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## Actual trends in the recruitment process at small and medium-sized enterprises with the use of social networking

### Abstract

Scientific and technological progress has influenced all areas of public life, as well as human resources management. Modern technologies enable us to obtain information easily and effortlessly. Recruitment is a process which aims to ensure a sufficient number of suitable candidates on time and at the lowest cost. In addition to classic methods used by enterprises in the recruiting process, new ways have been gradually developed. These modern methods include social networks which are currently used by almost everybody.

Our purpose is to define the potential and usability of social networks for employers at small and medium-sized enterprises. The authors of the article used a questionnaire to collect research data in 2016. The sampling unit consists of university students and graduates because young people mostly use social networks, in particular to search for available jobs. A total of 392 respondents were involved in the research including 211 respondents from Slovakia and 181 respondents from other countries. The respondents were university students and graduates from 16 Slovak universities and 24 foreign universities established in Austria, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the USA.

Following the outcomes of the research, there exist statistically significant differences mainly between the use and evaluation of social networks, which are relevant to the perception of advantages and use of social networks while searching for jobs by Slovak and foreign university students and graduates. All the respondents see advantages and the potential of social networks in the case when such networks are used to search for jobs.

Based on the results obtained, we may conclude that the social networks which recruiters in Slovakia should focus on when looking for employees include Facebook, Google+, PoceK, Skype and YouTube. In addition to classic methods of recruiting applicants, HR specialists should use the aforementioned social networks. The reason is that these social networks are the most used in Slovakia. Social networks provide great potential and are increasingly used by recruiters, too.

At the same time, we found that only 3.32% of the Slovak respondents significantly use social networks in their search for jobs. The most frequent answer was searching for jobs through friends' recommendations. This option was used by 52.13% of the Slovak and 62.43% of the foreign respondents. The evaluation of social networks by the Slovak and the foreign respondents was not statistically significant. However, a significant difference was observed in the evaluation of advantages of social networks mainly in the «low time consumption», «a lot of information in one place», «availability» and «quick feedback». Such advantages were crucial for the Slovak respondents. As part of the future potential of social networks, the opinion of the Slovak and the foreign respondents was highly similar.

Social networks have growing popularity since the time they were launched. When respondents use social networks to search for a job, they turn to their friends who can help them to find suitable employment or they use websites where vacancies are presented. However, it also depends on employers who have begun to use social networks as a quick way to reach potential applicants by offering eye-catching employment. In order to attract potential applicants, we recommend employers to place job offers in social networks. Now they are widely used and we expect that the impact will continue to grow.

**Keywords:** Social Networks; Recruiting; Employee; Employer; Headhunter; University; Students; Graduates; LinkedIn; Twitter; Chi-square Statistics

**JEL Classification:** D85; O15

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**Актуальні тенденції набору персоналу на малих і середніх підприємствах із використанням соціальних мереж**

**Анотація.** Науково-технічний прогрес впливає на всі сфери суспільного життя, зокрема й на управління людськими ресурсами. Сучасні технології дозволяють легко отримувати інформацію. Набір персоналу – це процес, спрямований на забезпечення підприємства достатньою кількістю придатних для виконання обов'язків осіб у належний час за умови найменших фінансових затрат. Разом із класичними методиками рекрутингу, які вже застосовуються на підприємствах, поступово з'являються нові способи набору персоналу. Ці сучасні методи передбачають залучення до процесу рекрутингу можливостей соціальних мереж, які сьогодні широко використовуються. Мета цієї роботи полягає у визначенні потенціалу соціальних мереж та зручності їх використання в процесі набору персоналу на малих і середніх підприємствах. Для того, щоб зібрати інформацію, необхідну для проведення дослідження, у 2016 році автори статті провели опитування. Вибірка складається зі студентів і випускників університетів, оскільки для пошуку вакансій молоді люди використовують переважно соціальні мережі. Загалом у дослідженні взяли участь 392 респонденти, серед яких 214 осіб були зі Словаччини, а решта (181 особа) репрезентували інші країни. Респондентами були представники 16-ти словацьких та 24-х зарубіжних університетів з Австрії, Великобританії, Угорщині, Італії, Литви, Нідерландів, Польщі, Швеції та США. Результати проведеного дослідження доводять, що статистично значущі відмінності стосуються переважно використання й оцінки соціальних мереж та вказують на переваги використання таких мереж для пошуку роботи студентами словацьких університетів, а також студентами вищих навчальних закладів інших країн. Було зроблено висновок, що переваги й потенціал використання соціальних мереж для пошуку вакансій розуміють усі респонденти.

