# BEYOND TRADITIONAL INTERVIEWS: INSIDE THE MINDS OF RECRUITERS

## A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXAMINING HOW RECRUITERS EXPECT AN INTEGRATION OF AI-INTERVIEWS IN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

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**Beyond Traditional Interviews: Inside the Minds of Recruiters**

Abstract:

The last years have presented a significant shift in human resource management processes, where measures based on traditional human interaction are increasingly replaced by digital and technological aids. In recent years, there has been a growing adoption of AI-interviews due to potential to streamline the hiring process, mitigate biases, and enhance the candidate experience. Historically, technological displacements have generated anxiety and concerns regarding the substitution of machines for labor. Nevertheless, as the role of machines continues to expand, greater attention is being placed on the significance of human-machine collaborations. However, the prospect of biases and discrimination in AI-interviews represents a potential obstacle to successful integration due to widespread concerns. Through a qualitative study, this thesis aims to answer how recruiters expect an integration of AI-interviews in the recruitment process. The sample includes 16 recruiters (including one pilot-interview). By analyzing the collected data through the lens of the theoretical framework, this thesis reveals that recruiters' expectations of AI-interviews are generally low. However, recruiters generally hold favorable expectations for the integration of other AI-tools into the recruitment process. The implications derived from this thesis therefore suggest that communication is critical in fostering balance and shared perspectives among internal stakeholders. To ensure successful integration and increase the expectations of recruiters, organizational support should also be customized to fit individual differences.

**Keywords**
AI-interviews, Recruiters, Talent Acquisition, Technology Adoption, Expectations

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Filippa & Ida
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## Abbreviations and Definitions

| Term | Abbreviation | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| Artificial Intelligence | AI | "The study of how to produce machines that have some of the qualities that the human mind has, such as the ability to understand language, recognize picture, solve problems, and learn." (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). |
| Artificial Intelligence-interview | AI-interviews | In this thesis, the term "AI-interviews" is defined as video interviews that are analyzed using AI technology (AI assessments), and interviews facilitated by an avatar (chatbot interviews) that is driven by AI. (Nordmark, 2022). |
| Artificial Intelligence-tool | AI-tool | In this thesis, the term AI-tools refer to recruiting tools powered by AI, excluding AI-interviews, which automates the recruiting process. Examples of AI-tools include tools to search candidates, sending personalized messages, scanning CVs, etc. (Nordmark, 2022). |
| Talent acquisition | TA | The acquisition of personnel and all the measures associated with filling a vacant position (Nationalencyklopedin, n.d.). |
| Technology Acceptance Model | TAM | TAM is a psychological model that predicts an individual's attitude to adopt and use a new technology based on their perceived usefulness and ease of use (Davis, 1989). |
| Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology | UTUAT | UTAUT is an extension of TAM. The model integrates eight other models of technology adoption and 32 constructs explaining the attitude toward and toward using a new technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003). |
| Expectancy-Value theory | EVT | The Expectancy-Value Theory is a psychological theory that predicts an individual's motivation to engage in a specific behavior based on their expectation of achieving a desired outcome and the value they place on that outcome (Atkinson, 1957). |

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# 1 Introduction

***"AI recruiting is often described as the largest tech-induced transformation that ever hit the talent acquisition industry, and it seems that the hype is growing every week"*** Nordmark (2023)

The last years present a significant shift in human resource management processes, where measures based on traditional human interaction are increasingly replaced by digital and technological aids (Jaser & Petrakaki, 2023). The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) further accelerates this progression and highlights a strategic shift in the talent acquisition (TA) industry (Upadhyay & Khandelwal, 2018). The disruption of the TA-industry, through AI, could automate and streamline various tasks, including CV-screening, researching candidates, and interviewing candidates. That is, human interaction and real-time cues giving the candidate an immediate sense of how one is performing, could be replaced with a screen reflecting your own image or an avatar-recruiter (Jaser & Petrakaki, 2023: Nordmark, 2022).

The rapid pace of technological advancement is likely to cause a split in the industry, with some companies focusing on integrating cutting-edge technologies and others sticking to traditional methods. On the one hand, multinational companies have successfully implemented artificial intelligence-interviews (AI-interviews) using machine learning algorithms to analyze candidates' facial expressions, speech patterns, and language (Booth, 2019). On the other hand, opponents prefer traditional methods and highlights concerns of transparency and accountability in AI-hiring systems (Harwell, 2019).

As the debate surrounding AI intensifies and its usage increases, it has become clear that further research is needed. Chubb et al. (2022) highlight the importance of conducting research to explore the capabilities and limitations of AI. While AI is advancing at an unprecedented pace, there are still many unanswered questions that must be addressed through rigorous scientific inquiry. The ongoing transition from traditional, face-to-face interactions to digital and automated processes in the HR-field (Nordmark, 2022; Jaser & Petrakaki, 2023) underscores the importance of understanding how this technology is shaping the workplace and its implications for employees, employers, and the TA-industry. Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute to the field of TA by enhancing the understanding of AI-interviews from the perspective of recruiters.

## 1.1 Research Gap

In recent years, there has been a growing adoption of AI-interviews due to potential to streamline the hiring process, mitigate biases, and enhance the candidate experience (Jaser & Petrakaki, 2023). However, current research has primarily focused on the technical aspects of AI-solutions, such as their accuracy and efficiency (Garg et al., 2022: Ore & Sposato, 2021), and less attention has been paid to the impact on employees in the TA-industry. This topic is of critical importance to investigate as the expectations, attitudes and behaviors of practitioners play a crucial role in determining the success of an implementation (Slack & Brandon-Jones, 2018).

## 1.2 Purpose and Research Question

The primary objective of this thesis is to provide knowledge on recruiters' expectations of AI-interviews in the recruitment process. Therefore, through a qualitative study and the lens of the theoretical framework comprising the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), and Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT), this thesis aims to contribute to the field of TA. In doing so, this study bridges the research gap and contributes by providing academia and practicing recruiters with essential knowledge on the implications of AI-interviews in recruitment. Therefore, the research question is formulated as follows:

*How do recruiters expect an integration of AI-interviews in the recruitment process?*

## 1.3 Delimitations

The thesis is delimited to examine the recruitment process from the individual's perspective. Therefore, this thesis contributes to the TA-field, excluding the field of AI and disrupting technology. Furthermore, the scope is delimited to recruiters' expectations of AI-interviews. This restriction was selected based on an economic analysis conducted in response to the US-EU Trade and Technology Council Inaugural Joint Statement (Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2022), which acknowledges that despite the current use of AI in

TA, the majority of recruitment firms still rely on human interactions for later stages of the recruitment process (Appendix 1). Furthermore, the thesis excludes recruitment firms using AI-interviews as the number of such firms operating in Sweden is scarce. Furthermore, the scope is limited to third-party agencies in Sweden (i.e., recruitment firms), excluding recruiters working in-house with TA.

# 2 Literature Review

The literature review commences with a broad examination of historical technological advancements and technological displacements, gradually narrowing its focus to explore the intricacies of human-machine collaboration, ultimately delving into the issue of biases in AI.

## 2.1 Technological Displacements

Throughout history, technology has always elicited fear of the unknown, starting from the wheel all the way to the internet. Previous research addresses that technological progress has resulted in substitution of machines for labor various times throughout history (Mokyr et al., 2015). Studies examining concerns related to the displacement of human labor by AI have generally taken either an optimistic or pessimistic stance. The optimistic view, as noted by Furman (2018), argues that AI development follows the same pattern as previous technological advancements and that historical progressions did not lead to a significant surge in unemployment levels. This suggests that current concerns about job displacement due to AI may be unfounded. Contrarily, the pessimistic view contends that AI is unique in its ability to replace cognitive abilities and therefore potentially could render human employment unnecessary (ibid). This implies that a fear of technology may be justified.

While it is impossible to predict the future, uncertainty and anxiety among humans during times of disruptive technology are a common occurrence (Bassett & Roberts, 2019). Nordmark (2022) asserts that while resistance to change might be an initial barrier to implementing AI-interviews in the recruitment process, such barriers are likely to be overcome as experience and knowledge increase. However, as the role of machines continues to expand there is an increasing emphasis on the importance of collaboration between humans and AI.

## 2.2 Collaboration Between Humans and Machines

Over the past few years, the TA-industry has undergone a rapid transformation through digitalization, with AI playing a significant role (Rodríguez-Espíndola et al., 2020). Experts assert that the introduction of AI-interviews has streamlined the hiring process, allowing recruiters to focus on facilitating the decision-making process (Nordmark, 2022). That is, as

suggested by Martínez-Miranda and Aldea (2005), Norman (2017), and Pillai and Sivathanu (2020), AI should be seen as a technological aid, rather than as a substitute of human decision-making. The latter research study further adds that AI is a complement that allows for improved efficiency, effectiveness, and fairness to the recruitment process. In line with the same reasoning, Cremer and Kasparov (2021) address the question of whether humans and machines are in competition with each other and argue that AI could not replace human workers. Furthermore, they contend that for substitution to occur between humans and AI, the two entities must possess similar qualities and abilities. While AI-solutions allow for faster and more accurate results, they do not possess emotional or cultural sensitivity, why AI cannot replace the human workforce (Cremer & Kasparov, 2021). However, the importance of humans learning to collaborate with AI-machines in a way that mirrors collaboration with other humans is stressed. This means that the quality of the outcome depends on meaningful interactions. Shukla et al. (2017) addresses this topic by highlighting similarities between learning to collaborate with a machine and learning to work in a new group-setting. However, Shukla et al. takes a more critical stance compared to Cremer and Kasparov (2021) asserting that the process of learning how to effectively collaborate with a machine is likely not a process for the vast majority.

