

Exploring Alternative Assessments

*A Qualitative Study of HR Recruiters' Expectations on the Impact of AI Assessment
Tools on Recruitment Processes*

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have extensively evolved and currently become one of the latest trends in the recruitment industry. A range of AI tools, such as digital interviews and gamification, have been globally adopted to assess candidate attributes. In turn, employment of such tools assist recruiting firms in increasing efficiency, tackling biases and addressing diversity challenges. However, caution regarding algorithmic bias and data errors still pertains. Through an abductive qualitative study, this paper aims to explore HR recruiters' perceptions and expectations regarding the impact of integrating AI-enabled assessment tools in the recruitment process. The study aims to investigate the novel practice of utilizing AI in the candidate assessment stage of the recruitment process, further adding to the limited existing research on recruiter's perceptions and intention towards AI in recruitment. The results indicate an early maturity stage for AI-enabled assessment tools, further enhanced by the increased skepticism amongst HR recruiters regarding the intention to adopt the tools for assessment. HR recruiters expect the integration of AI-enabled assessment tools to impact the recruitment process across four main dimensions: acting as an assisting element, challenging employer branding, altering the HR role, and generating accountability challenges. This instigates a discussion outlining considerations from HR recruiters' perspectives, serving as a valuable roadmap guiding the future development of AI tools for candidate assessment.

Keywords: *Human Resource Management, Talent Acquisition, Recruitment Process, Candidate Assessment, Candidate Assessment Stage, AI-enabled Assessment Tools*

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Definitions and Abbreviations

Human Capital	Human capital entails the accumulated skills and knowledge of the workforce (Diebolt and Hauptert, 2015).
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	AI can be defined as algorithms or systems that incorporate learning functions and cognitive abilities. These systems are capable of performing tasks that usually demand human intelligence (Pan et al., 2022).
Candidate assessment	Candidate assessment entails the evaluation of applicants through metrics capturing skills, personality and capabilities that are predetermined to align with the criteria of the firm (Black and van Esch, 2020).
AI-enabled assessment tools/AI assessment tools	AI-enabled assessment tools are used after the first screening stage of the recruitment process to help narrow the the candidate field further, comprising of tools that provide insights into skills, capability and even personality (Black and van Esch, 2020).

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

A firm is composed of organizational and human capital. In the contemporary landscape of firms, human capital is emerging as one of the most crucial assets. By the 2000s, there was a shift where firm value and competitive advantage could be recognized (Liu et al., 2023). Previously, firm value was entwined with tangible assets and recruitment practices were not classified as important in sourcing firm value and competitive advantage (Black and van Esch, 2020). Subsequently, firm value became predominantly associated with intangible assets, with employees serving as important drivers for this asset (Black, 2019). The role of people in firms transitioned from being a necessity for the operations, to driving firm value. CEOs began ranking attraction, selection and retention of employees as a top strategic concern, shifting recruitment to undertake a role of high strategic importance. Black and van Esch (2020) express, *“People are our most important asset”*, enhancing the importance of recruitment.

The core of recruitment is to effectively identify suitable candidates with the right qualifications for a position (Horodyski, 2023). Generally, the recruitment process comprises four main stages: candidate sourcing/outreach, candidate pre-screening, candidate assessment and candidate engagement (see Figure 1) (Black and van Esch, 2020; George and Thomas, 2021; Chen, 2022). The candidate outreach stage focuses on identifying active and passive candidates. Evaluation of the applications is done in the pre-screening stage and resumes are scanned. In the assessment stage, tests and interviews are provided to the candidate in various forms to give insight into the candidate's skills, personality, capabilities and perceptions. Assessment tests can further be incorporated within the pre-selection stage (George and Thomas, 2021). Finally, during candidate engagement, the firm interacts with candidates in order to ensure a positive recruitment experience (Black and van Esch, 2020; George and Thomas, 2021).

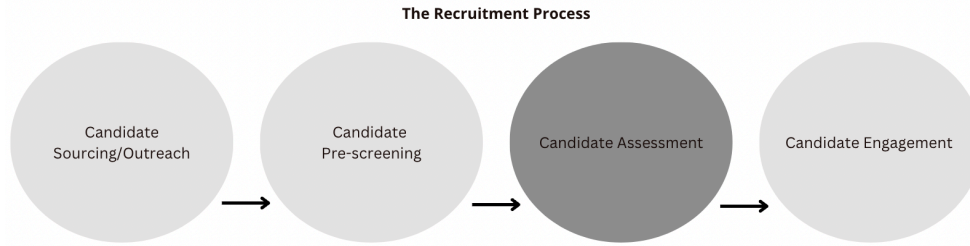


Figure 1

Candidate assessment entails the evaluation of applicants through metrics capturing skills, personality and capabilities that are predetermined to align with the criteria of the firm (Black and van Esch, 2020). This stage has the ability to decrease the pool of applicants by 50-80% and entails the analysis of profiles in depth, acting as a crucial element for recruiters to select and invest into the right candidates (Kabalina and Osipova, 2021). Therefore, defining and outlining the characteristics and skills within assessment is equally as important.

In alignment with the ascending role of human capital, the technological environment of recruitment has undergone transformation (Black and van Esch, 2020). AI tools have disrupted organizations' recruitment and selection practices and have positioned themselves with high popularity for improving assessment techniques (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). A range of tools can be effective for each construct of the recruitment process, to help select a suitable candidate (Horodyski, 2023). AI-systems within the candidate assessment stage, such as gamification, mobile and virtual assessments, and digital interviews, have been launched on a global scale and are capable of assessing most attributes. By utilizing AI, recruiting firms can overcome a variety of challenges in the process of talent acquisition such as efficiency, unconscious bias and the lack of diversity (Kantrowitz et al., 2023). However, to reach organizational goals, talent selection must be handled with caution (Chen, 2022). Therefore, this thesis aims to explore perceptions and expectations of integrating AI assessment tools in the recruitment process, from the perspective of HR recruiters within different business sectors and investigates the challenges and opportunities they perceive to be present in practice.

To decide the scope and area of interest for this study, an introductory pilot interview was conducted with a manager at a firm developing AI tools. This allowed the authors to gain an

understanding of the current environment in the domain. The discussion revealed areas of the recruitment process where practitioners lack knowledge and research, while also anticipating a significant increase in the offering depth of AI tools. Competence and development pertaining to the usage of AI-enabled tools in the early stages of the hiring funnel, more specifically the sourcing and the screening stage, is fairly established. In contrast, the integration of AI tools in the assessment stage has not been extensively examined. Introducing AI in this stage is emphasized to be a novel practice for practitioners. Therefore, the discussion underscored that insights addressing future expectations and perceptions from practitioners on AI assessment tools would be valuable to navigate this fast-changing environment.

1.2 Research Gap

AI-powered technologies have entered the market exponentially, disrupting recruitment and selection practices (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). Multiple studies explore opportunities and threats pertaining to AI tools for recruitment, and research technical aspects that give insights into the existing challenges (Yam and Skorborg, 2021). Additionally, previous research on technology adoption in recruitment tends to focus on applicants' perspectives (van Esch et al., 2019; Anderson, 2003). Therefore, there is an identified research gap concerning the impact of AI-enabled assessment tools from the viewpoint of recruiters and talent acquisition specialists on the recruitment process. On top of that, the authors have not observed that AI assessment tools have been investigated in the Swedish market (Alam et al., 2020; Ouiridi et al., 2016). It can be concluded that empirical studies currently lack thorough examination of AI-technology from HR professionals' perspective, providing practical relevance in terms of perceptions and expectations in this domain (Horodyski, 2023).

1.3 Purpose and Research Question

As identified by the research gap, further research is needed to understand the expectations and perceptions of AI assessment tools in practice. Furthermore, HR recruiters possess a pivotal role in steering decisions regarding the adoption of AI tools and serve as an influential party in guiding this development. Contributing to the area of technology acceptance and by elaborating on recruiter's expectations on the impact of AI assessment tools, a qualitative study investigates

the field and bridges the identified research gap. This is done through the perspective of Technological-Organizational-Environmental (TOE) frameworks and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), as well as elements beyond the theory scope. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the unexplored area of AI visions and practices in the candidate assessment stage and in line contribute to research by refining the theories UTAUT and TOE within the scope. Through a future oriented perspective, the purpose of this paper is to inform academia and practitioners within the field of talent acquisition, as well as academia, on the impact of AI assessment tools in the recruitment process. This intends to inform practitioners how to successfully navigate future practice and add to the existing research within the area. Based on the aim of this study, the following research question is formulated: *How do HR recruiters expect the integration of AI-enabled assessment tools to impact recruitment processes?*

1.4 Delimitations

The thesis is delimited to assessing companies operating within the Swedish market. Limiting the study to one market provides for empirical data collection where all participants pertain to the same national regulations and the same technological maturity on a national level (Taherdoost, 2021). The study will solely investigate the perception of HR recruiters, to efficiently explore the area of assessment in accordance with experienced practitioners. This aims to ensure trustworthy contributions of the interviewees. AI assessment tools are for the majority of companies unfamiliar and new (Black and van Esch et al., 2020). Therefore, the scope of this study focuses exclusively on the expectations and perceptions of HR recruiters' stance towards AI assessment tools, due to the early stages of maturity that these tools hold in the talent acquisition industry. The low level of maturity further facilitates the scope of the thesis by not limiting the study to a set of specific AI-enabled tools in the area of assessment.

1.5 Disposition

This thesis follows a structured organization that is divided into six main chapters. The first chapter intends to cover the background and research motivation of this study. The second chapter of the report presents a literature review, constructed upon a critical analysis on

published literature indicating what is known and not known about our research question. The third chapter aims to introduce two theoretical frameworks investigating technology acceptance: UTAUT and TOE. Furthermore, chapter four presents the methodology of this thesis, elaborating on the research purpose and philosophy, the research approach and strategy while sequentially discussing ethical considerations and method reliability. The methodology is followed by a fifth chapter that presents the empirical findings of the qualitative data gathered. The findings are discussed in the sixth section of the report, concluding the findings and presenting managerial and theoretical implications as well as limitations of the study.

2. Literature Review

The literature review encompasses a broad examination of AI development in the recruitment process, specifically within the “candidate assessment” stage. Thereafter, literature is introduced narrowing the scope into ethical considerations and governmental regulations.

2.1 The role of AI in the Recruitment Process

Firms are progressively employing AI-technologies in their recruitment process (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022) and AI tools can facilitate the coordination of applicants throughout the full recruitment process (Kelan, 2023). The technologies are capable of evaluating candidates beyond personality traits and resume (Chen, 2022) and can identify an applicant’s internal attributes based on external characteristics (Drage and Mackereth, 2022). The tools can be employed for a diverse set of practices, such as for orchestrating job advertisements, screening resumes and analyzing video-interviews (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). AI is currently predominantly utilized with respect to chatbots, simulations and games, video-interviews and social media task-automation tools and screening software (Kelan, 2023). However, literature is not in agreement regarding the role of AI tools in recruitment. Horodyski (2023) argues that AI does not necessarily replace humans but assists in performing difficult and time-consuming tasks. In alignment, Sakka et al. (2022) discussed that AI tools have the ability of assisting the repetitive tasks of recruiters. However, Hunkenschroer and Luetge (2022) underscore the ability of AI algorithms to entirely replace human decision makers.

Firms must change the way they work to incorporate and utilize the opportunity of emerging AI tools for recruitment (Horodyski, 2023). The tools have become attractive for selection by leveraging rapidity and efficiency of hiring in comparison to traditional screening and assessment practices. This makes them critical in the “*war of talent*” (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). Traditional recruitment practices are limited to requiring high investments in time and by being restricted to the capabilities of the human recruiter, risking incorporating human bias (Chen, 2022). The tools allow recruiters to attend to high volumes of information and free up time for strategic and human-centric tasks.

Companies can implement AI technologies for assessment, however, the human element should not be ignored as the environment, people and culture of the company is what is genuinely of matter to candidates. The final interviews, for that reason, should never be handed over to AI-enabled tools (Black and van Esch, 2020).