**Ключові слова:** соціальні мережі; набір персоналу; працівник; роботодавець; рекрутинговий агент; університет; студенти; випускники; LinkedIn; Twitter.

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**Актуальные тенденции набора персонала на малых и средних предприятиях с использованием социальных сетей**

**Аннотация.** Научно-технический прогресс влияет на все сферы общественной жизни, в том числе и на управление человеческими ресурсами. Современные технологии позволяют легко получать информацию. Набор персонала – это процесс, направленный на обеспечение предприятия достаточным количеством лиц, пригодных для выполнения обязанностей в надлежащее время при наименьших финансовых затратах. Вместе с классическими методами рекрутинга, которые уже применяются на предприятиях, постепенно появляются новые способы набора персонала. Эти современные методы предусматривают задействование в процессе рекрутинга широко используемых возможностей социальных сетей. Цель данной работы заключается в определении потенциала социальных сетей и удобства их использования в процессе набора персонала на малых и средних предприятиях. С целью собрать информацию, необходимую для проведения исследования, в 2016 году авторы статьи провели опрос. Выборка состоит из студентов и выпускников университетов, поскольку для поиска вакансий молодые люди используют преимущественно социальные сети. Всего в исследовании приняли участие 392 респондента, из которых 214 человек были из Словакии, а остальные (181 человек) представляли другие страны. Респондентами были представители 16-ти словацких и 24-х зарубежных университетов из Австрии, Великобритании, Венгрии, Италии, Литвы, Нидерландов, Польши, Швеции и США. Результаты проведенного исследования доказывают, что статистически значимые различия касаются в основном использования и оценки социальных сетей и указывают на преимущества их использования для поиска работы студентами словацких университетов, а также учащимися высших учебных заведений других стран. Был сделан вывод, что преимущества и потенциал использования социальных сетей для поиска вакансий понимают все респонденты.

**Ключевые слова:** социальные сети; набор персонала; работник; работодатель; рекрутинговий агент; университет; студенты; выпускники; LinkedIn; Twitter.

## 1. Introduction and Brief Literature Review

Reality confirms that today's world changes quickly and considerably [1-2]. Following the widespread prevalence of the Internet in the 1990s, social networking sites have flourished in popularity [3]. Social media have quickly become an integral part of people's personal and professional life [4]. Social networks are a very effective communication channel when looking for employees in this digital age. The Internet as a new medium is used mainly by the youth population [5-6]. Enterprises are aware of the potential of social networks, which is why they build their own closed but also open communities in them [7-8]. It is an innovative way to offer and find employment. Numerous studies [9-13] have examined the possibility of using social media for participant recruitment. However, according to Olexova [14], social networks are a more supportive than dominant tool for recruiting employees. User profiles are an essential element of social networks [15].

Registered users of social networks can create personal (or company), public or partially public profiles; they can communicate and share information, pictures, videos, chat and use many other services [16].

Traditional in-person recruitment methods often involve visiting schools, however, recruiting employees by using modern tools of information and communications technology is not exceptional these days [17]. The reason is that employees are an effective source of activities in the enterprise and, together with good reputation, represent the strengths and competitive advantages of companies [18-20]. It is confirmed by Aguado, Rico, Rubio and Fernández (2016) [21], that human resource professionals are increasingly using social networking websites for personnel recruitment and selection processes. The competitive fight is forcing businesses to bring new ideas, products or services to the market, therefore, companies have not remained oblivious to such

changes and have started using social networking websites to increase their competitiveness [22-24]. A Spanish survey presents that LinkedIn (77%), Twitter (29%) and Facebook (24%) are used for recruitment and selection [25]. Many companies use registration to social networks as a tool to attract new employees, where applicants can send their questions and receive regular updates on job offers and internships [26]. One of such social networks, which specialises exclusively in creating professional relationships, is LinkedIn. It is a professional web network which, according to a research conducted by the Society of Human Resource Management in 2014, was used by 95% of the 541 surveyed HR specialists recruiting passive applicants [27]. According to Ollington, Gibb and Harcourt (2013) [28] who researched the opinions of 25 recruitment specialists from New Zealand, LinkedIn is the most popular network for finding and attracting applicants. Applicants can publish a short message about themselves or information with an external link for more detailed information on education, experience, skills, etc. through another social network, which is Twitter. A wide variety of studies have already been conducted using Facebook as a platform for recruitment [29], however there are many other social networks and applications around the world which enable a more direct and faster connection between the employer and the potential employee. These include, for example XING social network, Craigslist and Plaxo or BranchOut application [30-32].

