

TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

School of Business and Governance

Department of Business Administration

Tamilla Huseynova

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND
SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES INTO JOB MARKET IN
AZERBAIJAN**

Master's thesis

Programme International Business Administration

Supervisor: Iivi Riiivits-Arkonsuo, PhD

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I hereby declare that I have compiled the thesis independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors have been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading. The document length is 11281 words from the introduction to the end of conclusion.

Tamilla Huseynova.....

(signature, date)

Student code: 177207TVTM

Student e-mail address: tamillahuseinova@gmail.com

Supervisor: Iivi Riivits-Arkonsuo, PhD:

The paper conforms to requirements in force

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(signature, date)

Chairman of the Defence Committee:

Permitted to the defence

.....

(name, signature, date)

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, many struggles have been occurred in the labour market either to find professionals or to hire skilled candidates. Previous research in a similar area with different experiences of companies have shown that due to the lack of communication and misuse of social media networking techniques lack of professionals take place in the labour market. Therefore, the author wants to examine an existing problem between the employers' strategies and the employees' methods of job search in order to fulfil the labour market requirements in Azerbaijan. First, the paper begins with an introduction of the literature review of previously done research of the relevant topics in the field of the recruitment and explores the impact of social media and social networking sites (SNS) on occupational opportunities. The main argument and aim of the paper is to investigate the strong impact of social media on two-way communication in the recruitment process in Azerbaijan. This paper is mainly based on the theory of Weak Ties. In order to achieve satisfactory results, a mixed-method approach was used. An online survey among the active social media users was conducted as a quantitative approach, wherein the qualitative approach was semi-structured interviews conducted with recruiters of different companies in Azerbaijan. Preference during the interviews was given to the outsourced recruiting companies and agencies, due to the diversity of occupations being searched. The survey questionnaire was designed to gather primary data for the analysis from the potential employees' perspectives, which helps to understand the user's perception about the job market over social media. This research completes the social media and SNS as potential tools in the successful strengthening network between job seekers and recruiters.

Keywords: Social Media Recruiting, Online Job Market, Social Media, Social Networking Sites, Job search, Azerbaijan.

INTRODUCTION

Azerbaijan has an incredible potential economy, and one of the social-economic arrangements made in the country is the improvement of the labour market. Due to the lack of the labour market, the country needs more potential employees. In order to reveal the prospective candidates and professionals, it is required to have a sustainable environment and means. The labour market can be driven and improved by skilful professionals and sustainable development. Due to the official numbers showed by The Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the unemployed number of people in the country was 20, 1 thousand by January 2019. (Abdulrahimov *et al.* 2019)

Nowadays, not only job seekers are struggling to find jobs, but also hiring managers and recruiters are experiencing troubles to find and hire successful candidates. Based on statistics mentioned earlier, it is seen that as there are many opportunities available, but there is a challenge for the employers to being able to face those opportunities as well. Consequently, a research problem is arising from this point. Therefore, there is an immense gap in the communication network and ties between the employer and employees.

Today, the technology and the internet contributing to almost every field of humanity. Though, the notion of online job market yet might not be considered to be that familiar way of job search in Azerbaijan, while being eligible to eliminate the line of the current unemployment problems providing engagement between two sides. This will lead to evolving hiring processes at new stages and subsequently unfolding the businesses. As mentioned, the economy requires active labour market to maintain the development of the economy. Despite, the arrangements implementing towards to growth of the economy by the government, yet the unemployment is taking place. (Rahmanov *et al.* 2016)

In today's globalised world, understanding of the online job market opportunities and being able to fit employer's requirements is a prerequisite for the success in the job search and hiring process. However, traditional methods of the employment being used might cause reduction of a fast, quick

and innovative way of the employment interaction between the jobseekers and employers. Previous scholars have discovered that social media is defined as the most potent relationship provider and builder, but unfortunately, the misuse of social media unable the organisations to take an advantage of it (Tsimonis, Dimitriadis 2014). Social media and its attributes are modern and innovative strategies already are using in many leading and successful organisations in the world. Therefore, social media plays a vital role in the economy's evolvment also because of fast communication features.

Earlier recruiters used always to approach traditional methods of employment. However, while applying traditional methods, one should consider that these techniques are more time consuming and out of date. Traditional techniques always required to wait until the employer announces that there is a need to be a potential candidate, competing among numerous other applicants. To get a job or being informed about the existence of any vacancies, one should hunt all the time. However, means of fast communication allows to share and provide the information to the unlimited end. Nowadays, still, some of the job seekers are taking advantages of traditional methods, whereas using new recruitment techniques could have reached the goals faster and efficiently.

Any level of unemployment is a significant aspect of the prosperity of the country, which requires a solution to issues in the labour market. Frequently, the youth, just freshly graduated and holding no experience behind are ending up with the jobs mostly available rather than they are interested. Consequently, such conditions create an environment for constant search of the jobs for youth and struggling environment to find appropriate opportunities for adults. However, the situation, mentioned, is not only the concern of jobseekers, but also a matter of interest for employers. While, approaching from the employment perspectives, yet many obstacles and difficulties exist to find a complete match or good-fit candidates. Therefore, the gap between two-way communications is one of the main reasons that unable to fulfil the labour market.

