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**Nemzetközi tudományos konferencia
a Magyar Tudomány Ünnepe alkalmából**
International Scientific Conference
on the Occasion of the Hungarian Science Festival

Sopron, 2023. november 23.
23 November 2023, Sopron

**FENNTARTHATÓSÁGI ÁTMENET:
KIHÍVÁSOK ÉS INNOVATÍV MEGOLDÁSOK**
SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS: CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

Szerkesztők / Editors:

OBÁDOVICS Csilla, RESPERGER Richárd, SZÉLES Zsuzsanna, TÓTH Balázs István

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Recruiting for Resilience: An Economic Approach to Mitigate Candidate Ghosting

Laureana Anna Erika TEICHERT

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Abstract:

Candidate ghosting has become an increasingly prevalent phenomenon in recruiting processes. It describes a behavioral pattern that enables one party to terminate communication with another party without offering any information or explanation. As power dynamics shifting within labor markets, candidate ghosting is leading to adverse issues, including key positions not being filled, project escalations and increased employee turnover. Previous research focus-es on the candidates' reasons to ghost. During recruitment processes this information is not available to companies. Therefore the paper focuses on the companies' perspective on candidate ghosting. In addition to these reasons, recommendations exist regarding preventive measures that could be adopted by companies to mitigate candidate ghosting. Empirical re-search lacks a specific target audience to which these measures can be applied to. Implement-ing recommended measures for all candidates while maintaining the candidate pipeline would incur significant costs. In order to effectively manage candidate ghosting in a cost-efficient manner, it is necessary to extract information from existing data available to companies in ini-tial phases of recruitment processes. Research has to provide valuable insights by bridging the gap between the phenomenon of candidate ghosting and the recommended preventive ac-tions. The current state of knowledge does not provide such outcomes.

Keywords: Human Resources, Talent Acquisition, Recruiting, Candidate Ghosting, Decision Making

JEL Codes: D81, M50, M51

1. Introduction to the subject of candidate ghosting

Candidate ghosting is a proportionate new topic in vocational surroundings and therefore underrepresented in academic discourse and in context of research (Vagas & Misko, 2018; LeFebvre, 2017). Ghosting as a phenomenon is a behavioral pattern describing the breaking off of contact from one party involved to another party involved without giving any information or explanation. Moreover, there is no response to contact attempts. The other person or party is left in uncertainty about the situation (Freedman et al., 2019, cited in Karl et al., 2021; Dreger & Koszewska, 2018, cited in Osbert-Pociecha & Bielinska, 2019). In general, ghosting occurs in both private and vocational surroundings. The origin of this phenomenon lies in the context of romantic relationships. The term itself is one of the Anglicisms used within the scope of partner search and has increased since the development of online dating apps. Outlined is the conduct of one of the involved partners cutting off contact without giving explanation about the reasons. A person disappears “like a ghost”. In many cases the person being ghosted is truncated from all communication channels (Freedman et al., 2019, cited in Karl et al., 2021; Dreger & Koszewska, 2018, cited in Osbert-Pociecha & Bielinska, 2019). Ghosting emerges in the experimental phase of searching for the perfect match. If there is an emotional investment in a relationship, ghosting will usually cease as the commitment to the relationship has grown.

Online communication follows rules made up of collective and individual expectations. These are culturally specific, vary over time and history, and depend on the platform. Though a certain degree of dishonesty is collectively accepted in order to attract attention (Beasley & Holmes, 2021). Virtual communication imparts online dating the character of online shopping. Online profiles are perceived as products (Minina et al., 2022). The mass of opportunities obscures the human being behind profiles and reduces the ability to make decisions. People are categorised on the basis of price comparison (Büttner & Stockrahm, 2018, cited in Zöllner, 2019). The playful structure of apps replaces getting to know each other by satisfying the need for recognition (Aretz, 2017). Possibilities of online dating gives the market of partner search visibility. Accordingly, factors such as rationalisation and consumption are implicated (Illouz, 2007). Implied is an invitation to market participants to systematically narrow down opportunities. Thus, a selection is made on the basis of personal preferences. The result is a market of attention with special rules of competition (Franck, 1999, cited in Dröge & Voirol, 2011). Recruiting has distinct parallels to online dating. Owing to various factors such as globalisation and digitalisation, ghosting could eventuate labour markets and moreover be detected in vocational surroundings. New technologies and a limited applicant market are responsible for ghosting (Lewis, 2019a). Easier access to the internet engenders changes in communication behaviour. According to Marquez, using modern technologies is not conducive to building social relationships. Anonymity would prevent loyalty to potential employers (Marquez, 2008). In vocational surroundings, ghosting is deployed by both sides, companies and candidates. During recruiting processes one of the parties involved interrupts communication and in general the contact. As in context of romantic relationships this happens without giving any information or explanation. The remaining party is left in uncertainty about the situation. As well this behaviour leads recruiting processes to be ended by one party not replying anymore to contact attempts regarding next steps. Recruiting processes are terminated by the use of ghosting. In particular interest of this paper is the case of candidates ghosting companies in recruiting processes, also known as candidate ghosting (Freedman et al., 2019; Koessler, 2018; Delgado, 2018).

