The Role of the Internet and Social Networks in Recruitment and Selection Process

Agneš Slavić
University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Economics in Subotica, Subotica, Serbia
Radmila Bjekić
University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Economics in Subotica, Subotica, Serbia
Nemanja Berber
University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Economics in Subotica, Subotica, Serbia

Abstract

Contemporary challenges and intense changes in the age of digitalisation significantly influence the design of business activities of all entities. Development of the Internet and social networks opens new opportunities the in implementation of human resource management. Internet's usage greatly changed the recruitment and selection of candidates. Internet recruitment has significant advantages compared to traditional recruitment, both in terms of companies and in terms of candidates. Usage of social networks, such as LinkedIn, Facebook & Tweeter, in implementing recruitment is becoming increasingly popular. The aim of this paper is to determine the role of the Internet and social networks in the implementation of recruitment and selection activities in companies in Serbia. Based on the review of available literature and presentation of the ruling attitudes, the authors have attempted to determine the importance of the Internet and social networks in the implementation of human resources activities in companies. Statistical techniques of descriptive statistics applied to the data of 160 companies that participated in the CRANET researches in 2014/2015 from the territory of Serbia have been used in the paper.

Introduction

The generation Y, young people born between 1980 and 2000, has a growing share on the labor market. By 2020, more than 50% of the global workforce will be comprised of this generation (Saxena & Jain, 2012). This generation, which grew up and developed with information technologies, the internet, and social networks, really sees the world as a global village. Bearing in mind what is important for the generation Y, when it comes to job search, there may be some major differences in comparison with the requirements of the earlier generation. Members of this generation want flexible working hours, incentive pay based on performance, the ability to grow and develop their careers, to participate in decision-making, and they want clearly defined and delineated responsibilities. Young people live in the virtual world, therefore, in addition to the traditional ways of communicating and attracting workforce, the use of modern technologies, especially the internet and social networks is necessary (Orrell, 2007). This significantly influences the implementation of human resource management activities, primarily the process of recruitment and selection in modern business conditions. If employers really want to be attractive to modern potential candidates, they have to adapt their recruitment and selection techniques. If companies are not visible and accessible on the Internet and social networks and if they are not interesting (they do not have a good image, advertising, and

reputation), they probably do not exist for this generation (Tulgan, 2009).

In 2001 Cappelli stated that "the war of talent moves to the internet and that employers need to have plan of a battle" because, in the conditions of ever stronger competition for talents, companies that conduct online recruitment and selection will be able to attract and retain the best candidates (Cappelli, 2001, p. 139). Bearing in mind that the use of the Internet for the purpose of recruitment and selection was still at the beginning then, and that today it has a more important role, it can be expected, due to further development of technology, that in the recent future e-recruitment and e-selection will be even more in the usage and will become a way of the copany's struggle for the best candidates.

The development of the Internet and social networks opens up new opportunities for the implementation of human resource management activities. The role of the Internet and social networks, such as LinkedIn and Facebook, is becoming increasingly important and popular in the implementation of the human resource recruitment process. Internet recruitment has significant advantages compared to classical recruitment techniques both from the aspect of companies and from the perspective of the candidates. Many companies have found out that the labor force structure on the labor market has changed, and in order to attract and retain a new generation with more demands and expectations from work, traditional recruitment techniques and selection are not enough. In order to obtain credible and useful information necessary to make valid decision on the selection of an adequate candidate, it is necessary to combine traditional and modern techniques. The paper presents the results of various researches that indicate the increasing importance of the internet and social networks in attracting and selecting suitable candidates for the advertised vacancy. The authors attempted to determine the role of the internet and social networks in the process of recruitment and selection using statistical techniques of descriptive statistics on a sample of 160 companies that participated in CRANET research in 2014/2015 on the territory of Serbia.

1. Theoretical background

1.1. The role of the Internet and social networks in recruitment

Recruitment is the most important area of human resources management because it determines the quality of all other activities that follow: selection, orientation, training and development, performance appraisal, rewarding employees, etc. Recruitment is defined as the process of aligning the professional preferences and goals of the individual with the goals of the organization (Bahtijarević-Šiber, 1999).

The earlier research was focused on providing as realistic job information as possible and traditional recruitment methods (Saks, 2005), while more recent studies focus on timely recruiting, recruiting through the organization site and online recruitment. Advertising a vacancy only through the company's official website is not sufficient for new generations. Recruitment must be guided by a marketing strategy, and modern technology should be one of the "tricks" that companies use to attract the workforce of a new generation, the Y-generation. Some companies that have recognized new trends and implemented them in their business already use blogs and social vacancy advertising networks for advertising and creating closer contacts with their potential candidates (Tulgan, 2009).

