job descriptions	More personal  Soft skills  Time consuming  Difficult to find candidates  Lengthy process  Mistakes  Documentation and manual work  Diversity	Positive feedback  Skeptic  Clients want AI because of speed and cost efficiency  Intimidated and cautious  Not keen to invest  Excited  Applying is faster and simpler

	<p>No need for recruiter in initial stages</p> <p>Create talent pool quicker</p> <p>In its early stages</p>	<p>Communicates with candidates</p> <p>Efficient sourcing</p> <p>Helps identify candidates</p> <p>AI finds more accurate candidate profiles</p> <p>Helpful for high volume positions</p> <p>Consistency</p> <p>Less hiring manager interviews</p> <p>Makes recruitment faster accurate and efficient</p> <p>Time and cost efficient</p> <p>Diversified candidate pool</p>	<p>Need time to teach the tool</p> <p>Doesn't give a candidate a second chance</p> <p>High cost</p> <p>Data privacy</p> <p>AI might reject good candidates</p>	<p>More governance needed</p> <p>AI will not replace all functions</p> <p>Used in onboarding</p> <p>AI will improve recruitment</p> <p>Recruiters will work together with AI</p> <p>Number of recruiters needed will become less</p>					<p>Candidates still want a recruiter present</p> <p>Concerned that AI will reject their application</p> <p>More aware about keywords and skills</p>
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**3<sup>rd</sup> step:** Choose the important codes; Combine codes together with the same color; Eliminate codes; Create themes

Categories/ Themes	Current use of AI	Benefits of AI Tools and Chatbots	Challenges of AI	Future of AI	Human interaction is still needed	Biasness	Benefits and Challenges of Traditional recruitment	Opinions from Clients and Candidates
Keywords/ Codes	<p><del>Initial stages of recruitment</del></p> <p>Attraction process, sourcing, application, pre-selection, pre-screening and scheduling</p> <p>Job descriptions</p> <p>Simple positions</p> <p>High-volume positions</p> <p>Hybrid solution</p> <p>Still new</p> <p>No need for recruiter in initial stages</p>	<p>Quick and simple application process</p> <p>Easy for candidates to apply</p> <p>More traffic and applications</p> <p>Helps streamline the process</p> <p>Faster process</p> <p>Create talent pool quicker</p> <p>Automation of manual work</p> <p>Reduces cycle time for recruitment</p> <p>Communicates with candidates</p> <p>Efficient sourcing</p> <p>Helps identify candidates</p>	<p>Lacks quality</p> <p>Needs to be legal and ethical</p> <p>Finding the right candidate</p> <p>Wrong profiles forward to interview stage</p> <p>Initial high financial investment</p> <p>Cannot rely only on AI</p> <p>Need time to teach the tool</p> <p>Doesn't give a candidate a second chance</p> <p>High cost</p> <p>Data privacy</p>	<p>AI will continue to change TA department</p> <p>AI will be used more</p> <p>AI will mainly be used in screening and sourcing</p> <p>AI will force candidates to be more aware of keywords and skill set</p> <p>AI will replace recruiters in sourcing</p> <p>More governance needed</p> <p>AI will not replace all functions</p> <p>Used in onboarding</p>	<p>Humans essential</p> <p>AI cannot replace humans</p> <p>AI cannot build relationships</p> <p>Human interaction is needed</p> <p>Human touch cannot be eliminated</p> <p>Candidate engagement</p> <p>Senior/Executive Positions</p>	<p>AI can remove some biases</p> <p>AI cannot eliminate biasness</p> <p>AI can help with biasness</p> <p>Neutralizes job descriptions</p>	<p>More personal</p> <p>Soft skills</p> <p>Time consuming</p> <p>Difficult to find candidates</p> <p>Lengthy process</p> <p>Mistakes</p> <p>Documentation and manual work</p> <p>Diversity</p>	<p>Positive feedback</p> <p>Skeptic</p> <p>Clients want AI because of speed and cost efficiency</p> <p>Intimidated and cautious</p> <p>Not keen to invest</p> <p>Excited</p> <p>Applying is faster and simpler</p> <p>Candidates still want a recruiter present</p> <p>Concerned that AI will reject their application</p>



