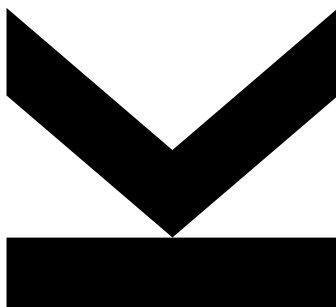JKU

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September 2021

Expert or person: does it matter for recruiters who we are? The role of hobbies in a CV

Master's Thesis

to confer the academic degree of
Master of Science

in the Master's Program
Leading Innovative Organizations

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SWORN DECLARATION

I hereby declare under oath that the submitted Master's Thesis has been written solely by me without any third-party assistance, information other than provided sources or aids have not been used and those used have been fully documented. Sources for literal, paraphrased and cited quotes have been accurately credited.

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Linz, 18.09.2021

Kateryna Hunko

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank God for being able to be here, to have this amazing experience in this university and course, to develop in the sphere I like.

I am extremely grateful to my family: my parents, my brother, my grandparents, my boyfriend for supporting me in my choice, for loving and encouraging me. Thanks to them I am the person now, which I always wanted to be.

I would also like to thank my supervisor - Matthias Fink for always motivating me, supporting, guiding and bringing a positive attitude. I really appreciate all the efforts you do in helping me to deliver a good paper and learn a lot from the whole process.

I would like to thank the whole LIO team: management, professors, assistants and my groupmates. For all of us this year was challenging, but thanks to our teamwork, desire and motivation to develop and grow both personally and professionally, we are at the last stage of accomplishing one more step in our lives.

Thanks to everyone who was there for me during each important step in my life, who supported and motivated me. Thank You a lot!

Abstract

This quantitative study concentrates on the different types of hobbies and their effect on the recruiters' perception of the candidates' skills and personality during the recruitment process. The hobbies section is one of the primary CV components, as it communicates implicit information about a person. However, it has been underestimated by both: candidates and recruiters. Hobbies proved to be an important factor in the development of the personality, but there are still doubts if they have any effect on the decision about employment. Additionally, gender bias is viewed as a moderating factor that can impact the interpretation of the "male" or "female" hobbies by the employer. In my research I refer to the signaling theory, that represents hobbies as a signal, which provides information to the recruiter, aiming to enhance the candidate's personal brand. This paper seeks to answer the following research questions: "What is the effect of introducing different types of hobbies on the recruiters' perception of the candidate?" and "What is the moderating effect of gender on the interpretation of different types of hobbies by the recruiters?". To approach them, the experimental design was used: two surveys with four CV versions were distributed among people who have experience in the recruiting processes. Out of seven analyzed soft skills, five differ significantly for the CVs with active and passive hobbies. The results of the study suggest that specific types of hobbies have a significant impact on the perception of the applicants' soft skills by the recruiter. At the same time, gender has a relatively small impact on the results. Therefore, job seekers should take into account the importance of hobbies and use them in order to communicate their personal brand. From the theoretical perspective, this work discusses a CV as a way to communicate a personal brand through hobbies' presentation, creating a base for future frameworks.

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Introduction

Recruitment is the heart of the organization and from this step, a firm gets the most valuable asset for themselves - people with all their experience, competences, knowledge, and skills. The whole process is usually strategically planned beforehand, and its main aim is to make sure that the best of the best candidates will be attracted. Having them, the organization can enhance performance and gain its competitive advantage.

The fight for talents, skills, and competences created a need to look for new ways of recruitment. Current society is used to the conveniences of Internet usage, so it is not surprising anymore that online recruiting grew and developed with tremendous speed. In 2018, around 90% of American companies were recruiting online, today this share is higher (Alamro et al., 2018). It has been proven that this method is one of the most popular among potential candidates for the position. The recruitment and eventual hiring of employees have been an area of tremendous focus for scholars (Thompson et al., 2008).

From the other perspective, for the potential employee, there is a challenge to present herself/himself in a way that the organization will see all the important traits and skills required for the job position. One of the earliest and important stages of the recruiting process is the presentation of the Curriculum Vitae (CV). It includes a diverse set of information, which should be considered and analyzed by the job provider (Hakel et al., 1970). Extracurricular activities are one of the core unobservable components of the CV, compared to the work experience and education, which could be observed (diploma, recommendation, etc.; Nemanick & Clark, 2002). At the same time, this section can potentially bring a lot of information about the candidate regarding his/her soft skills and personality.

Nowadays, in order to get a job, it is not enough to only be educated and experienced, most recruiters would like to see applicants that have well-developed soft skills. They often associate involvement in extracurricular activities with gaining interpersonal skills and leadership (Rubin et al., 2002). Multiple studies confirmed that extracurricular activities are an important component in resume evaluation, but there is less literature on what aspects of these activities are most valuable to an employer (Nemanick & Clark, 2002).

However, from the theoretical perspective CV is viewed as an element of communication between a candidate and a recruiter. The shift toward digital recruiting has become another constraint that needs to be considered in this process. Even though the recruitment processes moved digitally, the CV is still a requirement for most organizations. Signaling theory is proposed to explain the mechanisms of conveying the message to the receivers, which should clarify the impact of the hobbies section on the recruiter's conclusions.

There is little evidence that presents the effect of the hobbies section in the Curriculum Vitae on the recruiters' decision. Furthermore, little amount of research focused on the interpretation of extracurricular activities and unobserved traits they might communicate.

Based on the issues described above, the goals of this research are as follows. First of all, the aim is to find out how extracurricular activities in applicants' CVs influence the recruiter's decision and what unobserved qualities and traits do hobbies communicate in general. Secondly, I would like to uncover if participation in hobbies benefits future employment opportunities. Third, due to the different types of hobbies, I would like to check if passive and active hobbies communicate different sets of traits and if there is an effect on the success of job application. The last but not least, my goal is to check if there is bias and unequal judgment between the male and female CVs with the exact same content.

Based on the literature review performed, I have developed the hypothesis and tested them using the experimental design research method. In this paper I would like to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the effect of introducing different types of hobbies on the recruiters' perception of the candidate?

RS2: What is the moderating effect of gender bias on the interpretation of different types of hobbies by the recruiters?

1. Recruitment process

The organization consists of many departments, which have their own responsibilities. Each of them is important and the organization would be not able to effectively operate without even one of the elements. However, in order to make departments work, they need people (Kaharuddin, 2018).

Before joining an organization employees pass through two fundamental processes: selection and recruitment. These are two different phases of employment. Recruitment is a process where the organization looks for potential employees and encourages them to apply when the company needs to fill a specific job position. On the other hand, the selection is a screening of the applications received and deciding on one that is the most suitable for the proposed position. During the selection, there are two categories of candidates: the ones who will be offered a job and the ones who will be rejected (Mohammad, 2020).

The gravity of the hiring process is to prevent hiring the wrong person, who does not fit a specific position. Sequentially, it may result in major losses (financial and non-financial). That is why recruitment is one of the major processes in the whole organization. Taking this into account, HR managers use diverse channels for attraction of the potential employees to achieve the highest effectiveness. Recruiting is one of the core activities of the human resource team, which stays at the roots of the creation of human capital. Traditional recruitment has been functioning for a long time, however, with the technology development more and more organizations savored the taste of e-recruitment. This chapter will include the review of literature on the topics of traditional and digital recruitment, recruiting artifacts (CV, cover letter), give details about the structure of the CV, and consequently focus on the main topic of the research – hobbies (Kaharuddin, 2018).

1.1. Traditional versus digital recruitment

The main aim of recruitment is to find people and attract them in order to fulfill the needs of the organization and move together towards the initial goals of the firm. In a nutshell, recruitment is the process of hiring a new person, who will be contributing his / her knowledge, skills, competences for a wage and other benefits. Nowadays, there are various methods of recruitment: job advertisements, referrals, social media, recruitment agencies and many others. In order to increase the chances to attract the best candidate, organizations use multiple methods in order to reach people. It is the choice of the organization, which approach to follow in recruitment, and it strongly depends on several factors, such as culture inside the firm, target group, financing, and time. The effective recruitment process is one of the most crucial and vital tools in order to remain competitive in a market (Trivedi, 2018).

There are two major ways to recruit: traditionally and digitally. The former concept is defined as a process of using such artifacts as paper CVs, paper-based job applications, internal hiring, a journal advertisement, newspapers, magazines, or employment agencies in order to attract and select people (Kaharuddin, 2018). Traditional recruitment generally begins with the identification of the target candidates, their location, and possible ways to attract them. Afterwards the applications with the required documents (CV, cover letter) are received, sorted, and screened. After the shortlist is created, the candidates are being communicated regarding the pre-screening outcomes. Traditional recruitment was and still is widely used, however, it is gradually displaced by the organizations, due to the advantages of the digital process described below (Kaharuddin, 2018).

Digitalization has transformed recruitment providing new methods to increase the effectiveness of the process. It has started with the implementation of Web 1.0, which allowed users to search, reach and read information without being able to interact with others or contribute. However, even this functionality lets the organizations reach a wide range of potential candidates, sharing with them the information regarding the company and job offers. On the other hand, job seekers could screen hundreds of companies and choose the preferred one in seconds. Although the only drawback was that it is solely a one-way communication and as stated earlier - with no possibility to interact. The World Wide Web 1.0 presented a sufficient number of benefits to the recruiting sphere: decreased costs, search time, and a possibility to connect with more candidates. At the same time, communication between two parties did not differ significantly from traditional recruiting. It usually consists of 3 messages: call from the organization with the job offer, answer from the candidate with CV and cover letter, and lastly the decision of the company about the further cooperation. Even though over years this approach was proved to work effectively, the possibility to improve the communication within the recruitment process could bring a number of benefits. With the technology development and innovation, new Web 2.0 evolved, and the process of recruiting reached a new level (Naik & Shivalingaiah, 2009).

With the emergence of Web 2.0, according to Bernes-Lee, "read-write" web, organizations got the opportunity not only to share information but also interact with other users, potential employees, exchange information, get feedback and implement two-sided communication. Additionally, the job market was centralized by digital organizations, which collected job offers from different websites. This allowed candidates to see all the possible options in one place, increasing the amount of information available and the speed of search (Naik & Shivalingaiah, 2009).

This new phenomenon is called "e-recruitment" (Sills, 2014). Such terms as digital recruitment, modern recruitment, web-based recruitment are all interchangeable (Kaharuddin,

2018). E-recruitment is defined as a process of selection of a candidate using the Internet. In order to be competitive in a market, it is crucial for organizations to adapt their technologies in the recruiting process. Dhamija (2012) in her research stated that e-recruitment is "the practice whereby online technology is used, particularly websites, as a means of attracting, assessing, interviewing, and hiring personnel." There are 3 methods in e-recruitment that are generally used. The first one is so-called "web-recruiting", which refers to using the website that the organization owns. The second is to use recruiting platforms, such as Monster.com, Jobs.at, Career.com and others. And the third method is social media (Facebook, Linkedin, etc; Alamro et al., 2018).

According to the research, nowadays there is an increased interest in e-hiring. There are three main reasons why. First of all, e-recruitment can be a competitive advantage to a company, due to its fast growth, many organizations face a period of change and implementation of new technology into their daily operations. Another reason is that e-recruitment gives jobseekers a possibility to have a wide range of selection of the job positions presented, which forces companies to be more innovative in meeting their needs. In 2018, around 90% of organizations are using the Internet in order to improve and develop their recruitment. The same benefits refer to the organizations too, as thankfully to e-hiring they have a wider range of potential employees available (Alamro et al., 2018).

