



# Does the Use of Facebook Influence the Exchange of Information on Social Networking

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*Abstract: The use of Facebook for the employment seeking process is under consideration of many organizations as a new channel to exchange information. Facebook is the largest used private social network site (SNS) in Germany. This paper concentrates on young people between 20 and 30 years. The focus of the paper is the perspective of the individuals and to explain the thoughts and interest of this group regarding employment seeking processes. The research has been done with an online survey and 118 relevant participants. The result provides the indication that the use and membership at Facebook do not influence the behaviour and mechanism of SNS.*

## 1 Introduction

SNS are very important for young people and influence their social daily life. The employment seeking process and to identify potential candidates is very important for companies (Behtoui 2015). SNSs create a new opportunity to present companies and advertise employment opportunities. Young people are mainly using *Facebook* (Cheung et al. 2011) and the paper uses membership variables of *Facebook* to find out if the membership of *Facebook* has an influence on the employment seeking process with SNSs.

The social capital theory explains the behaviour of individuals in social networks and provides an explanation for the mechanism in social networks. The mechanism in social networks is explained with the relationships between individuals (Lin 2001). These ties create opportunities to exchange resources and information. The exchange is influenced by trust, obligations and experience of the relationship (Adler & Kwon 2002)(Sander & Teh 2014b). The maintenance of

the ties can be an investment of time to get in touch, provided resources and information or support for example.

SNSs are social networks in the internet. The SNSs influence the theory to explain social networks (Ellison et al. 2007). SNSs are more anonymous and misuse is easier because control about information or sanctions for misuse is more difficult. The size of SNSs increase and a personal meeting is not needed to create a network which leads to missing information e.g. information about the appearance or elegance of the other network member. *Facebook* is the largest private network and the largest population is between 20 and 30 years old (Budden & Budden 2011) (Pfeil et al. 2009). Individuals use SNSs to exchange information and resources. This research paper investigate the use of *Facebook* to collect information about potential employer.

## **2 Method**

The research has been done with an online survey to evaluate the use of SNSs for a student project at University of Ludwigshafen. The statistical process has been the calculation of mean, median, std. deviation and correlation with SPSS. The age is mainly normal distributed for this population. The mean is 24,5 and median is 24. Female participants are 50,8% and male are 49,2%. Relevant participant for the paper has been 118.

### **2.1 Use of SNS**

The experience with SNS is important to evaluate the use and to know the mechanism at SNSs. *Facebook* is the main SNS for the participants and the paper is mainly related to *Facebook* members (Bohn et al. 2014).

	Use of SNS in minutes per day	Number of ties	Duration of membership
N	114	114	113
Mean	57,74	396,05	5,35
Median	30	350	5
Std. Deviation	72,097	284,965	1,949
Minimum	0	0	0
Maximum	480	2000	13

Table 1  
Mean, Median, Std. Deviation, Minimum and Maximum regarding membership of  
*Facebook*, n = 113 - 114  
Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

Only 2,54% of the participants do not use *Facebook* which is normal in this age cluster (Statistisches Bundesamt 2014) in Germany.

The table above explains the use of SNS of the population. The use of SNSs is explained with the use of minutes per day, number of ties and duration of membership. That provides an indication about the use of SNSs and investment in SNSs. The mechanism of SNSs is influenced by the history which can be described with the duration of the membership (Bloch & Mckay 2014). That creates obligations which is an important factor for social capital theory (Sander & Teh 2014a). The results of mean and median have a large gap and can be explained with large maximum and all minimums is zero. The following diagrams are more detailed and provide a deeper insight in the use of *Facebook*.