In the following chapters a deeper look is taken onto the current state of knowledge on candidate ghosting and which outcomes academic discourse and in particular previous research provides so far. Next there will be a switch to the company side to determine what consequences candidate ghosting has on daily operations and what preceded findings offer companies to take action on this phenomenon. Finally, there will be an analysis of gaps in existing results as well as the knowledge academic discourse is missing to date. The aim of this paper is to break down results of previous research and to ascertain, if there are findings that could be used by companies to support decision making to mitigate candidate ghosting in recruiting processes.

2. Digression to the state of knowledge on ghosting in vocational surroundings

In the academic discourse there is barely visibility of ghosting in vocational surroundings. Until now, there are few studies on this phenomenon, each conducted in a different country, alluding ghosting to be widespread in international contexts and becoming a trend. Taking a look at previous research, it is striking, that this trend was conducted in 2018 at the earliest. Thus, ghosting in vocational surroundings evolved in 2018. In the following, a deeper look into preceded research is provided by considering four main elements (research focus, source of collected data, main findings, recommendations to mitigate ghosting) of each study.

2.1. Preceded research on candidate ghosting

The study "What causes workplace ghosting?", conducted in the US labour market in 2018, focuses on the acceptance of ghosting in vocational surroundings by both companies and candidates. Data was collected through questionnaires distributed to more than 500 full-time employees. The research found that ghosting by candidates in recruitment processes is more accepted than ghosting by companies. Also is ghosting more accepted in early stages of recruitment processes than in later stages. Hence, recruiters should foster the growth of commitment in the early stages of processes (Uggerslev et al., 2012). Main finding of this research is companies facing a greater damage of reputation in the case of ghosting a candidate than candidates when ghosting a company. Especially taking into account the contrasting situation of companies being able to take track of candidate ghosting for a limited period of time due to the obligation to delete candidates' data after a certain period of time, but candidates being capable to compose a negative comment on social media platforms, which can have an impact on the opinion of other applicants and candidates. Companies have the risk of a greater reputational damage in case of ghosting in recruitment processes. A recommendation is made on mitigating candidate ghosting. The reasons leading candidates to ghost should be investigated and the causes of miscommunication in recruiting processes accordingly resolved (Delgado, 2018).

Occasions engendering candidates to ghost companies were explored in a further study of the US labour market by Indeed in 2019, which focused on candidates' reasons to ghost. Questionnaires were distributed to 4,000 jobseekers and 900 companies to find out according causes. Looking at the results of this research, these are various reasons for ending recruitment processes by the use of ghosting. For instance, candidates are ghosting companies because of receiving a job offer in another recruitment process. Moreover, attending in job interviews and becoming aware of the job responsibilities not meeting existing expectations, could also be taken as an occasion to ghost. Offer conditions not matching expectations of respective candidates could also trigger ghosting tendencies. These reasons are as various as candidates themselves. By considering recruiting processes these could also be described as common reasons for ending these processes on candidate side. It could be said that ghosting is considered as a new opportunity of bringing processes to an end. The recommendation to mitigate candidate ghosting in recruiting processes is to focus on attentiveness and to optimize and improve communication with candidates at every stage of processes (Lewis, 2019a; 2019b).

