ETHICS, IDENTITY AND EMPLOYABILITY IN THE REVIEW OF CANDIDATES' SOCIAL MEDIA BY EMPLOYERS

ÉTICA, IDENTIDAD Y EMPLEABILIDAD EN LA REVISIÓN DE LAS REDES SOCIALES DE LOS CANDIDATOS POR PARTE DE LOS EMPLEADORES

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This article explores the relationship between ethics, digital identity, and employability in the context of employers reviewing candidates' social media profiles. It discusses how online profiles influence hiring decisions and the challenges in managing digital identity. **Methodology:** A literature review was conducted by selecting relevant studies and articles from the past decade to identify trends, benefits, risks, and strategies related to social media review in hiring. **Results:** The review shows that while employers gain a more comprehensive view of candidates, they also face risks of bias and legal issues. For candidates, well-managed digital presence offers advantages but also poses risks of privacy and discrimination. Key strategies for effective digital identity management were identified. **Discussion:** The findings highlight that digital identity is crucial in the modern labor market, presenting both opportunities and challenges. Therefore, efforts should be made to ensure a balanced approach that respects privacy and promotes fairness in the hiring process. **Conclusions:** It is imperative to adopt an ethical approach to social media review. Given this circumstance, future research should explore the long-term impact of these practices and develop tools for more ethical social media review.

Keywords: workplace ethics, digital identity, privacy, recruitment, social media.

RESUMEN

Introducción: Este artículo explora la intersección entre ética, identidad digital y empleabilidad en la revisión de redes sociales por empleadores. Se analiza cómo los perfiles en línea influyen en la contratación y los desafíos en la gestión de la identidad digital. **Metodología:** Se realizó una revisión bibliográfica de estudios y literatura relevante de la última década para identificar tendencias, beneficios, riesgos y estrategias relacionadas con la revisión de redes sociales en la contratación. **Resultados:** La revisión muestra que, aunque los empleadores obtienen una visión más completa de los candidatos, también enfrentan riesgos de sesgos y problemas legales. Para los candidatos, una buena gestión de la presencia digital ofrece ventajas, pero también riesgos de privacidad y discriminación. Se identificaron estrategias clave para una gestión efectiva de la identidad digital. **Discusión:** Los hallazgos destacan que la identidad digital es crucial en el mercado laboral moderno, presentando tanto oportunidades como desafíos. Es necesario un enfoque equilibrado que respete la privacidad y promueva la equidad en el proceso de contratación. **Conclusiones:** Es imperativo adoptar un enfoque ético en la revisión de redes sociales. Futuras investigaciones deberían explorar el impacto a largo plazo de estas prácticas y desarrollar herramientas para una revisión más ética de redes sociales.

Palabras clave: ética laboral, identidad digital, privacidad, reclutamiento, redes sociales.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, digital identity has become an intrinsic aspect of human relationships, shaping both personal and professional perceptions. This reality raises significant ethical issues regarding digital identity and employability such as the review of social media (SM) profiles by employers (Hazelton & Terhorst, 2015). Understanding how personal and professional elements interact and affect hiring decisions is increasingly relevant in the virtual world, where the boundaries between the two are blurry (Roth et al., 2016).

Ethics involved in the exploration of SM by employers covers a range of considerations, extending from privacy and consent to fairness and discrimination (Vroman et al., 2015). Proper management of digital identity is crucial not only for protecting personal privacy but also for improving employment prospects. In this context, digital identity is not only a representation of oneself in the virtual world, but also a crucial aspect of personal branding that can significantly impact employment opportunities (Ruparel et al., 2020). This article aims to examine the intersection of ethics, digital identity, and employability, and their influence on hiring practices in the contemporary workplace. The aim is to provide a balanced view that highlights both the challenges and risks associated with digital dynamics, as well as the opportunities and benefits they present for employers and candidates. Employers' growing preference for candidates' personal SM, such as X (formerly Twitter) or Instagram, over professionally oriented platforms like LinkedIn, has sparked a significant debate about hiring practices. Although these platforms were initially intended for sharing personal experiences, leisure moments, and opinions, they are now subject to scrutiny by potential employers, raising concerns

about privacy and professional ethics (Hazelton & Terhorst, 2015). Unlike LinkedIn, where users typically curate their content with a professional focus, networks such as X and Instagram offer a more personal and unfiltered view. As a result, they can reveal aspects of an individual's personality and values that may not be apparent in a LinkedIn profile or traditional CV (Van-Iddekinge et al., 2016).