	<p>In its early stages</p>	<p>AI finds more accurate candidate profiles</p> <p>Helpful for high volume positions</p> <p>Consistency</p> <p>Less hiring manager interviews</p> <p>Makes recruitment faster accurate and efficient</p> <p>Time and cost efficient</p> <p>Diversified candidate pool</p>	<p>AI might reject good candidates</p>	<p>AI will improve recruitment</p> <p>Recruiters will work together with AI</p> <p>Number of recruiters needed will become less</p>				<p>More aware about keywords and skills</p>
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**4<sup>th</sup> step:** Choose most relevant themes; Choose most relevant keywords; Describe the connections between the themes and keywords

Categories/ Themes	Current use of AI	Benefits of AI Tools and Chatbots	Challenges of AI	Future of AI	Human interaction is still needed	Biasness	Benefits and Challenges of Traditional recruitment	Opinions from Clients and Candidates
Keywords/ Codes	Attraction process, sourcing, application, pre- selection, pre- screening and scheduling  Job descriptions  High-volume positions  Hybrid solution  Still new No need for recruiter in initial stages	Quick and simple application process  Helps streamline the process  Faster process  Communicates with candidates  Efficient sourcing  Consistency  Time and cost efficient  Diversified candidate pool	Lacks quality  Needs to be legal and ethical  Finding the right candidate  Initial high financial investment  Cannot rely only on AI  Need time to teach the tool  AI might reject good candidates	AI will be used more  AI will not replace all functions  Used in onboarding  AI will improve recruitment	AI cannot replace humans  AI cannot build relationships  Human touch cannot be eliminated  Candidate engagement  Senior/Executive Positions	AI cannot eliminate biasness  AI can help with biasness  Neutralizes job descriptions	More personal  Soft skills  Time consuming  Difficult to find candidates  Mistakes and human error  Documentation and manual work  Diversity	Positive feedback  Excited  Clients want AI because of speed and cost efficiency  Skeptic  Intimidated and cautious  Candidates still want a recruiter present  Concerned AI will reject their application  More aware about keywords and skills

## **Connection between themes and keywords**

### Current Use of AI

- Currently AI tools are mainly being used in the attraction process, sourcing, application, pre-selection, pre-screening and scheduling
- AI tools help put together Job Descriptions
- AI tools is being used for positions with many applications → High Volume
- Recruiters work together with AI → Hybrid Solution
- AI is in its early stages → Still New
- Because AI is being mainly used in the initial stages → No need for recruiter in initial stages

### Benefits of AI Tools and Chatbots

- AI makes the application process easy for candidates to complete. Therefore, it generates more traffic and a larger talent pool → Quick and simple application process
- The use of AI in recruitment contributes to a more efficient hiring process, ultimately benefiting both employers and candidates → Helps streamline the process
- By automating time-consuming tasks of the recruitment process, AI contributes to a faster hiring cycle → Faster process
- AI tools and chatbots provide direct and immediate communication with the candidate without any barriers, such as scheduling appointments → Communicates with candidates
- The features of AI filter large quantities of profiles in a short time, making it easier and faster to create the talent pool → Efficient Sourcing
- Consistency: Because of the absence of any human element, the AI process is always the same. It fosters more reliable hiring decisions and a fair and positive experience for candidates.
- AI is faster than humans and in the long run more economic than labor costs → Time and cost efficient
- AI tools can reach candidates from anywhere and therefore has the potential to include candidates from different backgrounds → Diversified candidate pool

### Challenges of AI

- Lacks quality: When it comes to candidate selection AI lacks quality because it heavily relies on keywords. Additionally, the communication skills are not as refined as human communication
- Needs to be legal and ethical: To ensure the legal compliances, such as data protection, employers and AI developers need to collaborate. The algorithms of AI need to constantly be monitored to prevent the development of Biasness.
- Finding the right candidate: Because of the lack in soft skills AI might miss crucial information that would lead to finding the right candidate and make inaccurate assessments.
- Initial high financial investment: In the long run AI tools pay off, however the initial investment is high before you see a return.
- The tool needs to be constantly monitored to avoid mistakes → Cannot rely only on AI
- Companies need to put in the time to teach the algorithms → Need time to teach the tool
- AI might reject good candidates: The tool does not give candidates a second chance. If a candidate has a bad day or incomplete CV's, the AI tool will disregard them immediately.