Reasons causing candidates to use behavioural patterns like ghosting to end recruitment processes is subject of a study conducted in Poland in 2019. This research focuses on generational differences of candidates. The data was collected by distributing questionnaires to candidates who stated to already used the behaviour of ghosting in recruitment processes. As key finding of this survey is denoted younger generations being more likely to ghost than older generations. The study moreover provides an according explanation for these findings. Younger generations do not have a wide range of experience in handling complex or difficult situations like older generations have. Consequently, younger candidates are lacking the experience of dealing with unpleasant situations in recruiting processes and therefore decide to vanish and do not respond any longer to recruiters contact attempts. Looking at the reasons given by candidates for ending recruitment processes of the before mentioned study, these would not be categorised as a complex situation in regard to recruitment processes. Likewise, this research evinces that ghosting is considered by candidates as an appropriate behavioral opportunity. Recommended to mitigate candidate ghosting according to the explained study is the establishment of not further detailed recruiting practices in the context of recruitment processes (Osbert-Pociecha & Bielinska, 2019).

By evaluating the Global Indicator of Ghosting, a study conducted in Slovakia in 2018 examines ghosting within companies and works on a concept to predict employees' tendencies

to ghost. The higher the Global Indicator of Ghosting is, the higher is the tendency of employees to ghost. Data was collected by an employees' self-assessment through pre-defined categories. Ghosting tendencies of employees are investigated with a focus on gender differences. Men are more likely to ghost than women because of being socialized in different ways regarding the maintenance of communication. Miscommunication in companies has a negative impact on business and company results. Company internal ghosting demoralizes employees (Odine, 2015). The important finding of this research for the overall situation of ghosting in vocational surroundings is, that ghosting not merely emerges during recruitment processes. Ghosting is also a widespread problem in companies among employees. According to the research, behaviour similar to ghosting already has a negative impact on companies and daily operations. The essentiality of mitigating ghosting in recruitment processes in order to mitigate company internal ghosting is stressed. For the purpose of avoiding behaviour like ghosting or similar to it, it is recommended to provide training sessions that optimize communication behaviour in companies among employees (Vagas & Misko, 2018).

Finally, there is research that brings into focus the company perspective on recruitment. A study conducted in the US labour market in 2021 focuses on the problem behind the phenomenon of candidate ghosting. Candidates applying for an open job request and submitting application documents cause companies to be left facing an information asymmetry. Companies have any knowledge of a candidates' true intentions and have to rely on information and statements that are given by candidates themselves. Additional information that would hint towards hidden intentions or individual expectations of candidates is not submitted. By distributing questionnaires to students about fictitious situations in job interviews, factors influencing ghosting tendencies were investigated. A closer look at these parameters evinces the study examining a lot of factors describing the psychological background of candidates. Factors influencing ghosting tendencies are, for instance, a discrepancy between the candidates' expectations and the recruiters' communication behaviour. The information provided during processes does not always meet the candidates' expectations and could therefore be experienced as not enough content, too much information or negative statements. Helicopter parenting also has an impact on ghosting from candidate side. In conclusion, these factors are utter important in order to develop an understanding of the phenomenon and the candidate side. However, this is precisely the information that is not available to companies in recruitment processes. The results of the study provide a deep understanding of a candidates' situation but are hardly applicable to recruiting practices. In order to mitigate ghosting in recruiting processes, it is recommended to compensate given information content according to the candidates' expectations (Karl et al., 2021). Further research conducted in India in 2019 also focuses on factors influencing ghosting tendencies. In context of a business perspective on recruitment subjects this study can be regarded as the first one focusing on this aspect. Although the research interest being in the same line as the one of the above explained study, results provide an outright varied view on the phenomenon. Data was collected through distributing questionnaires but in this case to companies. Companies were canvassed about experiences made owing to candidate ghosting. The research provides results that are based on a company level of access to data in recruitment processes. Looking at the results in more detail, it becomes clear that these findings focus on the company perspective. Factors influencing ghosting tendencies are the industry background a candidate is working in, the educational background of a candidate profile, years of professional experience and the current salary. Considering the review of application documents these are factors which can be identified during recruitment processes. To these parameters companies have actually access to on the condition of considering submitted information. The results of the study are applicable as a basis for decision making. Recommended recruiting practices are not further specified strategies to mitigate ghosting tendencies (Kumar & Narayana, 2019).

2.2. Breakdown on preceded conclusions

Synoptically the current state of knowledge evinces that research explores the same phenomenon though variegating factors on several labour markets, mostly describing the background and living conditions of candidates who ghost. Above alluded studies outline the investigation of the phenomenon of candidate ghosting in multifarious ways leading to an extensive quantity of findings, collimated in the following table (Table 1).