However, the use of this information in the context of recruitment raises ethical concerns about fairness and privacy: to what extent is it appropriate for an employer to consider personal opinions, leisure activities, or aspects of a candidate's private life shared on these platforms (Williams & Almand, 2014)? Moreover, this practice can lead to unconscious bias or discrimination by evaluating candidates based on aspects of their personal lives that may be irrelevant to their job performance (Vroman et al., 2015). Therefore, the growing trend of reviewing personal SM in selection processes raises questions about the ethics of such practices, but also challenges organizations to reconsider their candidate assessment strategies, balancing the need for relevant information with respect for applicants' privacy and individuality (Davison et al., 2016).

Reviewing profiles on social media may offer employers a more comprehensive perspective of candidates. However, it raises ethical concerns regarding the use of personal information and the fine line between professional evaluation and privacy intrusion (Hazelton & Terhorst, 2015). Therefore, the objectives of this study are limited. The article primarily analyzes how candidates' online profiles influence employers' hiring decisions, considering the intersection of ethics, digital identity, and employability (Roth et al., 2016). In other words, it assesses the ethical implications and challenges of digital identity management in the labor market (Giones & Serrat, 2010; Van-Iddekinge et al., 2016).

To address the complexity and multifaceted dimensions of this topic, this article utilizes a methodology of literature review (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014). The primary focus has been to gather and analyze a wide range of academic and professional sources, including case studies, empirical research, specialized journal articles, and relevant academic literature. This selection has focused on works published in the last decade to ensure the relevance and timeliness of the information in the context of rapid technological and social developments (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014).

This review was structured in several stages. First, a search for keywords related to ethics in recruitment, digital identity and a review was conducted in academic databases and digital libraries. Keywords included, but were not limited to, terms such as "SM review in recruitment", "ethics in recruitment", "digital identity and employability", among others. After identifying an initial corpus of sources, a critical evaluation of their relevance and quality was carried out. Priority was given to those works that offered significant insights into employers' SM verification practices, the associated ethical implications and the management of digital identity in the work context. In addition, particular attention was paid to studies that presented a balanced analysis of the benefits and challenges of these practices. The information gathered has been analyzed and synthesized to construct a coherent narrative that addresses the objectives proposed in this study. This methodological approach allows not only to present a broad overview of existing research, but also to identify gaps in current knowledge, suggest guidelines for future research and put forward recommendations

for more ethical practices that respect the privacy of individuals (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014).

2. OBJETIVES

The study presented herein focuses on analyzing how the review of candidates' social media profiles affects employers' hiring decisions, highlighting the intersection between ethics, digital identity, and employability. Firstly, it evaluates the impact of digital profiles on hiring decisions, analyzing how the information obtained from social media can influence employers' perception and evaluation of candidates. Benefits and risks associated with this practice in the context of hiring have been identified. For example, a study concluded that more than 60% of companies check social media in their selection processes and that in one out of three selection processes, the candidate was rejected due to their activity on social media by mainly consulting Facebook or Twitter.

Furthermore, the ethical implications of social media review (SMR) in selection processes are explored, examining ethical concerns related to privacy, consent, and fairness in the use of personal information obtained from social media. The review of profiles can lead to biases and discrimination, and the associated legal consequences should not be ignored. For example, Hazelton and Terhorst (2015) indicate that the review of social media profiles by employers can lead to unconscious biases and discrimination when evaluating candidates based on aspects of their personal life that may be irrelevant to their job performance.

On the other hand, key strategies for effective digital identity management are identified, proposing recommendations for both employers and candidates on how to handle information obtained from social media ethically and effectively. The importance of digital literacy, awareness of privacy, and building a solid personal brand in the digital environment is highlighted. Roth et al. (2016) suggest that a well-managed digital identity can be an invaluable asset when looking for a job and developing one's career, especially in fields related to creativity or innovation, where an online portfolio can directly demonstrate skills and the quality of work.

Current and future trends in employers' review of social media are also investigated. To do so, an assessment has been made on how this practice has evolved and future expectations in terms of ethics and technology. Best practices and tools for a more ethical and effective review of social media profiles are identified. Hernández et al. (2014) highlight that the verification of information presented in resumes through social media has become a significant trend in the use of social media for recruitment.

Finally, it contributes to the development of a balanced and ethical approach to hiring by fostering the adoption of policies and practices that respect privacy and promote fairness in the selection process. Continuous dialogue is encouraged on the long-term implications of social media review in the labor market and individuals' professional development. Kenneally (2021) emphasizes the importance of ethics in social media review, highlighting that an ethical approach not only protects candidates' privacy, but also enhances the public perception of the company.

In summary, this study offers a comprehensive and balanced view of the challenges and risks, as well as the opportunities and benefits that digital dynamics present for employers and candidates. This is done by suggesting an approach that respects privacy and promotes fairness in hiring processes.