It is crucial for firms to guarantee a positive experience for all applicants when engaging with the organization. Based on the idea that AI is impartial and evaluates candidates equally, AI tools can actualize fair recruitment practices in a short time span, in comparison to a human (Chen, 2022). Although AI can reduce human bias, the tools risk introducing algorithmic bias in the recruitment process (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022) and engage in discrimination (Kelan, 2023), eliminating objectivity. Consequently, AI tools can impose ethical dilemmas, elaborated on in section 2.2 (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022).

2.2 The integration of AI in Assessment

Utilizing AI for assessment is a novel practice in comparison to integrating algorithms for screening practices (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). Commonly employed AI tools for assessment include video-interviews, simulations and games (Kelan, 2023). The tools can be adopted for the evaluation of candidates and allows established metrics to conduct in-depth evaluation of personality traits, competence and capabilities (Chen, 2022). Additionally, AI technology can assess an applicant’s digital record, to form a psychological profile of the applicant and evaluate personality traits to match the candidate with the culture of a firm (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). However, involved actors must understand the relationship

between the analysis conducted by the algorithm and actual performance to ensure successful practises, prior to implementing the tool (Black and van Esch, 2020). More exactly, there is a need for questioning how the data is of relevance and can be linked to job requirements in a consistent, dependable and valid approach (Kelan, 2023).

There are various AI assessment tools emerging in the field of recruitment. A trend can be identified in video-interview analysis for candidate assessment, allowing AI to act as a substitute for a human interviewer (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). By analyzing video-recorded interviews, the algorithm conducts an analysis of aspects such as wording, tone of voice, facial expressions and the candidate's response to the proposed content (Chen, 2022). Based on the analysis, the AI assessment tool provides a profile on the applicant's competence and personality traits (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). AI assessment tools can further engage in the assessment stage through gamification in forms of AI-powered simulations, skill tests and neuroscience video games (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). Gamification places the candidate in a virtual world and can be utilized to evaluate their profile by evaluating metrics of abilities, skills and traits (Chen, 2022) and analyzing qualities such as motivation, persistence, risk attitude and planning abilities (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). Based on a concluded assessment, the AI assessment tool evaluates the applicants in relation to the desired qualities for a job position (Chen, 2022).

2.3 Ethical Factors Related to Algorithmic Bias and Transparency

AI-enabled tools for assessment can trigger ethical concerns and dilemmas for organizations and society (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). Ethical concerns constitute biases, challenges regarding transparency and accountability and the need to adhere to governmental regulations to mitigate ethical risks.

The traditional recruitment process is not free from bias (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). A human recruiter can be affected by bias while engaging in the recruitment process. For example, initial information regarding a candidate can shape subsequent interpretation. Additionally, recruiters can enhance information that aligns with their initial judgements and risk unconsciously favoring candidates whom they share similarities with (Black and van Esch,

2020). AI tools can notably reduce bias in the assessment stage, as human recruitment incorporates subjectivity (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). More exactly, AI assessment tools are emphasized to have a potential of removing human bias and consequently improve inclusion and diversity of firms (Drage and Mackereth, 2022). AI assessment tools are capable of capturing data points on a candidate's behavior and conducting data-driven evaluation of personality. By correlating qualities and skills with previously successful employees, bias-prone intuitions of recruiters are extracted (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022).

A quantitative study indicated that more than half of the HR participants underscored bias, non-inclusiveness and outdated data pools as ethical risks to train AI algorithms (Horodyski, 2023). An algorithm can incorporate bias about applicants and be influenced by human bias, consequently replicating and enhancing it further (Soleymani et al., 2022). These biases can originate partly from biased algorithmic designers, limited raw data sets, bias embedded in the training data, bias in the model design principles as well as in the criteria selection (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). Consequently, the algorithms risk exercising biases towards marginalized groups, targeting gender, race, age or individuals with disabilities (Tilmes, 2022) and specific personality traits (Chen, 2023). Hence, AI tools risk affecting the hiring funnel both by inclusion and exclusion (Kelan, 2023).

AI systems are by default unaware regarding their potential classification of biases, making it incapable of realizing whether it is learning a bias (Black and van Esch, 2020). As a result, both individuals and entire classes can be subject to the discrimination. The presence of such biases advocate for cautious technical due diligence elaborating on implementation and design to maintain low risk levels (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). Although studies imply spread effects, the algorithms are most often better at improving diversity and inclusion metrics of recruited candidates, in comparison to a human recruiter (Drage and Mackereth, 2022).

Another area of ethical considerations highlighted by literature are the crucial elements of accountability and explainability of the AI algorithms. AI recruiting enables the ability to generate detailed feedback and detailed insights, however, the use of AI can lead to a lack of transparency towards candidates. The predictive and decision-making algorithms are obscure,

even for experts. This can provide difficulties for the recruiter to provide a qualitative explanation of which attributes among many million data points drive the decision. Firms need to have sufficient levels of data and statistical understanding to assure validity and accuracy of the AI. This means that the high-stakes and sensitive nature of assessment in the recruitment process requires rigor, when assessing the tools to be scientifically derived and professionally validated (Kantrowitz et al., 2023). This can be connected to the concept of accountability, describing that humans must be responsible in the decision-making. More exactly, the integration of AI technologies in recruitment may raise concerns whether responsibility lies in the hands of the recruiters, data scientists or the firm as a whole (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). This introduces a conflict of shared control between the algorithms and the recruiters (Chen, 2022).

2.4 Governmental Regulations to Mitigate Ethical Risks

The adoption of AI for recruitment practices enhance an ethical concern with regards to privacy and informed consent of participants. Firms utilizing AI tools for recruitment are held accountable for governmental regulations. It has been widely claimed that there is a need for implementing government regulations to a greater extent, such as on account of informed consent for processing personal data (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). The European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that emerged in 2018, is one of the strictest existing laws implemented to protect individuals. The law addresses requested procedures for storing, collecting and processing personal data. This year The *EU Artificial Intelligence Act*, also referred to as *The AI Act*, is the firstly introduced comprehensive legal framework on AI (Stewart et al., 2024). The *AI Act* aims to regulate for trustworthy AI inside and outside of Europe, assuring that AI systems respect ethical principles, safety and fundamental rights.

3. Theoretical Framework

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use (UTAUT) theory and the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework are refined through this qualitative study, to explore the relationship of several constructs on technology adoption. In this context, technology refers to AI assessment tools. The theoretical frameworks UTAUT and TOE have been utilized individually in previous studies to explore the acceptance and integration of

emerging AI tools within recruitment (Horodyski, 2023; Pan et al., 2022). Moreover, the theories capture a broad range of constructs identified by research to be of relevance in the investigation of AI tools. UTAUT and TOE are thus deemed appropriate to explore in the context of AI assessment tools.

3.1 Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use Theory

The acceptance of technology is in literature frequently examined by the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use (UTAUT) theory. The UTAUT was presented as an extension and holistic understanding of technology acceptance by Venkatesh et al. (Venkatesh et al., 2003). The framework encompasses and captures the essence of previously established models into four distinct constructs that positively correlate with individuals' intention to adopt technology: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Performance expectancy pertains to what degree the individual believes that the technology will provide benefits and enhance overall performance in line with the individuals expectations. Effort expectancy is defined as the individual's expectations about the ease of use of the technology. Social influence is the degree of influence others have on the user to start using the technology. Finally, facilitating conditions refer to the individual's belief that the level of organizational and technical infrastructure exist to support the use of the technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Additionally, this study comments on the moderator "age" and tests if a relationship exists between age and intention to adopt.

3.2 The Technology, Organization and Environment Framework

The technology, organization and environment (TOE) model, originates from information systems research and argues that three contextual factors influence an organization's adoption of new technologies: technology, organization and environment. More exactly, technological contexts include the availability and characteristics of rising and existing technologies relevant to an organization. The original TOE model does not address examples of aspects within the technological context. However, research has conducted an extension of the model, introducing technological complexity as an example of such a factor. Furthermore, the organizational context stresses the characteristics of an organization, for example through assessing organizational

structure, organization size and communication processes. Lastly, the environmental context discusses the arena in which an organization is operating, such as industry characteristics and government regulation. Moreover, TOE discusses the technological and organizational aspects, in alignment with external factors entailing social and environmental aspects (Pan et al., 2021). In the context of current research, the model has been utilized to identify the adoption of AI in companies and is stressed as one of the optimal models of explaining the AI adoption of organizations (Chatterjee et al., 2021).

3.3 Theory Application and Limitations

Despite the proliferation of the frameworks, there are several limitations present to their application. UTAUT has been criticized for offering a limited scope of constructs, presented as generalizable and missing to capture relevant constructs in the framework (Bagozzi, 2007). Similarly, the original TOE framework is limited by being obsolete and generic. Research advises to modify the model in accordance with specific research contexts and utilize the framework in combination with other theories. The model can exhaustively address the factors having an effect on the adoption decisions and the descriptive power of the model has been demonstrated in a variety of national, industrial and technological contexts. However, constructs demonstrate inconsistent results in research. Thus, it is indicated that there may be other factors that potentially exist in the adoption behavior (Pan et al., 2021).

To support the empirical findings, the authors decided to utilize UTAUT and TOE in combination to provide a comprehensive understanding of technology acceptance and adoption through the lens of HR recruiters. By combining the theories, this study aims to integrate a focus on individual-level constructs, as well as a broader perspective. TOE elaborates on contextual factors that can impact the AI adoption. UTAUT complements this perspective by elaborating on constructs that can impact the intention of an individual to adopt AI-enabled tools for assessment. UTAUT emphasizes psychological and behavioral aspects of technology adoption. A more broad perspective is provided through TOE as the framework examines the organizational context, elements in the external environment and addresses the availability of technological elements. Utilizing UTAUT to supplement the TOE constructs, strengthens the reliability of the theoretical framework provided in this paper and provides a holistic approach by combining

factors impacting the adoption of AI-enable assessment tools. Therefore, the models can mutually be utilized to investigate facilitators and barriers of a company's adoption behavior. This paper refines TOE and UTAUT in alignment with the specified domain of AI assessment tools by limiting the scope of the constructs to the elements in *italics* (see Table 1). The model illustrates an “X” where the theories overlap in terms of the constructs for each individual theory.

Theory Overlaps in the Context of This Study

***Caution:** “X” denotes the areas of overlap between TOE and UTAUT. The theory overlap shown above is limited to the scope and the design of this study.

The Technology, Organization and Environment Framework				
Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use Theory		Technological Context (Technological availability, Technological characteristics)	Organizational Context (Organizational size, Organizational structure)	Environmental Context (Governmental regulations, Industry characteristics)
	Performance Expectancy (Inclination to implement, Perceived advantages, disadvantages, drawbacks and risks)			
	Effort Expectancy (Ease of Use)	X (technological complexity)		
	Facilitating Conditions (Availability of internal/ external IT resources)	X (technological infrastructure)	X (organizational infrastructure)	
	Social Influence (Perceived general increase in usage)			

Table 1

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Approach, Purpose and Philosophy

A qualitative study design was best suited for this study, due to its exploratory nature and early stage of AI adoption in candidate assessment stage of recruitment. An exploratory research purpose was useful to clarify the current position of AI assessment tools in the recruitment industry, as the precise nature of the phenomenon is still uncertain. The study aimed to understand the future expectations and perceptions towards AI assessment tools from the perspective of multiple HR recruiters across the Swedish market. An exploratory study created a valuable opportunity for open-ended questions that enabled a more nuanced understanding of

the research topic and allowed candidates to elaborate on their responses. The research question was formulated with the interrogative word “How”, indicating an exploratory study. As the phenomena of AI-enabled assessment tools is not well established in the market, exploratory research contributes with an advantage of being adaptable to change and flexible (Saunders et al., 2019). Consequently, an exploratory study was aimed to generate new insights and understand expectations and outlooks of the AI tools.