Table 1: Outcome of antecedent research on candidate ghosting

Category of parameter	Collected on candidate side	Collected on company side
Candidates' reasons to ghost	Duration of recruitment processes	Lack of information regarding potential future employers
	Offer conditions not meeting the candidates' expectations	Missing negotiation possibilities in recruitment processes
	Recruiters' behaviour not meeting the candidates' expectations	Below-average offer conditions
	Job responsibilities not meeting the candidates' expectations	Long duration of recruiting processes
	Unsatisfying benefits	Unattractive employer branding
	Communication problems in recruitment processes	Communication endeavour not being clear
	Transparency of recruiting processes	
	Image of the respective company	
	Lack of flexibility on recruiters' side	
	Disappointment of expectations	
	No reaction from company side	
	Inadequate information about offer conditions	
	Accepting an offer of another recruiting process	
	Offered salary not high enough	
	Candidate didn't want to talk about deciding against the job offer	
	Candidate didn't know how to react in a different way	
	Missing trust towards recruiter	
	Knowledge gap regarding appropriate behaviour patterns	
	Retaliation for ghosting from company side	
	Cultural mismatch	
Communication behaviour of recruiters not fulfilling expectations		
Negative information content about the respective company		
Frequency of ghosting incidences	18% of interviewed candidates already ghosted	68% of companies claim that ghosting occurs frequently
	>50% of interviewed candidates terminate up to five recruiting processes during a job search	83% already faced ghosting incidences in general

		84% of ghosting incidences are No-shows at first day of work
		64% experienced brake-off of contact in recruitment processes
		60% experiences no final contract signature
		64% of HR managers are not prepared for ghosting incidences
Acceptance of ghosting	21% of respondents disapprove ghosting from candidate side	
	30% of respondents comprehend ghosting from candidate side	
	48% of respondents comprehend ghosting from candidate side in early steps of recruiting processes	
	35% of respondents disapprove ghosting from company side	
	23% of respondents comprehend ghosting from company side	
	36% of respondents comprehend ghosting from company side in early steps of recruiting processes	
Factors influencing ghosting tendencies	Average age of ghosters: 34 years	Male employees having higher ghosting tendencies than female employees
	Being raised by helicopter parents who tend to manage every situation for children	Most of the ghosters work in the low-wage sector: The higher the salary, the less the ghosting tendencies
		Industrial background: ghosting occurs most frequently in the information technology and retail sector, on second place in finance and accounting
		Educational background: Most of the ghosters have an educational background in information technology
		years of professional experience: 60% of ghosting incidences occur in recruiting processes with young professionals
		Already behaviour similar to ghosting has a negative impact on company results

Source: Delgado (2019); Lewis (2019a); Lewis (2019b); Karl et al. (2021); Kumar & Narayana (2019); Osbert-Pociecha & Bielinska (2019); Vagas & Misko (2018)

Striking is that most of the data has been collected on the candidate side, although nature of the phenomenon indicates candidates who ghosted are no longer available for contact attempts. In order to obtain such information, ghosters themselves had to be interviewed. By virtue of the nature of ghosting and the resulting breakdown in communication, consulting the respective candidate group is mainly no feasible alternative. All collected data is utter important