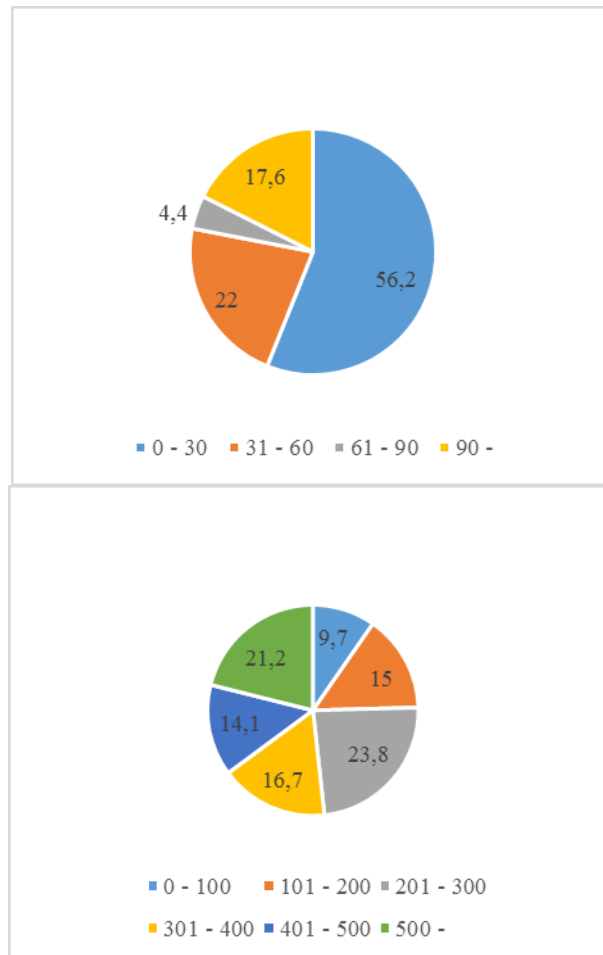


Figure 1

How many minutes do you use SNS? (rounding error +0,2); Number of ties, Results in %, n = 118

Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

The time to use SNS is an indicator for an investment in SNS. People invest time because they use the SNS to collect or provide information. People who use more time have a higher value with the internet, the return of their investment time is more beneficial as they have with other sources (Bloch & Mckay 2014). The number of ties of the individual are opportunities to get information, to find people who support ideas and is a prestige for the individual. People with many ties have valuable resources for other people and that can be the reason to be connected with each other (Kadushin 2004). The chance to create strong or weak ties is increased and is a further advantage. The size of the network is important

for the individual to have a benefit and to reduce the risk to be excluded from valuable connections to information and resources.

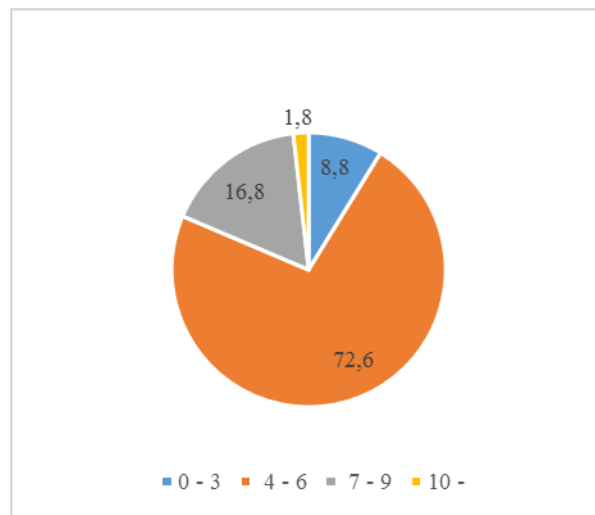


Figure 2  
Duration of membership, Results in %, n = 118  
Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

The duration of membership is the years which the individuals participate in the network. The time to be a member is an indication for trust (Sander 2013) (Brady 2015). The individuals would not stay a long time with a network if they would not have trust in the network. The long term membership creates a history with experience and obligations are created to other network members (Adler & Kwon 2002). The experience can be created with mechanism at SNSs and behaviour by other members for example. That influences the behaviour and use of SNS.

The use of SNS explained with the duration of membership, use in minutes per day and number of contacts brings us to the following hypothesis.

H1 Members of SNS who use more often, over a long period, with many social contacts in SNS more often use SNS to *collect information* than people who use less SNS for a shorter period with only a few contacts.

The variables explain the involvement of people in SNSs and the paper explore the reason if the collection of information about employer and potential employer related issues is a reasons to use SNSs. That can explain the behaviour of individuals of SNSs.