The internet as a recruitment method was recognized in the mid-1990s, and it was marked as a revolutionary recruitment method for the benefit of companies and candidates (Cappelli, 2001; Birchfield 2002; Boydell, 2002). The advantages of the usage of the internet, as a method of recruitment, were stated by numerous authors, and these advantages have been confirmed in practice in numerous researches. The list of benefits is long, while some of the most important are: cost savings, access to a large number of candidates, the possibility of easier targeting of potential candidates, faster responses and time savings, and ease of use (Starcke, 1996, Zusman & Landis, 2002; Parry & Tyson, 2008). However, in addition to the above advantages, one must take into account that there are certain shortcomings, too, such as: a large number of non-serious responses, a large number of applicants who do not have the necessary qualifications, and the mere fact that not all people have the possibility to access the Internet (Starcke, 1996). Bearing in mind that it is 2017 and the fact that the number of people who do not have access to the Internet is decreasing; the above mentioned disadvantages are not serious ones. In addition, the number of Internet users on the global level has increased by 10% in 2016 compared to 2015; in the absolute amount it would be 332 million (Kemp, 2016).

Apart from private, there are also professional social networks, among which the most famous is LinkedIn. These are specialized social networks that focus on the professional aspect of an individual. People on this network create their profile, which consists of a summary in electronic form that contains information about education (formal and non-formal education), careers (previous employment, organization, and volunteering, professional practices). Also, different professional groups of people who have common interests are created, or who belong to the same organization, or they are engaged in the same profession, or work/worked on a joint project, etc. This saves time while an employer is looking for potential employees. On the other hand, it is easier to inform the individual about the company for which he applied.

Recruitment through social networks is gaining in popularity, and the trend towards the growing popularity of both personal and professional (LinkedIn) will continue (Dery, Tansley, & Hafermatz, 2014). Social networks allow faster information exchange, faster collection of large amount of information, and the barriers between private and public domains and networks are reduced (McFarland & Ployhart, 2015); McDonald & Thompson, 2015). Research carried out by Nigel Wright Recruitment (2011) found that more than half of the people in the United Kingdom use social networks for job searching, of which 18% use Facebook, and 31% use LinkedIn. An interesting fact is that research conducted by Potentialpark 2011 on a sample of 30000 graduates, students and people at the beginning of career development showed that as many as 100% of respondents in Europe would like to get in touch (interacting) with employers online. Respondents prefer LinkedIn (48%) to Facebook (25%) (Potentialpark, 2011).

According to El Ouirdi, El Ouirdi, Segers, and Pais (2016) recruiters use social media such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter to post job ads, attract and recruit job applicants, and pre-screen applicants (Jeske & Shultz, 2016). The recruitment process in their organizations becomes more "dynamic, relational, and authentic, and the employer brand and attractiveness are enhanced" (Carrillat, d'Astous, & Grégoire, 2014; El Ouirdi et al., 2016).

The fact that LinkedIn is the most popular social network used for recruitment was also shown by a survey conducted by Jobvita in 2012. More than 93% of surveyed employers use LinkedIn for recruitment purposes, while 66% of employers use Facebook, and 54% use Twitter (Broughton, Foley, Ledermaier, & Cox, 2013).

1.2. The role of the Internet and social networks in selection

The process of selection of human resources is a logical continuation of the recruitment process, in which the collection of data of potential candidates is evaluated, and it has been decided who should be employed on a certain position (Dowling, Festing, & Engle, 2008). These two activities are interconnected and dependent. Recruitment is used to provide an adequate number of candidates for completing a job position, while the selection is used to select among the best candidates the one who will receive the position.

The use of modern information technologies can improve the process of sorting and contacting candidates. The Internet can facilitate the selection of candidates, especially when it comes to geographically distant candidates. Video conferencing and on-line tests can be used in the early stages of the selection process, saving time and cost. Even now there are huge numbers of companies which accept only resumes submitted online. On-line testing is now being used more and more, too.