3. METHODOLOGY

To address the complexity and multiple dimensions of the topic on social media review in personnel selection processes, this study is based on a detailed bibliographic review methodology. The following steps were followed in this methodology:

1. Source Selection:

   o An exhaustive search of relevant academic and professional literature was conducted, including case studies, empirical research, articles from specialized journals, and other pertinent academic texts.

   o The selection focused on works published in the last decade to ensure the relevance and timeliness of the information in the context of rapid technological and social evolutions (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014).

2. Keyword Search:

   o Keywords related to ethics in hiring, digital identity, and social media review were identified and used in academic databases and digital libraries.

   o Keywords used included terms such as "social media review in hiring", "ethics in personnel selection", and "digital identity and employability" (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014).

3. Critical Evaluation of Sources:

   o After identifying an initial corpus of sources, a critical evaluation of their relevance and quality was carried out.

   o Priority was given to works that offered significant insights into employers' SMR practices, the associated ethical implications, and digital identity management in the workplace context (Giones & Serrat, 2010; Van-Iddekinge et al., 2016).

4. Information Analysis and Synthesis:

   o The collected information was analyzed and synthesized to build a coherent narrative addressing the study's proposed objectives.

   o The review was structured in several stages to facilitate the analysis: initial search, relevance and quality evaluation, and synthesis of key findings (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014).

5. Identification of Trends and Strategies:

   o Trends, benefits, risks, and strategies related to SMR in the hiring process were identified.

- This review revealed that while employers gain a more comprehensive perspective of candidates, they also face risks of biases and legal issues (Hazelton & Terhorst, 2015).

6. Ethical and Legal Review:

   - The ethical implications and challenges of digital identity management in the labor market were evaluated.

   - Concerns about privacy, consent, and fairness in the use of personal information obtained from SM were considered (Vroman et al., 2015).

7. Building a Coherent Narrative:

   - The collected information was organized to provide a balanced view that highlights both the challenges and risks associated with these digital dynamics and the opportunities and benefits they present for employers and candidates.

   - This narrative also suggests guidelines for future research and provides recommendations for more ethical practices that respect individuals' privacy (Giones & Serrat, 2010).

Exemplary Implementation:

During the review, it was found that the use of SM such as X (formerly Twitter) or Instagram by employers to evaluate candidates opens a significant debate about privacy and professional ethics. These platforms, originally designed to share personal experiences, are now under the scrutiny of potential employers, highlighting the fine line between professional evaluation and intrusion into privacy (Hazelton & Terhorst, 2015). Furthermore, the effective and consistent management of digital presence stands out as a crucial skill in today's labor market. For example, the consistency between the information presented on different platforms, such as LinkedIn and other networks, is vital to maintaining a coherent professional image and avoiding discrepancies that may raise doubts about the candidate's honesty (Roth et al., 2016).

This methodology allows presenting a broad panorama of existing research, identifying gaps in current knowledge, and suggesting guidelines for future research that promote a balanced and ethical approach to social media review in hiring processes (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014).

4. RESULTS

4.1. The influence of digital profiles for recruitment

In this increasingly interconnected and digitized world, social media profiles have become an essential component in the configuration of professional identities and in the dynamics of recruitment. This section explores the impact of digital representation on employability, emphasizing the importance of privacy management by individuals and ethical handling of their information by employers. It aims to enhance the understanding about the relationship between digital identity and employment opportunities, as well as the crucial role of ethics in reviewing social media profiles.

4.1.1. Digital identity: concept and evolution

Digital identity can be defined as the representation of an individual in virtual space. It is a complex construction, formed by shared personal information, interactions and digital footprints that users leave online. According to Liceda (2011),

> Nowadays new technologies related to information and communications are expanding the concept of identity by complementing it with that of digital identity. Some of the data that help shape this new concept are individual identity data, behavioral data, data derived or calculated by third parties, and data that the users themselves creates in order to identify themselves in the digital world. As can be seen, the construction of this digital identity distinguishes between the information that is expressly revealed by the person, the identity that is revealed by the actions that the person performs, and that which is calculated or inferred according to the analysis of the actions that the person performs. (p. 7)

Unlike physical identity, which is relatively stable and defined by tangible attributes, digital identity is dynamic and multifaceted. It can change over time and vary according to context, reflecting different facets of an individual's personality and interests in different virtual environments. This flexibility enables users to adjust their digital images to suit specific audiences and purposes. For instance, they can create a personal brand for professional purposes or express more personal and casual aspects in other virtual spaces (Liceda, 2011). However, managing this novel identity presents unique challenges. It requires a balance between authenticity and privacy, between displaying an authentic personal image and protecting private or sensitive information. Digital representations can have a lasting impact on a person's public perception beyond the moment of sharing or interacting (Sáinz-Peña, 2013).