Glikson and Woolley (2020) address that one's knowledge and experience are important factors in understanding humans' ability to collaborate with machines. Furthermore, Bersohn and Lake (2017) emphasize the importance of supporting employees with negative perceptions and fears prior to the implementation, in order to improve expectations. Schrage (2022) further advocates for fostering a culture that normalizes human-machine interaction in order to fully leverage the benefits of AI and generate business value. However, while the importance of collaboration between humans and AI continues to be emphasized, it is important to address recruiters' perceived issues with AI-interviews.

## 2.3 Biases in AI

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2022) asserts that AI-systems may be at risk of unintended bias, incomplete data sets, and inadequate governance models, which could undermine the effectiveness and fairness of AI. Furthermore, the agency concludes that biases in AI could easily be reinforced and exacerbated over time. Besides this perspective,

Varsha (2023) further highlight that complete reliance on AI systems can result in gender and racial biases and discrimination. Thus, emphasis is placed on the importance of increasing awareness of how biases influence corporate fairness and societal well-being. Mujtaba and Mahapatra (2019) build on the same reasoning, highlighting the importance of awareness. However, they also conclude that the introduction of AI-solutions risk transferring human biases to machines, rather than eliminating biases.

Furthermore, as people become aware of issues relating to biases and discrimination in machine learning algorithms, there has been a surge in research on fairness in machine learning (Tilmes, 2022: Peña et al., 2020: Mehrabi et al., 2021). Moreover, an increased awareness of biases and discrimination poses a threat to the integration of AI-interviews in the recruitment process, as expectations could be negatively influenced. To comprehend recruiters' expectations of AI-interviews in a future recruitment process, three theoretical models are elaborated upon in the following section.

# 3 Theoretical Framework

TAM and UTAUT have been used to examine recruiters' attitudes of new technology, while EVT has been used to explore the perceived demands associated with integrating AI-interviews, in turn influencing expectations.

## 3.1 Technology Acceptance Model & Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

TAM was developed by Davis in the year of 1989 to address user acceptance of new technology and the factors that influence it. To assess individuals' willingness to use the technology, the study focused on attitudes, which were determined by two critical constructs: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (see Figure 1).

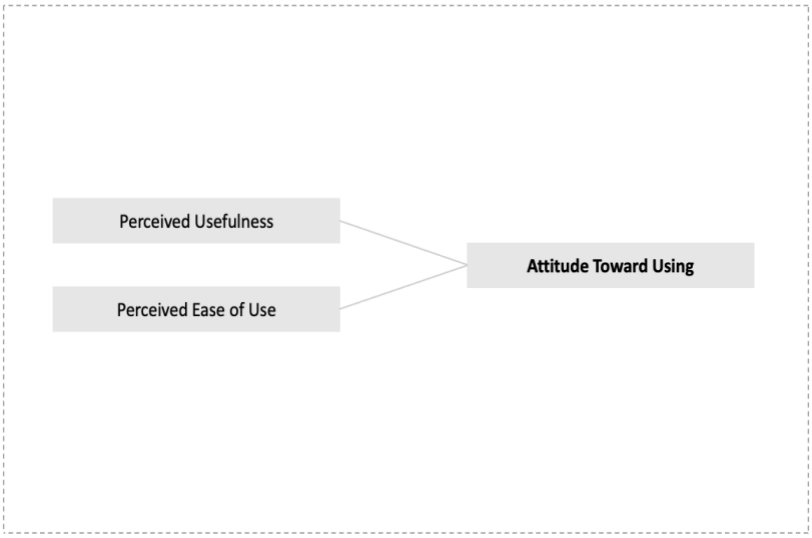



Figure 1: Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989)

Perceived usefulness refers to “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance" while perceived ease of use refers to “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort” (Davis, 1989). The distinction between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use has helped researchers understand underlying reasons why users may resist or embrace new technology (Marangunic & Granic, 2015). In turn, TAM has enhanced the understanding of user behavior when adopting new technology and has informed decision-making around the design and implementation of technology in various settings (Lee et al., 2003).

To elaborate upon the distinction between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, Davis found that perceived usefulness is a better predictor of intention to use a technology, compared to perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). Davis asserts that the stronger association between perceived usefulness and attitude is conceptually coherent, as users are mainly motivated to adopt a technology that fulfils a crucial purpose for them, despite perceived difficulties in using it. The correlation also makes sense since no user would accept a technology that does not fulfill a critical function, regardless of its ease of use (ibid). In turn this implies that the degree to which recruiters recognize the technology as useful is critical for the technology to be accepted and used (Ajibade, 2018).

UTAUT, developed by Venkatesh et al. (2003), is an extension of TAM. The model integrates eight other models of technology adoption and 32 constructs explaining the attitude toward using a new technology. UTAUT identifies four constructs that are positively correlated with individuals' intention to use a technology: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. In this thesis, the latter two will be used to complement the two constructs comprising TAM (see Figure 2). Social influence pertains to the significance of other people's expectations on an individual's attitude to a technology, while facilitating conditions concern the level of organizational and technical support available when learning to use a technology (ibid).

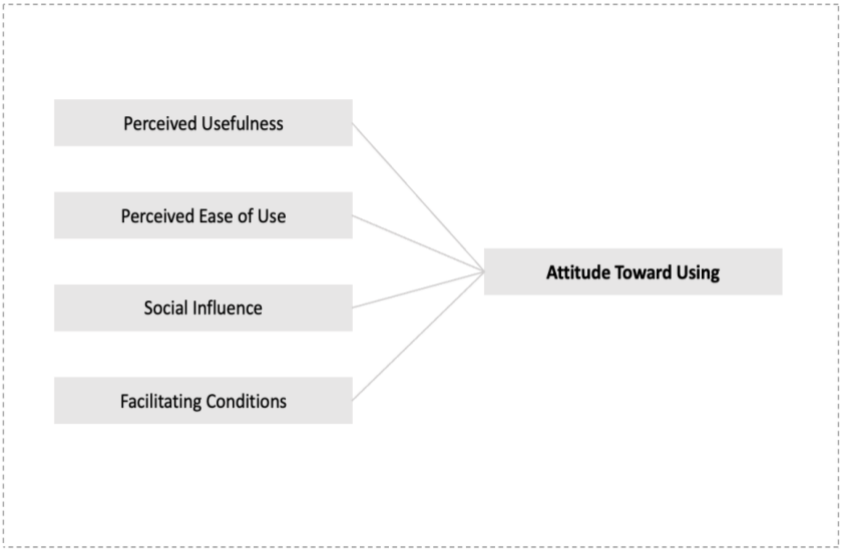



Figure 2: Combined Technology Acceptance Model and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (Dellborg & Olsson, 2023)

Previous research show that social influence plays a significant role in determining individuals' attitudes toward a new technology. Tran et al. (2021) found that people with limited experience with technology in general tend to rely more heavily on the opinions of others when forming their own views. Moreover, when it comes to implementing AI-interviews or AI-tools, there are certain facilitating conditions that need to be in place to ensure a successful implementation. One such condition, is a well-designed and intuitive user interface (Grover et al., 2022). Similar to social influence, this is particularly important for individuals not familiar with the technology as they may find it more difficult to navigate in such complex systems.

Although TAM and UTAUT provide a solid theoretical framework for examining user acceptance of new technology, they do not consider the potential costs of integrating such technology. To address this gap, EVT is used as a complementary framework to explore perceived efforts to integrate AI-interviews in the recruitment process.

## 3.2 Expectancy-Value Theory

EVT gained widespread recognition when Atkinson formally presented the model in the year of 1957. The theory predicts an individual's motivation to engage in a specific behavior based on their expectation of achieving a desired outcome and the value they place on that outcome (Atkinson, 1957). In the theory, motivation is determined by two factors, expectancy and value. Expectancy refers to the likelihood that a desired outcome can be attained through a specific behavior while Value refers to the perceived importance of the desired outcome.

Wigfield and Eccles (2000) offer a more refined interpretation of the construct Value, proposing that it encompasses not only positive value-components but also negative cost-components. The cost-component refers to the effort required to use a technology, where costs are highly correlated with choices and opportunity costs (ibid). Eccles (2005) further elaborates on this and suggests that the cost-component should be divided into three sub-components: effort cost, opportunity cost, and emotional cost. The effort cost relates to perceived demands associated with engaging in a specific task. The opportunity cost refers to costs arising when choosing to pursue one activity over another and in doing so must give up the benefits associated with the alternative activity. Lastly, emotional cost is defined as negative psychological feelings associated with integrating a technology.