The research topic selected seeks to see the contribution of SNS and how social media is popular and effective amongst prospective job seekers and organisations in Azerbaijan. The author wants to discover the social media phenomena in the job market as many people are facing troubles, even though many jobs opportunities exist. However, somehow, job seekers are unable to reach those opportunities. Consequently, one of the significant hardships characterising unemployment is to find appropriate and accurate methods for job hunting purposes. To enlarge the research area in

the spectrum of the social media motives for the employment and job search engagement, in Azerbaijan, the author concentrates on opportunities provided by social media. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn are widespread and accessible to use in Azerbaijan. Therefore, social media and social networking sites are quite potentially suitable and effective non-traditional techniques that might strengthen the ties between employees and employers in a fast and efficient way. Social media might lead to significant changes, improvements and success. Hence advancement of the of social media in professional interests might lead to business prosperity, social life improvements, that will lead to the development of the economy by diminishing to some extent the unemployment rate.

The thesis aims to evaluate and investigate to what extent various social media channels have a contribution to the success of the labour market in Azerbaijan. Two main research questions have been set to achieve the aim of the paper: (1) What are social media and social networking sites perception? (2) How does SNS influence job search and recruiting practices in Azerbaijan? For disclosing the subject and revealing primary research, the following sub-questions set: (1) What are social media channels mostly used for job search purposes in Azerbaijan? (2) How can social media centralise and maintain two-way communication between employers and employees?

The first part of the thesis is about the theoretical framework, wherein the literature reviews will present from previous research done by scholars in the subjects of the online recruiting and social media. The second part is about methodology, where data collection is a mixed-method approach. A qualitative approach is semi-structured interviews conducted with the recruiters or HRs of the companies' in Azerbaijan. As in this case, outsourcing recruiting companies could provide us with broader and accurate results as of diverse alternative job announcements, rather than specific field companies' examination, therefore, the author decided to have semi-structured interviews with outsourcing companies as well. In a quantitative approach, an online survey conducted with job hunters being active social media users over various social media platforms.

The purpose to get more data about social media users' perception and practice regarding the online job market and its influence. The data gathered will be examined along with the interviews conducted, apart from data analyses and interpretation to discover answers for the structured research questions. The final part is a conclusion along with the future research advice and discussion, followed by references and appendices presented at the end of the thesis. The paper

will be able to contribute to both recruiters in Azerbaijan to find useful guidelines in the world of the employment and labour market fulfilment over the social media. On the other hand, the paper will have a useful guideline for future job seekers enabling them to see distinct features and possibilities of the social media concerning the job market mainly in Azerbaijan.

The author would like to thank her supervisor Iivi Riivits-Arkonsuo, who helped to carry out this thesis. Her supervision and support along conducting this paper was immense and significant. Undoubtedly, under her direction, the thesis managed to be done successfully. The author also thankful to the all company recruiters and HRs in Azerbaijan for providing bright and vibrant responses to the interview questions, which helped the author to get comprehensive information to conduct this research. Additionally, the author thanks all social media active users actively taking part in a survey questionnaire.

1. RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, to measure the Azerbaijanis' attitudes, understanding and objectives towards to social media in terms of job search and disclosing the first main question along with sub-question, the author has chosen the concept of the theory of Social Media Networking and Theory of weak ties. Theory of weak ties can measure and evaluate Azerbaijani job seekers and employers' reciprocal relationship. On the other hand, the theory of Social Media Networking is selected to assess mutual behaviour and actions of the employment process over social media. Additionally, background information and a short overview of previous research and reviews presented by examining social media as a powerful recruitment tool in the employment process to understand people's association concerning the job market. The effects of the SNS into the employment process has been described and discussed as well. The author has used two main theories for the conceptualising and evaluating the analysis of the research. In the following chapters, the author will be examining the notion of traditional recruiting methods over social media, supportive theories of social media recruitment, along with the drawbacks and advantages of the online recruiting. All work done is to explore the interconnection between social media and the job market and how these two phenomena might support and lead to success altogether.

1.1 Theory of weak ties

Granovetter (1973) has discovered that weak ties most frequent network that people are choosing to have. Weak-ties is a relationship and communication with friends, family and acquaintances as a channel of information exchange. Network relationship influencing activities over social media driving them to the fast and practical end. The relationship is a fundamental of successful networking and developing brand trust, consumer networking. The notion of network attractiveness is the primary function of companies in the way of establishing social phenomena. Social groups and social networking sites create favourable to social interaction.

The reason for the fast and strong flow of information behind the theory is a mechanism of findings. Herein, the network concept of bridging or in other words, betweenness centrality. The only way to connect two different and independent ties to create a path as a bridge in between.