The authors employed an abductive research approach, by identifying themes through qualitative semi-structured interviews to refine existing theories and explain the phenomenon further. An abductive approach, entailed combining data and theory that merged for a seamless process between theoretical understanding and data analysis. This approach increased flexibility that enabled free exploration as well as an established degree of precision through scope limitation in accordance with the theoretical frameworks in use (Saunders et al., 2019).

This thesis took on an interpretative business philosophy, emphasizing the importance of understanding the subjectivity of individuals' perceptions and experiences (Saunders et al., 2019). The authors took an empathetic stance to show their understanding that each participant differs and is unique due to their personal experiences and opinions of the social world. Furthermore, the research question was investigated in an objectivist way. This ontological stance aimed to lay aside beliefs that the authors may have developed earlier in their careers on this phenomenon and placed focus on the prediction of how management would act in the future.

4.2 Research Strategy

4.2.1 Data Collection

Data constituted primary data collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews and an introductory pilot interview (Saunders et al., 2019). The introductory pilot interview was conducted before the fifteen semi-structured interviews in an open manner where discussion was intended to give insights into the design of this study.

The latter fifteen interviews were used to identify “aggregate dimension” themes and to refine existing technology acceptance theories, UTAUT and TOE, indicating an abductive approach. The authors adopted a cross-sectional approach where the phenomenon was studied at a particular point in time within a two month duration due to the time constraint. In addition, multiple data gathering was utilized through an analysis of different recruitment processes and business sectors. This provided the authors with the ability to generalize and validate their findings. The stated approach allowed for the ability to compare, contrast and identify patterns across multiple instances, referred to as replication of data.

Semi-structured cross-sectional interviews were undertaken across different industries and companies to fit the purpose of this thesis. The semi-structured interviews advocated for an in-depth two-way communication and flexibility, while still retaining considerable standardization through exact themes and questions to be covered in accordance with the interview guide (see Appendix 1) (Saunders et al., 2009). The questions were aligned with constructs from the theories in use, UTAUT and TOE. Additionally, the guide was complemented with questions beyond the scope of the theories in alignment with common elements from literature to answer the research question. The interview questions assisted in covering the minimum scope necessary during every given interview. A semi-structured interview approach allowed the authors to “probe” answers and opened to the exploratory nature where interviewees were asked to explain, discuss their thought process and evaluate certain themes in more detail. This gave the authors the capability to adapt to any changes during the interview process and allowed for investigating the area to its full extent (Saunders et al., 2019). This added relevance and depth to the obtained data beyond the predetermined questions.

Primary data was collected through thirteen synchronous electronic interviews utilizing Teams or Google Meet. This web conferencing featured sound and vision. Additionally, the authors engaged in two face-to-face interviews (Saunders et al., 2019). The interview setting was arranged in alignment with the interviewees’ preferences. In alignment with a semi-structured procedure, an interview guide was predetermined and organized into themes and questions intended to be covered within a sixty-minute timeframe (see Appendix 1). Klang AI, which is an AI transcription tool that uses AI solutions to assist with transcribing for the Swedish and

English language, was used to transcribe the interviews (Klang.ai, 2023). The transcriptions were reviewed and rewritten manually to ensure precision and to allow the authors to engage in careful analysis. Both authors were present for all the interviews, with an exception of one interview. This ensured attentive listening and communicated enthusiasm to further encourage the flow of the discussion. Both authors' presence allowed for the processing of the revealed information over a longer time period.

4.2.2 Sampling of participants

Sampling was done at a single point in time over a two month period due to a restricted time frame for data collection. The selection of each interviewee followed three precise criteria (see Appendix 3). In total fifteen interviews were conducted with recruiters from fifteen different firms (see Table 1 below). Table 2 presents a list of interviews dividing each interviewee by an anonymous code name, age group, company position, location of interview, business sector and size of firm. The interviewee sample comprised individuals from various age groups, resulting in demographically distributed data. The business sectors were divided according to an industry and sector list established by “The International Labor Organization” (ILO, 2024). The size of the firm was established in line with “Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development”, measuring enterprise number of employees by business and thereafter dividing firms into three categories: small, medium, large (OECD, 2024).

Interviews were obtained through the process of sending out emails and LinkedIn Inmails to multiple HR managers, talent acquisition specialists and recruiters. The authors sent out identical proposals (see Appendix 2) to a sample of sixty-two HR recruiters during the time span of February-March 2024 and secured fifteen of the sent proposals. Throughout the process of interacting with organizations and recruiters for potential interviews, the authors were recommended relevant interviewees. This implies a snowball sampling, indicating that an initial contact was utilized to generate additional contacts (Bryman & Bell, 2017). Turning to recruiters with knowledge within the research area strengthened the relevance of the interviewee sample. The stated tactic assisted in finding candidates with insights of relevance to the research question, despite the early maturity of AI-enabled tools for assessment.

Interviews were conducted during March and beginning of April 2024 (see Table 2). Out of a total of fifteen interviews included in the dataset, the initial interview served as a test interview during which the interview guide was tested, evaluated and improved based on the outcomes. Each interview was approached by a detailed explanation of the research question in order for the interviewee to gain some understanding of our study. All questions were open allowing participants to describe and develop their answer as they wish. Additionally, the authors made use of the critical incident technique by asking participants to describe, when relevant, a particular incident(s) relevant to the research question (Saunders et al., 2019). After fifteen interviews, theoretical saturation was attained and the authors no longer found new properties within the categories identified. Saturation was realized when the interviewees no longer presented new ideas and no new themes could be identified by the authors.

Table List of Interviews

Interviewee Code Name	Age	Position in the company	Interview Date & Duration	Location	Business Sector	Size of firm
A1	30-39	HR Partner	05 March 2024 48 min 53 sec	Online	Financial Services	Medium
A2	40-49	HR Manager	07 March 2024 59 min 18 sec	Online	Financial Services	Medium
A3	40-49	Talent Acquisition	11 March 2024 42 min 07 sec	Online	Commerce	Large
A4	30-39	HR Recruiter	18 March 2024 34 min	Online	Professional Services	Small
A5	50-59	Head of Talent Acquisition	19 March 2024 35 min 07 sec	Online	Financial Services	Large
A6	30-39	HR Partner	20 March 2024 50 min 38 sec	In Person	Commerce	Large
A7	30-39	Senior Talent Acquisition Specialist	20 March 2024 49 min 25 sec	In Person	Professional Services	Large
A8	20-29	Talent Acquisition Partner	25 March 2024 42 min 20 sec	Online	Professional Services	Large
A9	20-29	Recruiter	25 March 2024 45 min 39 sec	Online	Professional Services	Large
A10	20-29	Recruiting Specialist	27 March 2024 40 min 22 sec	Online	Professional Services	Large
A11	40-49	HR Responsible	27 March 2024 37 min 43 sec	Online	Financial Services	Small
A12	20-29	Talent Acquisition Partner	02 April 2024 1h 49 sec	Online	Financial Services	Large
A13	30-39	HR Professional	02 April 2024 23 min 43 sec	Online	Commerce	Large
A14	30-39	Talent Acquisition Team Lead	04 April 2024 48 min 30 sec	Online	Commerce	Large
A15	30-39	Senior Talent Acquisition Specialist	05 April 2024 43 min 30 sec	Online	Financial Services	Large

Table 2

4.2.3 Data Analysis

The authors used an abductive approach, where data was analyzed simultaneously throughout the process of data collection. This constitutes the grounded approach, as the authors aimed to explore participant's interpretation and experiences to refine theory that emerged during the collection and analysis of the data (Saunders et al., 2019). This study, therefore, followed a qualitative rigorous abductive study in steps presented by the Gioia methodology, that enabled

both creative thinking and systematic rigor in its articulation of the grounded theory (Gioia et al., 2013).

The Gioia methodology highlights that interviewing and analysis happens simultaneously, which means that codes and themes emerged early in the data collection process (Gioia et al., 2013). The process constituted three main steps of manual analysis. Firstly, the 1st-order analysis was conducted in the form of grouping together quotes and participant's language before attempting to break down the 1st code categories into a more manageable number of 2nd-order categories/themes. Thereafter, as the research process continued, the authors identified specific categories by labeling and adding phrasal descriptors. In the 2nd-order theme analysis, the theoretical realm was entered by suggesting concepts which helped observe and describe the phenomenon, comparing newly discovered results to previously published literature (Magnani and Gioia, 2023). The 2nd order analysis focuses attention on nascent concepts with inadequate theoretical relationships and existing concepts that arise from the theoretical background (Gioia et al., 2013). Finally, when the 1st-order terms and 2nd-order themes were identified there was a basis for data structure that allowed further grouping of the 2nd-order themes into aggregate dimensions. The aggregate dimensions of the 2nd order themes not only constituted a practical visual aid but also a representation of how we grouped the data together to progress from raw data to identified themes (Gioia et al., 2013). For a structured code analysis, the authors made use of color-coding for analytical themes that assisted with identifying occurrence across narratives and allowed for effortless comparison across coding (Saunders et al., 2019). The overall process of the Gioia methodology developed from an inductive-reasoning in the 1st order concepts towards an abductive approach as the 2nd order concepts are developed (Magnani and Gioia, 2023).

4.3 Ethical Considerations

There are several ethical considerations to take into account when conducting qualitative research. Confidentiality of data was considered during the study, where we anonymized all our respondents by providing a coded name for each participant and fully anonymizing the firm (Taherdoost, 2021). The participation of each interviewee was voluntary and no question was compulsory, maintaining any rights of withdrawal. This was informed to each interviewee (see

Appendix 2). Additionally, to make sure that all participants were comfortable and able to speak freely they were given the choice to have the interview be conducted in Swedish or English. Transcripts were never altered and all data was collected through maintenance of both authors' objectivity.

4.4 Method Reliability

Conducting a qualitative study pertained to several reliability issues that were considered by the authors at the very start of the research process. The author's bias affects the findings of the study. Thus, to minimize this bias and judgmental thoughts the interviewers practiced and followed a specific interview process (Taherdoost, 2021). Firstly, the authors made sure to introduce themselves and explain the concept of the study. Thereafter, the order of the themes and questions were followed as established in the interview guide as well as deviating from the guide when necessary, to record and reach the anticipated volume of results as well as sustain objectivity. To ensure the validity and reliability of our findings, each participant was given the possibility to receive the interview guide prior to the interview, as well as revise the written transcript subsequently. Furthermore, the authors informed the interviewees of the possibility to contact the authors if they wished to revise their responses subsequent to their participation.

The way in which an interview was orchestrated, is likely to affect its end result, in accordance with the mode effect (Saunders et al., 2019). Synchronous electronic interviews featuring sound and vision, facilitated for the authors to interact visually with the interviewees and allowed for both parties to remain in familiar locations. An online interview setting allowed for a wide distribution of participants geographically. Face-to-face interviews encouraged additional engagement from the authors by interacting with the respondent during an answer and providing verbal acknowledgements. However, interviews both in-person and online possess ethical issues that pertain to privacy and confidentiality concerns where interviewees may remain uneasy about the way in which the recordings are used and handled, limiting the depth of their answers.

The authenticity and reliability of secondary data, in terms of literature review, was examined in detail to make sure that the data collected was authentic and collected from trust-worthy relevant journals (Taherdoost, 2021). To extend the reliability of this study, an introductory pilot

interview was conducted intending to collect primary data as an aid to determine the research approach and design of this study. Additionally, this study made use of theoretical triangulation to enhance reliability and explore the research question from multiple angles (Donkoh and Mensah, 2023). This contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the topic by mitigating limitations of using a single theoretical approach. By utilizing both UTAUT and TOE, this study tested various theories complementing one another by focusing on both individual level constructs and broader perspectives. This ensures the exploration of alternative explanations through a comprehensive analysis of the findings.

Grounded theory was approached with extra caution through “theoretical sensitivity” meaning that the authors were focused on generating grounded theory from the data collected rather than basing results only on existing theory (Saunders et al. 2019). Therefore, themes identified emerged from the data collected rather than being interpreted overly by pre-existing theoretical concepts. The pre-existing theories in this study, UTAUT and TOE, helped the authors inform the project in general terms and defined the scope.