The evolution of digital identity has closely followed the development of information and communication technologies that began in the 1990s. Initially, this identity was a relatively rudimentary extension of the physical self, limited by the technology of that time. During this initial phase, online platforms such as internet forums and chat rooms were prevalent. These spaces allowed users to adopt pseudonyms, which enabled them to explore different aspects of their personality in an environment that provided a sense of anonymity and freedom (Mababu, 2016). As such, they functioned as segregated spaces from the offline world that provided a medium in which to experiment and express oneself but having little or no connection to a person's physical identity. This separation reflected the technological limitations of the time and an emerging understanding of what it meant to have an online presence. In this context, digital identity was less a faithful representation of the individual and more a projection of desires, interests, or aspects of personality that could remain hidden or unexpressed in everyday life (Sáinz-Peña, 2013).

The rise of social media in the early 21st century brought about a significant transformation in the nature of digital identity, which became more complex and intertwined with people's real identity. Platforms like Facebook (launched in 2004), Twitter (launched in 2006), and Instagram (launched in 2010) revolutionized the way individuals presented themselves and connected with others in the digital realm

(Mababu, 2016). Unlike the forums and chat rooms of the previous decade, these new platforms enable users to create detailed profiles that reflect their personal and professional identities in a more direct and visible way. The presentation of self has become a more deliberate and conscious activity. Users shared not only textual updates but also photographs, links to other websites, and later videos, creating a digital mosaic that represented their lives, tastes, opinions, and relationships (Hernández et al., 2014). This transition marked a significant change. Previously, digital identity was a parallel or alternative facet of physical identity. In the era of social media, it became a more integrated and coherent reflection of the individual (Mababu, 2016).

In addition to these platforms, LinkedIn, launched in 2003, played a crucial role in the evolution of digital identity in the professional sphere. Unlike the other networks that focused on personal and social life, LinkedIn established itself as a network dedicated to professional life and business. Here, profiles are created to highlight work experience, education, skills and academic, training and professional achievements, so it became a vital space for networking, job search and building a personal brand in the work context (Ruparel et al., 2020). Thus, presence on LinkedIn offered an additional dimension to digital identity: a facet focused on career and professional aspirations. On that network, self-introduction aligned with other goals, as users sought to connect with colleagues, employers, and industry professionals. LinkedIn also provided a tool for recruiters and employers to search for and evaluate potential candidates, highlighting the importance of a well-managed digital identity in the professional arena (Van-Iddekinge et al., 2016).

The evolution of digital identity has led to a growing interconnection between personal life and online presence. This has introduced new considerations and challenges that have transformed the way people manage their presence in virtual spaces. The line between personal and professional has become more blurred, making identity management a more complex and critical task. Users were faced with issues regarding how to balance authenticity and privacy (Giones & Serrat, 2010; Lam, 2016). On one hand, there was a desire to be transparent in their online expression, while on the other hand, there was a need to protect personal information and keep certain aspects of private life out of public view (Davison et al., 2016). This constant balancing act between overexposure and excessive reserve became a duality, particularly in professional contexts (Giones & Serrat, 2010). Additionally, users needed to be aware of how their posts, comments, and online interactions could be perceived by others, making digital impression management a key skill (Liceda, 2011). According to Giones and Serrat (2010),

> effective management of a digital identity requires attention to visibility, reputation, and privacy on the internet. This skill is not merely instrumental, but it is rather related to lifelong learning and immersion in the digital culture that is necessary for citizens living in a networked society. (para. 1)

In a world where a quick Google search can reveal a wealth of information, every digital action can have repercussions on one's reputation and professional image. The digital footprints left on these platforms began to have a more tangible and direct impact on life outside the web (Nores, 2016). In the context of employability, the

online profiles and activities of candidates have become factors to consider in the hiring process for employers and recruiters (Lanusse, 2019).

Thus, in the current landscape, digital identity is considered a complex and multidimensional entity, composed of a variety of personal data, interaction records and digital footprints. Every action, search and communication in these spaces contributes to the construction of a detailed and often revealing digital profile of an individual. Ultimately, the ongoing evolution of digital identity is a reflection of the dynamic interaction between technology, society and the individual self, a process that will likely continue to redefine the way humans see themselves and others in the digital world.