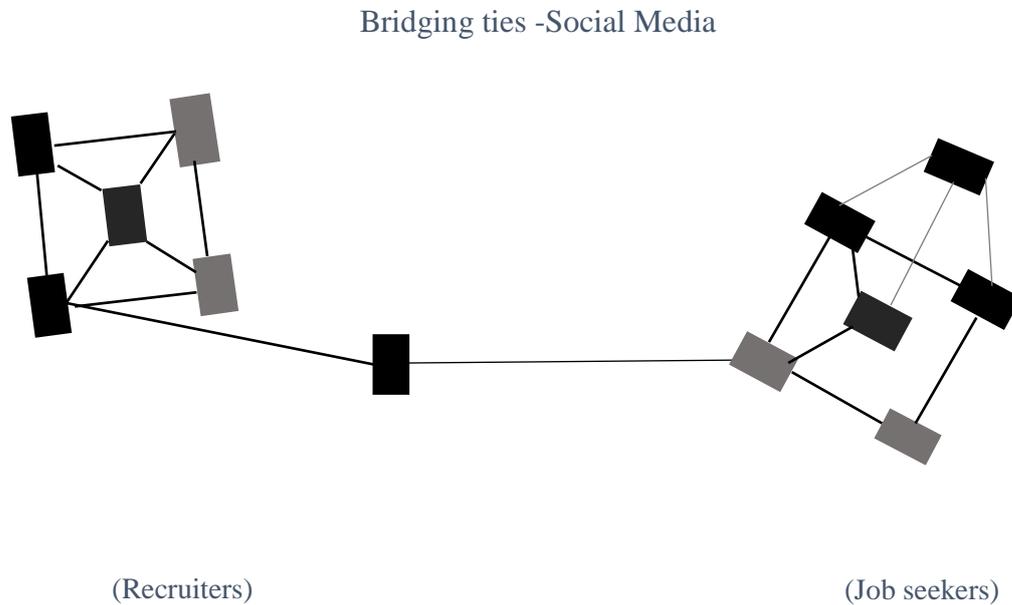


Figure 1. Positioning bridging ties and social networking theory for the survey

Source: compiled by the author (2019)

For example, Cluster A and Cluster B, where each cluster is a representative of a friend or acquaintance and all of them are connected to one another. Clearly stated how clusters are interconnected with the help of the bridge, where each has been receiving similar information (Figure 1). The bridging tie is a sit between the clusters, which helps and facilitates two unconnected ties to be focused in one point. The bridging tie in our case is social media, its attributes creating social networking.

Recent achievements in technology, broad access to the internet, social media and its channels with new opportunities, create effective means in terms of the job search methods. Nowadays, technology has a tremendous impact on almost every field and sphere all over the world. The usage of social media is getting popular every day in every society and as well as in Azerbaijan. People tend to spend lots of their time on the internet, mainly on social media platforms that are turning into dominating part of the economy in the developed countries. Employers can easily interact with candidates and even providing all necessary hiring steps online involving any means of social

media channels. Then it could be a reasonable solution to find the most matching candidates from anywhere. Consequently, one of the advantages provided by social media means is the ability to keep candidates always in active mode and being able to recruit at the moment when there is a need.

People get used to asking from friends, comrades, acquaintances or family members about jobs available, to assure if one has heard anything available, which justifies how social network theories are reliable and required to be implemented and tested (Green *et al.* 2011). Social media might have a stronger influence on organisations and their members' behaviour than traditional methods. Because social media notion confesses virtual presence, almost always keeps updated, connected, tied, and all these factors are in favour of social media in terms of the job market (Steger, Hauptmann 2013). The internet has a significant impact on the labour market; social media and social networking sites are already virtual members of our lives. Mentioned attributes of the internet are turning into part of everyday life activities. Consequently, it is perhaps not surprising for recruiting agencies, HRs, hiring managers utilising social media to contribute their professional activities effectively (Zizi, Alan 2010).

According to Deshati (2017) social media is the fundamental technique to the reach background of the company and the ability to assess the success of the organisation. Therefore, social media and social networking sites eligible to demonstrate to what extent companies perform on the market. They are already involved in business life for many reasons. In recruiting is also taking a leading part of it. There are many ways of recruiting personnel; for sure, the ones that stated in traditional recruitment strategies are also can be considered and still be using. However, social media, in comparison, can be beneficial to HRs and recruiters to promote vacant jobs available to a broader extent (Steger, Hauptmann 2013).

Social Networking Sites are one of the significant attributes of social media. The online social network allows to interact people with each other, view online profiles full of details and additional information about the professional life of the users, accumulate connections, who enable comment pages, shared publications, see common interests of fields. Consequently, this allows job hiring managers to see what skills not only listed in the professional profiles, resumes, but also assures that one has strong and confirmed abilities performed (Stephanie, Andrew 2012).

Organisations should not only share the vacancies available, new products and services but also, they can better keep relationships with active users to maintain attention and interest. Therefore,

the content which keeps active users involved could turn them into potential candidates later (Francesca 1973). Social media networking sites Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn are supportive tools that maintain the involvement of the internet and technology into the employment process. (Phillips *et al.* 2017)

Social media plays a vital role not only in the brand recognition of the companies but also a compelling character in online recruiting. People need to know where to find the correct people. Social networking is a prominent factor of uniting people over the internet. The idea and notion of “Networking” is a referral generation process that leads to creating a chain of actions linked between each other. The study of social media networking and their interrelation in between each other exemplified by Granovetter (1973).

Relationships are about developing and strengthening ties that make stronger networking relationship with each other and having been impacted by mutual performance. Research showed that the reason for strong ties is not an only relationship among employers and employees, but the strength of the relationships caused by the frequency of communication (Thornton *et al.* 2013). Due to Atterton (2007) the organisations are using networking as a method to build up new businesses. Commitment, trust and mutual understanding are three main components of a network relationship (O'Malley, Marsden 2008).

In the Haythornthwaite work (2011) can be observed that the stronger the ties in-network ties accompanied by all participants' activities, the more possible to achieve more goals and having financial. Thus, connection offers direct performance to the commercial expectations, which in its turn maintained by strengthening the network relationship. Social media is a powerful tool to maintain a social network. Demonstrated clusters in the Figure below, indicate each cluster as an example of different opinions of many people on various stages of professionalism. The more information flow is strong plausible, the more chain of networking is efficient. In this case, network illustration might be divided into various types.

Nowadays, social media is not only providing communication, networking but also opens up new opportunities in the professional direction, which means generating financial revenues. Moreover, most of the job found statistically are the result if weak social ties. Duration of interaction, the effort has been put into networking between one another, mutual support to maintain the relationship is considered the strengthening of social ties by Granovetter (1973).