According to Lee (2005), the main change that e-recruitment offers is a shift from the batch (all CVs are first collected, then processed and filtered) to continuous mode (all the stages are performed simultaneously). This is a vital change in the whole business process. It allows ongoing capturing and sorting of the applications. E-recruiting is a two-way communication process that allows people to connect using the Internet from different locations and time zones. It has become a universal tool for both parties: candidates and HR teams (Holm, 2012). This and other changes in recruitment with the introduction of the internet brought a set of benefits for the organizations:

- Saving costs;

Usually posting a job offer online is free of charge. An organization can make an offer on its website or use any other social media pages, where there are no fees. Costs of the Internet itself and hardware are insignificant, as nowadays companies use it for other purposes like marketing or product distribution. E-recruitment may still involve some costs, but only in specific cases. For example, if the organization has a very specific audience and wants to call for a narrow group of people. In this case, some costs will occur due to the use of external algorithms for targeted campaigns. However, in comparison to traditional recruitment, the general money spent on e-recruitment is lower.

- Bigger pool of potential employees;

The Internet connects a tremendous amount of people, and even until now each day more users join this global phenomenon. In the USA 98% of younger people (18-29 years old) are active users of the Internet. That is why, when recruiting digitally, it means to show the job position to a huge amount of potentially interested people. Therefore, it leads to selecting the best candidate and creating a competitive advantage compared to other organizations.

- Easy to use for both the organization and candidates;

There is a variety of recruiting platforms online, and most of them are designed in a way to be attractive and user-friendly for both parties - organizations and potential employees. At the same time, employers should create easy access to the information and simplify the navigation for candidates. It is easy to post a job advertisement and additionally it is possible to edit it anytime. This is a feature hardly achievable with the traditional recruitment methods, where the job proposition cannot be updated or edited. Thus, the offer needs to be posted again, which takes time and money. E-recruitment allows the job offer to be available online until the host of this offer decides to delete it, while the offer in the newspaper has its lifecycle (on average a week). One more point here is that e-recruitment is accessible. Due to the power of the Internet, it does not require much effort to connect to the candidates even if he/she is on the other side of the globe.

- Improves corporate image & identity;

Nowadays innovation and implementation of new methods in each sphere of business are one of the most crucial points to stay on the market and remain competitive. Showing that the organization is following trends and caring about the effectiveness of the HR team helps to attract the best candidates to the organization. Overall, it makes employers more attractive to potential employees and builds a strong corporate image in the eyes of stakeholders.

- Enables time-saving.

Due to the availability of filtration tools, it is easier to find the right person for a specific position. It speeds up the process, helping to sort applications depending on the chosen criteria. Additionally, having everything in one place and avoiding additional paperwork saves time for the HR team, as most of the files and information regarding the candidates can be retrieved from the platforms (Thompson et al., 2008).

At the same time, it is important to remember that in the recruitment process there are 2 perspectives, which are equally crucial to be considered. Therefore, together with the benefits

e-recruitment brings to the organization, it also facilitates the job-seekers experience and provides the following advantages:

- Bigger pool of potential employers;

Similarly, to the wide range of available candidates for the organizations, e-recruiting provides job seekers with a bunch of potential employers. Having the possibility to review and access a large number of companies allowed people who are looking for a job to choose among them.

- Availability of information about the company;

Companies are competing for the best employees, they present the information about themselves in order to attract applicants. From the job-seekers' point of view, with the emergence of e-recruitment, the information regarding the company itself, its norms, culture, and even salaries started to be easily accessible.

- Saving time;

E-recruitment allows access to many companies simultaneously, which makes the whole process of a job search faster. Additionally, due to the fact that the posting and all activities are performed in real-time, it means that if an organization found a candidate already, the offer will be deleted, not causing misinformation for other applicants. While with the traditional method there is no way to erase the offer from the newspaper already when it is published. One more point is the time needed to apply. Using the Internet capabilities, it can be done in minutes, while traditional methods require more time (walking to the post office or to the company itself in order to deliver a CV).

- Specific job search.

The opportunity to use the "filter" function in most of the social media recruiting pages or even company's websites help job seekers to target a specific field of interest and do not spend time scrolling and searching manually (Okolie & Irabor, 2017).

However, on the other side, there are some challenges of e-recruiting, which affect both sides: organization and candidates:

- Lack of face-to-face communication;

One crucial disadvantage that most of the researchers' name is the issue of communication between the HR and potential employees. Even though the technology develops extremely fast and there is a possibility to use the video resumes, or organize a video call, the human factor of live communication is still a gap in online hiring (Fayyazi, 2013).

- Significant amount of CVs received;

It is not possible to control each application, that is why many CVs that are being sent may be not even relevant for the specific job position or may be a result of someone's joke, etc. In this case, it may take more time for the HR team to review the documentation.

- More competition;

Nowadays it is hard to find a company that does not practice e-recruitment. That is why when logging in to the recruitment platforms or social media, there is an enormous number of career propositions. Due to this, when the organization posts a job offer it can quickly be vanished and be put down by other firms. It brings the risk of not being seen by the person who would fit best for the proposed position. In this war for talents, competences, and skills this disadvantage is crucial.

- Trust.

Even though almost everyone has access to the Internet nowadays, there is still a question of trust in it. Building trust between the candidate and recruiter is a competitive advantage of the organization. Putting information about yourself online is something that currently not everyone is willing to do. Due to the data securing policy it becomes easier, but the issue is not fully solved (Fayyazi, 2013). There is a lack of confidentiality because everyone can access the data you post online (Trivedi, 2018).

Even though there are some challenges, still the advantages overcome them and make e-recruiting a more preferable method nowadays (Sills, 2014).

1.2. Stages of digital recruitment

Researchers state in their papers that digital recruitment in most cases includes all the stages of traditional recruitment. The only difference is that they all are adopted to the web-based environment (Stankiewicz, 2015). Other papers say that the difference between the traditional recruitment process and e-recruitment is the sequence of stages (Holm, 2012). The evolution of the information systems should be taken into account. Today most of the tasks are performed automatically - tracking and selecting applicants, offering jobs to the specific targeted pool of users, etc. (Holm, 2012). Organizations integrated into their recruiting strategies software that allow them keeping the applications of people for the future possible offers (Stankiewicz, 2015). In order to be able to distinguish the e-recruitment stages, I have decided to have a closer look at the traditional process first. Traditional recruitment in most studies is described as linear, where the next stage can start only when the previous one is finished. According to Holm, it has 4 main tasks, and each group includes 2 sub-tasks, which generalize the activities that

need to be taken in order to move to the next task (Holm, 2012). So, the process looks as follows:

- Identifying applicants;

It includes defining the pool of potential candidates, which will correspond to the culture and values of the organization. Followed by searching for the target audience and places where people can be reached. Additionally, a message about a job offer is created as a first step of the communication process, with a job description, requirements, and overview of the organization.

- Attracting applicants;

When a recruiter has job requirements and knows its target audience, then he/she chooses how to reach candidates, so selects the recruitment channels. Writing about the traditional recruiting methods, these channels could be magazines, newspapers, TV advertisements. As soon as the channels are selected, the job announcement is posted.

- Processing the applications;

All the incoming applications are sorted first for each job position separately and then registered for further monitoring. Then the pre-screening is performed and the shortlist of the selected candidates for further evaluation is created.

- Communicating with applicants.

At the last stage, applicants are informed regarding the pre-screening results. The applicant is being contacted no matter what the decision is: is he/she shortlisted or not. Generally, the form of communication differs depending on the type of the organization itself and organizational culture. It could be a formal letter, email, or phone call (Holm, 2012).

Therefore, while comparing the process described above to the digital one, the main distinction is that in e-recruitment the processing of received applications and communicating with the candidates happens concurrently with other tasks, such as attracting potential employees, for example (Kapse et al., 2012). This creates a vital change in the whole design of the recruitment process. With the support of technology, simultaneous communication and job posting was enabled throughout the whole activity. Communication became not the distinct stage, but the component of each stage of e-recruitment. Therefore, the candidates are getting the information about the status of the application continuously from the moment of applying till the last step of being selected or rejected (Holm, 2012).

According to Kaharuddin and others (2018), the first step - identification of applicants - in e-recruitment looks similar to the traditional style. The activities are performed with little to no

technology involvement, generally, email correspondence is used (Kaharuddin, 2018). As for the second step - attracting applicants - it depends mostly on the tools and techniques of electronic recruitment. To find applicants, companies use advertisements on company websites, online databases of resumes, or professional networks such as LinkedIn as an additional recruiting source. The processing of incoming applications is usually fully or almost fully automated (applications received and sorted automatically). The feature that makes it distinct from the traditional process is that the system allows running all the recruitment activities simultaneously with pre-screening of the received applications. As for the last step - communication with candidates, for the e-recruitment it cannot be named as a final stage, as message exchange started from the moment of attracting candidates. Because of the technological and automation capabilities of electronic recruiting systems, applicants were continuously informed about their application and at what stage of recruitment it currently is. If after pre-screening the CV of the applicant does not match the expectations and requirements of HR, those applicants are also immediately informed about the decision. This is done even before the job position is officially filled (Kaharuddin, 2018).

According to Cappelli (2001), e-recruitment with the support of technology and adopted recruitment strategies has only 3 distinct stages: attracting, sorting, and contacting candidates. Attracting is usually performed by the design of the company's web page. Additionally, organizations may use electronic networks for the promotion and target the best-fitting audience. The next step is sorting, meaning analyzing the candidates and screen them. Usually, this is done with the help of online testing. The tests can vary according to the needs of the organization. They could be connected straight to the job requirements, where the skills of the applicant are checked, or they could be connected to the personal traits of the applicant and check if he/she will fit into the organizational structure and culture. The last step is contacting candidates. Generally, this is an automated communication process, which is implemented in most organizations that use e-recruitment (Holm, 2012).

Even though most organizations implemented digital recruitment into their business strategies, utilizing their websites, social media, or recruitment platforms, there is one attribute that remained, as a fundamental artifact of the recruiting - curriculum vitae (Frimpong, 2006). With the emergence of e-hiring it changed the designs, structures, forms, however, it is still indispensable. Nowadays, even if a job seeker applies for the job position using LinkedIn, for example, he/she will in most cases still be asked to deliver a traditional CV. Furthermore, this also works the other way around. If a candidate sends a CV, it is most likely his/her social media profiles (LinkedIn, Facebook) will be reviewed (Zide, 2014).

1.3. Artifacts

The process of personnel selection is a challenging and complex activity for most companies. There are numerous tools that support it: applications and resumes, interviews, background and reference checks, personality tests, and many others (Wright et al., 2011). The "classic duet" that is mostly being used are CV and cover letter (Apers & Derous, 2017). In order to have a better understanding of these terms, I decided to do deeper academic research.

During the process of application, most companies require a candidate to send a cover letter together with a CV. The purpose of the cover letter is to provide a potential employer with a brief overview of your experience, skills, accomplishments and prove why you are the best candidate for this position. The cover letter highlights a candidate's strengths and generally should be tailored to the specific job for which you are applying. The cover letter is one to two pages and consists of the following information: general introduction, main argumentation of what a candidate has to offer and what can be taken in return from the organization, meaning what is the mutual benefit and the conclusion with the updated contact information (Frimpong, 2006). According to the research, CVs sent without a cover letter received a negative response and the application was not proceeded further. This leads to the conclusion that a cover letter plays a vital role in the recruitment procedure (Goleman, 1995).

CV is one of the most widely used selection tools as it unfolds the primary information regarding the candidate, on which the first impression is strongly dependent (Knouse, 1994). CV is a testimonial and a brief summary of a person's biographical information, such as education, experience, achievements. Moreover, it may include a candidate's soft skills (for example, leadership, communication skills) or even personal traits, and hobbies (Apers & Derous, 2017). Generally, a recruiter gets piles of information regarding the applicant's skills, competences, motivation, personality. Based on it he/she is able to assess the match between the job requirements and the qualifications of the candidate (Wright et al., 2011).

The vital reason why companies routinely use resumes is that they are considered effective and inexpensive in evaluating the match between job requirements and applicants' knowledge, skills and abilities. Recruiters who review resumes are usually empowered to decide which applicants should be considered for further steps in the recruiting process. According to the research, recruiters often look far beyond the objective data in CVs. They also draw conclusions based on subjective information, such as personality characteristics and person-job fit. However, this judgment might be controversial, due to the high subjectivity and biased thinking. The reliability of such conclusions from the CV content in most cases is low (Wright et al., 2011).