5. Findings from Qualitative In-depth Interviews

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the data collection, of minor and major themes. The insights from the qualitative in-depth interviews were structured in a model following the Gioia methodology as presented below, where four main aggregate dimensions were derived from fifteen semi-structured interviews (see Figure 2). The primary dimensions describe the impact that AI-enabled assessment tools will have on the recruitment process from the standpoint of recruiters perceptions, expectations and acceptance: (1) assisting elements, (2) employer branding, (3) challenging the HR role and (4) accountability challenges. To elaborate the viewpoint of expectations, insights on the opportunities and threats were obtained to understand what positive and negative consequences HR recruiters perceived to be present with AI-enabled assessment tools. The chapter explains each aggregate dimension in accordance with the identified 2nd-order dimensions and further outlines the identified opportunities and threats.

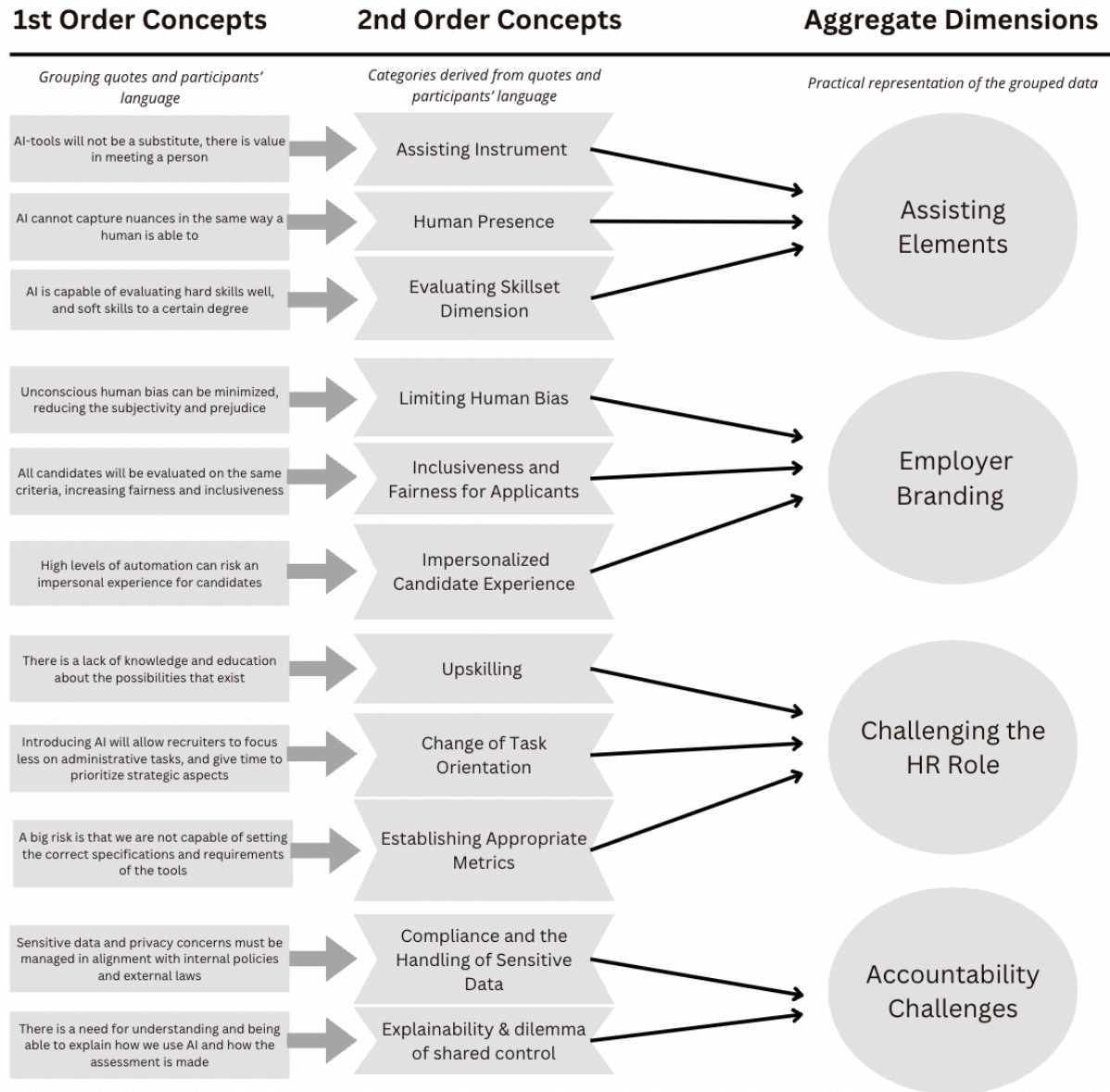


Figure 2

5.1 Assisting Elements

5.1.1 Assisting Instrument

When asked about their stance towards AI-enabled assessment tools, the interviewees were unanimous in the view that AI assessment tools should be treated as assisting tools in the recruitment process. These tools would provide support to understand candidates' profiles as an alternative perspective, rather than being fully immersed in the recruitment process. As

respondent A4 commented, it will be difficult to enable an AI powered tool to make decisions instead of the recruiter.

“I don't think we will ever come or we shouldn't come to that moment that it's making decisions instead of us. It's increasing or helping in assisting, but not replacing, because there is value in meeting an individual.” Interviewee A4

An interviewee further suggested that the phrasing “AI tool” should be substituted by the word “AI assistant”, as there are numerous tasks within the assessment stage that could benefit from AI assistance. They argued that there should be no resistance in using multiple assisting methods.

“I believe that there needs to be a change of vocabulary to ‘assistant’ instead of writing ‘tool’. Simply because there are many who might be concerned about adding another system to work when they might already have four, five systems” Interviewee A12

All the interviewees discussed the necessity for attentiveness in fully relying on AI assessment tools, given the indicated early stage of maturity for tools. They were more prone to fully adopt AI-powered tools early in the recruitment funnel, indicating to screening and sourcing, rather than in the assessment stage. The recruiters enhanced that this was due to the greater level of maturity in the initial processes. The respondents further analyzed that AI assessment tools, such as video interviews and AI-powered assessments, are currently on the rise. They stated that this would require a transition period prior to adoption to ensure functionality. As more actors offering assessment tools enter the market and as more tools become established, the likelihood of adoption grows.

“We are in discussions with a few different companies that we find exciting, but that's early on in the funnel. One of the reasons is that we are not recruiting as much now as we have done previously. [...] Later in the process, I think, if you look at , for example, video interviews, I think that will also come.” Interviewee A1

HR recruiters perceive that AI-enabled assessment tools could act as a useful benchmark to assure that they have not missed anything in their own human judgment. Insights generated by AI could be used as a reference point for HR recruiters to compare their own assessment against.

“Another advantage is that you can probably already do this with certain tools, but to be able to see clear correlations between the profile you get from this AI tool and how one performs later.” Interviewee A10

Another interviewee emphasizes,

“But on the other hand, I really believe that AI will be able to help by, say that we were having an interview now... To be able to give me hints that this made the candidate more

interesting or to focus on specific questions more. [...] and also probably be able to generate better conversation templates” Interviewee A1

5.1.2 Human Presence

All the interviewees agreed that the human presence of the assessment stage should not be neglected. They argue that AI at this stage is not able to mimic the nuanced judgment, contextual understanding and candidate experience that human recruiters provide. Although all respondents have a positive outlook on the adoption of AI in the assessment stage, they believe certain aspects near the end of the recruitment require human judgment.

“You always want to get a sense of what it is like to work with this person because that’s what will be applied in real life later on. So, that’s why I also think that it’s a bit more reasonable to use AI in earlier stages, to sift through this mass. But still at a later stage you want to have tested some form of collaboration” Interviewee A9

The interviewees mentioned the importance of being in control of the AI tools, highlighting that AI tools cannot respond to non-verbal cues and react to emotional intelligence. A fraction of the respondents underlined the ability for humans to consider facial expressions and emotions of candidates to a greater extent than AI-enabled tools.

“That gut feeling one has when reading a CV or meeting a person and listening to interview responses. It will be difficult to entirely translate that into an AI tool, I believe. Because it doesn’t read nuances in the same way a human is able to.” Interviewee A6

The respondent discussed that there will be a need for human presence in the assessment practices. The recruiters underscore that AI-enabled tools are not able to capture nuances of traits such as the candidate’s fit with company culture and values. Instead, the role of humans will be of significant importance in evaluating candidates on the presented aspects.

“But then it comes to a certain extent of human factor in assessing the whole, I believe. You can certainly program an AI bot to do anything. But these small components that you cannot read and link to the corporate culture or values.” Interviewee A6

5.1.3 Evaluating Skillset Dimensions

When asked about what skillset dimensions that recruiters expect for AI assessment tools to cover, they underlined that it differs depending on the role and volume of role recruitment. A few respondents pinpointed that they are more prone to implement an AI technology if the recruitment role is less specialized and the application levels are high. They argue that this is due to the required time of investment to orchestrate the tool properly for a specific position.

“I believe it is mainly for those who are in high volume recruitment, where you can establish a profile. Because it takes a while to build up a competency profile together with an AI robot. I would not implement them for random positions but if it is for a role where you have recurring recruitment needs and recruit high volumes where you can develop a profile.”

Interviewee A5

The respondents indicate that it is more beneficial from a financial perspective for larger firms to implement the tools. Orchestrating a functioning tool requires time investments. This makes AI assessment tools more beneficial for high volume evaluation as the benefits of utilizing the tools will outweigh the cost of implementation. Once orchestrated properly, the tool will assist in saving time for recruiters. Large firms are, therefore, more positive towards adopting AI assessment tools. The findings enhance that it will take more time and be more complex for firms with a more complex organizational structure to implement AI assessment tools. This is due to a more extensive communication process and the requirement of more people to approve of the tools and be engaged in the integration. However, the respondents do not imply that this has a relationship with the adoption of AI assessment tools.

Another respondent argues,

“It becomes significantly more sensitive to introduce it when we do more, what are called case interviews, that are more focused on the specific role” **Interviewee A7**

The interviewees agreed with the statement that AI-enabled tools for assessment would be applicable for soft skills, denoting to personality traits, and hard skills, entailing proficiency, competence and skills. The findings suggest that AI tools would be of great help for recruiters in evaluating personality and competence. Most interviewees underscored that hard skills would be more easily assessed, in comparison to soft skills. Some suggestions indicated that measuring hard skills leads to a more standardized evaluation. This is due to the capability to accurately predict technical proficiency skills required for a certain role.

“I think it could be a really good ally for the hard skills. Yeah, maybe not so good or not so accurate or easy to manage for soft skills. I think because the hard skills are usually quite straightforward and objective.” **Interviewee A13**

5.2 Employer Branding

5.2.1 Limiting Human Bias

HR recruiters expect that the adoption of AI tools for assessment could impact the recruitment process by making it more inclusive. By minimizing the unconscious human bias in assessment, AI-powered tools have the capability of providing a rather objective evaluation of applicants, in comparison to traditional assessment practices.

“I believe that it could contribute to a more objective evaluation. It may not have all the preferences that I may have. [...] You base much on and like things that confirm or reflect yourself. Therefore, AI can actually help you receive an input that is more objective. [...] It challenges me in my own prejudices.” Interviewee A2

A prevalent theme identified in the interviews was that AI may help minimize the unconscious bias of humans. The interviewees underlined that recruiters must be aware of potential existing algorithmic bias, to objectively conduct an evaluation of a candidate and interpret the results correctly. Respondent A12 enhances, “[...] you need to be aware of what bias it has, how you have perceived it and what information it has received” It is commonly brought up that there is a risk that bias is included in the algorithm as it is programmed by a human. Multiple HR recruiters realize that utilizing AI-enabled assessment tools could be a good combination with the traditional recruitment methods, by introducing procedures that reduce the impact of prejudice and subjectivity that may exist in human judgment.