Social media and SNS have created weak ties of the 21st century, where information (mass media) is the primary source shared via individuals and can connect people without borders. Types and functions of mass media are many and different: fan pages, mentioning or tagging a friend in the comment, adding friends and others. These functions can serve as a profitable method for the employment processes. According to Deshati (2017) Society for Human Resources studied and surveyed hiring managers, in which concluded that Linked, Facebook and Twitter are the most popular networking sites amongst the recruiters to hunt on skilled professionals.

The Figure demonstrates the employee type of network illustration tied with clusters. Furthermore, each cluster represents several samples of one single type of social networking.

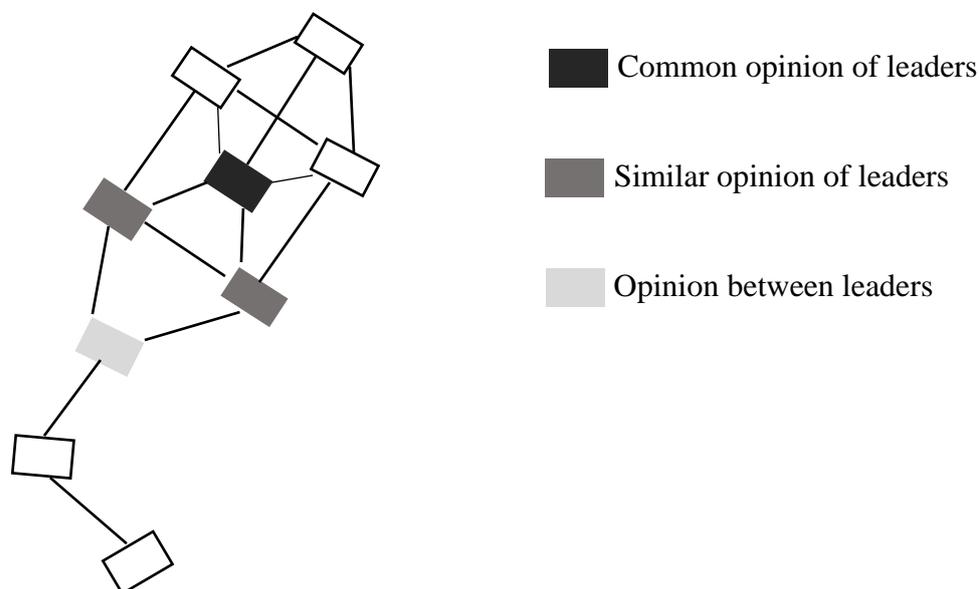


Figure 2. Network illustration of opinion leaders with high degree centrality, closeness centrality, and betweenness centrality

Source: Everett's kite (Brandes, Hildenbrand 2014)

1.2 Traditional recruitment

Many years, applying for jobs or hiring fitting candidates, organisations have used existed standards. Set of rules that requires simultaneous interaction of both sides at the same time into

the employment process, whereas in the modern era of technology, those steps might be shortened up to a few clicks on the computer. Mainly, this is what social media dynamics brings about. The internet turned into the primary resource that has been used as a mean of communication and maintaining virtual relationships. Finally, it is viewed as a technique to hunt or look for jobs. (Sivabalan *et al.* 2014). Therefore, it can be stated that almost all control of our lives is concentrated in the hands of the internet (Kaplan, Haenlein 2010).

Furthermore, control of life concerns not only our everyday lives but also professional lives has impacted consequently. Therefore, spending a vast amount of money to recruit, select, and provide training to hiring professional and skilful candidates by many contemporary companies considered to be a disadvantage versus social media recruiting (Backhaus 2004). Moreover, some HRM (Human Resources Management) leaders are struggling and complaining about finding true potential talents. That is the main reason why many huge, multinational corporations and companies cooperate with the recruitment agencies, which are functioning as a method of the alliance between employers and employees (Sivabalan *et al.* 2014).

Traditional methods of the employment, are: ads in the newspapers, word of mouth technique, where one can turn to friends, family, colleagues to see if they know anyone to be the referral. Also, internal hiring, where job seekers keep sending resumes and cover letters to various companies; visiting personnel offices and filling out the application forms in person, which is quite challenging. However, traditional techniques still might work in some cases, where quite rarely positive results estimated for getting responses to resume. The traditional way of hiring requires recruiters to meet and perform several interview stages with candidates to reveal their skills. However, in case of satisfaction, HRs give a call and invite applicants for already the next interviews for more in-depth screening (*Ibid.*).

Therefore, selection and step by step hiring procedures handled by hiring managers themselves, could save additional costs, avoid time-consuming meeting and seize bigger scales by taking hiring processes over the internet. The more social distances are growing, the more power of connection is weakening. However, social media has revolutionised and allowed interaction among people less affected, either in professional or personal life (Sacks, Graves 2012). In the world full of opportunities, some organisations are still struggling to find right-fit candidates, which is also trendy in Azerbaijan (Abdulrahimov *et al.* 2019).