The theories overlap in that all three (TAM, UTAUT, and EVT) explain human behavior and anticipates attitude and motivation to engage in a new technology. While UTAUT added the perspectives of social influence and facilitating conditions, EVT adds the perspective of costs (see Figure 3).

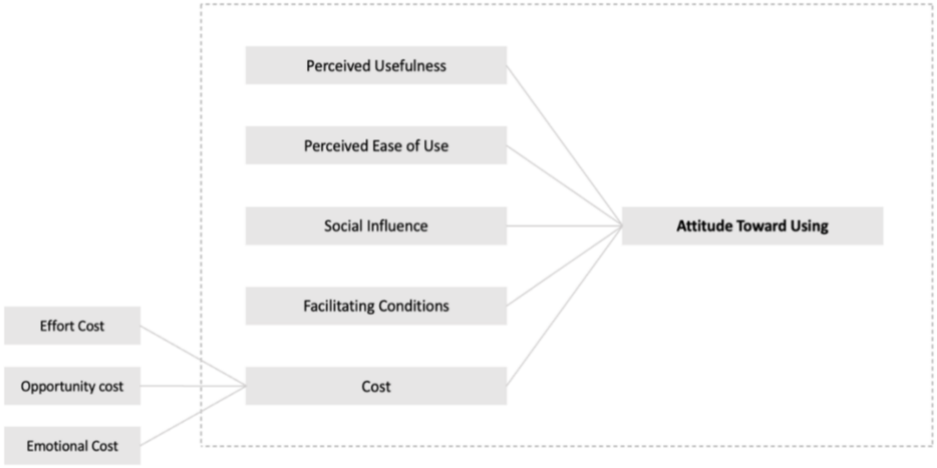



Figure 3: Combined Technology Acceptance Model, Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, and Expectancy-Value Theory (Dellborg & Olsson, 2023)

## 3.3 Theory Discussion

Despite empirical support, TAM and UTAUT have been criticized for their inadequacies in addressing the relationship between attitude and use. King and He (2006) suggest that TAM's simplicity rather than practicality explain its widespread acceptance. Meanwhile, Bagozzi (2007) criticizes UTAUT for its high complexity due to incorporating numerous variables, while still not accounting for all predictors of technology usage. By combining and integrating two constructs from TAM and two constructs from UTAUT, the authors argue that the resulting model provides a comprehensive understanding of factors that influence technology acceptance, in turn striking a balance between simplicity and complexity. Furthermore, as the debate on AI is one of the largest transformations that struck the TA-industry, the authors argue that the constructs render critical concepts in understanding recruiters' expectations of AI-interviews. Critics of EVT argue that previous literature has not given the cost-component adequate attention. However, the authors of this thesis argue that this component adds value to

the perspectives of TAM and UTAUT and therefore aim to contribute to the research gap of the cost-component in literature.

Regarding origin, TAM and UTAUT are positivistic models aiming to provide a scientific explanation of the adoption and use of technology based on observable and measurable factors (Davis, 1989: Venkatesh et al., 2003). Therefore, to better suit the purpose of this thesis and its interpretivist approach, TAM and UTAUT are modified to incorporate contextual factors that influence individual behaviour. Specifically, this thesis incorporates how differences in organizational culture between local Swedish firms and global firms may influence expectations. Regarding EVT, the theory initially gained prominence in educational research when exploring students' expectations on academic success (Atkinson, 1957). Ever since, EVT has been used to address expectations of goals in various domains. Therefore, the authors believe that the cost-component is suitable in its original form, to explore recruiters' expectations of AI-interviews.

# 4 Methodology

With a background in recruitment, the authors were drawn to the potential of AI to enhance recruitment processes. As current research has primarily focused on the technical aspects of AI, the initial idea was to shift focus from studying the actual technology to explore expectations associated with it. Furthermore, as the number of recruitment firms in Sweden using AI-interviews is limited, the authors decided to study the expectations of recruiters that currently lack experience of using AI-interviews in their work. This approach allowed the authors to discuss AI-interviews with a reachable group of people and gather valuable data.

To demonstrate the rationale behind the study's method, the Research Onion model by Saunders et al. (2019) is utilized. The model deconstructs the thesis into manageable components to explain why specific methods were selected. Figure 4 below illustrates the methodology using this model.

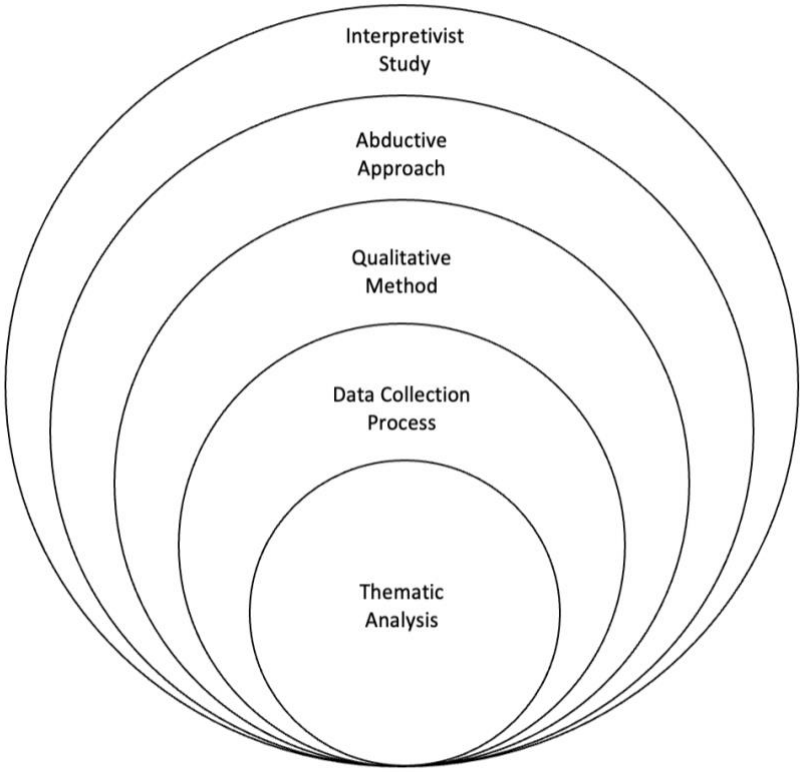



Figure 4: The Research Onion Framework (Saunders et al., 2019)

## 4.1 Understanding the Research

Outlined below are the two outer components of the Research Onion model: interpretivist study and abductive approach.

### 4.1.1 Research Philosophy

This thesis takes a constructivist ontological view, which acknowledges that the experiences of the authors and the interviewees are socially constructed and subject to continuous change (Saunders et al., 2019). In line with the constructivist perspective, the authors' ambition is to understand how recruiters experience AI-interviews (Bell et al., 2019). Because this thesis is concerned with the connection between AI and recruiters, a form of interaction, this research philosophy is suitable to answer the research question.

The epistemology of this thesis takes an interpretivist view. This emphasizes the importance of understanding the subjective experiences and perspectives of individuals, rather than treating them as passive objects of the study (Saunders et al., 2019). As such, the interpretivist approach encouraged the authors to engage in a more nuanced and empathetic understanding of the human experience, and to consider the diverse ways in which individuals interpret and interact with their social world (Bell et al., 2019).

### 4.1.2 Research Approach

This thesis takes an abductive approach, allowing to move back-and-forth between data and theory, as well as modifying existing theory if new findings emerge (Saunders et al., 2019). Furthermore, the research approach has an interactive nature as the data collection, data analysis and overall process are interrelated. The approach enabled the authors and interviewees to actively engage and collaborate to gain a deep understanding of different experiences and perspectives. This approach allowed for patterns, findings, and relationships to emerge during the process (ibid).

## 4.2 Research Strategy

Outlined below are the three inner components of the Research Onion model: qualitative method, data collection process, and thematic analysis.

### 4.2.1 Data Collection

A qualitative study including semi-structured interviews was conducted to fit the purpose of this thesis. This method allowed interviewees to share thoughts freely in turn enabling the authors to gain in-depth understanding of the recruiters' expectations. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allowed for new themes to emerge during the interviews, while still having a foundation in the predetermined interview guide (Appendix 3). This strategy allowed the authors to be adaptable to changes that occurred during the interview process (Saunders et al., 2019).

An interview guide was developed from the themes emerging from the theoretical framework and aligned with the semi-structured outline of the interviews. In total, the dataset comprised 16 interviews, including one pilot-interview to assess the initial interview guide. Additionally, some interviews necessitated supplementary questions for further clarification. In such cases, additional explanations were provided to ensure more detailed and comprehensive responses from the interviewees.