“It is great to have a tool that can make sure that we always ask the same questions and it is very accurate based on that, but I think the scary thing is that it is still something that is built by the people who have chosen to produce the tool.” Interviewee A14

The findings further underscore the need for considering that humans are prompting the AI-models. This signifies that the tools will be subject to human elements which poses a risk for making the AI-enabled models less objective.

“When it comes to biases, I believe that you need to be aware that there is a human behind it. Although there are many people prompting, there is still a manual imposition when they have created these systems and when they have created the infrastructure.” Interviewee A12

The model will be dependent not only on how it is orchestrated and what data it is built upon, it will further rely on what individual and what organization that has prompted the model, posing a risk of algorithmic bias and objectivity of the assessment practices.

5.2.2 Inclusiveness and Fairness for Applicants

The interviews enhance that AI assessment tools in this context could provide companies with a way of assuring that applicants are treated equally throughout the recruitment process. This would allow organizations to operate towards increased fairness and inclusiveness in the hiring funnel. The interviewees recurrently express the expectation that utilizing AI tools for assessment, would allow for evaluating candidates on a similar basis if the algorithm is prompted to exclude bias.

“If ten different recruiters do it, there will still be some diversification in the assessment basis. Whereas if AI was to do it, it would probably be the same assessment of all candidates. [...] It is fundamental that everyone is treated equally, it is clear that an AI robot could possibly obtain that if it is assessed. [...] This is a good way of increasing diversity and inclusion which makes us less prone to being biased in the recruitment process.” Interviewee A5

The respondents furthermore discussed that AI-tools in this context could assist organizations in providing a larger pool of applicants with an opportunity to get evaluated on their full potential, instead of excluding candidates early due to stereotypes originating from human bias. This advocates for inclusion by welcoming a greater number of applicants to be considered for job openings and receive objective evaluations.

“Perhaps it would help one to be a little more open-minded and not exclude certain candidates too quickly. Once you have selected some candidates or a set of criteria, that is what you stick to and then you allow the technology to do the job and then you trust that.” Interviewee A6

Instead, the interviewees argue that making use of an algorithm would allow the assessment solely to be based on a pre-established set of criteria by providing an assessment of similar format to all candidates. This would allow for increasing the correctness and fairness of the evaluation.

“We humans are very biased and so can AI be too. However, you could exclude that - it does not matter where the candidate originates from, what the name of the candidate is or what their picture looks like - you only look at the technical aspects. There, I think that it might have been better with an AI-tool.” Interviewee A9

However, if the algorithm entails bias or is unable to capture all necessary nuances of traits, the HR recruiter mutually enhances that inclusiveness may not be obtained. Respondent A10 states, *“I think that an AI-bot can be too biased, but I do believe that you can utilize it in the future.*

However, if you want diversity within your organization, I am unsure if an AI-robot can address nuances of attributes in profiles and what you are looking for but I would be thankful for it.”

On the other hand, the interviewees revealed that algorithmic bias is one of the largest threats of implementing AI-enabled tools for assessment. Algorithmic bias can lead to substantial negative effects for an organization by risking to discriminate against candidates and jeopardize fairness in the assessment practices. Respondent A4 enhances: *“I think a risk is of course that there is bias trained in the tool.”* Utilizing an AI tool that contains bias, risks eliminating the objectiveness of the evaluation of applicants, and ranking applicants with certain attributes favorably. This can put the brand and reputation of an organization at great risk.

“[...] If it should be considered that we have for some reason leaked information or if it would have emerged that the AI tool has not been very objective, but rather very subjective in its assessment, it would affect our brand.” Interviewee A7

The respondents stressed that there have been tests for assessment shown to exclude candidates based on gender. Hence, the importance to be cautious was underscored regarding what specific AI-enabled assessment tools to adopt when aiming to eliminate the risk of algorithmic bias in assessment. Risks might arise where the tools instead also engage in the discrimination of applicants and result in exclusion.

“I know that there have been studies conducted implying that the majority of times, men are ranked higher by the tests in comparison to women. [...] However, there may be other tests that will be inclusive for all people, because they are better suited to evaluate what is relevant for the job opening.” Interviewee A9

5.2.3 Impersonalized Candidate Experience

The interviews disclosed that adopting AI-enabled tools for assessment in the recruitment process, could contribute to creating an improved experience for applicants. Implementing AI tools in this context can provide flexibility for a candidate by allowing them to decide when to engage in a test. HR recruiters see a risk in high levels of automation in the evaluation of candidates, highlighting that it may result in an impersonal experience for applicants. Respondent A3 implies, *“I would probably say that the assessment side is more sensitive.”* It is argued that automation sources an impersonal experience as it is orchestrated for the large mass

of people. Respondent A1 enhances, *“Automation often becomes quite impersonal in order for it to work for most people.”*

It is conveyed among many interviewees that such practice is sensitive in the assessment stage of the process, and that there is an increasing need of involvement in terms of human interaction during the assessment stage. Thus, automation in this stage can weaken the experience for candidates and consequently have negative effects on employer branding. Incorporating AI assessment tools may induce negative perceptions during the process, diminishing reputation.

“In the screening stage, I do not think that we would have received that much feedback. [...] Had it been at a later stage, if it was an AI-robot interviewing them, they would have needed to know. Then, I do not know if it would have been very positive, many people perceive it as impersonal.” Interviewee A9

5.3 Challenging the HR Role

5.3.1 Upskilling

A recurring theme that recruiters emphasize is the belief that AI assessment tools will change the HR role and demand upskilling. They emphasize the importance of understanding how AI-enabled assessment tools function and what opportunities exist in today's market. The interviewees informed that the development of AI assessment tools has been rapidly advancing. However, recruiters' knowledge and understanding of the tools lag behind the fast pace of development.

“There is a lack of knowledge about the possibilities that exist. It's also because I'm not familiar with them. Then I definitely won't use them.” Interviewee A2

More exactly, the interviewees discuss the need for learning and acquiring new skills in order to understand how to effectively utilize and train the tools, how to interpret the results it provides and where to raise ethical considerations. The respondents presented suggestions that an increase of knowledge in this area will allow for a better understanding of how to incorporate AI tools alongside traditional recruitment methods. The findings enhance the need for new knowledge as a barrier for implementation.

“I believe that for us as an organization, part of it would be to ensure that people understand how it works. And honestly, education is one of those things that would initially take time. But

it's something that if everyone were to choose and educate themselves, it wouldn't take more time. [...] And then I think it would be to educate everyone to be a bit critical as well. Not blindly trusting what AI says." **Interviewee A1**

5.3.2 Change of Task Orientation

A common view amongst the interviewees was that the implementation of AI tools in the assessment stage would potentially result in a positive task orientation shift of the HR recruiter's role. HR recruiters will spend more of their time analyzing and interpreting data and understanding algorithms, rather than manually conducting candidate assessments.

"And that's something that, it will become a skill that recruiters will need to build in a completely different way and learn how to communicate with AI or how to ensure it does what I actually want it to." **Interviewee A1**

The majority of the respondents highlighted that adding an AI tool for administrative tasks in the assessment stage would enhance and improve the strategic decision making and candidate experience. The interviewees argued that it would allow for more time spent on perfecting recruitment strategies or supporting candidates through the entire recruitment process. A fraction of recruiters pointed out that AI tools could eliminate many administrative tasks in the screening stage, allowing recruiters to spend more time on applicants in the assessment stage. They argued that this would make their job more fun and collaborative, while allowing for more time spent engaging with the applicants.

"And hopefully, I mean if there are significant time savings for each individual recruiter, then we can spend more time on the qualitative collaboration or on the relationship itself and ensure that it works well and maybe have more time to learn about that team or part of the organization that you support. And I really think that it can provide, hopefully in the long-run, a more enjoyable experience as a recruiter." **Interviewee A14**

Most of the interviewees believe that adding an AI-enabled assessment tool could lead to more effectiveness and spare the recruiter's time, when the tools have been trained to evaluate candidate's in accordance with the recruiters' requests. This is due to the ability for AI to process large volumes of candidate data faster than humans are able to. Several respondents argued that recruiters would be positive towards implementing AI-enabled tools for assessment practices, to automate repetitive tasks and free up their time to focus on the candidate experience or more on the strategic aspects.

“Yeah. [...] Things could be done maybe in advance by a candidate without the interviewer. I think things could be speeded up and you can get maybe more compact insights in some sort of a report and that's it.” Interviewee A4

Another respondent argued,

“I think it's more about efficiency, that it would save us a lot of time initially. When the tool starts learning what we're looking for.” Interviewee A7

5.3.3 Establishing Appropriate Metrics

The analysis of the data reveals that HR recruiters do not find AI assessment tools to be complex to use. However, recruiters believe that their task orientation will be challenged by the requirement to establish appropriate metrics for AI-enabled assessment tools to be as objective and fair as possible. This will be a challenge in the adoption of AI assessment tools. The respondents mentioned that implementing an AI assessment tool would require constant monitoring and adjustment to ensure that the metrics align with organizational and role specific goals. It is furthermore vital to ensure that the tools in use are fair and bias free. Mastering the stated serves as a requirement for successful adoption. One interviewee argued that this would increase the importance for collaboration with managers to ensure that role specific specifications are as accurate as possible.

“I believe that the biggest risk is that we are not sufficiently skilled at creating specifications or requirements so that we, as the client, may not be proficient enough. [...] As the clients we need to do a good enough job, and all the managers in our organization who have personnel responsibility are different, and then maybe we need to have some kind of model for setting specifications. It may need to become more uniform.” Interviewee A11

The interviewees continued the discussion by underlining that usually when there is a third party involved, it is necessary to learn their methods and models. This requires additional collaboration between the firm and the external party. Several respondents also considered the extra data protection necessary to realize when in collaboration with a third party, emphasizing to carefully handle confidential internal firm information.

“The suppliers we have met have their own. [...] so they have their own model, they work for them. So somehow you have to rely on that their model measures what we ask for. And that's where you need to implement, pilot and test together. [...] you have to think about whatever AI product you choose to work with, it will be about developing together. There are no ready-made solutions today that are tailored, everything is development.” Interviewee A5

5.4 Increased Pressure on Accountability

5.4.1 Compliance and the Handling of Sensitive Data

The respondents uncovered that an implementation of AI assessment tools would put increased pressure on compliance and the handling of sensitive data of organizations. During the assessment stage, recruiters commonly engage in conversations with the candidates revealing sensitive information. These discussions contain data that is not acceptable to store. Respondent A13 implied, *“The dilemma is the data, the sensitive data.”* However, the recruiters underscored that there is a risk that an AI assessment tool may not be capable of classifying sensitive versus non-sensitive data. This poses a threat to the privacy and integrity of applicants. Consequently, utilizing AI tools for assessment is expected to require human supervision to segregate the data.

“[...] when it is people and it is GDPR issues and privacy, managers should be involved in, sensitive data can be disclosed. Because there is also a lot to be said about the fact that candidates can share sensitive data and you cannot save it, there it also becomes very sensitive. Then it is almost required that someone controls that also, so that you do not save that kind of data that you are not allowed to save. That can be tricky because an AI-robot may not be able to distinguish that.” Interviewee A5

The interviews reveal that AI-tools in this context endangered the integrity of applicants. More exactly, utilizing AI-enabled tools for assessment requires sharing the information of individuals in the training of the tools. Consequently, applicants are at risk of being scored in databases before applying to job openings. Thus, it is of importance to establish procedures that process the data correctly while being cautious on how recruiters handle privacy challenges of AI-powered tools for assessment. This puts pressure on recruiters to utilize the tools for a correct purpose and in a fair way.

“This is the risk with AI, talking about GDPR and integrity. You can do so much with AI, with the help of AI. [...] So then you have to be very cautious with how you handle it, how you use AI and for what purpose so that it is fair and is used for the correct purpose”. Interviewee A6

The interviewees indicate that implementing AI for assessment will place crucial emphasis on the practices of compliance, data storage and alignment with GDPR. This will require managers to be cautious with regards to what tools they adopt and what data the tools are authorized to access. Furthermore, the findings enhance the requirement for the tools to function in accordance with GDPR.