The following hypothesis is the influence of SNSs information to find a decision based on information of SNSs. The hypothesis is

H2 Member of SNS who use more often, over a long period, with many social contacts in SNS more often use SNS information *to make a decision* than people who use less SNS for a shorter period with only a few contacts.

### 3 Analysis

The analysis presents the results below. This part is divided in four sections. Any section is related to a question of the survey and explains the use of private SNS, provide reasons for the behaviour at SNSs and use of SNSs. The collected data gives support to confirm or reject the hypothesis.

#### 3.1 Requirements for information from employers to be valuable

The question which is evaluating the needed requirements to trust and use information concerning employers is “How should the presentation of an employer in SNS be?”. The data is analysed below.

The information which is provided in SNS regarding the employer has to fulfil attributes. These attributes which have been observed are trustful, real, believable and transparent. The interest of the user of SNSs is to collect reliable information and the information has to fulfil the requirements of the user. The survey provides the result that all evaluated attributes are important because the median is one or two and the means are all below 2,01. This is a strong indication that the information has to be trustful, real, believable and transparent to fulfil the expectations of a SNS user and explains the use of information at SNSs.

	Trustful	Real	Believable	Transparent
N	118	118	118	118
Mean	1,85	2,01	1,92	1,68
Median	2	2	2	1
Std. Deviation	1,059	1,209	1,171	1,108

Table 2  
Mean, Median, Std. Deviation regarding requirements at information on SNSs, n = 118  
Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

The diagram below explain the importance and tendency of the answer of the participants. The most important attribute for information is the transparency. This attribute has the highest agreement with 59,3% followed by believable with

46,6%. The next agreement about the importance of attributes for information is the trustfulness with 43,2%. On the last stage is the attribute real with 43,2%. The majority of answers are on the first three stages. The attributes are mainly related with trust and can be used to describe trust (Bakker et al. 2006). Trust is important to explain the exchange of information in social networks.

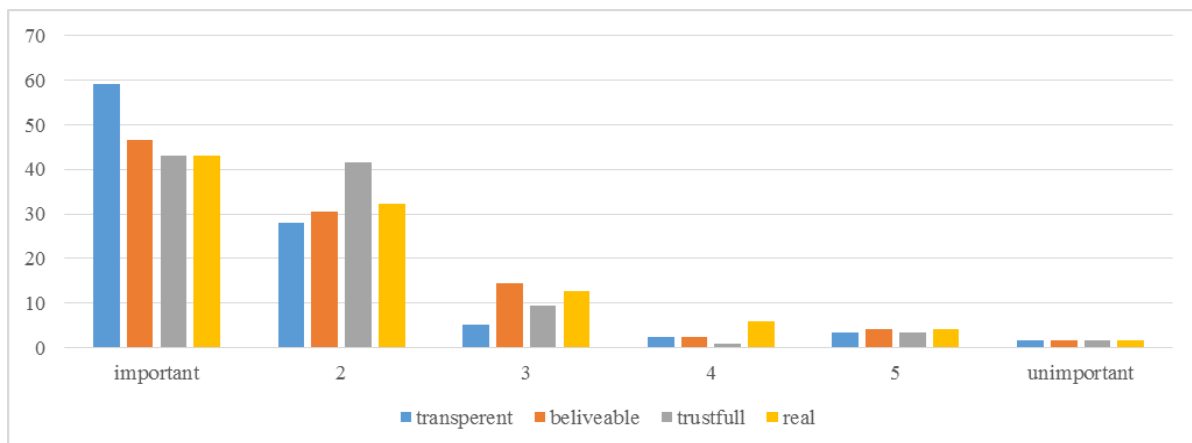


Figure 3  
 “How should be the presentation of employer in SNS?”, Results in %, n = 118  
 Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

The correlation between the variables to use SNS and age with the indication trustful, transparent, real and believable is presented in the table below.