A well-built CV gives an overview of who you are as a professional, what you can do, what you know, what your skills and accomplishments are. The main goal of the CV is to catch the attention of a potential employer and get an interview invitation. As recruiters receive piles of CVs, a successful one needs to stand out and make a good first impression. This significantly increases the chances to become pre-selected or selected. Not only the content matters but the visual part too. It should be appealing, well-structured, written without errors, and using professional, formal wording. There is a need to regularly update a CV, so it explicitly presents the most recent information. Having a digital CV makes this process easier and faster to execute (Frimpong, 2006).

1.4. Traditional versus digital CV

As it is stated in most of the papers, traditional and digital CVs have more similarities rather than differences. It would be incorrect to disagree that CV has evolved as the job market has developed, but its content has remained essentially the same. As described in the previous sub-chapters, it is usually a one-to-three-page document, where the information regarding a person's work experience, education, hobbies, community involvement, and professional achievements are presented (Kroeze 2015).

However, when it comes to the transformation of traditional CVs into digital ones, most articles state that the vital change is the ability of web-based CV to offer a high level of flexibility. Online CV gives a possibility to a candidate to present himself/herself by posting a simple CV online, or to have a well-designed and visualized or create a personal website. The formatting flexibility and the general appearance of the CV depend just on the candidate's creativity. The power of technology makes it possible to already show your skills to the recruiter at the stage of sending your CV by adding designs, infographics, multimedia, etc. (Kroeze, 2015).

Another difference is the ability to edit information. Traditional CV does not give the possibility to make amendments after a document is printed. On the other hand, a digital CV is easily updatable. This feature saves the candidate's efforts and time, as if the information in the CV needs to be updated or some mistakes should be fixed, in digital one this can be done in minutes (Kroeze, 2015).

On the platforms users usually insert all their skills, experiences, competence, hobbies, etc. The recruiter who looks for the candidate for a specific job position is able to sort all the possible options only to those who have sufficient skills. This is where the keyword search is executed. Traditional CVs lack this feature and usually if an organization hires using paper-based CVs, the HR team loses time and effort to perform the pre-screening and sort all the non-matching applications (Frimpong, 2006).

1.5. "Hobbies" section in CV

Moving to the topic of particular interest of this paper, hobbies are a commonly used CV section, which usually is overlooked by the managers and the researchers. Even though they leave a lot of space for personal interpretation, hobbies can be a source of information about individual qualities and abilities. A better understanding of this section can help to improve the communication process between the recruiters and candidates, making it more effective (Roulin et al., 2013).

1.5.1. Definition

Until now there is no one specific definition of the word "hobby". Researchers analyzed this topic from different angles and came up with various conclusions. However, most of them use "hobby" as a synonym for "leisure activity". In the literature, it is commonly characterized as a non-work occupation, but there are some contradictions. For example, some authors (Dodge et al., 2008; Donnelly & Dumas, 1997) state that active sports could be named a hobby, while others (Iso-Ahola, Jackson, and Dunn, 1994, McHale Crouter and Tucker, 2001) claim that these two are separate. Similarly, reading fiction literature also brought up the discussion by the researchers. There are also different views on the classification of hobbies. As for the definition itself, it tends to vary from one author to another. For example, Bogardus (1943) described a hobby as an activity that one finds appealing and to which one devotes a portion of own free time, and he/she does not get money for the participation in it. Stebbins (1982) stated that a hobby is a special activity that is far beyond a person's occupation, that is very enjoyable as it has long-lasting benefits. However, Menninger (1942) said that the generally used definition of a hobby that the vocabulary proposes, as something that is extremely interesting to a person, cannot be specific enough as it is hardly distinguishable from other activities in which people could be interested too (Larry, 2018). In order to define the word hobby in this paper, I decided to follow Daily (2018), where there is a statement that a hobby has a work-like character, but it is voluntary. This is an action that involves time, the usage of tools, where a person does not get money for participation and the activity is attractive to the actor (Larry, 2018).

There is a limited amount of literature available regarding the signals that hobbies give to the recruiters during the CV screening. At the same time, researchers were interested in the students and early graduates and their process of a job application. That is why, there are a significant number of articles, which focus on extracurricular activities, as a particular group of hobbies. They can carry information about individual knowledge, skills, and personal qualities. By the definition, these are the activities, which happen outside of the study program and the voluntarily conducted by the individual on a regular basis. Examples include arts, sports clubs, volunteering, etc. Further, in the text extracurricular activities and hobbies will be used as terms, which represents both of the definitions (Roulin et al., 2013).

1.5.2. Recruitment and hobbies

Nowadays, labor supply exceeds labor demand and due to this, employers are more selective when it comes to choosing the best candidate for the proposed position. Job seekers, from their side, tend to search for the factors that make them unique and different among the large candidate pool. Showing one's activities that are performed in the spare time is one of the ways to express an eagerness to develop oneself as a personality or/and professional. The hobbies section is usually one of the components in the CV. The presentation of a person's interests has a positive impact on the acceptance rate, as these activities may disclose something about a person that is not visible from other pieces of information. It has been proven that extracurricular activities that children and students take part in, play a vital role in personality formation, and affect the development of the skills and competences that support them in adulthood. For example, Weight, Navarro, Huffman, and Smith-Ryan (2014) did research and found out that students who did sports in university presented higher scores in leadership, work in a team, and diligence rather than the ones who did not do sport at all. This can be an explanation why some organizations pay attention to the activities that are performed out-of-work (Weight et al., 2016). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that different hobbies impact the perception of the recruiter about the candidate. This raises a need for the classification of hobbies and identification of their effect on the selection results.

1.5.3. Types of hobbies

Generally, in the literature, there are still some inconsistencies when it comes to the types of hobbies (Yamashita, et al., 2019). The most common classification is the division between active and passive hobbies (Firestone and Shelton, 1988). In the authors' opinion, active hobbies include those that are mostly performed outside. For instance, sport, exercises, bicycling, swimming, walking, gardening, etc. (Wang et al., 2012). Another paper by Firestone and Shelton states that passive hobbies are the ones that could be performed indoors, for example, reading, watching TV, playing computer games (Firestone and Shelton, 1988).

However, there are also other classifications presented in the literature. One of them is the categorization done by Dardis (1994). He identified another type of hobby, distinctive from the active and passive - social ones. As for the active and passive the definition stays the same as in the research done by Firestone and Shelton presented above. Active ones call for physical effort and range from straightforward sport (cycling, running) to other activities, such as fishing, hiking, or photography. Passive hobbies do not require the direct participation of a person (watching TV). As for the distinctive category - social - it includes activities which require social interactions, such as talking with others, being engaged in discussions, or visiting the theater, museum, or cinema (Bhargava, 2004).

Due to the fact that the impact of social hobbies on the perception of the individual could be speculated (higher score of social skills), in this paper I focus on the active and passive hobbies, comparing their effects on the CV interpretation.

1.5.4. Interpretation of hobbies

It is important to mention that recruiters are convinced that the selection of hobbies or extracurricular activities can tell a lot about the quality of a person's skills. (Conway, 2009) Participation in out-of-work activities has the ability to indicate skills and show signals regarding the personality itself. It is proven by the research that people who have hobbies are able to gain competence that will be useful in the labor market. In general, the literature supports the thought that hobbies have an influence on career success, as they develop relevant skills. However, according to Howard (1986), the experience gained during participation in a hobby is relevant only as much as it can be linked to specific skills (Howard, 1986).

Another reason why hobbies could be beneficial for career search and development is the fact that they have an influence on personal qualities (Tay, Ang & Dyne, 2006). According to Baumeister et al. (2003), hobbies could be the source of the development of self-esteem. It moderates the relationship between participation and success, which leads to positive feelings and greater initiative in the future. Having positive feelings helps people to cope better with stress and respond to difficult situations. Baumeister et al. (2003) suggest that self-esteem affects diligence in completing tasks together with the skill of adaptability (problem-solving). This is driven by the fact that people have a high desire to achieve the established goal, which leads to the development of a proactive personality (Baumeister et al., 2003). Research shows that this type of behavior has a positive impact on career success and indirectly fosters job performance, leadership skills, teamwork, and entrepreneurial spirit (Kraimer et al., 2001). All the above traits are called "soft skills", which according to Chia (2005) are considered at every level of the hiring process (Chia, 2005).

The notion of "soft skills" was precisely analyzed in the literature. According to Klaus (2010), around 75% of long-term success at the workplace depends on the ability to work with people, and only 25% depends on technical (professional) knowledge (Klaus, 2010). Nowadays, employers create a competition for a job position, where the top requirement is soft skills (Robles, 2012). That is why soft skills are also called "21st-century skills" (Gewertz, 2007). Soft skills give recruiters information about who a person is, it tells about one's personality. Hobbies evoke the development of soft skills and could be a signal that influences the recruiter's decision (Velasco, 2012). The regular candidate is attractive to the organization due to his/her academic and professional experience, as this tells about one's competences. Although this does not provide any information about a person, his/her qualities, and personality, which is not less important than the domain knowledge. On the contrary, biodata studies proved that such skills

are just as important as academic performance. There are several articles that state the point that soft skills are preferable to good grades in the university when it comes to recruitment. The results showed that soft skills (teamwork, integrity, honesty, diligence, interpersonal skills) are the most valuable qualities, as they explicate such skills as communication, building relations, coordination with others (Nuijten et al., 2017). Robles (2012) in his study mentions 10 principle soft skills identified by business executives. This list includes a positive attitude, social skills, responsibility, integrity, communication, teamwork, flexibility, work ethic, courtesy, and professionalism. However, some soft skills are more required at one job position and less at the different one. For instance, in the sales sphere, such skills as ambition and conflict resolution are more necessary than in finance (Robles, 2012).

According to Lu and Hu (2005), there is an interdependence between work life, personality, and the choice of leisure activity. Hobbies, in general, show that a person is goal-oriented and is willing to develop outside of the regular obligatory tasks (Naude et al., 2016). In his studies, Chalfin et al. (2015) came up to the conclusion that the following characteristics of athletes are valued by companies: competitiveness, goal orientation, work ethic, ability to handle pressure and stress, self-confidence, ability to work in a team, self-motivation, commitment, loyalty, determination and time management (Chalfin et al., 2015). According to Ivaniushina and Zapletina et al. (2015) team and individual sports have different effects on individual traits. For example, in team sports (also dancing) a person is a part of a whole and learns how to coordinate all together, which results in good teamwork. When it comes to individual sport (or also martial arts), these people tend to know what they want to get and are constantly striving to achieve specific outcomes, which leads to such qualities as goal setting, planning, prioritization, and self-management (Zapletina et al., 2015). Additionally, people who do sports, in general show higher levels of extraversion if compared with the ones who are not sportsmen. Additionally, sportspeople possess better emotional stability. They are less resistant to change and curious to experience new things (Barić et al., 2004). In his research, Nuijten et al. (2017) highlight that such qualities as social, interpersonal, planning, and organizing skills can be developed or even acquired by participating in different activities outside of university or work life. In this paper, it is stated that students and recruiters have different visions on the idea to include such activities in their CVs. Students underestimate the value of hobbies during recruitment, while recruiters claim that they should be considered. To compensate for the lack of work experience, students thought that university achievements have a higher value than extracurricular activities (ECAs), but recruiters stated the contrary (Nuijten et al., 2017).