The usage of the Internet for the purpose of selection of candidates provides many opportunities and poses new challenges for professionals who are in charge of staffing. First of all, social networks and other websites represent a rich source of information that in most cases is not available in any other way. Often, this information relates to questions concerning former employees and former employers (e.g.: the reason for termination of employment, attitudes and opinions about the previous employer or former employee). This is information that is often impossible to get through the traditional selection process (Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2008). Information can be reached via Google, but also through social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, based on networking of individuals, where they place information about themselves, their interests, hobbies and other personal and professional information. A survey conducted by Harris Interactive in 2013, one of the world's leading marketing companies, shows that more than 43% of HR managers have found that information they got through social networks has influenced their decision not to hire specific candidates. The reasons for this were: dissemination of inappropriate content (50%), criticism and dis-

respect of the previous employer (33%), discriminatory comments on women, members of other races and religion (28%). On the other hand, HR managers said that some of the information they came up with by searching for social networks contributed to consolidate the choice of candidates: the candidate leaves the impression of a professional person (57%), information on social networks confirms the candidate's qualifications (49%), the candidate is creative (46%). This information was helpful, but they were not crucial in deciding on the selection of candidates (Jovandić, 2014).

Employers use the Internet primarily for selection in order to get information about candidates quickly and with cost savings. For example, the American Society for Human Resource Management, SHRM, in 2008 found that organizations use social networks for the following reasons: getting information with less effort and time (51%), obtaining information that cannot be found in a cover letter or in a business biography (49%), the ease of checking the information listed in the accompanying letter and business biography (26%) (Karl, Peluchette, & Schlaegel, 2010). In addition to the above mentioned reasons, the literature emphasizes other reasons, such as: shortening the time needed to select an adequate candidate and cost saving.

The e-selection process consists of the following phases: Electronic Job Analysis, Electronic Job and Initial Screening, Electronic Tests and Assessments, e-interviews (Electronic Interviews), Selection Decision Making, Evaluation of Selection Systems (Stone, Lukaszewski, Stone-Romero, & Johnson, 2013, p. 53). The first phase is related to defining the job requirements, and accordingly, the characteristics of the individual that will be adequate for completing a job. Based on this information, an ad is created. The next phase relates to the vacancy advertising and online registration (CV, motivation letter). Companies today often use the official company website and commercial sites to advertise job positions. The next phase relates to the on-line testing. Lately, on-line tests have become attractive for employers because they save resources, but also for applicants (for example, they are free from time pressure – they can fill out the test they want and when they think they are ready and restful) (Makransky & Glas, 2011). However, the results of the research on the usage of on-line tests differ. Harris et al. (Harris, Van Hoye, & Lievens, 2003) showed that applicants preferred more classic pa-

per tests than on-line tests. In contrast, the results of the research of Potosky and Bobko (2004) indicated that applicants prefer online tests in comparison to classical tests. When it comes to the next phase, online interviews, although they are more and more in use, there is a small number of researches dealing with their effectiveness. Scientific papers mainly refer to describing various types of online interviews, but there are no concrete results on their level of representation to a significant extent (Stone, Lukaszewski, Stone-Romero, & Johnson, 2013). The next phase refers to the decision-making on the selection of candidates based on the results of all previous stages. This is a critical phase as the primary goal of the selection is to make a decision that will lead to the selection of candidates who will be the best for the job (Guion, 1965). Different strategies for effective selection are used to make a decision at this stage. The online selection process can significantly facilitate decision-making on selection, but also to save time for decision-makers (e.g.: HR specialists, managers) in comparison with traditional decision-making strategies (Stone, Stone-Romero, & Lukaszewski, 2003).

The usage of the on-line selection process is on the rise. However, the whole process is rarely carried out on-line. Employers opt for on-line collection of applications, and then use on-line tests to save costs and time. However, the other stages of the process continue to be predominantly carried out in a traditional way (e.g.: classical interviews are still much more present in relation to online interviews). Although the popularity of e-selection is growing, there are still a small number of scientific papers dealing with this problem. The application of e-selection can significantly facilitate and shorten the time that elapses from the moment of advertising of the job vacancy until the selection of an adequate candidate, as well as reduce the selection costs. However, there is a need for additional research into the factors that positively and negatively affect the possibility and efficiency of the implementation of the e-selection process, especially when it comes to their effect in the selection process of candidates from Y generation. For example, Van Iddekinge, Lanivich, Roth, and Junco (2016) suggest that organizations should be very cautious about using social media information such as Facebook to assess job applicants because they found in their research that recruiter ratings of applicants' Facebook information were unrelated to supervisor ratings of job

performance, turnover intentions, and actual turnover.