“We have GDPR being a part of all of it. You need to consider what tools you make use of to avoid spreading the data of candidates in a faulty way. If you give it comprehensive access to an individual's profiles, you will need to make sure that you have their consent to do so. So that is also an aspect of personal integrity.” Interviewee A1

It was emphasized that the increased risk of privacy and integrity issues can be mitigated through use of in-house resources to increase trustworthiness, ensuring clear firm compliance of the tool along with GDPR. Respondent A9 stressed, *“Compliance, what kind of company it is, third-party information or data storage, we are very careful with this [...] In this case, it might be a product that we would create ourselves.”* Involving external actors for the integration of AI assessment tools enhances the risk that confidential information will be leaked or that the capabilities and attributes of candidates that the recruiting company is looking for are revealed.

“Compliance is also very important, especially within talent acquisition because of the GDPR in Europe [...] Here, we do need to have the IT team involved to take care of the compliance of the tool, that everything is safe, that it is encrypted, that we will not have any issues, that no data will be given [...] so that will be very important.” Interviewee A8

The findings highlighted the existence of current and coming governmental regulations as crucial in the AI adoption within assessment. Both internal policies and external laws addressing AI usage, will put pressure on the companies on how to implement the tools and deal with the data. However, the regulations and policies will not affect the decision of adoption. Instead, these aspects would be of relevance for considering the implementation of the tools for assessment, by posing as barriers for implementation and demanding resources. A majority of respondents emphasized that industry specific regulations did not have an impact on recruiters' willingness to adopt AI assessment tools. The environment of different sectors did not have a relationship with adoption. However, specific industries, in this case professional services and financial services, have an increased level of regulations to comply with. Therefore, the interviewees pointed out that there needs to be extra caution in these circumstances.

“Our biggest barrier, that may have been if there would arise any legal requirements or legal aspects within regulations that we feel like we could not live up to [...] or if any internal policies would emerge.” Interviewee A3

Furthermore, another respondent stated:

“The AI Act in the zone of Europe came last week [...] that is the largest and major danger zone if we think about that, within the area. There it is the most high risk for different types of AI tools.” Interviewee A12

5.4.2 Explainability and a Dilemma of Shared Control

The compiled results from the interviews indicated that imposing AI-enabled tools for assessment would put pressure on recruiters by sourcing new aspects that they will be required to explain in regards to the rankings of candidates. This serves as a consequence of shared control.

“I think of risks, the ethical considerations, getting sued [...] someone thinks that it is just discrimination, and there was not any human interaction. How can we justify that it was not our fault in the way we set up the system?” Interviewee A8

By collaborating with an AI tool, recruiters will not only have to explain their own evaluations of applicants, but additionally the scoring of a candidate where an AI assessment tool has contributed to the overall ranking. The shared control poses a dilemma of accountability of the compiled metrics leading up to a concluded ranking of an applicant. This requires recruiters to engage in additional explainability, by being required to elaborate on the evaluations that are not solely conducted by the recruiter. Therefore, employers must be cautious in understanding how AI is utilized and what aspects are considered in the overall scoring. The results present an evident dilemma that HR recruiters clash on the view of who takes on responsibility and unsure how to explain decisions determined by AI-enabled assessment tools.

“You have to be cautious in really understanding how we use it and how the assessment is made [...] You always have to take the main responsibility as an employer. “Why did I choose this person and not the other person?” [...] I think that a big risk is that you do not understand how the assessment is conducted and that you end up in a situation where you have to show facts on why we decided to recruit candidate A over candidate C. If you have a hard time elaborating on that in a good way, then it is a risk.” Interviewee A3

However, another respondent added,

“If AI conducts an assessment [...] and we should reject a candidate, who is responsible for that decision? [...] How should you explain to an applicant that we declined their application after an AI-interview? [...] The only one they met was an AI-tool and it made a rejection.” Interviewee A7

The findings underscore that this would require recruiters to engage in training to develop the critical mindset required. The employers would continuously need to review and question the AI-enabled tool to assure that decisions are made on a correct basis. This could partly be done by analyzing samples of AI's contribution. Therefore, it is highlighted to refrain from placing excessive trust in the tool, as this could result in faulty evaluation practices. Respondent A7 enhances, “It is a black box when it does things on its own.” Furthermore, providing

transparency regarding AI utilization, referring to instances where it has been employed and where it has not, will be highly valuable in addressing the dilemma of shared control.

“I believe that you should train everyone in being critical, you should not blindly trust what AI says. And that you continue to iterate and question it [...] And that you believe that it does a good job and then you avoid pausing and questioning it.” Interviewee AI

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter will focus on discussing the findings presented earlier, in accordance with literature and theories in use. The discussion will refine UTAUT and TOE frameworks in this new domain, examining HR recruiters' adoption intentions and perceptions of AI assessment tools in the selection process. Thereafter, the four key aggregate dimensions will be revised in line with literature, as well as capturing aspects beyond the scope of the aforementioned theories relevant to answer the research question. Concluding this study, the authors provide an answer to the research question: *How do HR recruiters expect the integration of AI talent assessment tools to impact recruitment processes?* Finally, the discussion will elaborate on both theoretical and managerial implications in alignment with the findings of the study, while addressing its limitations and examining avenues for future research.

6.1 The Four Dimensions Impacting the Recruitment Process

The four aggregate dimensions: assisting elements, employer branding, challenging the HR role and accountability challenges, present a combination of new and established findings in relation to literature discussed in Chapter 2. The dimensions provide a contribution to further understanding and progress in the field of recruitment.

6.1.1 Assisting elements

The findings provide new insights, emphasizing in what way HR recruiters are willing to implement AI-enabled assessment tools. Literature is indecisive of the role of AI tools for recruitment practices on a general level (Horodyski, 2023; Sakka et al., 2022; Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). The results identify that regardless of the AI tool in usage, recruiters agreed that AI assessment tools should be treated as an assisting instrument rather than being fully immersed in the recruitment process. The presented finding can be explained through an existing

skepticism towards full automation for areas in HR. Instead, combining automation with a human may be perceived more positively for HR practices (Kares et al., 2023).

Further evaluating on the role of AI, the empirical results emphasize the need for human participation in assessing candidates. More exactly, the recruiters enhance the need for human judgment to ensure a functioning and collaborative environment incorporating a nuanced assessment of candidates. AI assessment tools are not expected to react to emotional intelligence in the same way as a human recruiter, making it limited to fit for culture. Literature enhances that AI tools can provide an evaluation of fit for culture (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). However, there is a need for questioning how the data can be linked to sequential job performance (Black and van Esch, 2020) as the accuracy of the data presented by the algorithm in predicting employment-related outcomes is uncertain (Kelan, 2023).

The literature furthermore enhances that AI assessment tools possess the ability of conducting in-depth evaluations of candidates' personality traits, skills, competence along with capabilities (Chen, 2022). In alignment, the findings from the interviews reveal that recruiters expect AI-enabled tools to assist in the assessment of both hard and soft skills. However, in contrast to the literature, a new finding is presented as respondents expect AI assessment tools to be utilized mainly for evaluating hard skills. The insight underscores that AI assessment tools will have a more prominent role in the evaluation of proficiency and competence, in comparison to personality assessments.

6.1.2 Employer Branding

The interviewees and the literature mutually agree that introducing AI-enabled tools for assessment could have the potential to mitigate human bias. However, both articulate that utilizing AI can instead impose algorithmic bias (Soleymani et al., 2022). Thus, a subjective judgment is at risk. Furthermore, literature enhances the existence of biases introduced by algorithmic designers and limited data sets enhancing the risk of encoding biases. This can result in replication of human biases (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). Although the tools might incorporate bias, the tools can assist in providing fairness and correctness in evaluation as they provide a similar evaluation for all applicants. Unilever demonstrated this in practice, by

implementing AI assessment tools and evaluating applicants' traits while eliminating non-material characteristics when scoring them. The firm's practises conclude that the AI assessment tools can reduce human bias in assessment, allowing for diversity in hire (Hu, 2023). However, HR recruiters and literature both have a mutual view that the situation is twofold addressing inclusiveness and fairness for applicants in the recruitment process. This twofold situation is presented by Kares et al. (2023) where their results reveal that applicants who had experienced prior human-base discrimination usually perceive decisions made by an algorithm more positively than candidates without such experience (Koch-Bayram et al., 2023). Therefore, while AI enabled assessment tools can provide a fair and objective judgment to increase inclusiveness, AI has the risk of further enhancing human judgment and creating programmed unaware biases in the process of assessing.

Furthermore, it is evident from the results presented that HR recruiters view AI enabled assessment tools as a concern to making the assessment stage of candidates more impersonal. Literature agrees with this statement and emphasizes that AI should be handled with caution in order to make sure that each candidate is given the human guidance necessary in order to integrate into the company's culture and environment (Black and van Esch, 2020). Moreover, this enhances a positive experience with the company during selection, especially when candidate volumes are large and many applicants do not receive an offer (Chen, 2022). The impersonalization factor is further enhanced in the findings presented by Kares et al. (2023) emphasizing that having a human oversee an automated system may alleviate negative reactions that can result from a fully automated process. The findings reveal that HR recruiters are willing to adopt AI talent assessment tools to provide candidates with the flexibility to complete assessments and interviews. Despite the convenience of flexibility, eliminating human interaction through AI assessment tools still poses a big risk of impersonalizing the candidate experience.

6.1.3 Challenging the HR Role

Literature stresses the importance for recruiters to understand how AI tools for recruitment practices function. Consequently, implementing AI tools in the recruitment process requires reverting attention to learning what the tools are evaluating (Black and van Esch, 2020). The findings complement the presented perspective with a new insight by isolating the scope of the

recruitment process and solely considering the assessment stage. In doing so, the findings enhance the importance of upskilling, partly for recruiters, to understand and utilize AI assessment tools in the correct manner before implementing them. The interviewees discussed that knowledge on the functionality of AI assessment tools is required to master how to adopt the AI tools when being paired with traditional assessment practices.

The literature suggests that AI tools for recruitment can increase the processing ability of HR departments. Moreover, the tools facilitate increased efficiency and possess the capability for substituting the repetitive tasks of recruiters (Sakka et al., 2022). This perception can elaborate on why practitioners consider task automation tools as one of the AI tools for recruitment that they rely mostly on (Albert, 2019). However, firms must adapt the way they work to fully utilize the opportunity of emerging AI tools for hiring (Horodyski, 2023). In alignment, the findings reveal that recruiters expect that implementing AI tools for assessment can allow for greater efficiency and lead to a shift in task orientation for the recruiters. The interviewees further add that this shift is expected to be positive by allowing managers to spend less time engaging in administrative tasks in the assessment stage. Instead, the shift would facilitate time for recruiters to concentrate on strategic decision making and on spending more time engaging with the applicants.

The findings complement this perspective by underscoring that the shift in task orientation will include more time dedicated to analyzing data and understanding the algorithms. HR recruiters put heavy emphasis on the challenge to establish appropriate metrics for AI assessment tools to align with organizational and role specific goals. The interviewees further addressed the importance of monitoring and prompting the tools correctly. The need for monitoring AI tools should be incorporated in recruitment practices to ensure an adequate performance (Kelan, 2023) as well as for prompting the model correctly (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). To build upon this, the recruiters underscore the risk that the firm is not sufficiently skilled at creating nuanced specifications for AI assessment tools and that recruiters might need the assistance of a model for setting specifications. The stated finding could be explained by the fact that decision-making algorithms are ambiguous, even for experts (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022).