Recruiters screen CVs in order to make conclusions about a candidate's basic qualities (academic, professional background, and personality traits), which in the future will support the selection process. HR specialists use the hobby section to infer a candidate's basic qualities and abilities (Nuijten et al., 2017). According to Rubin et al. (2002), extracurricular activities in which

students take part indicate a person's communication and decision-making skills together with the ability to collaborate (Rubin et al., 2002). Nuijten et al. (2017) state that almost all the recruiters that participated in their research have a positive attitude towards ECAs and if a job seeker includes information about them in a CV, he/she is perceived as proactive, initiative and one who is willing to develop and do more. Furthermore, recruiters stated that hobbies are one of the best ways to differentiate themselves among all other candidates. In the research, Nuijten et al. (2017) concluded that 81.8% of recruiters estimate that ECAs make an applicant more attractive. According to the studies conducted by Nemanick and Clark (2002), a student who takes part in extracurricular activities is more likely to be invited to the interview than the one who does not have any out-of-studies activities. We can assume that this is applied not only to university students but also to regular job seekers (Nemanick & Clark, 2002). Moreover, the conclusion was that if hobbies are not mentioned in CV, it makes a CV less successful, as in this case, the employer will not see a whole picture (both professional and personal) about the potential employee (Nuijten et al., 2017). However, the choice of hobbies in the CV depends on the domain of the future job. Not all hobbies are worth mentioning, only those that are relevant for a particular domain.

Most of the literature suggests that hobbies have a positive effect on the success of a job application. Furthermore, some researchers focused on particular types of hobbies and their impact on the perception of the candidates. In this paper, as mentioned earlier, I would like to focus on the categorization of hobbies suggested by Firestone and Shelton (1988) - active and passive. The main aim is to contrast the information, which recruiters receive while screening CVs of individuals with active and passive hobbies, nevertheless, in both groups, there are activities, which differ by their impression on the other individuals (Firestone & Shelton, 1988). In the following paragraphs, there is an overview of the active hobbies and their impact on personal brand.

People, whose hobby is sport: football, volleyball, tennis, basketball are seen as the ones who are in need of action, are open for change, and in general, have active personalities. They are assertive, enthusiastic, confident, and diligent (Zapletina et al., 2015). Dwyer and Gellock (2018) in their research are mostly focused on university students and the role of hobbies in their start of a career path. The general idea that they got from the interviews conducted is that doing sports develops interpersonal and also leadership skills. It is driven by a necessity to balance between the demands of university and sports teams and be able to optimize it at the level that works for both situations (Dwyer & Gellock, 2018). According to Hills and Argyle (1998) people who participate in sports clubs are perceived as extroverts (Hills & Argyle, 1998). When it comes to more competitive types of sports (football, hockey, sprinting), the level of introversion grows (Lu & Hu, 2005).

As for dancing, it includes nonverbal spatial intelligence. According to Keinänen (2000) at the dancing club, people learn specific words that are used; it requires understanding and evaluation of dance sequences, that is why dancing also develops linguistic intelligence. In most cases, dancing clubs work in a group setting, that is why participating in such may lead to the strengthening of interpersonal skills. The general idea of dancing is to present the feelings and the state of a person using just movements; hence it supports people to know themselves more and develop their intrapersonal intelligence. Keinänen (2000) also states as the positive effect of dancing on children is the opportunity to develop the ability to focus. This benefit spreads also to other activities, as children who are in the dancing clubs have more energy for their studies (Keinänen et al., 2000).

As for passive hobbies, chess according to the research conducted by Burgoyne et al. has a strong interconnection with the cognitive skills of an individual. It is stated that there is a positive correlation between chess and strategic thinking, planning, and processing speed, short-term memory, and fluid reasoning (Burgoyne A. et al., 2016). Chess is an individualistic and competitive game. During the process, two players battle each other demonstrating their willpower and knowledge in the field. In his research Kelly (1985) stated that people who play chess tend to be more introverted and also often rely on their intuition compared to other people. Moreover, people who play chess on a regular basis and for a longer time are more intuitive than others (Kelly, 1985).

While photography, drawing, craft, or cooking show a recruiter that a person is creative, innovative, and is not afraid of experiments. As for people who like to take photos, they are mostly seen as observers that care about details, which shows perfectionism and diligence. According to studies, crafting communicates such qualities as belonging, friendship, and sharing. People who craft tend to be more focused, relaxed, and calm, as this activity helps to organize a person's feelings. It fosters personal space, an understanding of self and others, and enhances physical and cognitive abilities. According to neuroscientific research, crafting supports a person to achieve relaxation (Huotilainen et al., 2018). Having art as a hobby improves cognitive skills as it boosts memory, social and perceptual skills (Hina, 2010).

Recent neuroscience research shows that reading fiction develops a person's critical thinking, empathy, and such cognitive-social skill, as a theory of mind, which means that an individual has the capability to think about his / her own and other people's mental state (Mar et al., 2006). This leads to the conclusion that reading helps to improve social skills, teamwork, and the ability to understand other people's motives. However, when it comes to scientific literature, it helps to gather knowledge but has no strong impact on developing emotional intelligence. Although reading fiction is a powerful way to increase the ability of the brain to remain open-

minded during information processing, which leads to effective decision-making (Harvard Business Review, 2020).

1.6. Gender bias in recruitment

Most human resource teams state that the main aim is to hire the best candidate for the job position, regardless of their personal characteristics (gender, age, race, etc). However, according to many research papers, there are still numerous conscious and unconscious biases during the recruiting process, the most popular are gender, age, and race (Maurer, 2001). In most cases when people judge others, it is based on unconsciously processed information. As a result, gender and race have an unconscious influence on decision-making in employee recruitment. In a nutshell, gender bias means a difference of perception of men and women with undifferentiated qualifications. The discrimination hypothesis was largely studied by many researchers, however, in order to measure the impact of biases on the CV review, the "audit" study was conducted. The idea of the study was to send the CVs of suitable candidates where only one feature differs - name, age, gender, nationality, etc. to the recruiters in order to check if these people fit the job proposition. Through this type of research, collective evidence supporting the hiring discrimination hypothesis was gathered around the world (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Derous et al., 2012).

Gender bias exists in both traditional and digital recruitment. Online hiring gives the possibility to target a specific pool of people, which touches not only gender discrimination but also age, race, etc. (Bertogg et al., 2020). In 2004 Coleetal researched if the gender of the recruiter affects his/her opinion and decision regarding the candidate's CV (taste-based discrimination). The results showed that male recruiters believed that female candidates have more extracurricular activities compared to male ones. While women reported that male candidates seem to have more professional experience compared to women (Bertogg et al., 2020). According to Gorman (2005), recruiters are more likely to hire a person with the same gender than a recruiter has (Gorman, 2005). For instance, a woman recruiter hires more female candidates, rather than a man recruiter (Bertogg et al., 2020). This also works the other way around, according to the research male recruiters were more likely to choose a male jobseeker. Cases, when female applicants had a moderately better profile, are not an exception. Consequently, patterns of gender discrimination may differ depending on the gender of recruiters, which leads to the issue of discrimination of women in masculine occupations and discrimination of men in the feminine (Bertogg et al., 2020).

In the male-dominated industries (for example, finance, software development, etc), there is still a tendency to hire men more. Researchers in many cases attribute these results to role congruence theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Role congruence theory outlines how a person

will be positively accepted when his/her traits are recognized within an expected stereotype. Based on gender stereotypes, females are seen as gentle, nurturing, calm, not willing to take risks (Kite et al., 2008). These characteristics are often conflicting with the ones that can bring the organization to success (Schein, 2001). While common male attributes are confidence, assertiveness, goal-orientation, risk-taking - the ones that are vital for organizational growth and development (Kite et al., 2008). Based on this, a congruence theory helps to understand why there is still unfairness between gender fit to the job requirements during the process of recruitment.

Sport, in general as a hobby, has a positive impact on hiring decisions. There are a few studies available on the topic of gender influence on college athletes during the recruiting decision-making process. For instance, Chalfin et al. (2015) in their research where he analyzed why recruiters are interested and target former athletes did not have any findings on a matter of gender bias (Chalfin et al., 2015). However, the results showed that both men and women who do sports were judged equally. Additionally, Chalfin et al. (2015) highlighted that around 52.3% of respondents stated that it was one of a company's requirements to choose people who are or were involved in sports activities (Chalfin et al., 2015). Another study performed by Tanguay, Camp, Endres, and Torres (2012) came up with similar results, that both men and women were evaluated equally during the CV screening process. However, Grappendorf and Burton (2014) found that women who do sports had an advantage during the CV review over male sportsmen or people who do not do sports at all (Tanguay et al., 2012). On the other hand, Grappendorf, Burton, and Henderson (2008) stated that in their research male were judged higher and were more attractive to the recruiters compared to females or people who are not involved in sports activities. The results showed that men were offered higher starting salaries. Most frequently, male recruiters tend to evaluate male applicants higher (Grappendorf & Burton, 2014).

Another crucial point is that from birth people are hit by the different stereotypes, even connected to sports activities and their division to masculine and feminine (Chınurum et al., 2014). Following societal expectations, the males usually must follow "masculine" behavior (being strong, athletic, independent, risk-taking), while females must be "feminine" (attractive, quiet, obedient, submissive, and caring). From historical times there was always a gender order and when someone tries to go against it, the person falls under the bias and gets labels from others (a girl plays football - then she is weird) (Constantinou, Manson and Silverman, 2009). Women were not seen as the ones who would be lifting weights, competing, and sweating, as according to society women should not be "masculine", but on the contrary should act like a lady. When it comes to sports, it was mainly seen as a "male" activity, with such characteristics as strength, competition, and endurance as a "masculine" field. Due to this, there is a common stereotype regarding "feminine" and "masculine" sports activities. As a female is usually seen as weaker and the one who should care more regarding the visual component and attractiveness,

such sports as horse riding, volleyball, gymnastics were labeled as "feminine", as these sports are characterized as more elegant and authentic. However, when a woman does sports that are characterized more like "masculine" (weightlifting, football) then they are seen and perceived as a "masculine" type, which brings the association of male characteristics (Nogueira et al., 2018). Nevertheless, according to Harding and Whiteside (2009), the situation has changed recently and there are more and more women who are involved in "male" sports (boxing, wrestling, football). The one changing factor might be the idea that modern youth do not perceive the gender borders in general that harsh as it was before (Chinurum et al., 2014).

Therefore, it is evidenced that the perception of individuals based on extracurricular activities can be affected by the gender of the candidates. That is why this paper will look at both of these variables: gender and hobbies type, trying to identify the discrepancies of the results because of gender and be able to justify them. This will help to distinguish the impact of the hobbies type from the gender concerns.

The type of hobby a person mentions in the CV is one of the components of his/her personal brand image, which is created based on many things that play a role during the recruitment process. The creation of the brand image takes the perspective of the candidate, as the main goal in the recruitment communication. That is why this view will be discussed in the following chapter.

2. Communication of a personal brand

2.1. Notion of personal branding

Personal brand, its building, and maintenance is a topic that has been widely used nowadays. Due to the active usage of social media, the image of oneself has become one of the most crucial components of success. However, personal branding is not only about social media.

2.1.1. Definition

Personal branding is one's reputation, attitude, skills, style, everything that can create a general picture of a person, his/her behavior, and competence. Collin Wright says that personal branding is self-marketing, and it can be compared to a marketing team in the organization, which runs a campaign for a product or service. The main aim of self-branding is to create, develop and correspond to a collection of attributes and associations with oneself, that will work towards the recognition for what a person wants to be and seen by others. This image helps others to create expectations regarding a person, his/her traits, behavior, skills, etc. (Hitchings, 2014). Personal branding is "the use of behavior to communicate some information about

oneself to others" (Tifferet et al., 2018). It is something that makes a person unique, a differentiative factor of an individual (Gensler et al., 2013). The most important stage in personal brand building and development is to define what it represents - the core values of a person. These are the key points of self-branding. They form the base for any communication strategies. Having the ability to build a strong personal brand is a competitive advantage when it comes to every sphere in social media, including recruiting platforms. Usually, recruiters do not spend a lot of time reviewing the CVs, so with this limited amount of attention, a candidate is required to create gripping content that sets him/her apart from others, revealing both professional and private lives. It is important to demonstrate to recruiters one's achievements that will build credibility (Osborn et al., 2016).