2. The role of the Internet and social networks in the process of recruitment and selection in companies in Serbia

2.1. Methodology

The research in this paper was based on data from the Cranet project, collected in Serbia during the 2014/2016 round of research carried out by researchers from the Faculty of Economics in Subotica. In the first half of 2015, 160 organizations from the territory of Serbia were investigated. Answers to the questionnaires were provided by human resource managers or managers in organizations with more than 50 employees (Leković, Slavić, & Berber, 2015), based on a standardized questionnaire containing questions from the key areas of human resources management (see the questionnaire structure in Berber & Slavic, 2016; Morley, Slavic, Poór, & Berber, 2016; Brewster, Mayrhofer, & Reichel, 2011; Lazarova, Morley, & Tyson, 2008).

Table 1   Structure of the sample – size (N=160)

Size of organizations (number of employees)	Frequency	%
1-249	97	60.6
250-1000	42	26.3
1000+	21	13.1
Total	**160**	**100.0**

Source: The authors.

The largest share of analyzed organizations in Serbia in 2015 was in the group of small and medium enterprises (60.6% of organizations). Large enterprises were present in 26.3% (over 250 workers in the organization). Very large enterprises, with over 1000 workers, accounted for 13.1% of the whole sample.

Table 2   Structure of the sample according the ownership

Ownership structure	Frequency	%
Private	105	66
Public	54	34
Mixed	0	0
Other	0	0
Total	159	100
Missing	1	-
Total	**160**	**100**

Source: The authors.

The data from Table 2 indicate that the largest share of analyzed organizations in Serbia was in the private sector, 66%, while 34% of the analyzed organizations belonged to the public sector.

Table 3   Structure of the sample – sector of industry (N=160).

Main sector of industry	%
Agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing, mining and quarrying	7.5
Manufacture of food, beverages, textiles, wood and paper, coke and refined petroleum, and related products	13.8
Manufacture of chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and medicinal chemical products	1.3
Manufacture of basic metals and metal products, plastic and other non-metallic products	3.1
Manufacture of computers, electronic products, electrical equipment	2.5
Manufacture of machinery and equipment	1.9
Manufacture of transport equipment	1.9
Other manufacturing	5.0
Electricity, gas, steam, and water supply, waste management	5.0
Construction	3.8
Wholesale and retail trade	9.4
Transportation and storage	6.3
Accommodation and food service activities, publishing, broadcasting activities	3.1
Telecommunications, IT and other information services	6.9
Financial and insurance activities	6.3
Accounting, management, architecture, engineering, scientific research, and other administrative and support service	1.9
Public administration and compulsory social security	5.7
Education	6.3
Human health services, residential care and social work activities	5.0
Other industry or services	3.1
Total	**100**

Source: The authors.

According to Table 3, around 45% of enterprises are engaged in production sector, while around 55% of organizations belong to the service sector. The largest share of organizations analyzed in the Cranet Research in 2015, are in the food, trade, telecommunications and IT sector.

For the purposes of this research and exploration of the practice of e-HRM in organizations, the following variables have been analyzed:

▪ The usage of the Internet and social networks for recruitment of managers, professional workers and administrative and physical workers in the organization;

▪ The usage of the Internet and networks for selection of managers, professional workers and administrative and physical workers in the organization.

Data analysis was done with statistical program SPSS, using descriptive statistics.
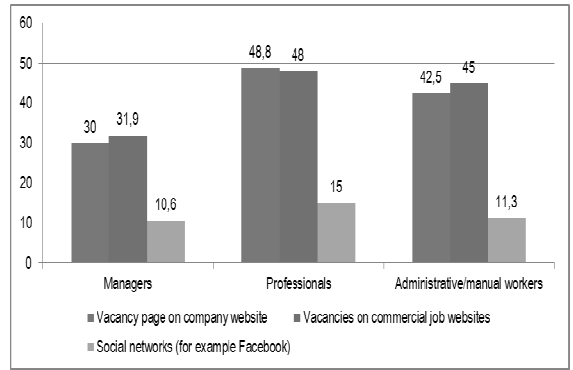
3. Results of the research

According to the research results shown in Table 4, it is noticeable that 30% of organizations in Serbia use advertising of a vacancy on the official website of the company for managerial positions and 32% of organizations do the same on commercial sites (for example https://poslovi.infostud.com, http://www.lakodoposla.com, etc.). Organizations use company's website and commercial sites to advertise a vacancy for professional workers in 49% and 48%, respectively. The companies from the sample indicated that 43% of them recruited administrative and physical workers through their own website and 45% through commercial employment sites.