**2. Purpose of the Study and Methodology**

The purpose of the questionnaire research, carried out in 2016, was to define the prospects and usability of social networks for employers at small and medium-sized enterprises when recruiting employees. The research was especially aimed at selected university students and graduates in Slovakia and abroad because they are the people who use social networks most, in particular to search for employment when they have completed their studies. A total of 392 respondents were involved in the research including 211 respondents from Slovakia and 181 respondents from other countries, such as Austria, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, USA, structured according to Table 1.

Most students and graduates from foreign universities who took part in the research came from Lithuania (104; 57.46%), Great Britain (29; 16.04%) and the USA (22; 12.15%). The other respondents who took part were from Poland (6; 3.31%), the Netherlands (5; 2.76%), Italy (5; 2.76%), Hungary (4; 2.21%), Austria (4; 2.21%) and Sweden (2; 1.10%).

To distribute the questionnaire, we used Facebook and Pokec, as well as websites of universities in Slovakia and abroad. The STATISTICA 12 program (Dell, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma) was used to process data. The purpose was to consider if the structure of the responses by Slovak respondents to individual questions was statistically significantly different from the structure of the responses by foreign students. To consider the difference, we used the method of contingency tables and Chi-square statistics in the contingency tables. The statistical significance of differences in preferences of Slovak and foreign university students and graduates was established through the *p*-value significance level (*p*-level).

If  $p > 0.05$ , then there is no statistically significant difference between the opinions of Slovak and foreign respondents.

If  $0.01 < p < 0.05$ , then the difference between the opinions of Slovak and foreign respondents is of small statistical significance.

If  $0.001 < p < 0.01$ , then the difference between the opinions of Slovak and foreign respondents is of medium statistical significance.

If  $p < 0.001$ , then the difference between the opinions of Slovak and foreign respondents is of large statistical significance.

The highly statistically significant difference is shown in bold in the following tables.

**3. Results**

Among all the analysed social networks (Facebook, Google+, Haboo, ICQ, LinkedIn, MySpace, Netlog, Pokec, Skype, SkyRock, Tuneti, Twitter, Twoo and YouTube), Facebook was the most used social network. It was used by 98.58% of the Slovak students or university graduates and 98.34% of the foreign students or university graduates. YouTube was the second most used social network. It was used by 81.04% of the Slovak and 85.64% of the foreign respondents. The highly statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) was observed in the use of Google+, LinkedIn, MySpace, Pokec and Twitter. If compared to the foreign respondents, the Slovak respondents used Google+ and Pokec more frequently. LinkedIn, MySpace and Twitter were preferred by the foreign students and university graduates.

In addition to functions such as chatting, playing games, relaxing, obtaining information, personal presentation through statuses and content sharing (photos, videos, etc.), we examined how intensively the respondents used social networks in their search for jobs (Table 2). The respondents could indicate whether they use social networks significantly, on average, occasionally or never. The highly statistically significant difference was found in the «significantly» option ( $p < 0.001$ ). Only 3.32% of the Slovak respondents significantly use social networks in their search for jobs. The majority of the respondents only occasionally used social networks for this purpose.

Further, we were interested in the way the respondents used social networks in their search for jobs (Table 3). They could choose from the following options: fan sites, friends' recommendations, advertising banners, specific applications, particular company websites, HR specialist profiles and the «I do not use social networks» option as a last resort. The most frequent answer in both surveys was searching for jobs through friends' recommendations. This option was used by 52.13% of the Slovak and 62.43% of the foreign respondents. The second most frequent option indicated by applicants was the use of a particular company's websites. We did not notice any statistically significant differences in this answer. The options, such as fan sites and HR specialist profiles, were popular neither in Slovakia, nor abroad. For the «advertising banners» option, we noticed only small statistically significant differences in the use ( $p = 0.004$ ). This option was not