According to Tifferet (2018), the two main reasons for self-presentation are rewards and self-actualization. Additionally, there are two types of self-branding: self-promotion and personal self-expression. They may conflict with each other, as the characteristics inherent in self-expression may not be suitable for self-promotion. For example, showing interest in video games as a hobby may satisfy the user's need for personal self-expression, but may be not suitable for professional self-promotion. It is important for a brand building to show the necessary points on a personal website, to which everyone, in particular recruiters, has open access (Tifferet et al., 2018). Self-brand building requires an individual to be strategic with the images and information they post on social media sites and to manage their profiles in a way that highlights their best skills and experiences (Osborn et al., 2016).

People generally adapt their self-presentation based on the reaction they would like to evoke from others. At the interview, the common example of self-presentation is to present one's professional appearance (outfit, hairstyle, makeup, etc.) and additionally by non-verbal behavior (eye contact, smile, gestures, etc.). All these differentiate one person from another in terms of liking and might prompt positive interviewer feedback. This all also works in the online world; however, the components of a successful personal brand are different (Tifferet et al., 2018).

2.1.2. Personal brand in a CV and online

As stated in the chapters above, one of the first stages of the recruitment process is CV (or profile) screening and usually, this is the first interaction of the recruiter with the candidate's brand. This is a tool that can support in communicating a person's skills, abilities, traits, and behavior (Hitchings, 2014). A CV is a "selling document" of a job seeker. Its the main purpose as a branding tool is to include the features the candidate has and how these features will benefit the employer. Building a brand is not enough, the vital point is to maintain it, make it consistent and efficient, creating a special proposition in the job market (Osborn et al., 2016).

Building a personal brand is a continuous process. When a recruiter reviews a CV, he/she already knows what to look for, that is why it does not take long to check one application. If there is nothing that catches attention, he/she moves on. A brand - a distinctive factor - should keep the employer's attention (Tifferet et al., 2018).

There are a number of factors that influence one's brand, however, ones that could be distinguishable are hobbies, additional training, voluntary work, certifications, courses, exchange programs. Nowadays, companies care a lot not only about a person's professionalism but also if he/she fits the organizational culture and this is where hobbies can say a lot. As discussed in chapter 1, some personality traits can go along with certain hobbies. By inserting specific hobbies in one's CV, a candidate can fluctuate his/her brand by providing signals about self traits and skills (Tifferet et al., 2018). When it comes to hobbies, there is an advantage to specify and mention the ones that are suitable for the particular job position or if a person plans to apply for a specific job, he/she is able to acquire new skills by being involved in a hobby. In general, the combination of different hobbies may be a good base for a strong personal brand (Gander, 2014).

For a job seeker in order to succeed in a self-presentation using a CV, it is important to know three things. First of all, it is to know who you are (if you are active, dynamic, social there is no need to state the opposite in order to fulfill someone's requirements). The second step is to get familiar with the competitors. The goal of personal branding and a CV in general, is to stand out among other candidates. A person will not be able to stand out if he/she does not know with whom he/she competes. The last, but not least, is to know the target. The vital point in branding is a focus. A person has to know who to address and communicate the personal brand created, right people would see it and distinguish it from others. HR reviews tons of resumes and spends limited time reviewing each single of them, personal branding is a tool that makes a candidate stand out (Gander, 2014). Personal branding consists of both tangible and intangible credentials. Looking at the CV, tangible ones are on the surface and easily noticeable: education, years of experience, additional courses, job responsibilities, etc. However, when it comes to intangible ones, they cannot be instantly detected. The goal of a candidate is to present self-brand in a way that it signals to the recruiter the under-surface credentials. Such units as skills, motivation, reputation, and ambition are classified as intangible ones. Transferring the message is a complex process, one of the ways was mentioned earlier - filtering the hobbies, skills section according to the position to which a person currently applies (Rangarajan, 2017).

The creation of a personal brand using a CV nowadays is a more complex process than it was before the emergence of digital technology. Now a CV should be paired up with an online presence. As mentioned before due to Web 2.0 the rules and procedures in job-seeking have changed (Gander, 2014). One of the most popular hiring platforms is LinkedIn, which was

launched in 2003 and as for now, it counts around 756 million members in more than 200 countries. It leans towards a person's self-promotion, as the main goal of the platform is to help a user to get a job (Black et al., 2019). However, this may be a secondary factor in the recruitment process, which might go after the CV screening. Thus, the alignment between the CV and online profile should be lined up. Most recruiters use it as an addition to the regular CV in order to make more holistic decisions (Shahani et al., 2014). That is why the information presented in a CV should be backed up in the social profiles in most cases. If a person states that he/she is a copywriter or/and a writer, but social media does not provide evidence for that (posts, comments), the recruiter would be questioned. If a person possesses a skill that is important to show a brand but is not possible to prove that online, then the certificates, portfolios, accomplishments can be presented (Gujarathi et al., 2018). In labor social media platforms (like LinkedIn) an important part of the self-brand is the established network (friends, connections). This is one point that the recruiters can additionally check while entering the candidate's page after the CV review (Kroeze 2015). It is also evidenced that this type of social network has a positive effect on the selection process in the organizations. The availability of a bigger amount of information makes the process of recruiting more efficient in case of mass selection. This way organizations can focus only on the people with the most promising profiles. Social connections have a direct impact on the self-brand, as it enhances the idea of a person being social and outgoing (Hosain & Liu, 2020).

In a CV and social media, a candidate presents both implicit and explicit data. As mentioned before, recruiters take into account a person's soft skills while making the decisions regarding the job applicants. However, according to another research done by Shahani et al. (2014), recruiters pay attention mainly to the explicit data of the candidate. The examples of the explicit data can be certificates, experience, education, skills, endorsements, recommendations from others (Shahani et al., 2014). People tend to trust when it comes to assessment by others. Recommendations support to validate one's expertise in a specific sphere (Tanha, 2018). However, social media platforms also offer to the recruiter implicit data, for example, photos, number of posts, and user's connections (network; Rangarajan, 2017). Mostly, implicit signals affect the perceived competence of a person and his/her professionalism. One of the examples - a picture of the applicant presented on a CV or online. According to a study conducted by PhotoFeeler regarding the likeability based on a photo, they found out that if a person in a picture has a smile with teeth, then this person will be more likeable by others rather than a person without a smile. Additionally, it has been proven that face-only pictures are less preferable than upper-body ones, and glasses have a positive effect on likeability of a person. This study again proves that each detail in self-branding plays a role and may be vital for the recruiters' decision (Tifferet et al., 2018).

Bias is an additional factor that is always present in each social activity and can influence a brand. Usually, some statements written online may be perceived differently by different people. When it comes to communication, it is crucial to know how to deliver the message in a way that it does not create misconceptions. The way to overcome this is to ask for feedback from the recruiters, or just external people about potential improvements, additions, or edits on a CV or personal profile (Bendick & Nunes, 2011). At the same time content is not the only factor, which plays a role in CV. Specific formatting, long spans of unemployment, grammar or spelling mistakes, short tenure at the companies or other aspects can lead to a number of biases. It should be considered by the applicant in order to avoid misunderstanding with the recruiters (Uddin, 2019).

To conclude, a personal brand is a basic goal of the employee during the recruitment process. CV serves as the first point of contact, which defines the decisive first impression about an individual. There are a number of factors in the regular CV that have an impact on the candidate brand. At the same time, hobbies carry a potential for sharing implicit information about personal traits and skills.

2.2. Communication theory

2.2.1. Signaling theory

In order to understand the notion of how personal brands are seen from the employer's point of view, I decided to refer to the communication theories. The one that focuses directly on the signals, which candidate or his/her CV wants to translate to the recruiter, is signaling theory. It is used in different fields of business, including economics and marketing (Dwyer & Gellock, 2018). Together with that, it was widely applied by the authors to explain the notion of communication between the candidate and recruiters. Signaling theory suggests that employers discover a lot of personal information about the candidates, collected from different sources including CV (Spence, 1973). Intelligence, motivation, self-organization, leadership, and communication skills are examples of unobservable attributes that could be derived from a person's CV (Wilkin & Connelly, 2012). This observable data such as education, work experience, skills, extracurricular activities (hobbies), etc. sends a "signal" to the recruiter about deeper, unobservable traits of a person (Briggeman & Norwood, 2011). The main goal of a recruiter is to hire the best candidate for the specific job position and form conclusions regarding the professional and personal characteristics from the available signals. Additionally, assumptions regarding the future outcomes of a potential employee can be made (Nemanick & Clark, 2002).

Signaling theory involves the interaction of 3 components: signalers, receivers, and signals. In this process, signalers possess the peace of information, which is not available to

outsiders. It provides the possibility to choose the content and the signal, which will be used to communicate information. From the receiver's perspective, signals are the only key to understand the meaning assigned by the signaler. Different signals should be integrated into the coherent meaning by the receiver, which increases the complexity of the communication model (Gao et al., 2008). In recruitment, signaling theory, as stated before, is mainly used to investigate asymmetries of information (Pernkopf et al., 2021) and decrease them in order to make information more transparent (Nyagadza et al., 2021). In general, signals can be positive or negative, and their interpretation depends strongly on the receiver, in our case recruiter. Signals help to make connections between what a recruiter knows and what he/she would like to know. What was mentioned earlier, is that the interpretation of the signal sent affects the decision of the receiver (recruiter; Connelly et al., 2011). There are signals that are easy to notice and interpret, while others are sometimes difficult or even impossible. This is called the observability of a signal, meaning the extent to which a receiver can notice a signal (Mahabubur, 2018).

Signaling theory is often used in various studies in order to see how words can signal the characteristics of an individual (Wilkin & Connelly, 2012). For instance, it was applied by Maurath et al. (2015) in their investigation about how having such experience as volunteering in a CV helps individuals who do not have a poor professional background (Dwyer & Gellock, 2018). Wilkin and Connelly (2012) conducted a similar study, where they examined volunteering and the signals it provides to recruiters. The results indicated that the experience (paid or unpaid) does not make a significant difference in the recruiter's opinion during selection, meaning that any relevant experience is indicative of a positive resume evaluation (Wilkin & Connelly, 2012). In a conclusion, the studies described above illustrate that participation in any CV-building activities enhances the chances of the candidate to stand out among others and get a competitive advantage (Bangerter and Rulen, 2012). The benefit of signaling theory usage is the fact that it may facilitate the recruiter's understanding of the applicant (Vinayak et al., 2017).

According to Spence (1973), a candidate can shape the signals that CV translates about his/her invisible traits to the job recruiter. People usually have a choice of what activity to be involved in. For instance, if an individual does sports, he gives up investing his/her time in some internship available. While both of these activities deliver some signal regarding the person to the HR team (Connelly et al., 2011).

Signaling is a two-sided communication. Candidates from their side, trying to outperform others in order to get the position. It is their choice what kind of hobby to insert in a CV and what traits it may or may not communicate to the recruiter. When it comes to the organization, in order to get the best candidate, they compete with others while attracting applicants. In many studies,

this is called the "War of talent" (Michaels et al., 2001). In this case, signals such as higher salaries, additional bonuses, corporate social responsibility are used (Roulin & Bangerter, 2012).

As for the additional activities (such as extracurricular activities, hobbies) they also work as a signal to employers, however a different one than the professional CV components (academic qualification, previous work experience, courses diplomas, GPA, etc.) that are mainly used to check the skills of the applicant. According to the research, people who engage in additional, out-of-work activities have greater social, time management, and self-organizational skills, compared to the ones who are only academically oriented. Moreover, if a person participates in specific activity and in addition holds a leadership position, this encourages the recruiter to make a judgment (meaning that a leadership position sends a signal) that this candidate is diligent, wants to contribute to the shared aim, and follows work ethic (Rubin et al., 2002).

2.2.2. Hypothesis derived from the theories

Based on the literature review performed, I came up with the following hypothesis that will be tested in my research discussed in the next chapter.