Years ago, one of the main factors to be characterised as a suitable and competent worker, was when each employee was able to solve some specific tasks and to be master at it. Each employee had some particular set of abilities and skills required to perform for their professional activities. In contrast, nowadays, job managers demand much skills be concentrated in one person; such attitude in its turn creates a space and environment to study, learn and work more ever than before. Consequently, even though many opportunities are creating and opening up, at the very same time, many obstacles appear in hiring qualified employees. Moreover, for the employees, vice-versa, to look for jobs thoroughly. (Saks, Ashforth 2000)

Organisations, companies and agencies might spend their time in vain, screening and interviewing the candidates based on resumes. All resumes created are on a base what recruiters want to see and hear, not what the candidates have and able to perform (Alison *et al.* 1994). Therefore, there are many data left required to check against the job requirement announced and information written on the resume. Recruiters have to go through several stages of manual recruiting. The very first attempt is to get connected with the prospective candidate. If the interview was done over the phone, emailing, or any other means of the traditional technique, then minimal information has left for the employees. In contrast, employers put all efforts to request and questioning the candidate. Meanwhile, the clarification of the successful interview herein means an open and mutually beneficial organisational relationship. (Ronald 1994)

Undoubtedly, there is a list of advantages that traditional recruiting provides as well. The first thing is that online hiring is eligible to work with only within the connection to the internet. Therefore, people who do not have a link to the internet experiencing drawbacks of social media. On the other hand, being able to apply for a job with just within seconds, by a click - draws uncertainty for managers and recruiters. Consequently, many candidates with different skills and backgrounds might apply to any specific job, without considering and meeting any requirements at all (Kluemper, Rosen 2009).

Nevertheless, recruiters should find out if one is going to be the qualified candidate choice or not. Therefore, only after a couple of stages and meeting in person, the traditional way of recruiting will eligible to assess the quality of the employment process. All in all, to maintain the quality search for employment, traditional methods might be not enough. (Brasher, Peter 1999)

However, because there is a lack of safe believe and confidence, among people, it is difficult to list and keep personal data online from employees' perspectives. Therefore, many people are not

using the internet only for security purposes. Consequently, they feel more comfortable, safe and confident while applying to traditional techniques. However, the internet might have technical issues to access individual job web pages, some websites errors might occur from time to time, consistent reloading of the web pages and in several cases not full information about job advertisements.

However, from the employers' perspectives, traditional methods of employment require more money investing in comparison with social media possibilities and are not going to be as efficient as it would be. The employer might struggle to reveal a candidate while screening not only professional aspects of the potentials but also personal qualities. The traditional techniques of employment are not holding many advantages (Alison *et al.* 1994).

According to Granovetter (1973) over the internet recruiting processes gave higher results in the employment. During the years, the internet has developed, expanded and turned into the mainstay of technological society. The biggest and significant updates done over the internet is providing the flow of information from prominent organisations, companies, enterprises and government down to people. Creation of social media and social networking sites - putting fundamentals of quick and fast communication by a click.

1.3 Social media recruiting

The internet has been evolving and now has already made lots of contribution to many fields of businesses. Also, added significant features to the global expansion of the information. Consequently, the internet has created a series of types of communication. Then, the internet can be defined as a 'network of networks'. The development of the internet has created a path of communication. Therefore, the internet is a necessary power in globalisation, which has a direct effect on the global marketplace and efficiency in the capital. (Whittaker 2002)

The phenomenon of social media in one of the previous research has discovered as a way of enclosing the growth and potential of the internet, along with the new supplementary technologies generated. The high-speed internet formed and created networking sites, which allow its users to create and exchange between contents. Therefore, to develop social media, three main components are required: content, community and web 2.0 (Figure 3). Consequently, the opportunities

providing by social media platforms are diverse, and for many different targets can be used (Kaplan, Haenlein 2010). Even though the theory has introduced us web 2.0, which is diverse and the volume of the data is more extensive; currently we are at the era of Web 3.0 (The deep web 2001). Web 3.0 is the generator of the flow of information apart from humanity. It has a more extensive variety of sources, where analysis, gathering and distributing data - turns into the knowledge and information. (Evans 2011)

The understanding of online recruiting or social media recruiting can be identified as the method of attracting and hiring prospective job seekers with the usage of the internet that makes the process faster, more relaxed and comfortable. The most crucial point of e-recruitment is an inexpensive way of employment opportunities (Hadass 2004). Social media grants access to the information of people on a large scale and in a massive way. The report found might be used in many purposes; governmental purposes, research gathering or for the employment processes. (Deshati 2017)

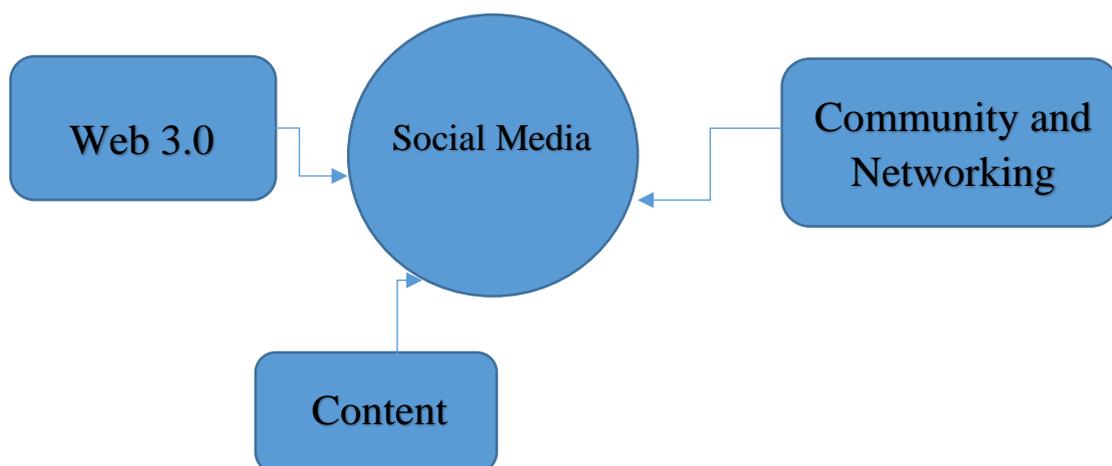


Figure 3. Social media components

Source: Kaplan, Haenlein (2010)