to understand candidate ghosting. Looking at the factors investigated so far in previous research, there are indications of the information content addressed. Several studies refer to gender as an indicator (Eagly, 1987, cited Karl et al., 2021; Karl et al., 2021; Eunson, 2012, cited Vagas & Misko, 2018). Furthermore, age is repeatedly mentioned as a parameter (Bauer, 2005, cited in Osbert-Pociecha & Bielinska, 2019; Rosenberg, 2018, Lewis, 2019a). Similarly, years of professional experience are addressed in some inquiries (Lewis, 2019a; Kumar & Narayana, 2019; Osbert-Pociecha & Bielinska, 2019). Salary was also linked to a higher possibility of ghosting tendencies (Antal, 2018, cited in Osbert-Pociecha & Bielinska, 2019; Lewis, 2019a; Kumar & Narayana, 2019). The research by Osbert-Pociecha and Bielinska considered the influence of differentiating educational levels on ghosting (Osbert-Pociecha & Bielinska, 2019). Factors not directly attributed to the candidate are alluded. For instance, moreover examined is the industry or educational background on the basis of a survey (Kumar & Narayana, 2019). The type of employment is briefly touched upon the Indeed study (Lewis, 2019a). In light of all these findings, there is a need for categorisation. Research results can be divided into four groups: candidates' reasons to ghost, frequency of ghosting incidences, acceptance of ghosting, factors influencing ghosting tendencies. Nonetheless sole factors influencing ghosting tendencies could be deployed to optimize recruitment processes to mitigate candidate ghosting from a company perspective. Taking into account all parameters of the respective category, six factors remain that support decision making in recruitment processes: age, gender, salary, type of employment, industrial background and educational background. The evidence suggests that research provides barely a basis for data-driven recruitment approaches. Customarily, application documents are used for screening purposes only. Currently no additional insights are gained from this data. The need for future research is to focus on information and data being available to companies in recruitment processes. Acquiring insights along these data streams would be crucial to support decision making in recruitment and to allocate a better candidate experience.

3. The pertinence of recapturing the company perspective on candidate ghosting

By recapturing the company perspective should be noted that companies face an information asymmetry, a lack of information, in recruitment processes. Candidates use the superior negotiating position created by the paradigm shift on labour markets to test own market values (Gurchiek, 2018, cited in Osbert-Pociecha & Bielinska, 2019). This leads to a passive attitude of employees. Careers being carefully planned, opportunities are perceived and high expectations are placed on potential employers (Antal, 2018, cited in Osbert-Pociecha & Bielinska, 2019). To meet these requirements and expectations recruitment has to deal with available information. Information not related to recruitment processes can't be acquired. To fill the resulting gap, recruiting practices are recommended in order to mitigate candidate ghosting, such as investigating the candidates' reasons to ghost or improving the recruiters' communication behaviour. Recommendations of preceded research to mitigate candidate ghosting are aggregated in subsequent table (Table 2).

Table 2: Compilation of advocacies of preceded research on mitigating candidate ghosting

Preceded research	Recommendation on mitigating ghosting
“What causes workplace ghosting?” (<i>Delgado, 2018</i>)	Companies should investigate the reasons triggering ghosting tendencies of candidates. According to these reasons causes of miscommunication should be resolved. Consequently, the definition of communication channels in advance to make sure communication can be handled accordingly is essential.
The Ghosting Guide: An Inside Look at Why Job Seekers Disappear (<i>Lewis, 2019a</i>) Ghosting Unmasked: Listen to the Voices Behind the Epidemic (<i>Lewis, 2019b</i>)	Attentiveness towards candidates should be focused on from company side. Communication behaviour from company side should be enhanced and applied to the respective candidate throughout every stage of the recruiting process. Actions taken should meet the candidates’ expectations and foster a beneficial communication concept.
Ghosting w polskich przedsiębiorstwach – perspektywa kandydata/ pracownika. Wyzwania dla rekrutacji. (<i>Osbert-Pociecha & Bielinska, 2019</i>)	There is the need on company side to mitigate candidate ghosting in recruiting processes by setting up specified recruiting practices. Financial resources should be spent in an efficient and targeted manner. These recruiting practices are not described in detail.
Understanding of ghosting in re-education of human resources in an organization. (<i>Vagas & Misko, 2018</i>)	Companies should set up training sessions to optimize the communication behaviour between employees in the context of daily operations. These training sessions should focus on recommendations to avoid ghosting between employees and to evince alternatives to this specific behavioural pattern.
Slip Out the Back Jack. Why Applicants Ghost Potential Employers. (<i>Karl et al., 2021</i>)	Companies should compensate given information content about the company itself as a potential future employer to meet the candidates’ expectations. Given information could be not appropriate to the candidates’ need for knowledge. By actively working on the provided information content companies should compensate missing details and data.
Ghosting behavior of job applicants: An analysis of factors driving behavior. (<i>Kumar & Narayana, 2019</i>)	For companies it is crucial to mitigate candidate ghosting in recruiting processes by setting up specified recruitment activities which are not described in detail. Mitigating candidate ghosting is the companies’ responsibility.