### 4.2.2 Sampling

This thesis is based on 16 interviews. In total, 25 recruitment consultants were contacted through email and LinkedIn (Appendix 4), in which ten agreed to participate in the study. After conducting a few interviews, the snowball sampling technique was employed to identify and access the additional interviewees (Bell et al., 2019). Initially, no differentiation was made based on organizational status. This resulted in interviews with twelve recruiters and four recruiters who also hold a position in the management team. Moreover, the sample comprise recruiters employed in five different firms operating across various industries, geographical regions, and recruiting for distinct organizational levels. The firms also differ in terms of size,

where some constitute small firms primarily operating in Stockholm, and others constitute large firms operating globally.

Saturation was reached when having conducted ten interviews and a high level of homogeneity in responses and a relationship between codes could be identified. To test this emerging interpretation, six additional interviews were conducted. An overview of the sample is summarized in Appendix 2. Gender is disregarded in the analysis, however, displayed in the overview to increase transparency.

### 4.2.3 Analysis

The authors utilized a thematic strategy to analyze the data, which involved familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finally producing the report (Nowell et al., 2017). The initial steps involved identifying patterns, such as repetitions and common concepts. These themes were then coded and transformed into first-order concepts by examining similarities and differences in the data. To avoid confirmation bias, the authors initially conducted this process individually, and then compared the concepts to evaluate the coding process. This process generated 30 first-order concepts, and by applying the theoretical lens, these were merged to 11 second-order themes, ultimately leading to 4 aggregated dimensions that provided a comprehensive understanding of the data.

## 4.3 Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues have been taken into consideration when conducting the study. To ensure compliance with GDPR all interviewees signed a consent form, allowing the authors to utilize collected data and transcribe interviews. Interviewees' names and respective firm are anonymized and replaced with pseudonym names and letters. To ensure that the interviewees did not feel vulnerable when asked personal questions, the interviewees were allowed to be in command of the interview and disclose information according to their comfort level. The interviewees were also informed about their entitlement to retract. Furthermore, to avoid language barriers and misunderstandings, all interviews were conducted and transcribed in Swedish, the mother tongue of the interviewees.

## 4.4 Method Discussion

Evaluation of the methodology is based on four criteria suggested by Bell et al. (2019): credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. The study may have weaknesses in terms of credibility as all interviews were conducted in Swedish and had to be translated to English for this thesis. This introduces the possibility of slight deviations from the original meaning in the translated citations. To address this risk, the interviewees were given the opportunity to validate their translated citations before publication. Moreover, criticism could be directed toward the confirmability of the study due to the sample of 16 interviewees, which may not be sufficient for reliable results. However, during the interview process saturation was reached and given the semi-structured nature of the interviews (meaning that interviewees touched on the same themes even when not directly asked about them) this indicates that the sample was adequate. Finally, to increase dependability, the authors documented and saved research material. Additionally, a supervisor and supervisor group regularly audited the material throughout the research process.

An alternative design could be a mixed-method approach, involving qualitative and quantitative data collection (Saunders et al., 2019). The benefits of this alternative design include the ability to examine a larger sample size, in turn gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. However, the downside to this approach is that it requires more resources to complete.

# 5 Empirical Findings

Derived from a thematic analysis, the authors identified four aggregated dimensions that constitute key drivers behind recruiters' expectations of AI-interviews. The following section presents the empirical findings in accordance with the aggregated dimensions (see Figure 5).

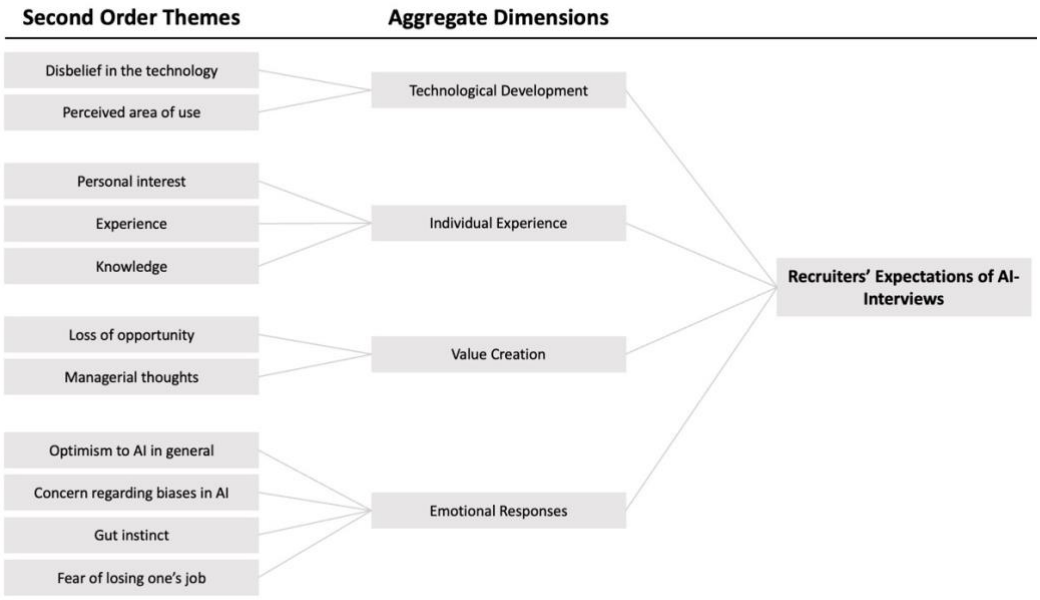



Figure 5: Overview of Empirical Findings (Dellborg & Olsson, 2023)

## 5.1 Technological Development


The interviews revealed that perceived areas of use and disbelief in the technology explain how recruiters perceive the overall technological development of AI-interviews. Most interviewees expressed that the current technological development of AI-interviews is insufficient to replace their roles.

### 5.1.1 Disbelief in the Technology

A notable trend that emerged during most interviews was a lack of confidence in the baseline technology of AI-interviews.

> *“If the technology were better, I can imagine that AI could replace a human interview, but the tool would need to be improved to better recognize body language and read between the lines.”* ***Kajsa, firm 4***

Hedvig, along with others, offered further insight by suggesting that while AI-interviews may not yet be advanced enough, candidates may also not be ready for this development.

> *"I don't think AI can replace human interviews. The technology is not good enough, it needs to be tested for many years first. Also, the audience is not mature enough, I don't think a company that implements AI-interviews would attract a diverse range of candidates."* ***Hedvig, firm 3***

### 5.1.2 Perceived Area of Use

Although most interviewees expressed skepticism about the usefulness of AI-interviews, they believed that recruitment firms hiring for other organizational levels could derive benefits from the technology. For instance, interviewees with experience of recruiting senior positions generally held a pessimistic view toward integrating AI-interviews at this level. Instead, they believe that AI-interviews are better suited for recruiting junior positions where candidates do not have as much previous experience. Further, some recruiters working with senior positions highlighted that the complexity and nuance of senior-level positions requires a more personalized approach to the interview process, which could be difficult for AI-interviews to replicate.

> *"My personal opinion is that AI-interviews work better in bulk recruitment. I have a hard time envisioning how we could replace our interviews with AI interviews, given the seniority of our recruitments. If so, then I think there are other ways to use AI."* ***Clara, firm 1***

Interestingly the opposite also tended to be true. Interviewees responsible for lower-level recruitments believed that an integration of AI-interviews would fit better in firms recruiting senior positions. This was explained by the technology being better suited for recruiting

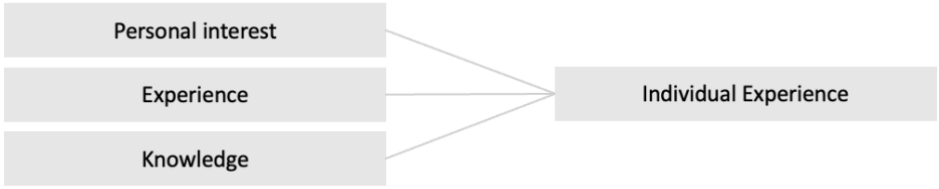
positions with explicit and extensive profile of requirements, typical for senior positions requiring more work experience.

> *"Using AI-interviews in recruiting junior candidates would never work since personality is so important. However, when you have a clear profile of requirements, for instance in senior recruitments, it be so much easier."* ***Gully, firm 2***

Additionally, many interviewees denoted the difference between candidates applying for a job and being headhunted. Generally, in senior positions job openings are not advertised and therefore, since the firms do not receive applicants, AI-interviews were argued to be inappropriate.

> *"Sending out an AI-interview while trying to sell a job would be odd, especially since we typically do not utilize personality tests during the initial phases of recruiting for senior positions, making the idea of sending out an AI-interview to sell a job seem even more peculiar."* ***Bella, firm 2***

## 5.2 Individual Experience




The empirical findings show that personal interest, experience, and knowledge of AI are important factors in determining recruiters' expectations. Building on this, the empirical findings suggest that individual differences play a role in determining the extent to which interviewees discuss AI in their workplaces, in turn influencing the overall expectations.