4.1.2. Employability and digital presence

Digital presence, then, goes far beyond being a reflection of a subject's personal and professional identity, since, nowadays, it functions as a dynamic portfolio that showcases skills, experiences and achievements, and it becomes a crucial platform for networking, exploring job opportunities, and building interpersonal and professional relationships. It must be reiterated that in this world where first impressions are often digital, online presence can significantly influence the perception of employers and recruiters (Ruparel et al., 2020). But, beyond professional networks such as LinkedIn, platforms such as X, Instagram or Facebook can also play a role of notorious relevance because they provide valuable information about the individual's personality, interests and ability to interact and communicate in a social context (Lanusse, 2019). According to Nores (2016):

> More than 60% of the companies consult social media in their selection processes; likewise, that 23% make their recruitments through this channel and 62% through other online channels; in short, it also showed that in one out of three selection processes the candidate was discarded because of his activity on social media, mainly consulting Facebook or Twitter. (p. 6)

In this regard, a person's ability to manage their privacy or digital presence (maintaining a professional image while sharing aspects of their personal life) may be indicative of their ability to interact in contemporary professional environments (Van-Iddekinge et al., 2016). This identity generated in virtual spaces has become a critical element of personal branding and professional reputation in the 21st century. In this context, knowing how to manage and optimize it is key to maximizing opportunities in today's competitive labor market (Liceda, 2011). In today's highly digitized labor market, recruiters and employers use the internet and social media to verify information provided by candidates and gain a more holistic understanding of their profiles. Even in fields related to creativity or innovation, online profiles can be a showcase of the candidate's thinking and creativity. For example, an online portfolio on platforms like Behance or Dribbble for designers, or GitHub for developers and programmers, is very useful to directly demonstrate your skills and the quality of your work. Additionally, in SM applications like Instagram, a candidate can showcase their creativity and use it as a portfolio of their designs. Therefore, a strategically managed digital presence is an invaluable asset when looking for a job searching and developing one's professional career (Lanusse, 2019).

However, the potential negative impact of poorly managed or neglected online presence is the other side, in the relationship between digital presence and employability. Inappropriate or controversial posts on social media are one of the most common pitfalls, ranging from offensive or discriminatory comments to posts that exhibit risky behaviors. Certain content can generate a negative impression on recruiters or employers, leading them to question the candidate's suitability for the role or company culture (Vroman et al., 2015). Inconsistencies in the information presented across different platforms can also be problematic, such as discrepancies between work experience listed on a resume and on a LinkedIn profile. This may generate doubts about the candidate's honesty and the accuracy of the information provided, and lack of coherence can be a decisive factor in more competitive selection processes (Roth et al., 2016). Therefore, effective and coherent management of digital presence is a crucial skill in today's labor market. While authenticity is important, it must be balanced with a sense of privacy and professionalism.

4.1.3. Ethics in Social Media Review Ethics

In its broadest sense, ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the study of moral principles and rules of conduct that govern human interactions and behaviors. By adhering to shared ethical principles, individuals can promote interactions based on trust, respect, and cooperation, which are fundamental elements for any type of relationship, whether personal or professional (Kenneally, 2021). This fosters an environment where individuals feel valued and respected, which in turn facilitates effective communication, conflict resolution, and the strengthening of community and personal bonds. It is understood that the lack of ethical consideration in these relationships can lead to conflicts, misunderstandings, and emotional harm (Van-Iddekinge et al., 2016).

In the workplace, ethics refers to the set of values and principles that guide behavior and practices within that environment. Therefore, it is essential for the efficient and fair functioning of any organization and for establishing a positive and productive work environment (Kenneally, 2021). One of the key components for achieving this is integrity. It involves adhering to moral standards in professional activities, such as being honest in communications, reliable in fulfilling obligations, and consistent in the application of policies and procedures. It also includes transparency in decision-making and management, which fosters trust both within the organization and with external clients and partners (Roth et al., 2016). Responsibility and respect are also important aspects. This involves taking responsibility for one's actions and decisions and understanding how they can affect others both inside and outside the organization. It also involves treating others with dignity and consideration, regardless of their position or relationship with the company. A responsible and respectful work environment not only improves morale and job satisfaction, but can also increase productivity and collaboration (Kenneally, 2021).

Regarding the review of social media by employers, ethics can be seen as the set of principles and norms that govern fair and appropriate conduct in the use of information obtained through these means (Davison et al., 2016). This ethics encompasses several

key dimensions, including privacy, respect for individual autonomy, non-discrimination, and transparency. Some individuals hold the belief that:

> [...] Emphasis is placed on the risks that are run when employers use non-professional social media in personnel selection processes. It is important to consider certain ethical and legal implications related to intrusion into an individual's privacy. Employers may infer a candidate's personality based on information found on their social media profiles, which may have been posted by the candidate or their acquaintances. However, this information is easily manipulated and may lead to inaccurate evaluations based on subjective perceptions of the individual's personality. (Lanusse, 2019, p. 10)

Privacy, in this context, refers to individuals' right to maintain control over its personal information, particularly that which is shared in a context that was not originally intended for employment evaluation (Kenneally, 2021). Respect for individual autonomy entails recognizing privacy in order to honor individuals' capacity to present themselves in different contexts (personal versus professional) and the importance of not using information obtained in a way that violates that autonomy. Therefore, it is necessary for the hiring process to be completely transparent, including clear and open communication from employers or recruiters about if and how they will use personal information (Hazelton & Terhorst, 2015).