### Future of AI

- AI will be used more: In the future we will see more companies using AI tools within Talent Acquisition

- AI will not replace all functions: Having recruiters using their soft skills, guiding, and negotiating with candidates will still be essential.
- Used in onboarding: AI will help with the manual tasks of these two stages, by sharing documents or answering questions.
- AI will improve recruitment: Together with the benefits of AI tools, such as streamlining the process and making it faster, recruitment will become more efficient. Because of its ability to continuously learn and adapt, it will become more accurate.

#### Human interaction is still needed

- AI cannot replace humans: AI does not have the same qualities as a person. Companies cannot only rely on data when deciding on the right candidate.
- AI cannot build relationships: When it comes to candidate engagement, recruiters are more able to create the bond with the candidate.
- Human touch cannot be eliminated: AI cannot make candidates feel as valued as a recruiter.
- Candidate engagement: Candidates need and want to be seen as a person. Having a robot sending you a message takes away the personal aspect that candidates want.
- Senior/Executive Positions: These positions require a more sophisticated, complex, and high-quality recruitment process.

#### Biasness

- AI cannot eliminate biasness: The tool is not developed enough to eliminate biasness. AI still learns from humans and human biases cannot be eliminated.
- AI can help with biasness: Being fed the right data, AI can help reduce biasness by reducing human interaction.
- Neutralizes job descriptions: The tools can neutralize the language in job descriptions, making it more inclusive.

#### Benefits and challenges of traditional recruitment

- More personal: Traditional recruitment involving humans in all stages of the process makes the experience for the candidate more personal. Recruiters react more specifically to each individual.
- Soft skills: There are certain soft skills that cannot be replaced by a robot. You still need recruiters to read face expressions and connect with candidates.
- Time consuming: People only work 8 hours a day, meaning that the recruitment process takes longer.
- Difficult to find candidates: In traditional recruitment the sources to reach candidates are limited.
- Mistakes and human error: We are all walking biases and have no control over unconscious judgments.
- Documentation and manual work: In traditional recruitment requires more administrative tasks and creation of documents.
- Diversity: Because recruiters don't use all available sources to find candidates, it's more challenging to create a diverse candidate pool. The language barrier also adds to the difficulty of having a diverse candidate pool.

#### Opinions from clients and candidates

- The clients from Korn Ferry who are currently using AI tools are happy with the results → Positive feedback

- Clients are excited about the possibilities with AI → Excited
- Clients want AI because of speed and cost efficiency: Because of the elimination of human interaction in the early recruitment stages a candidate pool is created much faster. Reducing labor costs will prove to be more cost efficient in the long run.
- Skeptic: There is still some skepticism from clients who are not as keen to implement AI just yet. Most of these clients do not come from the technology industry.
- Intimidated and cautious: Because of the complexity of AI tools, people don't understand it and are initially suspicious. Clients are still hesitant to hand over control to a robot.
- Candidates still want a recruiter present: During the application process the candidate still want to be able to talk with a human in case they face any technical issues or have any questions.
- Concerned AI will reject their application: Candidates are suspicious to have a robot assess them. If they don't use the right words during an interview, they are concerned that the AI tool will reject them.
- More aware about keywords and skills: Candidates believe that AI will only select them if they use certain keywords and skills on their online profiles.

**5<sup>th</sup> step:** Decide if there themes more important than others; Summarize results

**6<sup>th</sup> step:** Answer key question