### 5.2.1 Personal Interest

Stemming from the interviews, personal interest appears to be an important determinant in understanding whether recruiters familiarize themselves with AI in general.

*"I am so excited about what AI could bring. I spend too much time learning about new technologies, like Chat GPT, in my spare time."* ***Anders, firm 1***

The empirical findings further suggest that recruiters lacking personal interest, knowledge, and experience of AI tend to depend on others to form their expectations. Therefore, in organizations where at least one recruiter is personally interested in AI, their beliefs can positively or negatively influence the entire team's expectations.

*"[...], we do talk about AI quite much, and I think it's because some people are personally interested."* ***Hedvig, firm 3***

However, in teams where there are no recruiters with a personal interest in AI, communication about AI may be less frequent or effective.

*"I don't think anyone finds it [AI] super fun so we don't talk about it"* ***Lovisa, firm 5***

### 5.2.2 Experience

Interviewees' experience with AI-interviews, either conducting or participating in one, impacts expectations of an integration in the recruitment process. Those with negative experiences tend to have lower expectations and are more skeptical of the tool's effectiveness.

*"I participated in an AI-interview, but I couldn't control how much time I had to answer the questions, and it ended up feeling horrible, it was too mechanical and impersonal."* ***Freja, firm 2***

Contrarily, those with positive experiences tend to be more optimistic and recognize the benefits. This optimism was particularly associated with a higher level of flexibility.

*"It [participating in an AI-interview] was so pleasant, I could take time to prepare my answers, and I even did the interview late at night. Introducing this at my work would be so helpful for me especially since I have two kids and struggle to plan my days."* ***Bella, firm 1***

### 5.2.3 Knowledge

Interviewees with knowledge of AI showed an understanding of potential benefits associated with an integration of such tools in the recruitment process. However, in general these interviewees believed that AI-tools rather than AI-interviews, could improve job performance. In terms of AI-interviews they expressed a belief that the technology needs further development.

> *"Before I started working with recruitment, I was part of a team that developed tools for recruitment firms, among other things AI-interviews. From this experience, I believe that when the technology is fully developed, AI could really be beneficial for all recruitment firms."* ***Hedvig, firm 3***

However, other interviewees could not see how AI-interviews could streamline the recruitment processes while maintaining high quality, demonstrating a limited understanding of benefits.

> *"I don't understand how an AI-interview will work in recruitment, but that may be due to my lack of technical expertise. […] I'm afraid I will never learn how to use such technologies, maybe due to my age?"* ***Marie, firm 5***

## 5.3 Value Creation


The third construct pertains to the perceived loss of opportunities to create value due to an integration of AI-interviews. The empirical data reveals that management teams actively discuss AI-solutions, aiming to keep up with the fast-paced development of AI.

### 5.3.1 Loss of Opportunity

Brand-building became a recurring theme in the interviews, where the recruiters particularly emphasized that interviews constitute an important sales opportunity as candidates could be future customers.

> *“Candidates today will be customers tomorrow [...] we use every opportunity to generate business affairs and therefore the personal interaction is key.”* ***Olivia, firm 5***

Bella mentioned the importance of ensuring that an AI-interview is as good to sell the company and build a brand as the recruiter. Otherwise, implementing AI interviews causes a loss of sales opportunities.

> *"Every candidate I meet is a sales opportunity, [...], the AI robot must be so good that it sells our company, and if everyone has AI-robots, there will be nothing unique about us."* ***Bella, firm 1***

### 5.3.2 Managerial Thoughts

The extent to which AI is utilized varies across the firms, in turn showing a split in the collected data. Some discuss AI-tools and AI-interviews daily, while others barely heard about it. However, recruiters also holding a position in the management team, tend to discuss AI-solutions frequently. Particularly AI-tools, not specifically AI-interviews, are a widely discussed topic among management teams, where all four management team members refer to the potential economic benefit of investing in and integrating AI in the recruitment process.

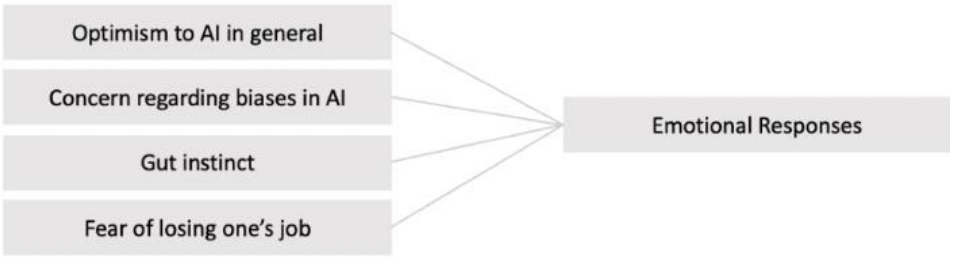
> *"In the partner group we talk about AI every week, [...] it could be a huge opportunity to cut costs and therefore increase profits, why we need to keep up with technological development."* ***Didrik, firm 1***

> *"AI has been on the agenda at all of our recent meetings, [...] we have even put together a project team working on understanding how we can streamline our processes using AI-solutions."* ***Olivia, firm 5***

There is no doubt that AI is frequently discussed among management teams. However, it appears that within the rest of the organization, there is a discrepancy in the level of discussion on this subject. In firms where the management team has not included the recruiters in the dialogue, concerns relating to lack of communication were expressed.

> *"I hope that the management team takes a stance on AI because we are not talking about AI at all."* ***Erika, firm 2***

## 5.4 Emotional Responses




The empirical data indicates a strong focus on emotions in the interviews. Although many interviewees strive to remain objective and rational during the initial phase, they often end up expressing personal emotions and concerns. Based on the data, the authors identified four commonly discussed topics.

### 5.4.1 Optimism to AI in General

Throughout the interviews, it became evident that most recruiters hold an optimistic outlook on the introduction of AI-tools. This positive stance was explained by the potential to streamline administrative tasks and improve efficiency at the beginning of the recruitment process (Appendix 1).

> *"AI can be a support for me as a recruiter, assisting in tasks such as writing job adverts, candidate presentation or other administrative work."* ***Lovisa, firm 5***

Some interviewees further argued that it is essential to keep up with technological development in order to preserve market share.

*”You have to adapt. It's going to happen whether one like it or not.“* ***Isabelle, firm 3***

Anders held an extreme position, stating that it would be disheartening if his job remained exactly the same in five years. Therefore, in his opinion, an integration of AI-tools could potentially increase job satisfaction.

*"It would be sad if this job looks exactly the same in 5 years.“* ***Anders, firm 1***

### 5.4.2 Biases Associated with AI-interviews

Stemming from the interviews it became evident that many of the interviewees expressed skepticism regarding the reliability of AI-interviews in the recruitment process, emphasizing that AI-interviews do not remove biases but rather incorporate biases that one is unaware of.

*“Scary that AI has developed into a tool that can mimic human intelligence, in what feels like no time, especially since I am not familiar with the technology and its own biases."* ***Lovisa, firm 5***

Aligned with the same reasoning, there was a widespread belief that the biases of individual developers can be transmitted to AI-interviews. In turn, some expressed a concern that the recruitment process was to be influenced by one who lack experience within the industry, i.e., AI-developers, compared to an experienced recruiter.

*“I feel a sense of uncertainty, what if the wrong developer is responsible for the creation of our tool?”* ***Kajsa, firm 4***

### 5.4.3 Gut Instinct

Aligned with the widespread concerns regarding biases, some interviewees articulated a belief that their individual experience and biases are what makes them good at their job. With slight nuances, various interviewees compared their ability to assess and interview candidates to the ability of an AI-interview.

*"AI cannot pick up on small details. It's not always something the person says, but it can be tone, body language, etc."* ***Isabelle, firm 3***

*"I would really like to believe that I am better at assessing candidates than an AI-interview, I have been working with recruitment more than 10 years"* ***Olivia, firm 5***

Furthermore, an interviewee with experience of working at various firms in the TA-industry expressed a belief that biases create uniqueness, in turn differentiating recruitment firms from each other.

*"I would like to believe that my biases are my strength, that's what makes us different from other firms"* ***Didrik, firm 1***

### 5.4.4 Fear of Losing One's Job

While most interviewees articulated a belief in their own ability, some expressed a fear of losing one's job as a consequence of implementing AI-interviews.

*"I'm afraid that my role is threatened, what I do is [to] interview candidates."* ***Nathalie, firm 5***

Building on the fear of losing one's job, several recruiters expressed concerns about the ability to collaborate effectively with machines while keeping up with the rapid pace of technological development. Some even expressed fear that they may not be able to adapt to these changes quickly enough, while also keeping up with the fast-paced development of new technology, ultimately threatening their job security.

*"I'll be honest, I'm not that great with technology, and the thought of having to work alongside an AI-interview makes me a bit nervous. I'm just not sure I'd be able to keep up, and it's making me worry about what might happen to my job."* ***Josefine, firm 4***

Contrarily, some interviewees perceive AI-interviews as a helping aid that can enhance their workflow. By automating a part of the recruitment process, Clara articulated that one would be able to devote more time and effort to the other aspects of work.