As described in the chapters above, research has proved that there is an interdependence between personality and the choice of leisure activities. According to Naude (2016) hobbies show that a person is goal-oriented and is willing to develop outside of the regular obligatory tasks (Naude et al., 2016). Meaning that hobbies in general, no matter if they are passive or active, they still deliver information regarding the applicant's personality. That is why the hypothesis derived from the literature read is the following:

H1: Hobbies will impact the respondents' opinion regarding the applicants' skills.

According to Chalfin et al. (2015) people who do sports are perceived as competitive, oriented towards the goals, team players, and the ones who know how to coordinate with others (Chalfin et al., 2015). Dwyer and Gellock (2018) state that sports develop interpersonal and leadership skills (Dwyer & Gellock, 2018). Hills and Argyle (1998) say that people who participate in sports clubs are perceived as extroverts and are outgoing and communicative (Hills & Argyle, 1998). Based on this evidence, the following hypothesis was created:

H2: CVs including active hobbies signal that an applicant is a team player with a high level of competition and communication skills.

The research is focused on the following passive hobbies: chess, craft, and reading. Each of them separately communicates different skill sets: chess - strategic thinking, planning, high processing speed (Burgoyne A. et al., 2016); craft – the ability to share, perfectionism,

diligence, self-organization, and creativity (Huotilainen et al., 2018); reading (in particular fiction) - critical thinking, empathy, social skills (Mar et al., 2006). Having all this information leads to the following hypothesis:

H3: CVs including passive hobbies signal that an applicant is more creative, self-organized, and is able to deal with stress better.

Based on the literature regarding gender bias in hiring, a larger number of papers state that the bias is present from both sides: male or female recruiters. Based on this information I could assume that no matter if the hobby is active or passive, male applicants will still be rated higher. Additionally, gender includes the association of males and females with particular sets of hobbies. This could lead to weather positive or negative effects on the relation between hobbies type and the impression candidates make on the recruiter. Consequently, the following hypothesis are created:

H4: Both male candidates with active and passive hobbies will be rated equal to or higher than female candidates with the same set of hobbies.

H5: Gender has a moderating impact on the dependence between the hobbies' type and the candidate's soft skills evaluation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection

The main focus of my research is to find out the role of the "hobbies" section in a digital CV. There are a number of other factors that impact the perception of the recruiter, so it is crucial to reach as many people as possible in order to collect various opinions and perspectives. As a result, I have decided to go for the quantitative research method and create a survey, which would be analyzed in the later stages (Appendix 1). Additionally, due to the high impact of gender bias on the correlation between hobbies and recruiter perception, there is a need to test the results for the discrepancies. That is why I decided to create 2 surveys, which include the CVs of the candidates with different gender (survey A – female; survey B - male). Moreover, each survey contained two CVs with identical information except for the hobbies section, which was splitted into active and passive activities. In total, 2 surveys were created with 2 different CVs in each. Additionally, at the beginning of the survey, the description of the overall purpose of the study was omitted in order to prevent attracting more attention to the hobbies section.

In order to collect information, I have used LimeSurvey survey software. All the data was collected and analyzed anonymously. Each participant was informed about the privacy rights and the anonymization of the data. All the questions were obligatory, and the participant could not proceed further if at least one question was not answered. Before activating the survey and sending it out, I have created a pre-test to see if all the questions are clearly understandable. The average time for filling the survey was 6 minutes and all the questions presented were comprehensive, so the final version of the survey was not changed.

In order to find out the answers to the questions presented at the beginning of the paper and to investigate if hobbies affect the decision of the recruiters while hiring, I decided to use a 2×2 between-subjects the experimental design to test my hypotheses. The main reason why the decision fell on using experimental design is because in this case, I am able to manipulate the independent variables and adjust them according to my needs. This allowed me to eliminate a contingency factor like individual background and experience, bringing more objectivity to the research.

3.1.1. Participants

The target participants for this study are people who are working in the HR sphere or who are somehow connected to the hiring process (for example, team leaders, who are reviewing CVs in order to decide if this or that person fits his/her team; start-uppers, who hire people to their teams, etc.).

The survey was running from August 17th to September 11th, 2021. In order to reach participants, I have used various communication channels: Facebook, LinkedIn, personal connections, word-of-mouth, email. As the target group is focused, there was a challenge to get a sufficient number of responses to be able to analyze data, which would lead to valuable results. In order to increase the response rate, I have requested to participate in more than 25 private groups connected to HR and management in both Facebook and LinkedIn. The links to the surveys were posted there once in 3 days. The initial target was to get around 100 responses to both surveys. This was achieved after 3 weeks from the beginning of the survey.

With the purpose of distinguishing my survey from all others, I have decided to motivate the potential respondents by the incentive. One of the respondents, who wanted to participate in the lottery could leave his/her email address and when the survey is deactivated, the randomizer chooses who wins the 30 EUR Amazon voucher.

3.1.2. Survey structure

As stated earlier, for this experiment I designed 4 different CVs, which I included in 2 surveys (2 CVs in one survey). Each CV has 2 variables: hobbies and gender. The general differentiation looks as follows:

1. Survey A:

   a. Female - active hobbies;

   b. Female - passive hobbies;

2. Survey B:

   a. Male - active hobbies;

   b. Male - passive hobbies.

This was done in order to be able to make a comparison between the two versions to see if gender plays a role in the recruiters' decision-making. Moreover, the aim was to observe if there is a difference in the recruiters' reaction when it comes to active and passive hobbies and check if they affect the final hiring results. By using 2 separate surveys I decreased the time needed to complete each of them by half, which has a positive impact on the ratio of completed responses. Additionally, this design helps to avoid contextual factors in comparison of active and passive hobbies, as each person reviews both types of CVs.

The general design of the CVs was simple and the same for all 4 samples. The CV was created using Canva software. The structure, layout, fonts, text size was identical in all 4 samples. CVs included the general information that each CV possesses: contact information, education, experience, skills, and hobbies. I decided not to include photos of the applicants, in order to avoid "Liking/disliking" bias.

The survey included 4 question groups. The first one - general questions. The aim of it is to get to know respondents better and to collect information regarding their age, gender, the country they work in, and experience in human resources. The second and third question groups have identical questions, the only difference is the CV. The whole information across all 4 CVs is the same, except the hobbies and gender (2 males, 2 females). These two question groups start with a CV sample at the very top followed by the questions that are directly concerning the CV presented. The intention of the questions is to check how recruiters would rate this applicant and what are his/her chances to be employed. The answering options are a Likert scale from (5) "extremely likely" to (1) "extremely unlikely". The second question aims to find out the reason why the specific person is likely/unlikely to be hired. The possible answer options are divided

into the traditional categories: education, experience, soft skills. Additionally, I included the "other" option in case a survey respondent has a unique opinion of why a candidate deserves a spot or not. The next question is meant to see what is the first section that a recruiter checks while opening applicants' CVs. As for the options, I decided to go with the general CV structure: experience, education, skills, about, and hobbies. The last question in both question groups concerns unobservable traits that the particular hobbies listed in each CV could communicate according to the literature review presented in chapters 1 and 2. It includes 7 major soft skills that correspond to the reviewed literature (see. Chapter 1) and that refers to the hobbies included in the experimental CVs: communication skills, self-organization skills, decision-making skills, creativity, competitive spirit, and stress resistance skills. Survey participants were asked to rate how much they associated these skills with people whose CV they see, using a Likert scale ranging from (1) "I fully disagree" to (5) "I fully agree".

As seen from the question description above, the main measurements used are a Likert scale, "check all that apply '' and multiple-choice questions.

A total of 280 individuals participated in the survey: survey A - 143 respondents, survey B - 137 respondents. After filtering unfinished samples, 187 final questionnaires were received (survey A - 92; survey B - 95). This shows a response rate of 67%. The overall picture of the number of participants is presented in the table below:

	Total amount received	Incompleted	Fully completed
Survey A	143	51	92
Survey B	137	36	95
Total	280	87	187

Figure 1. Participants

As for the demographic information out of 187 completed responses 124 were male, 63 female. The ratio is presented in the graph below:
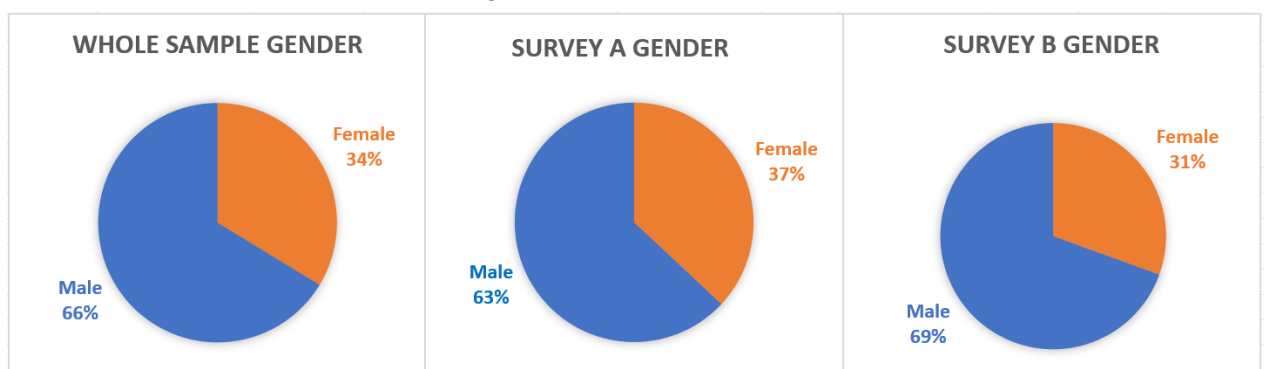

Figure 2. Survey participants' gender

This unbalance is present in both surveys so this could be caused by the type of communication channels used. At the same time, there is still a sufficient number of responses from both genders, so it should not affect the results of the research.

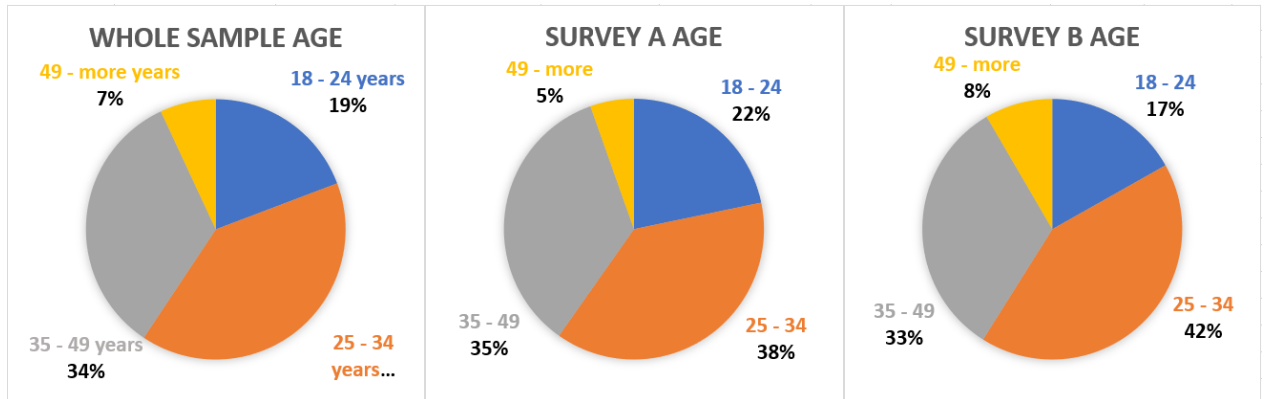As for the age, the distribution looked as follows:

Figure 3. Survey participants' age

There is an approximately equal distribution between age groups except for 49 years plus. Therefore, the result of this study will be less relevant for people older than 49 years.