Source: Delgado (2018; Lewis (2019a); Lewis (2019b); Osbert-Pociecha & Bielinska (2019); Vagas & Misko (2018); Karl et al. (2021); Kumar & Narayana (2019)

Contemplating recommendations made in relation to ghosting, implementing these across the entire candidate funnel is not feasible due to a lack of capacity and resources (Athanas & Wald, 2014; Hesse, 2015). So far academic discourse is lacking a target group to adapt recommended recruiting practices to, which means per default a rollout of activities to the whole candidate funnel. An implementation of recruiting practices across the entire candidate funnel is no alternative by virtue of tremendous costs involved. A viable opportunity would be the adaption of recommended practices to an identified target group, so activities meeting needs of candidates. Crucial for companies would be to be enabled to personalize recruiting processes and to address specifics of distinct profiles. The candidate side would also be benefited. Considering candidates as stakeholders aims at achieving this match, due to candidates being already stakeholders to companies in multiple ways. If it is business serving customers (B2C) there will be a high possibility of candidates also being customers of the respective company. If the business is serving other businesses (B2B) candidates will be business partners or client representatives. In case of hiring a candidate, this respective candidate could be a future colleague. Even in case of not hiring a candidate, there is an opportunity of this candidate being a

future employee of a competitor. In each case described, a bad candidate experience has a negative impact on the business (Athanas & Wald, 2014). Recruiters should be instructed and qualified to meet the candidates' expectations by combining personal attributes, giving accurate information and working towards a consistent recruitment strategy (Chapman et al., 2005). A company being incapable to fill open positions is lacking staff or knowledge, or on both counts. Responsibilities and supplementary assignments have to be postponed to remaining colleagues who might not have capacities with regard to time or necessary proficiency to fill residual gaps in workforce. Inability of providing necessary resources engenders the escalation of projects. Overloading remaining employees leads to a poor working atmosphere and to an increase in employee turnover. Customers will notice partnerships, if a company is incapable of delivering promised products or services. The loss of clients results in a decline in profit.

There is a quantity of recruiting practices to mitigate candidate ghosting, though for general implementation, which is neither efficiently nor feasible in terms of time or resources. In order to be able to deal with ghosting in recruitment processes, there is the need of data that enables companies to apply recommended recruiting practices to a specific target group, owing to a high-quality recruiting being crucial for the company success and survival (Taylor & Collins, 2000, cited in Swider & Steed, 2022). Such results are not provided by the current state of knowledge. In particular, research is lacking knowledge on candidate ghosting that can be deployed in the context of recruitment activities for companies.

4. Concluding by addressing the research gap academic discourse should focus on

Research evinces candidate ghosting to be more accepted by respondents than company ghosting, consequently companies have to anticipate candidate ghosting (Delgado, 2018). The outcome leading to the pertinence of mitigating candidate ghosting in recruiting processes is that behaviour, even assimilable to this phenomenon, has a negative impact on company results (Vagas & Misko, 2018). The overarching purpose should be enabling companies to modify existing recruiting practices to an identified target group (Griepentrog et al., 2012). Contemplating results of preceded research, there is no stated objective that recommended recruiting practices should focus on. An information deficit resulting in an information asymmetry on company side accrues when candidates submitting application documents (Spence, 1973). Mainstay of recruitment is candidate information being at the disposal of companies without reaching out to candidates for no recruiting purposes. Even in the case of incompleteness, actions have to be oriented towards this quantity and content of information (Holtbrügge, 2018). Recruitment processes aiming at commissioning employees to carry out an activity in return for a fee (Picot et al., 2012). There is a conjecture and speculation about candidates pursuing own interests. Arising uncertainties should be reduced through contracts, which is not done in favour of self-interest. In this respect there is a lack of information, due to missing contractual conventions in recruitment processes and sole informal agreements (Troger, 2018). Candidates have cognizance about hidden characteristics, such as ghosting tendencies or real intentions, hidden intentions, like testing the own market value, that companies do not have (Picot et al., 2012). Identification of such characteristics or intentions by companies can only be done on the basis of available information content. Accordingly, companies have to be empowered to alter recruiting practices (Osbert-Pociecha & Bielinska, 2019). Analysed should be whether the information in application documents indicates ghosting tendencies. Research results should reduce the information asymmetry on company side, as companies suffer financial losses in case of candidate ghosting (Pape, 2014, cited in Rechsteiner, 2019). Considering candidates as stakeholders is necessary to achieve this bridging. A candidate experience should be as personalised as a customer experience and aim at meeting the candidate needs. Consequently, academic discourse and research needs to alter its focus and to address the analysis of information content