		Use of SNS in minutes per day	Number of ties	Duration of membership
trustfull	Correlation Coefficient	-0,08	0,047	-0,05
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,397	0,619	0,601
	n	114	114	113
transparent	Correlation Coefficient	-0,02	-0,008	<b>-,221*</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,83	0,932	0,019
	n	114	114	113
real	Correlation Coefficient	0,011	0,062	0
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,909	0,512	0,998
	n	114	114	113
beliveable	Correlation Coefficient	-0,097	0,077	-0,006
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,303	0,415	0,952
	n	114	114	113

Table 3

Correlation coefficient between use of Facebook and requirement for information at SNSs, n = 118, \*.  
Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

A statistically relevant correlation coefficient does not exist. The correlation coefficients are weak and only one result is significant at the 0,05 level. That is the correlation coefficient of -0,221 significant at the 0,05 level between transparent and duration of membership. That means only transparent has a statistical significant weak correlation between the duration of membership at *Facebook*. All correlation coefficients of duration of membership are zero or negative. This means the experience which gained with the history of membership and life experience has a negative correlation between the variables.

### 3.2 Individuals expectation of the kind of information at SNS under consideration of the employment seeking process

The next question of the survey evaluates the kind of information that would be expected by the participants from potential employer at SNSs. “Contact information” and “Job opportunities” has the median 1. The median is two for “Development opportunities for employees and for all other variables is the median three. That gives the indication that the most important expected information are contact details and job opportunities.



	Contact information	Business informatin e.g. profit, turnover ...	Information about employees e.g. age distribution	Job opportunitites, job avertisement	Development opportunities for employees e.g. education programs	Information about company culture e.g. leadership style	Information about compensation and benefits
n	118	118	118	118	118	118	118
Mean	1,75	2,59	3,1	1,74	2,36	2,76	3,21
Median	1	3	3	1	2	3	3
Std. Deviation	1,294	1,269	1,222	1,236	1,356	1,245	1,513

Table 4

Mean, Median, Std. Deviation regarding expected information on SNSs under consideration of the employment seeking process, n = 118

Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

The diagram below supports the tendency which has been analysed in the table above. Contact information and job opportunities are on the same level with 61,9 % at stage one and on the second scale is the result 22,9% for contact information and Job opportunities has 20,3% at second scale. This supports the result that these two information are the most important. The gap between the two leading expected information and the third place is 28%. On the third place is "Development opportunities for employees with 33,9% at scale one and on scale two responds 28%. The other results do not have a clear tendency to be important or unimportant for the participants.

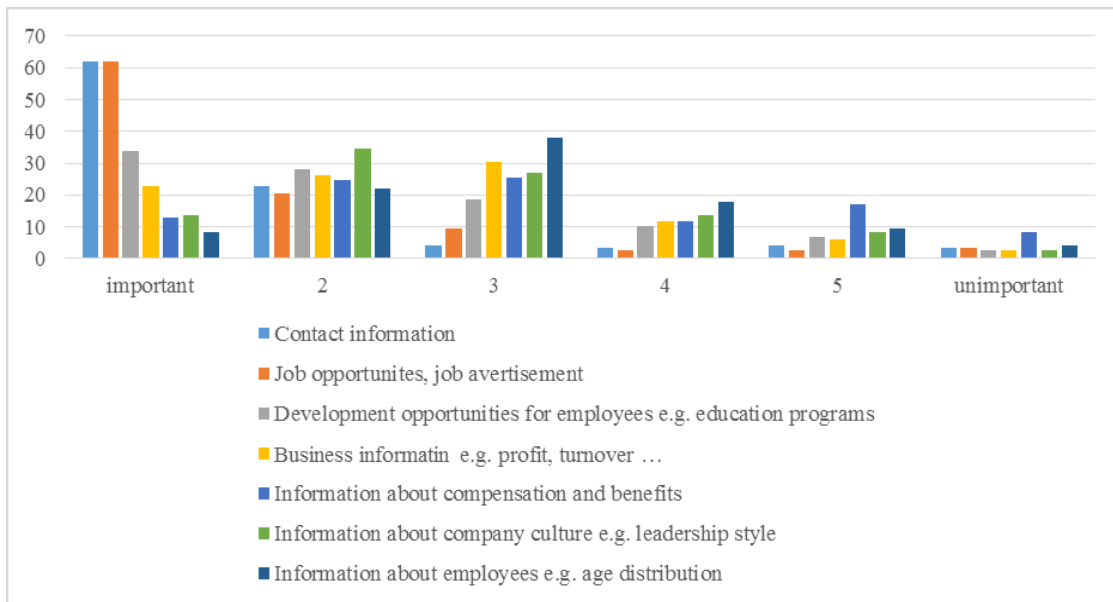


Figure 4

“What kind of information would you expect at SNS from potential employer?”, Results in %, n = 118

Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

The correlations are weak and the results are not at significant level. There is not any significant relevant correlation between the use of *Facebook* and the expected information. The results cannot explain that the investment in *Facebook* e.g. time, number of ties or duration of membership has any correlation with the expectation which kind of information is important.

		Use of SNS in minutes per day	Number of ties	Duration of membership
Contact information	Correlation Coefficient	0,034	0,093	0,006
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,717	0,327	0,951
	n	114	114	113
Business informatin e.g. profit, turnover ...	Correlation Coefficient	-0,028	0,012	0,098
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,766	0,898	0,301
	n	114	114	113
Information about employees e.g. age distribution	Correlation Coefficient	-0,043	0,022	-0,148
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,65	0,819	0,117
	n	114	114	113
Job opportunites, job avvertisement	Correlation Coefficient	-0,02	0,057	-0,075
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,836	0,544	0,428
	n	114	114	113
Development opportunities for employees e.g. education programs	Correlation Coefficient	-0,032	-0,003	-0,061
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,733	0,974	0,522
	n	114	114	113
Information about company culture e.g. leadership style	Correlation Coefficient	0,175	0,019	0,011
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,062	0,839	0,91
	n	114	114	113
Information about compensation and benefits	Correlation Coefficient	0,029	-0,044	0,055
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,76	0,641	0,566
	n	114	114	113

Table 5

Correlation coefficient between use of Facebook and expected information at SNSs under observation of employment seeking process, n = 118,

Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

### 3.3 Reason to use or not to use SNS to collect information of potential employer

After evaluation of expected information the next analysis is about the value to exchange information and to explain the reason to use SNS to collect information. The participants do not use SNSs to collect information about employer but the

use of SNSs to collect information is under consideration to identify information about potential employer. *Facebook* members are aware that they can use SNSs to collect additional valuable information but they do not use *Facebook* for the employment seeking process. The median is five for “I never reflect this opportunity to use SNSs for employment seeking reasons” on a scale from one for important to six for unimportant. That the SNS is not actively used can be explained by individuals using SNSs only for private reasons on scale two. Another reason not to use SNSs is that profiles at SNSs should not be under consideration or get the attention from potential employers (Sander, Teh & Sloka 2015) (Zide et al. 2014). The opportunity to collect more information or to get in touch with employees of potential employers have a median four. The chance to get an insight about real daily work conditions has the median five. This is an additional indication that the information exchange at SNS under consideration of the employment seeking process are not very often used and the information quality is on a low level. That individuals do not trust SNS has the median three and can be an indication that only few individuals use SNS to exchange information.

	I can collect more information at SNS	I can get in touch with employees of potential employers easily	I get an insight about real daily work conditions	I use SNS only for private reasons	I do not trust information at SNS	I am not interested that potential employer considerate my private profile	I never reflect this opportunity to use SNS for employment seeking reasons
n	118	118	118	118	118	118	118
Mean	3,81	4,2	4,58	2,26	3,36	1,96	4,29
Median	4	4	5	2	3	1	5
Std. Deviation	1,613	1,567	1,493	1,549	1,272	1,398	1,779

Table 6

Mean, Median, Std. Deviation regarding reasons to collect information on SNSs, under consideration of the employment seeking process, n = 118

Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

The results are not so clear as the tendency of the answers before. The two highest rated answers are “I am not interested that potential employer considerate my private profile” with 79,9% on first and second stage and “I use SNS only for private reasons” with 68,6% on first and second stage. That SNSs are under consideration for the employment seeking process provides the answer “I never reflect this opportunity to use SNS for employment seeking reasons” with 41,5% of the participants disagree with this statement. The positive weak tendency for the result “I do not trust information at SNS” with 60,1% summarized at stage one, two and three is an explanation that people agree that they do not trust

information at SNSs. The participants tendency to disagree with the statements “I can collect more information at SNS” has the result 55,8% on the last three stages and “I can get in touch with employees of potential employers easily” has the result 64,4% on the last three stages. That means that participants are aware of the opportunity to exchange information about employment issues but they do not use this opportunity only a few.