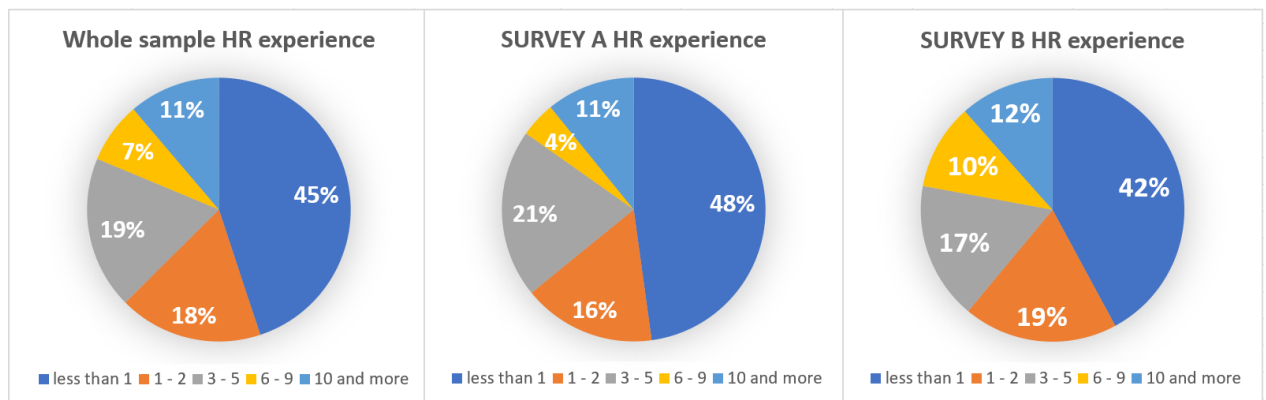As for the professional experience of HR, the biggest set of respondents are new in this area:

Figure 4. Survey participants' HR experience

This factor can have a significant effect on the answers. That is why focusing on individuals who worked more in HR is a potential idea for further research.

Finally, the place of origin appeared to be diverse as in total there are 34 unique countries together with 15 people who identified it as "other". For the following graph, all the countries, which were mentioned less than 4 times were included in the set of "other":
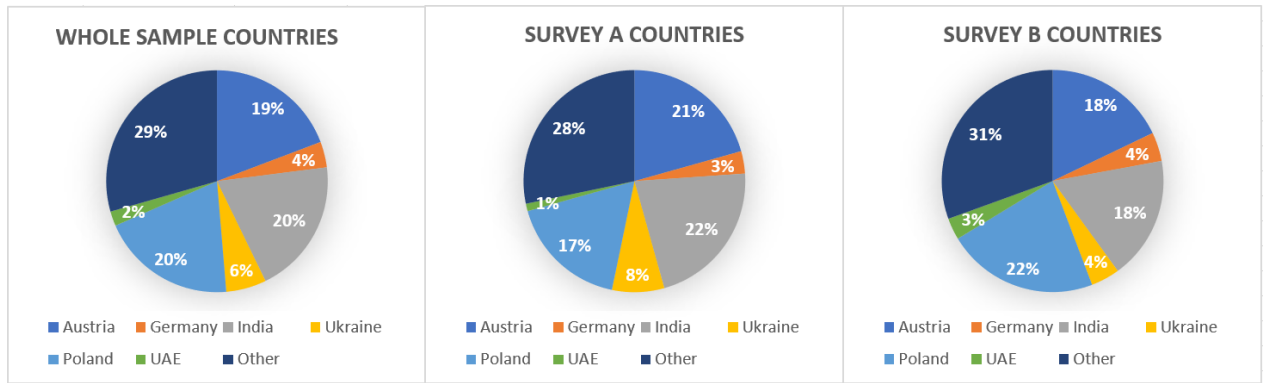
Figure 5. Survey participants' countries

Comparing two surveys there is a similar distribution of respondents across the countries. Therefore, the comparison of cross surveys variables (gender) should not be significantly affected by the national culture factor.

3.2. Data analysis

Information received from the respondents, based on the quantitative questionnaire was exported to the Excel tables for further analysis. For answering the research questions the focus was made on the last survey question, about the perception of individual traits. The Likert scale was coded as follows: fully agree - 5, rather agree - 4, neither agree nor disagree - 3, rather disagree - 2, fully disagree - 1. In order to analyze the impact of hobbies on the recruiters' interpretation, the mean values were used while comparing the results of the CVs with active and passive hobbies. For each soft skill, the average score was calculated and compared between two CV types. Student t-test was run to identify the significance of the differences. I applied two-tailed types of tests because the aim is to identify any group with a higher mean value. The paired approach is used, as each respondent reviewed both CVs with active and passive hobbies, so their answers are interrelated.

Additionally, cross-analysis between genders was also included in order to identify the impact of gender on the perception of the same content. Therefore, all the respondents were divided into 4 groups: female with active hobbies (FA), female with passive hobbies (FP), male with active hobbies (MA), male with passive hobbies (MP). The mean value for each soft skill was compared between four groups. The aim of this analysis is to identify the impact of hobbies and to track the influence of gender on the results.

Moreover, it is important that CVs with active and passive hobbies were viewed by each respondent. That is why, there is a possibility to identify how the very same person perceives hobbies, which excludes a number of contingency factors (education, nationality, professional background). Thus, another analysis used the difference between the scores based on the Likert

scale for each soft skill. The results of CVs with passive hobbies were subtracted from the active ones, giving the set of numbers representing the fluctuation of the results for each respondent. The standard deviation was calculated in order to identify the difference in both positive and negative (plus and minus) directions. Hobbies type is the only possible factor that can create these fluctuations. That is why standard deviation helps to identify the influence of hobbies on the recruiters' perception of the candidate's skills (the higher standard deviation figure the stronger impact of the hobbies).

Finally, the 2x2 matrix is used to compare the means of probabilities that the candidate will be hired for four CVs. The survey includes these questions with the Likert scale, so the same coding was applied. As a result, I can observe the average score of the likelihood that the candidate with each type of CV will be hired.

4. Results

4.1. Active versus Passive hobbies

Starting from the standard deviation score, it results in approximately 1,30. Likert scale stays with the range between 1 and 5. Therefore, the difference between the two scales could be from 4 to -4, giving a small range for deviation. Thus 1,30 can be considered as a significant standard deviation. It leads to the conclusion that in the context of the same recruiter there is a significant impact of hobbies type on the perception of the candidates.

Moving to the comparison of the CVs with active and passive hobbies, the mean values of the skills scores are summarized in the table below:

Soft skills	Mean difference (A-P)	Active (means)	Passive (means)	t(186) Statistic	T-test p value
Team-player	1,02	3,95	2,93	11,51	$1,71 * 10^{-23}$
Communication skills	0,48	3,83	3,35	5,26	$3,85 * 10^{-7}$
Self-organization skills	-0,13	3,58	3,68	-1,34	0,2012
Decision-making skills	-0,58	3,34	3,90	-7,64	$1,11 * 10^{-12}$
Creativity	-0,76	3,11	3,87	-7,96	$1,6 * 10^{-13}$
High competitive spirit	0,24	3,74	3,51	2,82	0,0053
Stress resistance	-0,14	3,46	3,60	-1,80	0,0727
Total average	0,02	3,57	3,55		

Figure 6. Comparison of the mean values and t-tests

The second column shows the difference between the means of scores for active minus passive hobbies groups. The total average represents the mean value of the response for all seven soft skills. The last two columns present the output of the Student's t-test in terms of t statistics and the p value.

According to the total average score for active and passive hobbies (3,57 and 3,55), it is possible to conclude that for these 7 skills on average they show similar results in total. At the same time, looking at each skill individually, there is an unequal evaluation by the recruiters of the two CVs. CVs with active hobbies result in higher scores for team-player, communication skills, and competitive spirit. Contrary, decision-making, and creativity are assigned to individuals with passive hobbies more often. For self-organization and stress resistance there is no significant difference identified. These conclusions are also supported by the p value of the t-test. Considering that the alpha value is 0,05, for self-organization and stress resistance the difference is insignificant. As for other skills, the t statistics exceed the t critical value (1,97), which confirms the significance of the results.

4.2. Four groups (FA, FP, MA, MP)

In order to include gender variables in the analysis, we used a 2x2 matrix. At the same time, there are seven skills, which should be analyzed. That is why seven separate matrices were combined into the following table:

	team - player	communication skills	self-organization skills	decision-making skills	creative	high competitive spirit	stress resistance skills
Female (Active)	3,93	3,92	3,67	3,26	3,05	3,74	3,41
Female (Passive)	2,85	3,27	3,74	3,90	4,00	3,36	3,60
Male (Active)	3,96	3,75	3,48	3,43	3,17	3,75	3,52
Male (Passive)	3,00	3,43	3,63	3,91	3,75	3,65	3,60

Figure 7. 2*2 matrix (FA, FP, MA, MP)

The table includes mean values of the scores assigned by the recruiters to four CV types (FA, FP, MA, MP) for each soft skill. The data is visualized in the graph below:
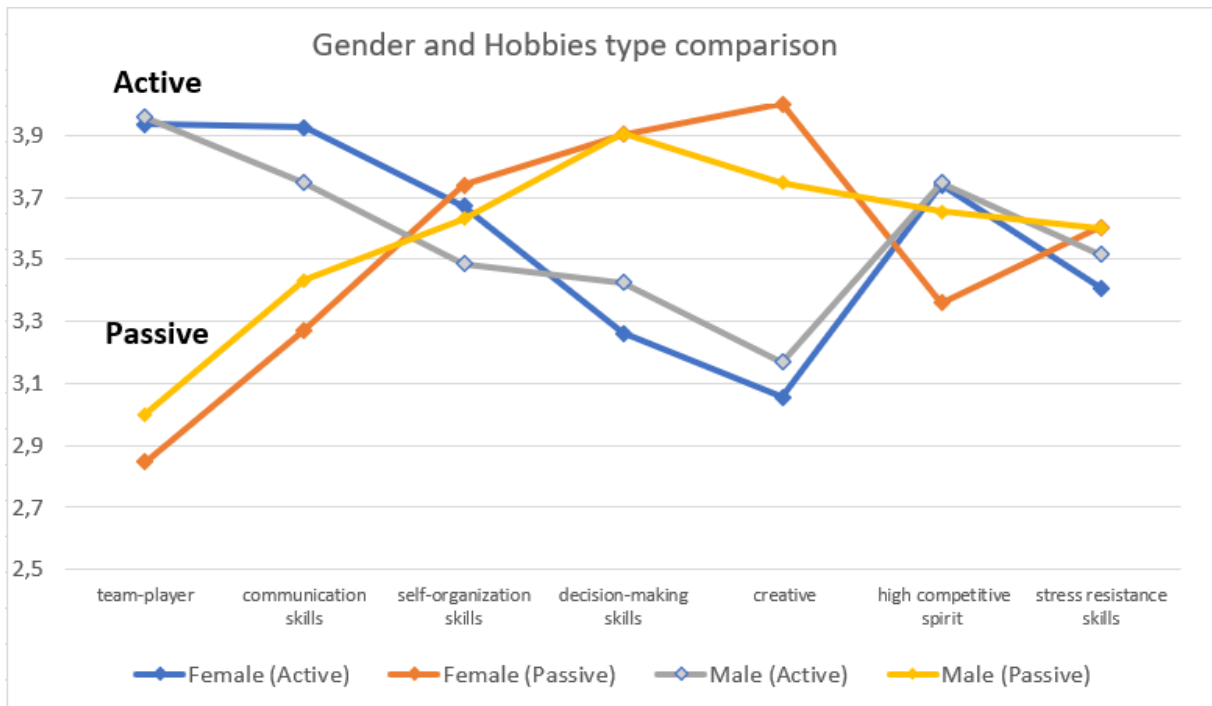
Figure 8. Gender and hobby type comparison

First of all, it is possible to observe the difference in skill scores assigned to the candidate depending on active and passive hobbies in the CV. It was presented with the numbers in the previous section, but the graph also depicts the distinction between the genders. Thus, while comparing the line graphs of FA with FP and MA with MP, it is possible to understand if the impact of hobbies is moderated by the gender of the candidates. It is possible to observe that for most of the soft skills there is an insignificant fluctuation in the Likert scale lower than 0,2. However, for creativity and competitive spirit, the passive curves of male and female candidates show differences in 0,25 and 0,3 correspondingly. Therefore, the influence of gender on these two skills is higher for candidates with passive hobbies compared to the ones with active.