> *"Conducting interviews is only a fraction of the work I do, if AI-interviews were to be included, it would only allow me to focus more on the other parts."* ***Clara, firm 1***

# 6 Analysis

To answer the research question, "*How do recruiters expect an integration of AI-interviews in the recruitment process?",* the empirical findings are analyzed using the theoretical framework (see Figure 6). In short, the empirical findings indicate that recruiters' expectations of AI-interviews are complex and multifaced, with varying levels of optimism, skepticism, and belief in this emerging technology.

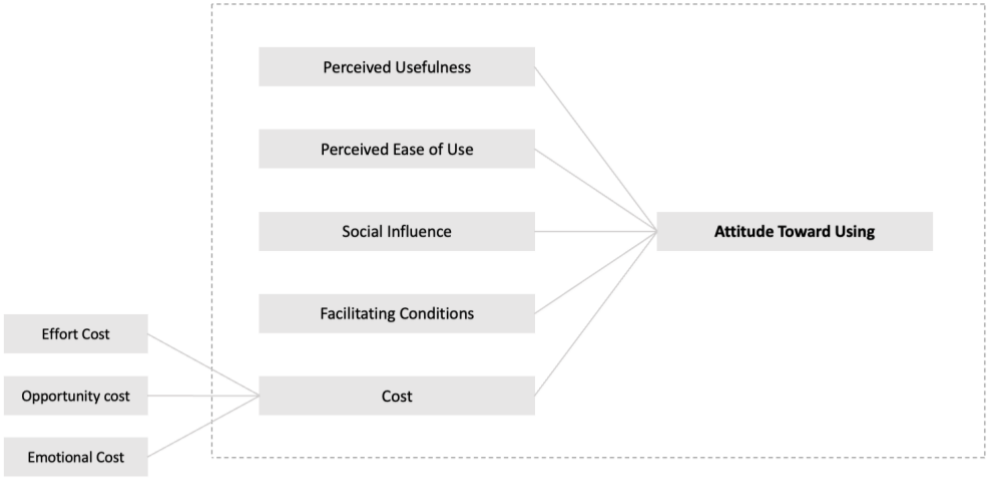



Figure 6: Overview of Analysis using the theoretical framework (Dellborg & Olsson 2023)

## 6.1 Perceived Usefulness

In terms of perceived usefulness, the empirical findings show that recruiters do not believe that AI-interviews would enhance their job performance. That is, the thesis reveals that recruiters do not currently perceive AI-interviews to be useful or beneficial for their job. Most interviewees attributed skepticism toward the usefulness of AI-interviews due to lack of confidence in the baseline technology. In turn, signaling that the perceived usefulness could increase if AI-interviews were to be more technologically advanced and tested.

Furthermore, there is a widespread belief that AI-interviews could be useful in other recruitment firms. For instance, interviewees headhunting senior positions articulated a belief that AI-interviews could be useful in recruiting junior positions, and the other way around. Despite such varying opinions among interviewees, a majority agreed that other AI-tools can generate value in the beginning of the recruitment process (Appendix 1). Interestingly, even

though the earlier stages of the recruitment process also involved assessing candidates, the recruiters did not seem concerned about biases. In contrast, when discussing AI-interviews, biases were frequently mentioned as the primary obstacle and explanation for why the technology needs further development.

Elaborating upon biases, the low degree of perceived usefulness could be explained by most recruiters articulating a fear that AI-interviews inadvertently transfer human biases onto machines, rather than eliminating biases. Many recruiters fear that the current technology is not yet advanced enough and therefore risks making biases systematic. Some recruiters go even further, discussing that an inclusion of AI-interviews could lead to widened inequality.

Besides a general disbelief in the technology and fear of transferring biases onto machines, a third explanation of the low degree of perceived usefulness is that recruiters did not expect AI-interviews to effectively enhance value creation and brand-building. Many interviewees expressed the importance of utilizing interviews as a selling opportunity, but also to establish lasting relationships with customers. This indicates that human interaction, through interviews, can serve as a platform to showcase skills, expertise, and professionalism, which can help in building trust and credibility. This links to perceived usefulness as recruiters did not think of AI-interviews as a substitute to human interviews in terms of fostering future collaborations and driving sales.

Lastly, it becomes clear that there is some divergence between management team members and non-management team members. While the aim of the thesis was to understand recruiters' expectations, it surprisingly became evident that the expectations of recruiters who hold positions in the management team differed from those who do not. In terms of creating value, non-management team members focus on the loss of sales- and brand-building opportunities. While the management team members share these concerns, they also focus on opportunities to cut costs by integrating AI-tools. Therefore, when implementing AI-interviews, it is important to reconcile these divergent perspectives, creating balance and a common perspective among internal stakeholders.

***Sub-conclusion:*** *Overall the perceived usefulness of AI-interviews is low. However, this thesis reveals a slight difference between recruiters' expectations and management team members' expectations, where the latter tend to be more positive due to the opportunity to cut costs.*

## 6.2 Perceived Ease of Use

The empirical findings suggest that three factors were of utmost importance in understanding perceived ease of use: personal interest, knowledge, and experience. Interviewees with a personal interest in AI tended to identify several benefits associated with AI-interviews. Some extreme cases even articulated that it would be stupid not to implement AI-interviews since the tool seems easy to use yet could streamline much of their work. Contrarily, interviewees with lack of personal interest and knowledge tended to be more negative to AI-interviews. Extreme cases at this end expressed a fear of never learning to use AI-interviews and therefore never understanding the usefulness.

While the interviewees with experience of participating in AI-interviews were limited, a pattern where most were displeased with their experience could still be traced. Some used their lack of competence and personal interest to explain the negative experience. Others attributed their negative experience to the lack of human interaction and mechanical nature of AI-interviews, as they felt that these factors detracted from the overall quality. Although only two interviewees had positive experiences with AI-interviews, they attributed their satisfaction to the flexibility allowing them to complete the interview at their own convenience. Interestingly, the mechanical nature of AI-interviews, allowing participants to be more flexible, is seen as positive by some interviewees and negative by others.

The abovementioned illustrate the divergent perspectives of the interviewees. While some expect AI-interviews to be easy to use, others see the integration as an obstacle. From the perspective of TAM, it is suggested that perceived ease of use is not as important as perceived usefulness in understanding attitudes to use a new technology (Davis, 1989). This implies that, despite some interviewees articulating a personal interest, knowledge and positive experience, perceived ease of use will not be critical. As posited by Davis, if AI-interviews satisfy a critical criterion, recruiters will acquire the skills to employ the technology, irrespective of its initial perceived ease of use. However, as revealed in the empirical data, perceived ease of use is recurringly discussed by interviewees, indicating that it is an important factor in determining expectations of AI-interviews. That is, this contradicts the findings in Davis's (1989) study. However, this could be explained by the setting of this thesis with recruiters and AI-interviews,

especially considering the discussion surrounding AI as one of the most substantial technological advancements to have impacted the TA-industry.

***Sub-conclusion:*** *The importance of perceived ease of use emphasizes the need to educate recruiters on technicalities with the tool to create a sense of familiarity with the interface. Furthermore, this signals that expectations of AI-interviews can be influenced and changed by proactively helping recruiters in learning to understand how the tool is used.*

## 6.3 Social Influence

This thesis highlights the impact of other individuals and groups on recruiters' expectations of AI-interviews. In teams comprising at least one individual with personal interest in AI, the team tends to talk more about AI-solutions. That is, the personal interest of one individual creates a ripple effect where AI is continuously discussed informally. Talking about AI-solutions informally appears to influence the frequency with which firms discuss AI-solutions formally, suggesting that informal discussions may ultimately result in firms addressing AI-solutions. Contrarily, when team members lack interest in AI, discussions about AI-interviews are not frequently held.

Furthermore, the empirical findings revealed that social influence across all organizational levels occurred to a higher extent in small firms, compared to large firms. Contrarily, it was evident that large firms tend to keep the discussion at management team-level to establish a clear position to be communicated consistently throughout the whole organization. Therefore, small firms allowed for social influence from all organizational levels.

Moreover, in firms where the management team has included the employees in discussing AI-solutions, the recruiters generally possess a deeper knowledge. In addition, these recruiters expressed a sense of inclusiveness, feeling involved in the decision-making process. In turn, this enhances motivation to understand the benefits with AI. Contrarily, in firms where the management team has not yet addressed the topic throughout the firm, recruiters' expectations tend to depend on other factors than social influence. That is, when management team members engage with recruiters, they seem to positively influence them socially. Lastly, in terms of social influence, differences were observed when comparing small and large firms.

Management teams in small firms tend to proactively communicate their stance on AI early in the process, creating a greater sense of inclusiveness. In contrast, large firms tend to keep the discussions at management team level, therefore not influencing the recruiters' expectations directly.