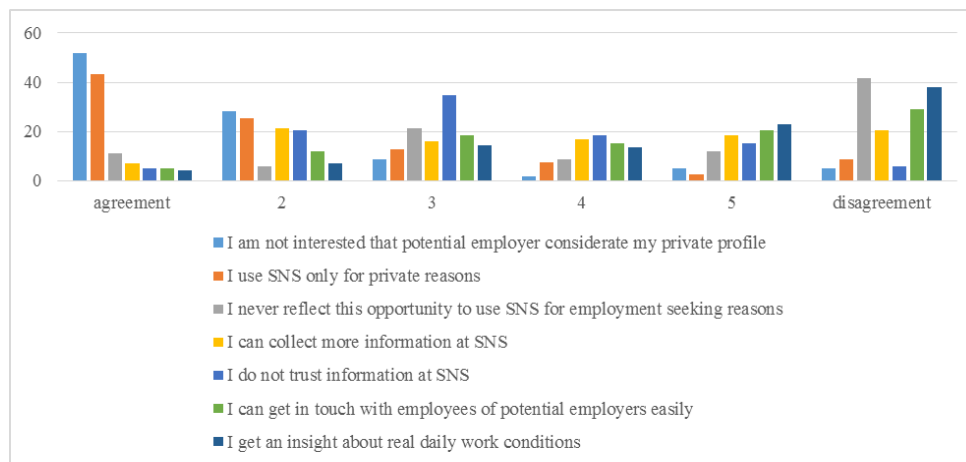


Figure 5

“Do you use SNS to collect information about potential employer?”, Results in %, n = 118

Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

The correlation coefficients between use of SNS and variables regarding use of SNS to collect information is too weak to use the result to explain the mechanism at SNS under consideration of the collection of information about potential employers influenced by the use of SNS. The only result with a correlation coefficient is -0,188 significant at the 0,05 level between time to use SNS and “I can collect more Information at SNS”. The result is too weak for explanations but can give the indication that the time at SNS has an influence on the collection of information at SNS under consideration of the employment seeking process. The surprising result is that the correlation coefficient is negative.

		Use of SNS in minutes per day	Number of ties	Duration of membership
I can collect more information at SNS	Correlation Coefficient	<b>-,188*</b>	-0,132	0,024
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,045	0,163	0,804
	n	114	114	113
I can get in touch with employees of potential employers easily	Correlation Coefficient	-0,151	-0,103	-0,024
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,108	0,275	0,797
	n	114	114	113
I get an insight about real daily work conditions	Correlation Coefficient	-0,059	-0,018	0,049
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,533	0,852	0,606
	n	114	114	113
I use SNS only for private reasons	Correlation Coefficient	0,085	0,103	-0,023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,367	0,274	0,807
	n	114	114	113
I do not trust information at SNS	Correlation Coefficient	-0,064	-0,092	0,055
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,5	0,333	0,563
	n	114	114	113
I am not interested that potential employer considerate my private profile	Correlation Coefficient	-0,018	0,036	-0,052
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,851	0,702	0,582
	n	114	114	113
I never reflect this opportunity to use SNS for employment seeking reasons	Correlation Coefficient	0,038	0,045	-0,001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,691	0,634	0,994
	n	114	114	113

Table 7

Correlation coefficient between use of Facebook and use of SNS to collect information under consideration of the employment seeking process, n = 118, \*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

### 3.4 Influence of the company presentation in social media to choose a potential employer

The last part is related to the hypothesis if people use SNSs to find a decision to choose an employer. The assumption has been that the collection of information

influence the decision process. The result has a median of five and mean of 4,53 on a six point scale with one for ever and six for never. The diagram below present the distribution of the answers.