At last, calculation of the score of hiring probability based on mean values is presented below:

Score of hiring probability	Active	Passive
Female	3,68	3,43
Male	3,73	3,56

Figure 9. Score of hiring probability

In general, male candidates are more likely to be hired despite their hobbies' type. At the same time, CVs with active hobbies have higher probabilities to lead to positive outcomes in the recruiting process for both genders. Considering the fact that there was a small difference in the

soft skills scores in total, it is possible to assume that the skills assigned to the active hobbies have a higher value for the recruiters.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze and understand the role of hobbies in applicants' CVs and what personal traits they signal to the employers. Literature suggests that hobbies are a valuable component in the CV, which should not be neglected and in most cases, those CVs that include a hobbies section are evaluated higher. However, studies show that there is a difference in the interpretation of different hobbies by people. Additionally, there are also gender biases connected to some hobbies, which are viewed as whether "male" or "female" ones. Therefore, this paper analyzed the perception of hobbies in the CV context, where there is a limited amount of information. This topic was approached as a communication process using the signaling theory in order to explain how hobbies provide implicit information about the personality and the soft skills of the candidate to the recruiter. Additionally, taking the perspective of the candidate in the recruiting process, the notion of personal branding was applied, as a key purpose of the CV communication. The personal brand depends on different details, which contribute to the belief that hobbies can have a diverse impacts on the perception of the candidate. Finally, according to the latest research, different types of hobbies lead to a diverse outcome in terms of personal skills development. This research is aimed to understand if these differences are recognized by the recruiters and if they have any effect on their decisions.

Moving on to the main findings, results suggest that recruiters refer to the hobbies section in the CV as to the one that can signal a person's soft skills. Wide fluctuations in the responses show that active and passive hobbies are perceived differently by the same person (recruiter). This supports hypothesis 1 presented in the chapter above, which is aligned with the personal branding principles, where every detail matters.

Literature suggests that people who are engaged in active hobbies are perceived as competitive, team players, and good at communication. At the same time, a comparison of mean values and t-tests showed that candidates with active hobbies were evaluated significantly higher in these skills on average. Thus hypothesis 2 is fully supported by this evidence.

On the other hand, people with passive hobbies are believed to be more creative, decisive, self-organized, and stress-resistant, according to the literature review. Due to this, hypothesis 3 is partly supported, as the results show that in all of these soft skills CVs with passive hobbies were rated higher. However, the difference in stress-resistance and self-organization are insignificant compared to others.

Nevertheless, the analysis done regarding the probability of hiring suggests that male candidates are more likely to be hired for both hobby types. Similarly, CVs with active hobbies received higher scores for hiring probability for both genders. These results support hypothesis 4 together with the existing literature on gender bias.

Comparison of the CVs with different genders and same CV content, for most of the soft skills, showed insignificant difference towards either male or female applicants. Only creativity and competitive spirit scores showed a difference between the genders for passive hobbies. However, I would assume that it is barely related to the moderating role of gender in the hobbies' interpretation. According to the literature the gender biases include the belief that women are more creative, and men are more competitive, which could explain the outcome of the study. Therefore, hypothesis 5 was not confirmed by the results of the research. The moderating role of gender factor in the relation between hobbies type and candidate perception was not identified.

In general, results meet the expectations raised from the literature review, concluding that the choice of hobbies in a CV could have a significant impact on the outcome of the recruiting process. At the same time, there is a possibility to investigate this topic further.

6. Implications and limitations

This research can serve as a fundamental base for future papers connected to this topic. The literature review provides an overview of the perception of hobbies and soft skills they are communicating. Additionally, this paper has a practical implication as it can help both job seekers and recruiters to learn more about the background meaning of the particular hobby. It may help recruiters to understand a candidate better and make more accurate decisions. For a job seeker, it would be beneficial to know what they are unconsciously communicating to a recruiter while entering particular data in their CVs. Additionally, a study proposes an application of the signaling theory to the recruitment process. This could be the base for the development of a future framework of communication between a recruiter and a candidate.

However, this study has some limitations, at the same time, it leaves a space for future research. The main purpose of the paper was to determine if there is an effect on a recruiter's decision by introducing the hobby section in a CV. If yes, what the particular (passive/active) hobbies communicate to the recruiter about the candidate. Although implementing the experimental design research, we took into consideration only two variables: gender of an applicant and hobbies. There are other factors that influence recruiters' decisions that were not analyzed in this study - education, age, nationality, experience. These factors were not taken into account and due to this, future research may extend the number of variables. An additional constraint is the design of the CV itself and the amount of information in it. In the research, our

CVs had simple designs and limited information included, which could result in a negative evaluation. Together with that experimental design can have low external validity, which means that the result could appear to be less relevant in real life. Due to the fact that participants of the experiment know that survey is a part of the research, they may act as it is expected to, while the reaction to the real situation will be different. In science, this effect is called Hawthorne effect (Cappelen & Tungodden, 2012).

Furthermore, the research was performed from the recruiters' perspective and their interpretation of hobbies in CVs. The possible idea for future research is to analyze the same variable - hobbies - but from the applicant's side, meaning what he/she tries to communicate by inserting the specific hobby in the CVs. Another way to develop this topic further is to analyze if participation in hobbies or extracurricular activities is able to substitute and compensate for the lack of educational or professional backgrounds. In my research, I analyzed the impact of hobbies on the candidates with sufficient education and experience. However, they could be different if a person would lack either of them. Moreover, there is also a difference between the first screening of the CV and the further ones. This research focuses on the first impression of the recruiter about the candidate, at the same time hobbies could be viewed differently when CV will be reviewed again.

To conclude, there is a wide potential for future research on the topic of CV interpretation. The importance of this topic is raised because of the decrease in live communication between candidates and recruiters. Thus, the value of information signaled by the CV is higher than before.

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Appendix 1

Both surveys include the identical questions, the only difference is the CV examples. In order to avoid duplicates, I decided to insert only one survey version, which are followed up by all 4 CV versions.

Master thesis Survey

Good day!

My name is Kateryna, and I am a LIO (Leading Innovative Organizations) Master student in JKU, Linz, Austria. I am conducting a study on the notion of self brand building and its role in the digital communication with recruiters.

I am very grateful for the time you spend on this survey, so I made sure that it will only take 7 minutes. Your data will be collected anonymously and only used for this research.

This is not all! There is a lottery. One of the respondents will win a 30EUR Amazon voucher. All that is needed is to complete a survey!

Thank you for your participation.

There are 13 questions in this survey.

General questions

What is your gender? *
Please choose **only one** of the following:
o   Female   o   Male

How old are you? *
Please choose **only one** of the following:

o   18 - 24
    o   25 - 34
    o   35 - 49
    o   49 – more

What country do you mainly work in? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- o Austria
- o Germany
- o Poland
- o Ukraine
- o Other

How many years are you in HR? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- o less than 1
- o 1 - 2
- o 3 - 5
- o 6 - 9
- o 10 and more

CV #1

Please have a look at the CV #1 (application for the position in HR team) and answer the questions below.

CV example 1 (please see it under the survey content)

How likely will this person be employed? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- o extremely likely
- o rather likely
- o neither likely, nor unlikely
- o rather unlikely
- o extremely unlikely

I would <u>hire</u> / <u>not hire</u> this person, because: *

Please choose **all** that apply:

- o of the education
- o of the experience
- o of the level of soft skills
- o Other:

What is the first thing you check when opening applicants' CV? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- o "About" section
- o "Education" section
- o "Experience" section
- o "Skills" section
- o "Hobbies" section

Please rate the following statements: *

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	I fully agree	I rather agree	I neither agree, nor disagree	I rather disagree	I fully disagree
I think this applicant is a good team-player					
I think this applicant has good communication skills					
I think this applicant has good self-organization skills					
I think this applicant has good decision-making skills					
I think this applicant is creative					
I think this applicant has highly competitive spirit					
I think this applicant has good stress resistance skills					

CV #2

Please have a look at the CV #2 (application for the position in HR team) and answer the questions below.

CV example 2 (please see it under the survey content)

<table>
<tr><td>

How likely will this person be employed? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- extremely likely
- rather likely
- neither likely, nor unlikely
- rather unlikely
- extremely unlikely

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I would <u>hire</u> / <u>not hire</u> this person, because: *

Please choose **all** that apply:

- of the education
- of the experience
- of the level of soft skills
- Other:

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<tr><td>

What is the first thing you check when opening applicants' CV? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- "About" section
- "Education" section
- "Experience" section
- "Skills" section
- "Hobbies" section

</td></tr>
</table>

Please rate the following statements: *

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	I fully agree	I rather agree	I neither agree, nor disagree	I rather disagree	I fully disagree
I think this applicant is a good team-player					

	I fully agree	I rather agree	I neither agree, nor disagree	I rather disagree	I fully disagree
I think this applicant has good communication skills					
I think this applicant has good self-organization skills					
I think this applicant has good decision-making skills					
I think this applicant is creative					
I think this applicant has highly competitive spirit					
I think this applicant has good stress resistance skills					

Email address

Please insert your email address here if you would like to participate in the lottery.

If not, please skip the question.

Please write your answer here:

Thanks a lot for your time!

CV example 1 (female; active hobbies):

VENESSA STUART

HR SPECIALIST

CONTACT

Address:
Linz, Austria

Phone:
+43 897 56 78 98

Email:
thesis@gmail.com

HOBBIES

- Football
- Dancing
- Hiking

SKILLS

- CRM user
- Debating
- Public speaking

WORK

2020-2021 **Junior HR specialist**
Recruiting and training HR interns, working on the improvement of the HR process

2019-2020 **HR intern**
Responsible for the employee development programs

EDUCATION

2016 - 2019 **Johannes Kepler University**
Linz, Austria
Bachelor of Intercultural Communication

2004 - 2016 **High School #6**
Berlin, Germany

CV example 2 (female; passive hobbies):

LISA BROWN

HR SPECIALIST

☎ CONTACT

Address:
Linz, Austria

Phone:
+43 897 56 78 98

Email:
thesis@gmail.com

★ HOBBIES

- Reading
- Origami
- Chess

✎ SKILLS

- CRM user
- Debating
- Public speaking

WORK

2020-2021   **Junior HR specialist**
Recruiting and training HR
interns, working on the
improvement of the HR process

2019-2020   **HR intern**
Responsible for the employee
development programs

EDUCATION

2016 - 2019   **Johannes Kepler University**
Linz, Austria
Bachelor of Intercultural
Communication

2004 - 2016   **High School #6**
Berlin, Germany

CV example 3 (male; active hobbies):

ROBERT SMITH
HR SPECIALIST

CONTACT

Address:
Linz, Austria

Phone:
+43 897 56 78 98

Email:
thesis@gmail.com

HOBBIES

- Football
- Dancing
- Hiking

SKILLS

- CRM user
- Debating
- Public speaking

WORK

2020-2021   **Junior HR specialist**
Recruiting and training HR interns, working on the improvement of the HR process

2019-2020   **HR intern**
Responsible for the employee development programs

EDUCATION

2016 - 2019   **Johannes Kepler University**
Linz, Austria
Bachelor of Intercultural Communication

2004 - 2016   **High School #6**
Berlin, Germany

CV example 4 (male; passive hobbies):

NIKOLAS CLARK

HR SPECIALIST

📞 CONTACT

Address:
Linz, Austria

Phone:
+43 897 56 78 98

Email:
thesis@gmail.com

⭐ HOBBIES

- Reading
- Origami
- Chess

✏️ SKILLS

- CRM user
- Debating
- Public speaking

WORK

2020-2021 **Junior HR specialist**
Recruiting and training HR interns, working on the improvement of the HR process

2019-2020 **HR intern**
Responsible for the employee development programs

EDUCATION

2016 - 2019 **Johannes Kepler University**
Linz, Austria
Bachelor of Intercultural Communication

2004 - 2016 **High School #6**
Berlin, Germany