However, as the boundaries between personal and professional life become increasingly blurred in the digital environment, ethical issues arise that threaten privacy, consent, and justice in the use of information obtained through such means to make hiring decisions (Roth et al., 2016). One of the main dilemmas lies in balancing the candidates' right to privacy with the legitimate interest of employers in knowing their future employees. While social media can provide valuable information about a candidate's personality, social skills, and values, it can also reveal aspects of their private life that are not relevant to their professional performance (Lam, 2016). This raises the question of how ethical it is for an employer to base their hiring decisions on information obtained from sources that were not designed for professional purposes (Davison et al., 2016). Additionally, there is a risk that reviewing social media profiles may lead to conscious or unconscious biases and discrimination (Williams & Almand, 2014). Recruiters or employers may form judgments based on factors such as physical appearance, age, sexual orientation, religion, political opinions, or socioeconomic status, which may be evident in resumes and social media profiles when privacy is not properly managed or when candidates are asked to grant access. This is not only ethically questionable but can also lead to unfair hiring practices (Lam, 2016). It is important to consider consent. Although much of the information on social media is public, candidates may not anticipate or consent to this information being used for employment evaluation purposes, which would undermine their chances of being hired (Hazelton & Terhorst, 2015).

4.2. Privacy vs. Professional demands: ethical challenges

The interplay of personal privacy and professional duties, as seen above, creates a minefield of ethical issues, particularly in the context of SM assessment by employers. This section goes into current developments in this technique, weighing the benefits

and hazards for companies or recruiters as well as potential candidates. Simultaneously, the delicate balance between protecting individuals' personal privacy and meeting professional needs and expectations in today's workplace is discussed. Furthermore, effective digital identity management tactics will be examined, showing how individuals might reconcile these two seemingly opposing sectors of their lives in order to propose alternatives for a more ethical and balanced coexistence.

4.2.1. Current Trends in Employer Social Media Review

Employers' habit of assessing SM has gained prominence in the recruitment and selection landscape:

> Recruitment and selection are directly tied to the company's strategy in that they enable the entry of people who must offer value to the organization. Clearly, the trend is changing as they combine technology-based sources (recruitment 3.0, e-recruitment, etc.) with traditional sources: press advertisements, e-recruitment (InfoJobs, Monster...), consulting services head-hunter type selection, social media (friends, family, and acquaintances of workers...), professional associations or corporations, and so on. Furthermore, businesses are taking advantage of the Internet's capabilities to learn more about the applicants of their job openings. (Mababu, 2016, p. 148)

This modern approach departs from traditional methods of evaluating potential employees based purely on resumes and interviews, giving companies with a broader and more diverse means of evaluating possible employees. In this environment, SM have evolved into a rich and dynamic source of information, exposing elements of the candidates that would otherwise remain concealed in traditional methods (Kenneally, 2021). This tendency reflects an increasing awareness that the skills and experiences indicated on a resume are not the only indicators of a candidate's potential. Recruiters and employers can gain a more complete picture of a candidate's personality, passions and interests, and how these parts of their personal life affect their professional performance through networks (Ruparel et al., 2020). Furthermore, as previously indicated, they reveal information about the candidate's lifestyle, communication abilities, and social interactions. Furthermore, a significant trend in the use of SM for recruiting is the verification of the information supplied in candidates' resumes, in order to confirm the legitimacy of the provided material and uncover any discrepancies or exaggerations.

They are also used to assess an individual's culture fit, which refers to the extent to which a candidate's beliefs, behaviors, values, and attitudes match or align with a company's organizational culture, that is, with the norms, practices, values and beliefs that define the environment and the way of working in that space. When talking about culture fit in the hiring process, you are evaluating how a candidate's personal style will complement or integrate with the existing culture in the organization (Kenneally, 2021). For example, if a company values innovation and risk-taking, a candidate who demonstrates creativity and a willingness to challenge the *statu quo* may be considered a good cultural fit. On the other hand, if a company has a more traditional and hierarchical structure, it could look for candidates who feel comfortable in that type of environment and who value stability and structure (Nores, 2016). Thus, another

notable trend in the use of SM for recruiting purposes is the detailed analysis of candidates' communication skills and networks. On LinkedIn it is possible to review connections and recommendations to evaluate the scope and quality of the candidate's professional network, while observing their activity in groups and forums related to the industry (Hernández et al., 2014). Beyond this platform, digital interactions in general offer insight into a person's communication skills: their ability to express themselves, argue constructively, and handle discussions is revealed by how they articulate their thoughts, respond to comments and engage in conversations (Lanusse, 2019).