***Sub-conclusion:*** *This thesis reveals that social influence from all organizational levels, i.e., both recruiters and management team members, impact recruiters' expectations. Ultimately, positive social influence can increase the extent to which AI-solutions are discussed formally in recruitment firms.*

## 6.4 Facilitating Conditions

The empirical findings reveal that non-management team members are unfamiliar with AI-interviews. Some recruiters even expressed concerns about the risk of losing one's job due to lack of knowledge and perceived inability to learn about this new technology while also keeping up with technological development. In turn, this indicates that facilitating conditions are critical for the success of a future implementation. By offering organizational support and educating employees on the benefits of AI-interviews, companies could alleviate recruiters' concerns and potentially raise expectations. However, an interesting finding is that recruiters who also hold a position in the management team did not express similar concerns. This indicates a divergence in beliefs among internal stakeholders, in turn highlighting the importance of achieving a balance. One explanation for this divergence is that management team members tend to have more extensive knowledge of AI-tools. Furthermore, given their status as management team members, they felt more secure about receiving facilitating support in the future compared to lower-level employees. Ultimately, if these differences are not reconciled, they could further increase the barriers to a future implementation of AI-interviews.

***Sub-conclusion:*** *Facilitating conditions are shown to be an important concern for recruiters, particularly as AI-interviews are a relatively new technology. Consequently, although management team members are less concerned with a future need to provide employees with facilitating support, this is something that should be addressed in the early stages of a future implementation process to create a balance between internal stakeholders.*

## 6.5 Costs

Outlined below is an analysis of the three cost-components in EVT.

### 6.5.1 Effort Cost

The perceived effort costs required to engage in AI-interviews are primarily determined by personal interest, knowledge and experience. Recruiters who possess limited knowledge and experience expect an integration of AI-interviews to pose higher barriers compared to recruiters with knowledge and experience. This lack of familiarity requires higher effort to learn to collaborate with AI-interviews and shapes expectations accordingly. In other words, recruiters who lack knowledge and experience may face higher effort costs when integrating AI-interviews.

However, recruiters with personal interest in AI did not perceive effort costs incurred from an implementation of AI-interviews as an obstacle. Contrarily they expressed enthusiasm to the learning process despite having limited knowledge or experience. This suggests that they perceive the efforts required to learn about AI-interviews as low, even though the demands may actually be high. Therefore, this thesis highlights that personal interest is an important factor in determining recruiters' motivation to integrate AI-interviews in the recruitment process, ultimately influencing expectations.

### 6.5.2 Opportunity Cost

Implementing AI-interviews entails, at least to some extent, an exclusion of human interviews. This creates an opportunity cost since recruiters expressed concerns about limitations of AI-interviews in effectively fostering relationships, brand-building, and sales. In turn, this implies that the cost-component increases and therefore that the barriers to implementing AI-interviews becomes higher.

Elaborating on opportunity costs, it is evident that some recruiters viewed the integration of AI-interviews as a missed opportunity to evaluate candidates based on their experience and intuition. This perception increased the overall cost component, as they saw the loss of this valued alternative as the core of their job. Furthermore, recruiters acknowledged that human

interviews are an enjoyable task. This could explain why recruiters tend to be more positive to an integration of AI-tools, with potential to streamline administrative workload, compared to AI-interviews.

### 6.5.3 Emotional Cost

Fear of losing one's job emerges as a prominent emotional response. However, this fear was not expressed by employees with experience of AI-interviews. Contrarily, these recruiters were convinced that the tool does not possess sufficient emotional or cultural sensitivity, and thus could not replace their experience of interviewing and assessing candidates. Therefore, the emotional cost-component depends on the recruiter's experiences.

Moreover, as aforementioned, the interviewees articulated a genuine sadness in being replaced by a machine due to interviews being seen as an enjoyable task. This does not only increase the opportunity costs but also emotional costs, signaling the importance of small things such as having fun at work.

***Sub-conclusion:*** *Overall the costs of integrating AI-interviews in the recruitment process are high. The opportunity costs and emotional costs tend to be high for all recruiters. On the other hand, recruiters who have a personal interest, knowledge, and experience in AI-solutions may perceive the barriers to integrating AI-interviews as lower.*

# 7 Discussion

## 7.1 Answer to Research Question

Through a qualitative study, the authors have explored how recruiters expect an integration of AI-interviews in the recruitment process. To gain deeper understanding of individual differences, the empirical data have been analyzed through the lens of the theoretical framework, with the aim to answer the research question:

*How do recruiters expect an integration of AI-interviews in the recruitment process?*

This thesis derives five sub-conclusions that explain recruiters' expectations of AI-interviews: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, social influence, facilitating conditions, and costs. Firstly, one can conclude that the perceived usefulness of AI-interviews is low. This can be explained by a general disbelief in the technology of AI-interviews, a fear of transferring biases onto machines, and inability to effectively enhance value creation, sales and brand-building. However, this thesis also reveals that if the technology were to be more advanced, the perceived usefulness could increase.

Secondly, perceived ease of use was shown to depend on individual factors, including personal interest, knowledge, and experience. Recruiters that lack personal interest and knowledge tend to see the process of learning to collaborate with a machine as an obstacle, in turn lowering expectations. Regarding experience, most recruiters with experience of participating in an AI-interview were displeased due to the lack of human interaction and the mechanical nature. Altogether, this emphasizes the importance of communicating the purpose of AI-interviews and educating recruiters on technicalities with the tool, to create a sense of familiarity with the interface, ultimately improving expectations.

Thirdly, this thesis reveals that firms comprising at least one individual with personal interest in AI-interviews tend to engage more in discussions on AI-solutions. Limited technological experience may cause individuals to rely more on social influences when forming their expectations. Such increased reliance on others highlights the importance of the management team communicating a positive stance in an integration of AI-interviews.

Fourthly, all interviewees expressed a sense of unfamiliarity with AI-interviews, which could be explained by the delimitation to examine recruiters working at firms who currently do not use AI-interviews. Therefore, recruiters recurringly highlighted the importance of facilitating support in a future implementation.

Lastly, this thesis reveals that an integration of AI-interviews will generate various costs. In terms of effort cost, individual differences determine the perceived demands. Recruiters with personal interest in AI did not perceive the learning process as an obstacle, causing the costs to be perceived as low. Contrarily, the costs were perceived as high when recruiters had negative experiences or lack of knowledge. Furthermore, implementing AI-interviews entails at least to some extent, an exclusion of human interviews, and a perceived loss of brand-building and sales opportunities. This causes the opportunity cost to increase. In terms of emotional costs, an exclusion of human interviews awoke particularly emotional responses as it is an enjoyable task among recruiters. Therefore, taken all together, the costs associated with integrating AI-interviews are relatively high, however with some differences depending on individual factors.

Answering the research question in brief, this thesis indicates that recruiters generally have low expectations of an integration of AI-interviews in the recruitment process. However, recruiters tend to view the integration of other AI-tools more positively.

## 7.2 Contributions

The findings of this thesis offer several theoretical insights. This thesis suggests that interviewees may experience some apprehension toward AI-interviews as it remains a relatively unfamiliar tool. Furthermore, as aligned with the study of Shukla et al. (2017), the effectiveness of a collaboration between humans and machines will differ depending on individual factors. This thesis found that personal interest, knowledge, and experience are particularly important individual factors. Furthermore, in cases where knowledge and experience are limited, it was seen that social influences from colleagues and the management team are critical factors in understanding a future human-machine collaboration. According to Glikson and Woolley (2020), individual differences can cause difficulties in the implementation process, which is why it is critical to balance the divergent perspectives.

Similar to the study of Mujtaba and Mahapatra (2019), this study shows that recruiters are concerned about the risk of transferring human biases onto machines, rather than eliminating the biases, if integrating AI-interviews. However, this thesis reveals an intriguing finding that suggests a difference in the level of concern regarding biases depending on the expectations of the AI-solution. Specifically, in the case of AI-interviews, where expectations are generally low, concerns about transferring biases onto a machine are high. Contrarily, when it comes to AI-tools, where expectations are generally higher, biases are not typically cited as a concern despite that such tools also assess candidates and are thus susceptible to transferring biases onto a machine. This contributes to the literature by underscoring that concerns of biases may depend on the attitude toward the technology.

Furthermore, as aligned with Bassett and Roberts' (2019) study, a sense of uncertainty and ambiguity among recruiters caused by the disruptive nature of AI-interviews is highly prevalent. This thesis contributes to the ongoing discussion about the uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding the impact of AI by highlighting a difference between non-management team members and management team members.

## 7.3 Implications

This thesis has implications that are important for recruitment firms and developers of AI-interviews and -tools. For management team members, it is critical to be aware of differences in expectations of AI-interviews between recruiters and management team members. This emphasizes the importance of communication to create balance and a common perspective among internal stakeholders. For recruitment firms, it is essential to provide training and support to recruiters to facilitate the learning process. Given the importance of individual factors in determining one’s ability to collaborate with a machine, this organizational support needs to be customized to fit all individual differences. That is, recruitment firms should be aware that a systematic approach to training may not be sufficient. Lastly, developers of AI-interviews should be aware of the widespread concern of biases. Thus, it is critical to control the programming of AI-interviews, to ensure that it operates in a fair and objective manner. Consequently, the findings of this thesis can contribute to a more objective and nuanced understanding of recruiters' expectations of AI-interviews.