Table 4 The level of the usage of internet and social networks for recruitment (%)

	Managers	Professionals	Administrative/ manual workers
Vacancy page on company website	30	48,8	42,5
Vacancies on commercial job websites	31,9	48	45
Social networks (for example *Facebook*)	10,6	15	11,3

Source: The authors.

The usage of social networks such as Facebook or LinkedIn is only in the beginning phase, as it is indicated by the results from Table 4. Only 10.6% of domicile organizations use such networks for recruiting managers, 15% for professional workers and 11.3% for recruitment of administrative and manual workers.

Picture 1 The level of the usage of the Internet and social networks for recruitment (%)
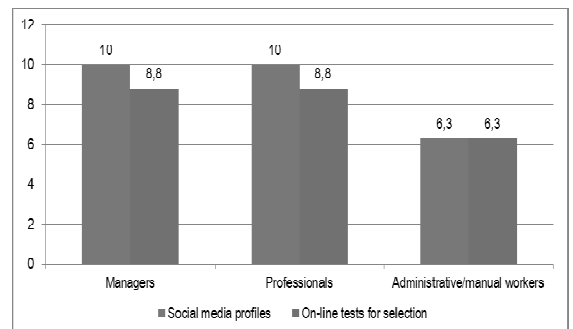**Source:** The authors.

According to the research results presented in Table 5, only 10% of organizations in Serbia use social network profiles for selection for managerial and professional positions, and only 6.3% of organizations do so for selection of administrative and manual workers.

Table 5 The level of the usage of internet and social networks for selection (%)

	Managers	Professionals	Administrative/ manual workers
Social media profiles	10	10	6,3
On-line tests for selection	8,8	8,8	6,3

Source: The authors.

When it comes to on-line selection tests, the situation is similar, only 8.8% of organizations in Serbia use these selection methods for selection in managerial and professional positions, while 6.3% of organizations do so for selection of administrative and manual workers.

Picture 2 The level of the usage of internet and social networks for selection (%)
Source: The authors.

Conclusion

The development of the Internet and social networks opens up new opportunities in the implementation of the recruitment and selection activities. The majority of company management finds that the structure of the labor force in the labor market has changed a lot, and traditional recruitment and selection techniques are not sufficient to attract and retain a new generation which has different demands and expectations from work. In order to obtain credible and useful information necessary for deciding on the choice of an adequate candidate, it is necessary to combine traditional and modern techniques, with the increasing use of the internet.

The results of the conducted research show that in Serbia, the Internet and social networks are used in the process of recruitment, but still not to a great extent. According to the results of the survey, 30% of organizations in Serbia use advertising of a vacancy for managerial positions on the company's official website and 32% of organizations do so, on commercial sites. The social networks, such as Facebook or LinkedIn, are used to a lesser degree, while the implementation of social networks for recruitment is still in its beginning phase.

In Serbia the internet and social networks are still not significantly used in the selection process. In only 10% of cases, organizations from Serbia use profiles on social networks for selection for managerial and expert positions, and only 6.3% of organizations do so for selection for administrative and manual workers. With regard to on-line selection tests, only 8.8% of organizations in Serbia use these selection methods for selection for managerial and professional positions, while 6.3% of organizations do so for the selection of administrative and manual workers.

The internet and social networks are more common and more used for the recruitment process than for the selection process. This can be explained by the purpose of the recruitment process. The aim of the recruitment is to inform available suitable candidates about the free job positions and that the best and most qualified of them apply for the job. The second reason is significant time and cost savings.

When it comes to the selection process, the role of the internet and social networks is important, but not crucial. The role of the internet in the selection process is most often viewed through on-line testing. This can be significant due to the acceleration of the selection process and cost saves, but there are still a modest number of surveys and researches on the application of on-line tests, as well as their efficiency and acceptability. When it comes to the role of social networks in the selection process, the conclusion is that the decision to choose an adequate candidate should not only rely on social networking data, but this information can help in making decisions. A combination of traditional selection methods with modern on-line methods can provide better results and provide better information base for the decision makers to select an adequate candidate. **sm**

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✉ **Correspondence**

Agneš Slavić

Faculty of Economics in Subotica
Segedinski put 9-11, 24000, Subotica, Serbia

E-mail: slavica@ef.uns.ac.rs