Likewise, the growing practice of reviewing SM of candidates by employers has generated an intense debate about ethics and privacy (Hazelton & Terhorst, 2015). As a result of this practice, the traditionally clear line between what can be considered to be professional and what can be considered to be personal is blurred, leading to important questions about the limits of information deemed fair and relevant for the evaluation of a candidate (Davison et al., 2016). Establishing clear guidelines on what information is relevant and how it should be used is essential to ensure that the recruitment process is fair, impartial and respectful of candidates' privacy rights.

4.2.2. Benefits and risks for employers and candidates

Beyond what a CV or an interview can provide, digital profiles reveal essential parts of the candidate's personality and habits of interaction, as stated above. This information can be used to determine whether a candidate would fit in with the company's and team's culture, or if, on the contrary, they exhibit careless, violent, or excessive interactions, among other things (Aguado et al., 2016). In other words, certain behaviors or publications on these platforms may be relevant to a candidate's evaluation, particularly if they reflect behaviors that are contrary to the fundamental values of the company or society in general, such as cases where a candidate exhibits clearly inappropriate behaviors, such as racism, violence, discrimination, or illegal activities (Kenneally, 2021). With this, employers may have justified reasons to consider these aspects as highly relevant factors for their hiring decision (Roth et al., 2016).

SM is also extremely important for identifying passive candidates, that is, those who are not actively looking for a new job, but who could be a good addition to the team. Although this review and verification process by employers is often seen as a one-sided evaluation tactic, it can also offer several benefits to candidates (Lanusse, 2019). While a resume is limited to professional experience and education, SM allow candidates to show a broader range of skills, interests, and aspects of their personality. Having a strong personal brand that showcases professional accomplishments, projects, and contributions is beneficial, as long as the person can manage their privacy or self-image online (Kenneally, 2021).

Despite the benefits of SM in the hiring process, there are important concerns to be aware of. One of the most serious is the likelihood of bias owing to the candidate's personal characteristics (gender, age, sexual orientation, or belief), which can lead to recruiting judgments that are not only unethical but may also violate equal opportunity legislation (Vroman et al., 2015). Because certain jurisdictions have strong laws on

how and when SM information may be utilized, this practice may expose organizations to legal issues connected to privacy and discrimination in the hiring process. Violation of these rules may involve legal consequences, including lawsuits for invasion of privacy or discrimination. Therefore, if candidates learn that their private life is being scrutinized in ways that they consider intrusive or inappropriate, this can generate an extremely negative perception of the company and affect its ability to attract talent in the future (Aguado et al., 2016). There is also a risk that candidates will feel obliged to censor their online presence in a way that reflects what they think employers want to see, which can lead to a false presentation of themselves or a possible mismatch between their true interests and values and those of the organization that, in the long run, can lead to work problems. On the other hand, candidates with limited or no digital presence also face risks, as such presence is considered a reflection of connectivity and relevance in the modern world. The lack of a digital profile can be mistakenly interpreted as a lack of technological knowledge, professional commitment or social and interaction skills (Hazelton & Terhorst, 2015).

A complex and nuanced picture emerges when the benefits and risks associated with SM are taking into account. This practice can enrich the hiring process for employers, but it must also be balanced with awareness of potential risks, such as unintentional biases and legal issues related to privacy and discrimination (Williams & Almand, 2014). On the candidate side, the ability to present a more comprehensive picture of your skills and personality is undeniable advantage, but this is offset by legitimate concerns about privacy and the risk of being evaluated for aspects of their personal life which are unrelated to their work performance. The pressure to manage an online presence that is attractive to potential employers can also be a source of stress and anxiety. The key to addressing these benefits and risks lies in a balanced and ethical approach. For employers, this means establishing clear guidelines on what information is relevant and how it should be used, always respecting the limits of privacy and legality (Aguado et al., 2016). For candidates, it means being mindful of how they present themselves online, while striving to maintain an authentic representation of themselves and protecting their privacy. Ultimately, the use of SM in the hiring process is neither intrinsically good nor bad. Its value and dangers depend on how it is handled, with a conscious approach to the ethical and legal implications. It should be noted that people have the right to a private sphere that should not influence their employment opportunities (Ruparel et al., 2020).