6.1.4 Accountability Challenges

The findings and literature amplify ethical considerations surrounding privacy and informed consent when integrating AI tools into the recruitment process. Increased emphasis is placed on responsibilities for adhering to governmental regulations, such as GDPR and the AI act (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022; European Commission, 2024). However, the results outline and reveal the specific effects and pressure that exists with adopting AI tools within the “candidate assessment” stage. The adoption of AI-enabled assessment tools increases the pressure on compliance and handling of sensitive data. Conversations with candidates constitute a significant part of the assessment phase, involving sensitive data that should not be stored or retained. Thus, adopting AI assessment tools poses significant risk to privacy and integrity in this phase, presenting potential long-term negative effects if not used in compliance with current and evolving policies and regulations. To address the risk, it is supported to utilize in-house resources to enhance trust and ensure dependable tools.

Explainability is presented as an issue that triggers the “dilemma of shared control”. In line with literature, the results underscored the issue of explainability and “black box” of AI that present a challenge for recruiters to understand and explain evaluations made by an AI if they adopt AI tools during the assessment stage. Therefore, given the sensitive nature of assessment, recruiting firms need adequate levels of data knowledge to be able to explain the decisions made by an AI-enabled assessment tool (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). The results and literature still present an important unresolved dilemma of shared control, concerning the question of who is responsible for the decision-making process when there is an AI tool making decisions (Yam and Skorburg, 2021; Chen, 2022). The results verified this dilemma for assessment tools, consequently.

6.2 Refining Theories

6.2.1 Refining Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use Theory

The results clearly present a relationship with various dimensions in the UTAUT theoretical framework, presenting a refined model with clear relationships pertaining performance expectancy, effort expectancy and facilitating conditions (see Figure 3). The empirical findings

demonstrate a positive relationship between individuals' intention to adopt AI assessment tools and their performance expectations. It is evident that HR recruiters expect the ability for AI enabled assessment tools to provide benefits and overall efficiency in their recruitment. Recruiters believe that AI assessment tools can enhance overall performance by providing more objectivity, reducing human bias and providing the recruiter's with more time for important strategic task orientations. Specifically, respondents highlighted that AI-driven assessment tools minimize subjectivity that exists in human judgment, leading to a more fair and consistent decision-making process during recruitment. Additionally, recruiters argue that AI assessment tools will change the HR role positively by reverting attention from administrative tasks to more strategic tasks that will streamline the recruitment process.

In a similar way to the first dimension, the empirical results present a positive relationship between the intention to adopt AI enabled assessment tools in relation to individuals' expectancy about the ease of use of the technology. This dimension suggests that while effort expectancy is low in terms of general usability of AI assessment tools, there are certain challenges regarding the configuration of AI to meet the various needs and requirements of different recruitment processes and different job roles. AI enabled assessment tools are not perceived as difficult to use. However, the challenge identified is setting the right metrics into the AI. It is challenging to identify accurate and precise criteria that align with firm requirements and that can capture all the necessary role-specific attributes. There was no relationship between social influence and HR recruiters' intention to adopt AI enabled assessment tools, indicating that the degree of influence that others have on recruiters to implement the tools is currently very low. In terms of facilitating conditions, the results reveal a positive relationship between the availability of IT infrastructure to support implementation and intention to adopt AI enabled assessment tools. Specifically, HR recruiters expressed that the need for in-house IT resources is always necessary to implement and effectively maintain AI assessment tools.

As a moderator, age was emphasized to have an effect on all three predictors established above; facilitating conditions, effort expectancy and performance expectancy. HR recruiters of a younger age tend to have a more positive attitude and possess a more intentional standpoint to adopt AI for candidate assessment.

6.2.2 Refining the Technology, Organization and Environment Framework

This study refines the TOE framework, in the context of AI-enabled tools for assessment in the recruitment process (see Figure 3). The findings discussed that the technological context has a relationship with recruiters' adoption of AI tools for assessment, partly in forms of technological availability. The interviewees underscored the early maturity and scarcity of established AI assessment tools. Consequently, expressing skepticism in fully relying on AI tools in this context and expect to be more inclined to adopt AI assessment tools as they become more established and progress in maturity. This would enable a testing phase for the AI tools to ensure their functionality. Recruiters' adoption of AI assessment tools furthermore has a relationship with the characteristic of available and emerging technology, in forms of their capabilities. The respondents perceived AI tools for assessment not to be complex in terms of usability, advocating for adoption. However, the recruiters revealed that the trust in implementing AI assessment tools is dependent on whether the tools can function in accordance with GDPR and that recruiters are concerned with how the tools handle sensitive data, being a requirement for adoption. This concern was greater for adopting AI assessment tools from third parties. The willingness to adopt is further dependent on if the considered tools are capable of excluding algorithmic bias and can capture nuance of traits, further arguing for a relationship between adoption and the characteristics of technology.

The recruiters underscored a relationship between the organizational context of recruiters and the adoption of AI assessment tools. The findings suggest that AI tools in this context are more advantageous for firms engaging in high volumes of assessments, making them more favorable to adopt for larger organizations with more resources. Accordingly, the interviews uncovered that larger firms are more inclined to adopt AI assessment tools. Complementary, the recruiters emphasized that large firms typically have more complex structures. This results in a more complicated adoption process that takes longer times due to extensive communication processes. Although it can be concluded that the organizational structure has an effect on the adoption process, it does not have a relationship with recruiters' adoption of AI assessment tools.

The study emphasizes that the environmental context did not have a relationship with recruiters' adoption of AI assessment tools. The interviewees emphasized that existing and emerging

governmental regulations pertaining to AI usage for assessment serve as a barrier for adopting AI assessment tools. The regulations put pressure on firms by demanding them to utilize the tools under restricted circumstances. Furthermore, the sector in which a company operates is affected by how extensive the pressure of policies are. Recruiters operating in professional or financial services are under greater pressure, resulting in a high barrier of adoption by needing to ensure accuracy of the AI assessment tools to a greater extent. However, neither the industry characteristics in forms of industry environment of a firm or policies within sectors had a relationship with recruiters' expectations on the adoption of AI assessment tools.

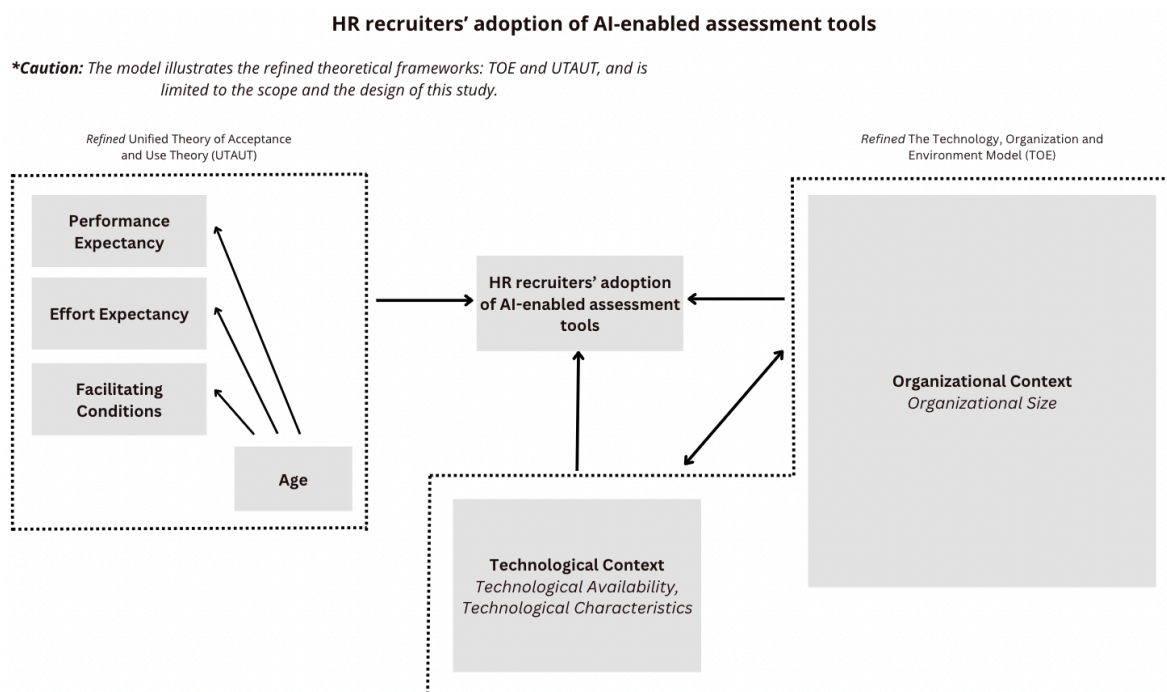


Figure 3

6.3 Answer to the Research Question

Through a qualitative study, this thesis explored the research question: *How do HR recruiters expect the integration of AI-enabled assessment tools to impact recruitment processes?* The frameworks TOE and UTAUT facilitated in exploring recruiters' adoption of AI assessment tools by examining individual-level constructs and considering external and internal contexts of recruiters. Recruiters' adoption of AI assessment tools had a relationship with: the organizational context, the technological context, performance expectancy, effort expectancy and facilitating

conditions (see Figure 4). Recruiters anticipate AI-enabled assessment tools to take on an assisting role in assessment practices, specifically in the evaluation of hard skills. Yet, human participation will remain vital for ensuring a collaborative environment and capturing nuances of applicants' traits. Recruiters perceive the tools to mitigate human bias and subjectivity, enhance fairness and inclusiveness in the recruitment process. However, their integration is anticipated to depersonalize the candidate experience, potentially impacting employer branding negatively. Recruiters expect that AI assessment tools will reshape the HR role, eliminating the need for engaging in administrative tasks during assessment. However, mastering the tools will require upskilling and introduce challenges in establishing metrics to align with organizational and role specific goals. Recruiters convey a cautious mindset towards accountability challenges posed by AI towards assessment, emphasizing the need for increased vigilance to ensure compliance and safeguard sensitive data. Further, explainability is crucial to address in order to determine accountability for decisions made by an AI. Figure 4 presents a summary compiling the refined theories of UTAUT and TOE (on the left) and relationships captured in this study beyond the scope of the theoretical framework (on the right). In combination, the model illustrates the four main dimensions enhancing how recruiters expect the integration of AI-enabled assessment tools to impact the recruitment process through four dimensions by: acting as an assisting element, challenging employer branding, altering the HR role and generating accountability challenges (see Figure 4).

The Main Contributions of this Thesis

***Interpretation of the model:** The model illustrates the refined UTAUT and TOE (to the left) and the additional aspects captured by the qualitative study (to the right). Combined, the aspects conclude the four dimensions of recruiters' expectations.