There are several kinds of research previously done on the subject of social media recruitment. Though there are many reasons for which recruiters have to apply social media during their search of candidates, the main reason is cost and speed (Redman *et al.* 2016). Comprehension of social recruitment and the way it is functioning, is an essential phenomenon for HRs, especially recruiters, but also understanding of drawbacks, implementing traditional methods over the

employment practices is much more critical (Alison *et al.* 1994). Either online or web-based recruiting can be characterised as an act of attraction employees with the usage of the internet. (Frederick, Plessis 2012)

However, companies should also know that one of the main goals to attract potential is the consistency of maintaining the content to build social relationships between job seekers and recruiters. For example, the use of social media for general purposes is significantly higher than social media use for job search. Even though, social media is also able to improve organisations' candidate selection process; by different factors: screening potentials profiles, fastening the communication, strengthening ties. Additionally, the information of candidates provided on social media profiles might not be that accurate assessing their professional skills over personal skills as the usage of social media for general purposes outweighs than the usage for job search. (Smith, Anderson 2018)

The study conducted in a couple of years ago has shown that around 93% of organisations are approaching to social networking for the recruitment purposes, which later turned into the notion of social recruiting (Jobvite 2017). Even though job search web sites are still taking a leading part of the employment techniques, social networks are getting more and more popularity over the traditional means of the hiring processes (Breaugh 2008). However, now, online recruiting has proved to be the most convenient way for both job-hunters and (Smith, Anderson 2018). Many companies started being established, the path to a competitive labour market, where owners of the organisations and hiring managers want to fill vacant places with highly skilled candidates to be ahead of the competitors and social media is taking in a more serious and professional approach than ever before (Doherty 2010)

To get, skilful candidates interested in enterprises must have a brand attractiveness, strengthening the network, where candidates would also be engaged and involved in the company's activities and updates. The job seekers can take advantage of announced job alerts to not only apply but also to see for whom they are going to work (Thackeray *et al.* 2012). This allows a prospective candidate, to see what the organisation is and enables to do research, where creates an image from the current employees to clarify how professional the organisation's background.

Unfortunately, some seeing social media and SNS as an only means of entertainment yet. According to (Archana *et al.* 2013), social networking is also one of the essential criteria, which plays a significant influence and role in recruiting. Social media users should not only be using social media as an entertainment or communication tool with friends, but also as a new technique of job search (Kaur *et al.* 2018).

Online recruiting can be expanded to a more extensive pool of potentials and simplify the recruitment process (Habibi *et al.* 2014). Initially, employers and organisations are the first people who could take advantage of such a facility (Kowo *et al.* 2019). Already many companies employ and involve in recruiting techniques the usage of SNS, where many of them having successful experiences and practices. Recruiters can quickly assess personal data and personal features of one, to find even answers to the questions, which are restricted to ask candidates as a recruiter (Dossena *et al.* 2019). Therefore, from the employment perspectives, it is an excellent advantage for recruiters. Recruiters who are applying to technology and innovations to approach candidates via developed and innovative ways are reaching to the most innovative and technologically skilled prospective (Galanaki 2002).

Social media platforms, the first coming are the following social media networks: Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter (Francesca 1973). LinkedIn is the leading social media platforms in the world of business because it is mainly designed for business purposes. Exchange with a list of active users, which called connections. These connections are a list of contacts with whom there is a mutual level of relationship exist. These connections might have a link either from the real life of from the social networking life. List of links allows building social networking, to follow and be followed by both recruiters and employees (Manroop, Richardson 2013).

The internet usage as a recruiting tool is creating new techniques of doing old things in a technological way, which attracts and changes the life of the people. Therefore, people, who are not that much technology-friendly they are just looking for stability in life. In contrast, for digital natives, it can be a new door to explore with full of opportunities. Social media turns into another way of acting towards businesses; it is another way of holding companies (Prensky 2001). Therefore, the internet and social media are tools of development and be aware of the updates for a lifetime (Tyler 2002).

Facebook is the next popular social media platform and has many additional sets of functions that can be used intelligently towards the employment process (Schivinski, Dabrowski 2015). Brand awareness is one of the leading and significant features that social media could bring to companies concerning finding good-fit candidates. That is the reason that organisations should have put continuous impact and effort on social media platforms, so that job seekers would be kept interested all the time to be followed. Therefore, the internet over Facebook and other SNS provide an easy and fast way to communicate. (Richmond *et al.* 2011)

The theory of incomplete information seeks a question - why some sort of data is not available. For example, political and social issues relation views of an applicant, alcohol, drugs or other similar types of variables that mostly measure negative influences in assessment procedure (Tsui *et al.* 1992). Also, such social categories as age, race, religion, status are definitions of social identity (Tajfel, Turner 2004). Many contributions are provided by self-categorisation theory, one of them is psychological group, where community or group of people are together sharing the same ideas, notions, interests and understandings. It means people evaluate themselves by adding or enrolling to the groups that they are involved in.

It is well known that many recruiters now considering information provided in a social media platform. Some might think that avoiding usage of social media creates a great path to be unique and being contacted by many recruiters, but it is another way around (Jaccard, Wood 1998). Frequently, there are many cases found where inexistence of social media platform might leave candidates questioned a lot by interviewers. Hence, candidates who are good at modern technology practises are the best-valued candidates (Phillips *et al.* 2017).