**Tab. 1: Composition of the research sample**

Data to identify respondents		Slovakia		Abroad	
		Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency
Gender	Male	91	43.13	70	38.67
	Female	120	56.87	111	61.33
Age	Up to 20 years of age	2	0.95	31	17.13
	21-25 years of age	180	85.31	130	71.82
	26-29 years of age	16	7.58	12	6.63
	30 years of age and over	13	6.16	8	4.42
Completed education	Secondary	109	51.66	82	45.30
	Undergraduate	75	35.55	85	46.96
	Graduate	24	11.37	14	7.74
	Postgraduate	3	1.42	0	0.00

Source: Own research

**Tab. 2: Intensity of using social networks in a job search**

Options	Country	Not used by		Used by		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i> -level
		Number	%	Number	%		
<b>Significantly</b>	Slovakia	204	96.68	7	3.32	21.2	<b>0.000</b>
	Abroad	150	82.87	31	17.13		
On average	Slovakia	138	65.40	73	34.60	1.3	0.261
	Abroad	128	70.72	53	29.28		
Occasionally	Slovakia	116	54.98	95	45.02	2.2	0.135
	Abroad	113	62.43	68	37.57		
Never	Slovakia	175	82.94	36	17.06	0.5	0.466
	Abroad	155	85.64	26	14.36		

Source: Own research

popular as well. The statistically significant difference ( $p = 0.000$ ) was observed in the case of not using social networks. The results show that social networks as one of the job search options in Slovakia are used as much as abroad.

The participants in both surveys said that social networks as a tool for job search are perceived as less trustworthy. This option was indicated by 58.77% of the Slovak and 54.14% of the foreign students and university graduates. The results obtained and presented in Table 4 show a small statistically significant difference ( $0.01 < p < 0.05$ ).

Further, we investigated what advantages the respondents saw in social networks as a tool for job search (Table 5). The statistically significant difference was observed in the «low time consumption», «a lot of information in one place», «availability» and «quick feedback» options. A greater number of Slovak respondents saw advantages in all those options, even though such a method of searching for a job was not much used by them. For the «convenience» and «no advantages» options we did not notice any statistically significant differences in the opinions of the Slovak and the foreign students and university graduates.

Finally, we examined the potential of social networks for the future (Table 6). The respondents who took part in both surveys responded similarly. Based on the results obtained, we can conclude that both the Slovak and the foreign students and university graduates see the potential in this job search method.

The use of social networks is non-negligible in recruiting employees, because the strengthening influence of social networks belongs to the 10 strongest trends in recruitment and talent management. Based on the results obtained, we can conclude that the social networks which recruiters in Slovakia should focus on when looking for employees include Facebook, Google+, Pocek, Skype and YouTube. In addition to classic methods of recruiting applicants, HR specialists should use the aforementioned social networks. The reason is that these social networks are the most used in Slovakia. Social networks provide great potential and are increasingly used by recruiters, too. It is demonstrated by the results of the study carried out by LMC on a sample of 234 respondents, according to which social networks such as Facebook or LinkedIn are used for work by 24% and for personal use by 27% of the respondents. A total of 44% of HR specialists do not use social networks because it would be a waste of time for them, whereas 11% of the respondents consider using community networks for the future [12].

Recruiting potential employees is dependent on the activity of the user of social networks. Nowadays, young people use social networks especially to chat, watch videos and relax. It follows from our research that the respondents use social networks to search for jobs rarely. One of the factors why they have not used social networks to a greater extent is their untrustworthiness when searching for employment. Most respondents indicated that social networks are less trustworthy, which can be the result of the fear that their personal data may be abused or other information may be provided in the respondents' profiles. However, according to Claeys-Jackson [13], social media offer graduates the one and only opportunity to build their personal profile which can be of interest to headhunters. The importance of applicants' personal presentation on the Internet, and especially in social networks, is confirmed by the research conducted by the Mashable company. These activities can impact not only the invitation for an interview but also the offer of employment. Up to 91% of employers enquire about applicants on the Internet. The research done by the Mashable company further shows that HR officers