## 7.4 Discussion of Limitations

While this thesis has yielded interesting findings, it is important to note its limitations. Firstly, an interpretative approach was used to present the empirical data, which could have been influenced by the authors' subjective interpretations and biases. This could have an impact on the accuracy and fairness of the data presented. Secondly, a larger sample size could have improved the reliability of the thesis and allowed for more nuanced comparisons. Thirdly, the constructivist ontological view in this thesis, aiming to understand individual subjective experiences, limits the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, caution should be exercised when applying the findings of this thesis to a broader population.

Furthermore, to add nuance to the thesis, the sample could be expanded to include recruiters from firms that already use AI-interviews in their recruitment processes. By comparing the expectations of this group with those of recruiters who do not use AI-interviews, the authors could gain further insights and draw more comprehensive conclusions.

## 7.5 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this thesis suggest that recruiters have low expectations of AI-interviews compared to other AI-tools. However, as the thesis only briefly touches upon other AI-tools, further research should examine how recruiters expect the integration of such tools. Furthermore, given the limitations of the thesis, future research should adopt a multi-method approach and a longitudinal perspective to investigate recruiters' expectations of AI-interviews. This would help to reduce the ambiguity of the results and provide alternative perspectives. Due to the limitations, future research should also explore the attitudes of recruiters working at firms that currently use AI-interviews in their recruitment process. Such research could be used to educate recruitment firms that are not yet using AI-interviews.

Furthermore, while this thesis explored the expectations of recruiters, differences between non-management team members and management team members emerged. As such, further research should delve into these differences to better understand how the adoption of AI may impact different levels of the organizational hierarchy. Finally, more research is needed to

better understand the impact of AI in the recruitment process, and to identify the ways in which recruiters can best utilize these tools to make informed hiring decisions.

## 7.6 Conclusion

This thesis contributes to the ongoing discussion regarding recruiters' expectations of AI-interviews in the recruitment process. The findings suggest that recruiters are generally skeptical about the technology, leading to low expectations of its integration. However, recruiters tend to have a more positive attitude toward other AI-tools.

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# Appendix 1: Granberg's Four-stage Recruitment Model

The second (Sourcing), third (Screening), and fourth (Assessment) stage of the typical recruitment process is currently experiencing pressure from AI-solutions (Nordmark, 2022).

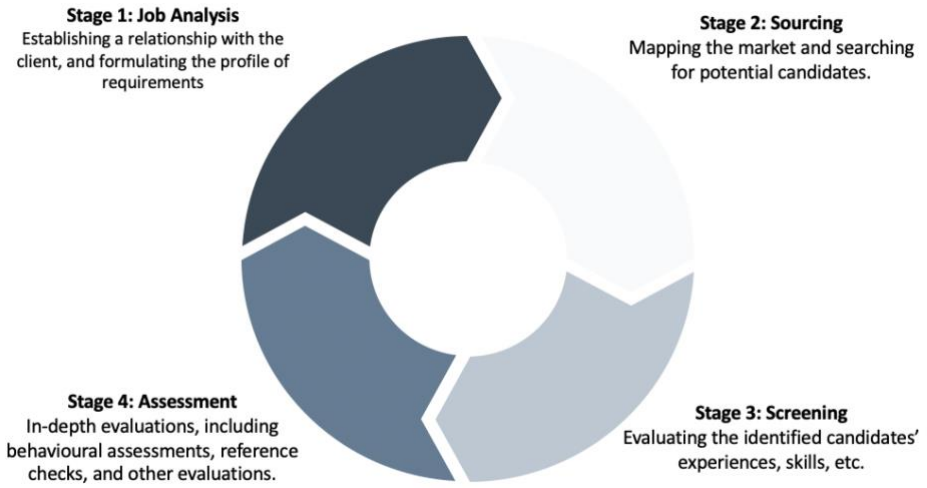


Figure X: Granberg's four-stage recruitment model

# Appendix 2: List of Interviewees and Interviews

| Interviewee Code Name | Gender | Company Code Name | Operating Market | Role | Recruiting Focus | Date of Interview | Place | Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anders | Male | Firm 1 | Stockholm | Recruitment Consultant | Executive Search | 9 March 2023 | Physical | 32:59 |
| Bella | Female | Firm 1 | Stockholm | Recruitment Consultant | Executive Search | 8 March 2023 | Physical | 37:02 |
| Clara | Female | Firm 1 | Stockholm | Recruitment Consultant | Executive Search | 15 March 2023 | Digital | 29:03 |
| Didrik | Male | Firm 1 | Stockholm | Recruitment Consultant & Management Team Member | Executive Search | 20 March 2023 | Physical | 41:00 |
| Erika | Female | Firm 2 | Global | Recruitment Consultant | All levels | 21 March 2023 | Digital | 31:29 |
| Freja | Female | Firm 2 | Global | Recruitment Consultant | All levels | 22 March 2023 | Digital | 33:06 |
| Gully | Female | Firm 2 | Global | Recruitment Consultant & Management Team Member | All levels | 22 March 2023 | Physical | 42:45 |
| Hedvig | Female | Firm 3 | Sweden | Recruitment Consultant & Management Team Member | Mid-level and Executive Search | 16 March 2023 | Physical | 35:54 |
| Isabelle | Female | Firm 3 | Sweden | Recruitment Consultant | Mid-level and Executive Search | 13 March 2023 | Digital | 34:42 |
| Josefine | Female | Firm 4 | Europe | Recruitment Consultant | Junior levels | 27 March 2023 | Digital | 33:46 |
| Kajsa | Female | Firm 4 | Europe | Recruitment Consultant | Junior levels | 28 March 2023 | Digital | 31:56 |
| Lovisa | Female | Firm 5 | Sweden | Recruitment Consultant | All levels | 15 March 2023 | Physical | 37:02 |
| Marie | Female | Firm 5 | Sweden | Recruitment Consultant | All levels | 9 March 2023 | Physical | 29:46 |
| Nathalie | Female | Firm 5 | Sweden | Recruitment Consultant | All levels | 10 March 2023 | Digital | 28:59 |
| Olivia | Female | Firm 5 | Sweden | Recruitment Consultant & Management Team Member | All levels | 14 March 2023 | Physical | 44:24 |

# Appendix 3: Interview Guide (translated to English)

*Inform about the purpose of the thesis and research question. Inform that the participation is voluntary, and that disclosures will be completely anonymized.*

**Part 1: Introduction**

Please tell us a bit about yourself and your journey to where you are today?

- What is your position/title?
- How long have you been working here now?
- How long (in total) have you worked in recruitment?

Please tell us a little about [Company X].

- What characterises you as a company in the industry?
- What is your recruitment process like?

**Part 2: AI**

What is your attitude toward AI?

Do you use AI in your everyday personal life?

Do you talk about AI internally in your company? If so, how?

How do you perceive your colleagues' attitudes toward AI?

Have you participated in an AI-interview yourself? If so, what is your perception of the experience?

In your opinion, what is the objective of AI-interviews?

In your opinion, what constitutes potential limitations of AI-interviews?

Do you think AI interviews can replace human interviews today?

- If yes: Why and how?

- If no: Why?

Do you think AI interviews could replace human interviews in the future?

- If yes: Why and how?
- If no: Why?

Do you think AI interviews will impact the customer experience?  If so, how?

Do you think AI interviews will impact the client experience? If so, how?

Do you believe that [Company X] will integrate AI-interviews into the recruitment process in the future? If so, when and in what stage of the recruitment process?

**Part 3: Conclusion**

Is there anything you feel you haven't had the opportunity to convey during the interview that you would like to share?

Is there anything you would like to revise or amend from your earlier statements?

# Appendix 4: Email to Prospective Interviewees (translated to English)

*All communications related to the thesis were sent from email addresses provided by the Stockholm School of Economics to ensure the thesis's legitimacy and maintain a formal tone.*

Hello [Name],

Our names are Filippa Olsson and Ida Dellborg, and we are currently writing our bachelor's thesis in management at the Stockholm School of Economics with a focus on recruitment processes and AI. Given the ongoing discussion and debate about AI in today's society, our hope is that this thesis can contribute insights to both the academic world and those of you who are active in the recruitment industry.

With an interest in today's technological development, as well as the organizational challenge of recruiting and attracting the right candidates, it would be exciting to meet with you to understand your attitude and expectations regarding future implementation of AI-interviews in the recruitment process. Your unique position as a Recruitment Consultant makes us interested in hearing more about your perception of the potential outcomes of such a change.

We understand that your schedule is busy, but we would greatly appreciate it if you have the time to meet with us for a 30-minute interview. We are very flexible regarding both time and location for the meeting, both during and outside office hours. Thank you for considering our request, and we look forward to hearing back from you!

Best regards,
Filippa Olsson & Ida Dellborg