The phenomenon of social media is already a trend in the recruiting sector. Moreover, no matter either social media is being used as a powerful tool in the private sector or public sector (Kumar 2003). Personality theory is considered to be most often one of the positive ones. Physical attractiveness used in pre-interview session might get points on prior base and accept an applicant already on physical appearance-based (Walster *et al.* 1972). However, this is not only about physical attractiveness, but also the way how the person looks like, the way of wearing, facial photos, image and appearance all together appearing on social media platforms.

1.4 Social media and job market

The role of the internet in a job market over recent years has been increasing. Even though some companies still recruiting based on old techniques, many organisations are already gaining profits of social media recruiting. Labour market consists of fundamental understandings of two versus notions: demand and supply. Consequently, the digital impact on the labour market has many advantages to supply companies with a higher quality of services over social media. As the massive flow of information is coming from the usage of social media, the number of employees has been searching for also could be retrieved from social media or social media attributes. Social media can supply companies with many recourses and services. As there is a high need for employees in the labour market, social media plays a liaison role in the supply of professional candidates to companies.

As it is said, the main assets of any company are considered to be its employees. Therefore, social media and SNS are eligible to supply the existed demand to cover the dearth gap of the employees in the labour market. The internet updates create a new relationship: network between HRs and employees - internet recruiting, which is famous all over the world and has already been used in many prominent international organisations. There are privileges for prospective candidates and employees as well. For example, the applicants almost everywhere can create and send their resumes for free, make a filter, while looking for jobs beginning from salary ranges to fields of works. Candidates can apply to several vacancies they want to; no restrictions, some job applications are even able to compare salaries; it gives a broad spectrum of choice and diversity.

Moreover, the advantage is not only for people who want to find jobs, but also concerns the employees who are not satisfied with their current jobs and looking for some other opportunities. Because they are working and not all the time able to attend career events or to see in person agencies, potentials save time using social media, while looking for jobs. Correct understanding of the information conveyed will open precise examination and allow rational evaluation of the companies and candidates take over.

Social cognitive theory designed by Bandura, states that there are mainly two cognitive powers that make a person act differently. In this theory, also mentioned that a person who is not confident - is not going to work (Bandura 1997). Therefore, having a relation to our research, the author

derives that social media users who are behaving over social media platforms are having some confidence in their actions (Lin, Chang 2018).

Consequently, most efforts that are done over social media can be considered as a cognitive action, which helps to make outcomes about personality. As a rule, people take part and involved in job search communities and groups to find well paid and right conditioned jobs. The reality is that people are already keeping updated themselves in the world of technology not only with the help of the newspapers, word of mouth, broadcasting emails, journal ads but also and mainly with the online sources. Within the development of technology and with the usage of the internet, such updates are taking less time and contribution. This is the reason why; traditional techniques are in the behind position of the online methods. TV, newspapers, posts are now considered as just secondary sources, replaced by online news, news channels on social media platforms.

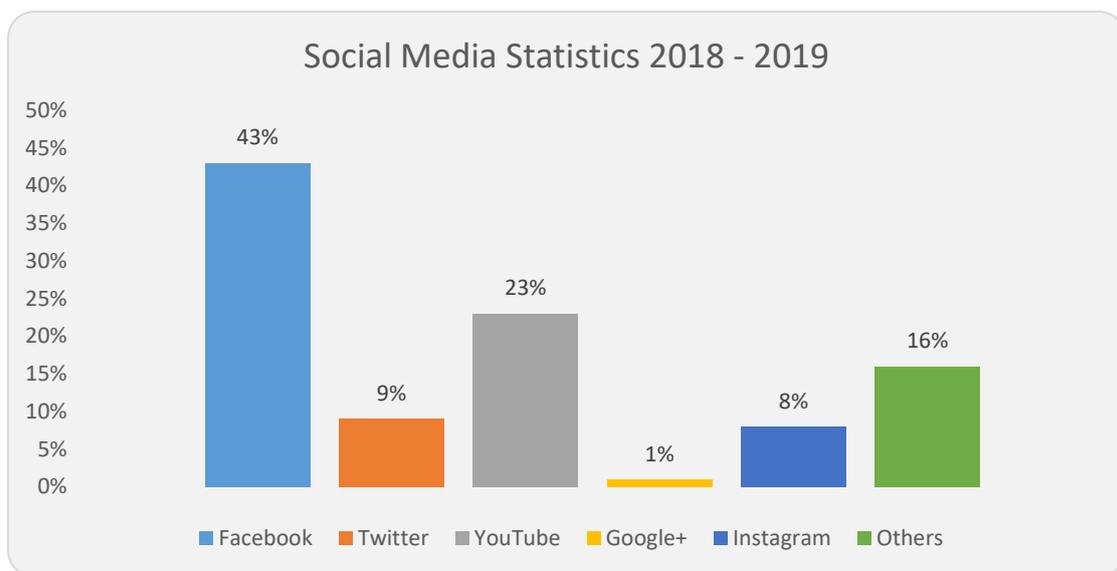


Figure 4: Social Media Statistics for 2018 and 2019

Source: Social Media Stats Azerbaijan (2019)

The notion of social media is also getting popular in Azerbaijan. The global phenomenon is having a significant impact on the labour market by developing and improving professional ties between job hunters and hiring managers. Furthermore, it is relatively lower in use in terms of professional usage in comparison to other developed countries. According to the survey of the latest year, 44%

of active internet users are using Facebook for everyday habit. The usage of Instagram is also showed rates, relative to 9%. However, the first place has taken by Facebook (Hajiyeva 2019).