Tab. 3: Possibilities of using social networks in a job search

Options	Country	Not used by		Used by		$\chi^2$	p-level
		Number	%	Number	%		
Fan sites	Slovakia	185	87.68	26	12.32	3.6	0.058
	Abroad	169	93.37	12	6.63		
Friends' recommendations	Slovakia	101	47.87	110	52.13	4.2	0.040
	Abroad	68	37.57	113	62.43		
Advertising banners	Slovakia	168	79.62	43	20.38	8.1	<b>0.004</b>
	Abroad	163	90.06	18	9.94		
Specific applications	Slovakia	165	78.20	46	21.80	2.5	0.114
	Abroad	129	71.27	52	28.73		
Company websites	Slovakia	102	48.34	109	51.66	2.2	0.139
	Abroad	74	40.88	107	59.12		
HR specialist profiles	Slovakia	201	95.26	10	4.74	1.5	0.217
	Abroad	167	92.27	14	7.73		
<b>I do not use social networks</b>	Slovakia	182	86.26	29	13.74	14.8	<b>0.000</b>
	Abroad	176	97.24	5	2.76		

Source: Own research

Tab. 4: Evaluation of social networks

Country	Trustworthy		Less trustworthy		Untrustworthy		I do not know		$\chi^2$	p-level
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%		
Slovakia	21	9.95	24	58.77	8	3.79	58	27.49	11.3	0.010
Abroad	36	19.89	98	54.14	12	6.63	35	19.34		

Source: Own research

Tab. 5: Advantages of social networks

Options	Country	Nondecisive		Decisive		$\chi^2$	p-level
		Number	%	Number	%		
<b>Low time consumption</b>	Slovakia	60	28.44	151	83.43	31.3	<b>0.000</b>
	Abroad	102	56.35	79	43.65		
<b>A lot of information</b>	Slovakia	75	35.55	136	64.45	28.2	<b>0.000</b>
	Abroad	113	62.43	68	37.57		
<b>Availability</b>	Slovakia	68	32.23	143	67.77	15.6	<b>0.000</b>
	Abroad	94	51.93	87	48.07		
<b>Quick feedback</b>	Slovakia	160	75.83	51	24.17	12.4	<b>0.000</b>
	Abroad	162	89.50	19	10.50		
Convenience	Slovakia	143	67.77	68	32.23	5.6	0.018
	Abroad	142	78.45	39	21.55		
No advantages	Slovakia	199	94.31	12	5.69	0.7	0.403
	Abroad	174	96.13	7	3.87		

Source: Own research

Tab. 6: Future potential of social networks

Country	Yes		No		I do not know		$\chi^2$	p-level
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%		
Slovakia	126	59.72	7	3.32	78	36.97	9.9	0.007
Abroad	135	74.59	5	2.76	41	22.65		

Source: Own research

look for additional information related to future employees especially in Facebook (76%), Twitter (53%) and LinkedIn (48%) [12]. Through the social network profile, employers are able to get a compact image of the applicant; they can get to know the real personality of the applicant. Eventually, such information can influence the employment decision.

**4. Conclusions**

Human resources are starting to pay great attention to the incoming generation, i.e. the university students of today who are bringing a new worldview, new habits and ideas into the work environment. Searching for a position is a significant step in everybody's life. The present time opportunities enable us to publish resumes on the Internet easily and search for a job through social networks. When looking for job offers, young people often use recommendations of their acquaintances or pay attention to online advertising. It follows from our research that there are no big differences in searching for jobs while using social networks. In the area of intensity of the use of social networks in job search, we observed a statistically significant difference between the Slovak and the foreign respondents (only 3.32% of the Slovak respondents significantly use social networks to search for jobs). A similarity was identified

between the Slovak and the foreign respondents in the area of possibilities of using social networks. Medium statistical significance was found in advertising banners. The evaluation of social networks by the Slovak and the foreign respondents was not statistically significant. However, a significant difference was observed in the evaluation of advantages of social networks mainly in the «low time consumption», «a lot of information in one place», «availability» and «quick feedback». Such advantages were crucial for the Slovak respondents. As part of the future potential of social networks, the opinion of the Slovak and the foreign respondents was highly similar.

Social networks have enjoyed growing popularity since the time they were introduced. When respondents use social networks while searching for a job, they turn to their friends who can help them to find suitable employment or they use websites where vacancies are presented. However, it also depends on employers who have begun to use social networks as a quick way to reach potential applicants by offering eye-catching employment. In order to attract potential applicants, we recommend employers to place job offers in social networks. Now they are widely used and we expect that the impact will continue to grow.

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