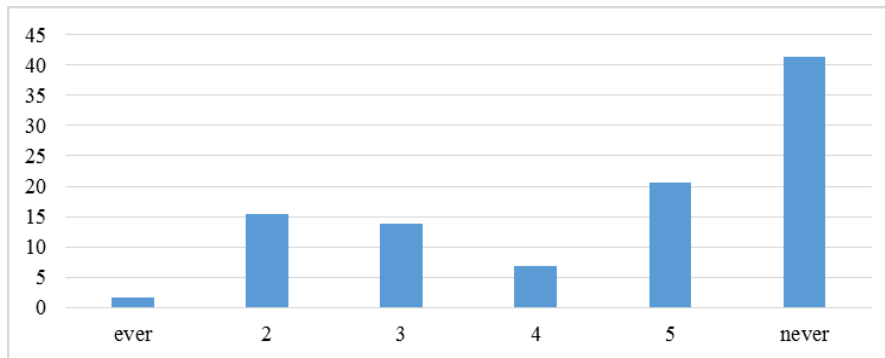


Figure 6

“Did the appearance of companies in social media influence your choice for an employer positive?”,

Results in %, n = 118

Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

The result is clear. The majority with 41,4% never used SNSs to find a decision regarding potential employer and on stage four, five and six are 69% compared with 31% for the first three stages.

The following table presents the results of the correlation between the use of SNSs and age with the influence on the choice for an employer. The results are three negative weak correlations and only the correlation coefficient between the number of ties and the influence of the decision is -0,188 significant at the 0,05 level. All other results in the table are not significant on a statistical relevant level.

		Use of SNS in minutes per day	Number of ties	Duration of membership
Did the appearance of companies in social media influence your choice for an employer positive?	Correlation Coefficient	-0,128	<b>-,188*</b>	-0,128
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,18	0,047	0,18
	n	112	112	111

Table 8

Correlation coefficient between use of *Facebook* and influence of SNS to decide about potential employer, n = 118, \*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Tom Sander conducted survey

The surprising result is that the correlation coefficients are all negative. This means that the investment in SNS, the experience and history with SNS and number of social contacts has a negative result which is an indication that the heavy users less often use SNSs to find the decision than users with only little experience, social contacts and use per day.

## 4 Result

The test of the hypothesis with the results to reject or confirm the hypothesis is possible with the data. The hypothesis cannot be supported by the results and the analysis provides the information that the use of SNS is not deeply related to the collection of information at *Facebook* about employer and that the decision about the choice of employer is not influenced by the use of *Facebook* (Sander, Teh & Majláth 2015). That means the hypotheses are rejected.

The explanation for this result is that people are using the private SNS mainly for private reasons and the aim of a private SNS is to share and exchange information and resources about private issues. They protect their private life which is explainable with the high agreement that they would like to hide their profile from their potential employer. That means they are not using SNSs for employment seeking processes but the participants thought about the opportunity to use SNS for the employment seeking process. Individuals are not aware about the possible advantages to use SNSs for the employment seeking process e.g. to get a deeper insight or to collect more information is mainly anticipated as a few value by the participants. That explains the results that the expectations of individuals are to identify information about potential employer. Expectation is mainly concentrated on job opportunities and contact details. All other opportunities are rated below with a gap of 28% at the first stage of the scale.

This results explain the use of SNS to find information about potential employer and guide to the result that individuals are not influenced by *Facebook* to identify a decision to choose an employer. That reject the second hypothesis. That means the use of SNS for the employment seeking process is not under consideration for the information collection actively data but the use has been under consideration and individuals are aware that they can use *Facebook* to collect information about potential employer.

Organizations which recruit employees have to be aware that *Facebook* is not used from many members of SNSs to collect information about employer and the decision about the choice of employer is not influenced by *Facebook*.

Future research has to take under consideration evaluation of other kind of social networks. Further of interest are other generations to generalize the result and to



identify differences between different generations. The results have been done for individuals in Germany and cannot be used for other countries or cultures.

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