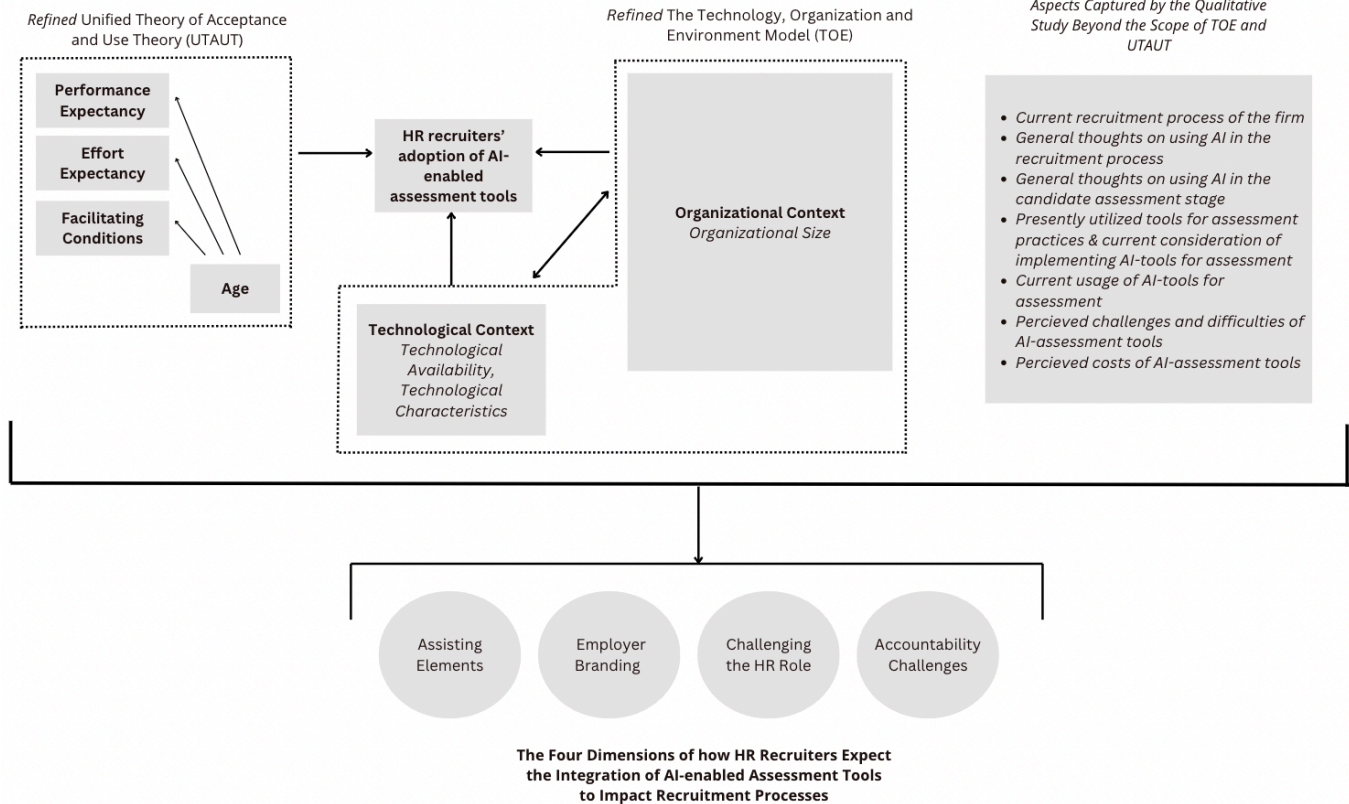


Figure 4

6.4 Theoretical implications

The theoretical contribution of this study entails a refined model of the existing theories, UTAUT and TOE, identifying dimensions that have a relation with recruiters' adoption of AI assessment tools in the assessment stage of the recruitment process. The theories by Venkatesh et al. and Tornatzky and Fleischer, can be refined through our results indicating that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, the organizational and the technological contexts have a relationship with recruiters' adoption of AI assessment tools (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Pan et al., 2021). This study extends the findings of Horodyski's (2023) study that examines recruiters' perception of AI-based tools in recruitment. The presented findings build on the previous by establishing the underlying perceptions pertaining to the usage of AI enabled tools particularly for the assessment of candidates. By making use of these insights, researchers can effectively explore what specific AI assessment tools best fulfill the expectations of

recruiters. The identified concerns and opportunities of recruiters' regarding AI assessment tools, further opens up a relevant area for investigation by exploring how to overcome such concerns or make use of opportunities. Horodyski (2023) further refines UTAUT in the perspective of AI-based tools for recruitment. In alignment, Pan et al. (2022) conducts a study on the adoption of AI in the recruitment process, from the perspective of the TOE framework. The study of this paper extends the research of both studies, by refining UTAUT and TOE in the context of AI assessment tools in isolation. In doing so, the study identifies aspects that have a relationship with adoption of AI assessment tools for recruiters. This advises researchers on what aspects to focus on when investigating the adoption of AI assessment tools in quantitative approach. This would allow for comparing the levels of impact of the dimensions.

6.5 Managerial Implications

This study provides implications and insights for practitioners across multiple domains: recruiting firms, HR recruiters and AI developers. From the standpoint of recruiting firms, the results provide insights into the future evolution of the HR recruiter role. This allows organizations to undertake necessary actions and effectively allocate resources within the HR department. More exactly, this enables organizations to strategically invest in human capital by effectively allocating resources towards the upskilling of current employees, as well for recruiting new employees with the demanded competencies. Furthermore, this study indicates the importance for recruiters to select, cautiously prompt AI and strategically choose AI collaboration partners, to prevent adverse effects on employer branding. Consequently, AI developers are given guidance where to allocate their efforts to provide attractive AI tools for assessment, as well understand the assisting role that recruiters expect the tools undertake. The insights indicate for what purpose recruiters are more inclined to utilize AI tools. In addition, insights highlight the level of transparency needed in the orchestration of the tools, for them to fulfill the requested needs for recruiters and thus be competitive. This guides AI-developers to satisfy the requests of recruiters to a greater extent, increasing the ability to monetize their product offerings. By allowing AI-developers to focus on enhancing the functionalities requested by recruiters, AI assessment tools can improve the hiring experience of recruiters. For example, an AI assessment tool could improve efficiency. Finally, for policy makers, accountability challenges and the specified role of emerging AI tools for assessment, clarify the future nature

and extent to which regulations must govern this domain. Consequently, the insights narrow down relevant areas for policy makers to focus on, allowing for efficiently allocating initiatives.

6.6 Limitations and Future Research

There are multiple limitations identifiable for this study. Due to the early maturity of AI tools in this context, the study investigates AI assessment tools without limiting the scope to a set of specific tools. Instead, this study integrates existing and emerging tools providing overall key dimensions on recruiters' expectations and perspectives regarding AI assessment tools. Future research could investigate individual AI tools for assessment and analyze how these tools in particular are perceived by HR recruiters, such as AI-interviews or gamification. Candidates' perspectives and perceptions towards the different AI tools in this context could also further examine what characterizes an optimal adoption from the applicant's view. Furthermore, this study is limited to the Swedish market meaning that the analysis is solely based on perceptions and expectations of recruiters in Sweden. Future research can, therefore, examine the perceptions of recruiters in other countries and investigate whether the expectations and level of maturity varies internationally. In alignment, research is advised to examine whether recruiters' expectations regarding the impact of the tools differ between sectors and industries, as this paper is limited to distinguishing these factors. Finally, this study is limited by elaborating briefly on the 2nd order concepts that establish the identified aggregate dimensions. Future research is advised to further examine these dimensions and explore them through a practical perspective. For example, future research can examine the concept of "upskilling" by elaborating on what exact competences will be needed and how recruiters must train to gain these skills.

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8. Appendix

Appendix 1 - Interview Guide

“First of all, we want to thank you for participating in an interview with us for our qualitative study. We want to assure you that your confidentiality is of utmost importance to us and any information shared during the interview will be anonymized and used solely for academic purposes. Your engagement is voluntary, and you retain the right to choose not to respond to any inquiries posed to you.”

During the interview, we will refer to the concept of "candidate assessment". Candidate assessment, in this context, encompasses a comprehensive assessment of applicants' skills, abilities, and personality profiles.

INTRODUCTION

- (Voluntary) Gender, Age (*Aspects Captured by the Qualitative Study Beyond the Scope of TOE and UTAUT*)
- What is your position within the company and how long have you held this position? (*Aspects Captured by the Qualitative Study Beyond the Scope of TOE and UTAUT*)
- What are your main responsibilities? (*Aspects Captured by the Qualitative Study Beyond the Scope of TOE and UTAUT*)

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

Focus: The entire recruitment process

- If you were to briefly describe it, what does your recruitment process look like today? (*Aspects Captured by the Qualitative Study Beyond the Scope of TOE and UTAUT*)
- What are your general thoughts on using AI in the recruitment process? (*Aspects Captured by the Qualitative Study Beyond the Scope of TOE and UTAUT*)

Focus: Only the "candidate assessment" stage

- What are your general thoughts on using AI in the candidate evaluation stage (interviews, competency assessment, personality assessment, gamification)? (*Aspects Captured by the Qualitative Study Beyond the Scope of TOE and UTAUT*)
- What tools do you currently use for candidate evaluation (interviews, skill assessment, personality assessment, gamification)? (*Aspects Captured by the Qualitative Study Beyond the Scope of TOE and UTAUT*)
 - Are you currently considering implementing AI tools for such evaluation? If so, which ones, where in the recruitment process, and for what purpose?
- Do you currently utilize AI tools in candidate evaluation? If so, which ones, where in the recruitment process, and for what purpose? (*Aspects Captured by the Qualitative Study Beyond the Scope of TOE and UTAUT*)
- Do you believe there has been a general increase in the use of AI tools for candidate evaluation? If so, which ones, where in the recruitment process, and for what purpose? (*Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use Theory: Social Influence*)
- Are there contexts where you would be more or less inclined to implement AI tools for evaluation (personality assessment, competency assessment)? (*Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use Theory: Performance Expectancy*)
- Do you perceive AI tools in this context to be easy or difficult to use? (*The Technology, Organization and Environment Framework: Technological Context & Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use Theory: Effort Expectancy*)
- Do you believe there are AI talent assessment tools that can offer advantages or opportunities in the recruitment process compared to the traditional recruitment process? (*Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use Theory: Performance Expectancy*)
- Do you think there are drawbacks or risks associated with implementing AI tools in this area? This compared to the traditional recruitment process. (*Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use Theory: Performance Expectancy*)
- Do you believe there are any challenges or difficulties regarding the use of AI assessment tools? (*Aspects Captured by the Qualitative Study Beyond the Scope of TOE and UTAUT*)

- What are your thoughts on the costs (missed opportunities, expenses, time) of AI assessment tools? *(Aspects Captured by the Qualitative Study Beyond the Scope of TOE and UTAUT)*
- Does the structure of your organization (size, management structure) affect your decision to use AI talent assessment tools in this context? *(The Technology, Organization and Environment Framework: Organizational Context)*
- How can the availability of internal and external IT resources affect your decision to use AI talent assessment tools? Do you consider IT resources important for the ability to implement these tools? *(The Technology, Organization and Environment Framework: Technological Context, Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use Theory: Facilitating Conditions)*
- How can the structure of your industry (e.g., laws) and competitor behavior affect your decision to implement AI talent assessment tools? *(The Technology, Organization and Environment Framework: Environmental Context)*
- What response do you expect candidates to have to the introduction of AI talent assessment tools for evaluation (interviews, competency assessment, personality assessment, gamification)? *(Aspects Captured by the Qualitative Study Beyond the Scope of TOE and UTAUT)*

CONCLUSION

- Do you have any additional thoughts or information that you would like to share, that you have not had the opportunity to express during this interview? *(Aspects Captured by the Qualitative Study Beyond the Scope of TOE and UTAUT)*

Appendix 2 - Email draft sent out to all HR recruiters

Email in English (A translated version in Swedish was also sent out.)

Hello xxx,

We are two third-year bachelor students at the Stockholm School of Economics (Handelshögskolan) in the BSc Retail Management Program who are writing our bachelor thesis on AI in recruitment. Moreover, we are looking at the emerging integration of AI in recruitment processes and researching the navigation of successful future recruitment practices.

We believe that you could contribute valuable input and knowledge in this area. Therefore, we wonder if you would like to participate in our qualitative study through an interview with us. Specifically, we are looking for someone within HR with recruitment experience. No experience with AI recruitment is required. Instead, we will focus on future perspectives during the interview.

If you know someone who would be better suited to participate in an interview with us, we would be grateful if you could refer us to the right person.

The interview will be approximately 1 hour long and conducted digitally or physically, depending on your preferences. We want to assure you that confidentiality is of the utmost importance to us and that all information shared during the interview will be anonymized and used solely for academic purposes. We will also ensure to send the specific interview questions as the meeting date approaches so that you have the opportunity to review the questions in advance.

We have attached a slide with our contact information and more details. If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Thank you for your consideration!

Best regards,

Maja Broman and Helena Toncev

Appendix 3 - Selection of Interviews

Selection of interviewees
Responsible for recruitment in a specific organization
Experience in HR recruitment, specifically assessment practices
<i>No experience required with AI tools for recruitment</i>

Appendix 4 - AI Transparency

ChatGPT 3.5 was used for this thesis to assist in language improvements as well as for providing synonyms. The authors utilized ChatGPT 3.5 for guidance on how to improve clarity and academic language of sentences. However, no text in the paper is replicated from the suggestions given by ChatGPT 3.5. Finally, the authors utilized ChatGPT 3.5 for inspiration regarding the title.