4.2.3. Strategies for managing digital identity in the labor market

Professionals and job candidates are advised to maintain a positive and authentic online presence to optimize their career prospects (Roth et al., 2016). In this regard, the review of the literature has yielded some useful strategies for the management of this identity and its presence in the SM to be effective for employability. These strategies include the following (Davison et al., 2016; Kenneally, 2021; Ruparel et al., 2020):

- Mindful content curation: Professionals should be mindful of the content they post and share online, especially on their public profiles. This includes avoiding

potentially controversial or inappropriate posts, and focusing on sharing content that positively reflects your skills, knowledge, and professional values.

- Consistency and authenticity: it is important to maintain consistency between the different profiles. Information such as work experience, education, and skills should be consistent across platforms. At the same time, it is important to maintain a level of authenticity by presenting an image that is true to your real values and personality.
- Privacy and security settings: Users should be proactive in managing the privacy settings of their SM accounts to control what information is publicly available. Regulating, reviewing and adjusting your privacy settings can help protect the information that you consider private to limit what potential employers can see.
- Building a personal brand: Developing a strong personal brand online that highlights areas of expertise, achievements and projects is notoriously relevant. Blogs, digital portfolios, and active participation in professional networks can be key components of this strategy.
- Regular monitoring and review: It is advisable for individuals to periodically check their online presence to ensure that their digital image remains positive and is kept up to date.
- Digital education and knowledge: it is necessary to stay informed about current trends in SM and online best practices. Digital literacy not only helps in effective digital identity management, but it is also a valuable skill in itself in the modern labor market.

By implementing these strategies, professionals and job candidates can ensure that their digital identity serves as an asset in their professional development, helping them to open doors and create opportunities in today's labor market (Davison et al., 2016).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has succeeded in analyzing how ethics, digital identity and employability overlap in the context of employers' review of SM. The objectives set at the beginning of the study have been achieved, offering a detailed perspective on the implications of digital identity in hiring decisions and the ethical challenges faced by both employers and candidates in managing digital identity. The research has emphasized the growing importance of digital identity in the labor market and has highlighted both the benefits and risks associated with employers' online profile checks. While they provide employers with additional tools to evaluate candidates, they also pose ethical challenges and privacy concerns. The benefits for employers include a more comprehensive evaluation of candidates, while for candidates, a well-managed online presence can highlight their skills and experience. However, the risks associated with this activity cannot be ignored, as they include biases and legal issues related to privacy and discrimination.

Nevertheless, this research has its limitations. One of them is the rapid evolution of technologies and digital platforms, which may render some observations and conclusions obsolete in a short period of time. Additionally, the variability in legal and cultural norms between different countries and regions can affect the generalization of some findings.

Regarding the future perspective of the topic, it is clear that the importance of digital identity will continue to grow and evolve alongside technological advances. It will be crucial to maintain continuous vigilance on how employers' social media review practices adapt and change in response to these advances. Moreover, more research will be needed to explore the long-term implications of these practices on individuals' professional careers and to develop strategies and tools that promote an ethical and effective balance between personal privacy and professional demands. It is anticipated that both employers and candidates will need to become increasingly aware and strategic in how they use social media information. Finally, education and skill development in managing digital identity will become significant aspects of the professional field. Digital literacy, privacy awareness, and personal branding skills will become increasingly important in a labor market that continues to integrate with the digital world. To conclude this article, some recommendations are summarized for both employers and candidates to navigate the complex environment of digital identity in the labor market more effectively, maximizing benefits while minimizing associated risks (Davison et al., 2016; Giones & Serrat, 2010; Mababu, 2016; Williams & Almand, 2014; among others):

- Recommendations for employers: to develop and to communicate clear policies on how social media will be reviewed and used in the hiring process; to implement training programs for recruiters and hiring managers on unconscious bias, ensuring that decisions are based on skills and qualifications, not personal prejudices; to be transparent with candidates about the use of their social media in the selection process and, when possible, obtain their consent; to ensure that the information obtained from social media is directly relevant to the competencies and skills that are required for the position; to avoid crossing the line between what is considered to be professional and what is considered to be personal, as respecting candidates' privacy is fundamental to maintaining ethical and legal practices.

- Recommendations for candidates: to be aware of the image projected on social media; to maintain a professional profile and ensure that personal information does not harm job opportunities; to use social media to highlight skills, achievements, and experiences; to regularly review and adjust privacy settings on all social media platforms to control publicly accessible information; to publish content that positively reflects professional skills and values; to be aware that social media profiles and digital footprints can be reviewed by potential employers and prepare accordingly, ensuring that the online presence is an accurate and positive representation of professional capabilities.

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