available in each recruiting process to every company. Research needs to capture information alongside application documents. The decision to provide this information has already been made by the candidate when submitting these documents. There would be no entailment to contact candidates for non-recruitment purposes. Intention of analysing application documents should be the identification of a target group. Knowing more about specific candidate groups would foster recruiters and hiring managers to decide in handling each recruitment process and supporting favoured candidates in a more targeted manner. The attempt to gain data regarding the company perspective on recruiting processes serves to align recruiting practices and target groups resulting in saving company resources. Best practices have already been developed. For instance, the elaboration of better communication strategies with candidates is recommended (Karl et al., 2021). Maintaining a comprehensive communication concept with each candidate exceeds the capacities of recruitment departments. A further example is mentioned in the study by meta HR, which alludes expectation management. Candidates should be contemplated as stakeholder (Athanas & Wald, 2014). Implementing expectation management to specifically selected candidates is a reasonable possibility, as these are of particular interest to the company. When considering given recommendations for recruiting practices, it becomes clear that these cannot be deployed across the entire candidate funnel due to a lack of capacity (Athanas & Wald, 2014; Hesse, 2015). So far generated solutions are recommended for general implementation, though are not meant to be executed for an identified target group. The extension of recruiting practices across the entire candidate funnel does not correspond to a contemporary and efficient recruitment strategy. Especially when filling certain positions that require special qualifications, candidate ghosting can lead to inefficiency and the position not being filled (Hübbe, 2018, cited in Kienbaum, 2018). Considering the costs behind generic implemented recruiting practices, targeted ones are rather efficient and cost-saving (Athanas, 2019). The possibility of optimizing standard processes and paying extended attention to stakeholders' requirements is opened up, leading to an economically efficient use of recruitment resources. A company success depends on the ability to take influence on stakeholders (Pfeffer, 1981, cited in Yu, 2019). As research by Kang Yang Trevor Yu evinces companies having the possibility to take influence on different factors in recruitment to have an impact on the company image for candidates (Yu, 2019). Particularly due to the paradigm shift on labour markets and the changing attitude of candidates towards companies, recruiting practices should be targeted at defined candidate profiles. Perceiving ghosting tendencies in advance would be of high relevance in order to save resources in recruitment processes and being able to deploy appropriate activities (Conrad, 2014). This prevents actual ghosting tendencies from being triggered and recruiting processes from coming to an unwanted end. By combining actions and target groups, company resources are preserved and spent more efficiently. In this way, resources and capacities are expended in a more targeted manner to economize human and financial capital as well benefiting the candidate side by assigning recruitment activities to profiles specifics and candidate needs (Breugh & Starke, 2000).

5. Summary and approaches for further research

Summarizing the exemplification of preceded chapters it becomes apparent that previous research on ghosting in vocational surroundings provides barely starting points for the company side to take preventive actions on mitigating candidate ghosting in recruiting processes. The quantity of findings which was gained in previous research projects provides confined outcomes that could actually be exploited to mitigate candidate ghosting. Noted should be that companies during recruiting processes have only access to a limited amount of data and also do not have the opportunity of approaching ghosters themselves to obtain additional information. The research focus so far has been on understanding the phenomenon of candidate ghosting and less

on an investigation with the attempt of practical applicability. Therefore, also recommendations to mitigate candidate ghosting are set up for general implementation. Companies lack a data basis to anticipate the phenomenon and take appropriate recruiting practices in advance. As evinces by preceded research, various reasons for candidate ghosting are caused by companies themselves. In order to be able to react appropriately to the phenomenon on company side, subsequent research would have to provide a database that indicates to companies which target group preventive recruiting practices should be aligned to. The phenomenon of ghosting in vocational surroundings is underrepresented in academic discourse as well as in preceded research and requires more attention. Feasible research attempts should therefore aim to enable companies to handle and improve recruiting processes accordingly. Subsequent research should focus on data available to companies in recruiting processes. The perspective of companies on candidate ghosting has to be analysed in more detail, also what information is provided to companies by research regarding candidate ghosting in recruiting processes in order to identify conceivable ghosting tendencies and to take preventive recruiting practices for identified target groups. In general, further research projects should focus on the company side and gain insights into data streams for the implementation in decision making in recruiting processes.

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