The development of the labour market has a direct relation to developing economic growth and reduce poverty. The labour market has several indicators that required to analyse in order to provide an in-depth observation of the current situation in the country. The labour force rate indicates the proportion of the country's age for work purposes (Abdulrahimov *et al.* 2019). During the analysis of the DCWP (Table 1) and other secondary sources, can be observed that the number of aged people in the labour market has increased, which in its turn would have a significant influence on the labour market in general. Deriving from the fact that the labour resources and the labour force age influences the labour market - it is an undeniable fact that the age of the labour force for this research paper is quite essential. The working-age increase will require creating many job opportunities in overcoming years.

From table 1 can be seen that the actual majority of the population intensively involved in the job market and the age variation from 15 up to 63. Even if the difference between the total sum of the population number and people occupied into economy slightly differs, still improvement is better to be done regarding the diminishing of the unemployment part of the population. (Aliyev *et al.* 2011)

Even though actions are taken to increase the social and economic life in Azerbaijan, the country has not reduced for the full of poverty. Nevertheless, many challenges exist. One of the main challenges to meet and solve for both job hunters and recruiters is the labour market thriving. The reason set of objectives is sustainable development goals. Aimed for the development strategies and implementation of the mentioned ones to attain high standards of the capital but also of the regions is one of the purposes to get social media usage profits. (Aliyev *et al.* 2011)

Many might think that rural areas must be less accessible to employment opportunities. However, it is vice versa for Azerbaijan. Due to high subsistence of agriculture, rural areas are less impacted by the unemployment rate. The situation changes considering the urban areas, whereas the labour participation rate deviates and the unemployment rate is usually higher (Garbe-Emden *et al.* 2011).

Azerbaijan is very famous in its oil sector all over the world. In order to sustain and improve any

other field of the economy, it is required to make changes and develop many fields and sectors at the same level. Therefore, development measures were taken in the direction of the non-oil sector to be able to share and proportionally distribute the employment. “Number of persons received official unemployment status in the employment service offices by the country made 20, 1 thousand for the beginning of January 2019.” (Abdulrahimov *et al.* 2019).

1.5 Challenges and threats

Social media has divided into various branches. Accordingly, each type of social media has its specific characteristics and specific qualities. The qualities and specifications of social media means might have advantages, but on the other had challenges. The author exemplifies some challenges and threats observed in terms of the labour market.

Blogs are the very first and initial platform of speaking out online. Even though blogs are not having popularity in the employment process yet, they are frequently used by many organisations to update the information about changes and innovations in the company. Though blogs do not have any advantages for the job hunters in job search but might carry the necessary general information on the background of organisations, therefore, organisations and hiring managers should have a keen eye on the publications done via blogs.

SNS is the leading attributes of social media. Many organisations using SNS as a marketing tool to connect with customers; one of the largest communities of SNS is Facebook. There is a saying that if Facebook would be a country, it would be the more populated country in the world. Therefore, Facebook opens large and broad access to the data, either of the employer or employee. However, the hiring managers would benefit more and get loads of info about candidates, either professional or personal, which would allow them to have more investigation and distinct evaluation. The number of users of SNSs in Azerbaijan is quite adequate. According to the statistics derived, Facebook is the most famous SNS in Azerbaijan and consists of 43.78 % of the total usage of SNS (Abdulrahimov *et al.* 2019).

Many famous and popular companies and organisations are having their Facebook fan page accounts. Facebook pages most of the time have more interactive concern, rather than the general information which is also available on the official webpages of the organisations. It is mostly used

as an auxiliary tool to promote, advertise and keep the customers' inter-coupling, building brand image and brand loyalty (Kajanová *et al.* 2017). Even if Facebook was not initially created as a work-related, but is used as a work-oriented no less than LinkedIn. Facebook is a platform that establishes and maintains connections for both, either professional or personal life perspectives. Moreover, maybe this is the result of high usage because people nowadays are getting lazier, and combination of both in one platform is also an advantage of technology-friendly users.

Advertising is one of the most popular functions of social media and SNS. Many ads might be seen in various social media platforms, advertising many different ads. One of the popular ads have been advertising are jobs or job-related web pages with different work offers. Even though it is quite a pricy type of job advertisement through social media platforms, yet is in use of popularity. The advantage of such advertisements is the probability to reach many people at a time. However, the content of an advertisement itself is better to be monitored by specialised agencies or specialists to make sure it follows all standards within the framework of installed rules and procedures of the countries' labour code. (Kim 2016)

One of the main disadvantages of social media is having incomplete information. The cases, where very often candidates do not insert any information regarding themselves, or where job publishing is not carrying complete data about the vacancy is considered to be the incomplete source. The reason behind is that social media and social networking sites are designed for communication with friends and acquaintances, where might be limited of wording to some extent. However, unfortunately, incomplete information is taking by many people as a not credible and trustful source. Social media users might be short of certain information which is not available or published, which will lead to doubts. (Johnson 1987)

Next, emotions may take over the person's usual way of behaviour, and it might show a person from totally different sides. The gratification theory stands for building a personal network and by that to satisfy emotional needs through social media means. Consequently, the user might utilise social media just from the emotional side of his/her character, not considering possible further professional screenings. (Podsakoff *et al.* 2003)

Opinion mining can occur based on reviews or comments of other people. However, because negative comments are remembered most, people's feeling, opinions, evaluations, attitudes for any

products or services might change due to other opinions' (Feldman 2013). Social media is very active, fast-changing and successful to use by hiring managers in case of correct and appropriate approach. Either the online hiring process for recruiters or job search for job hunters is an advantage to avoid time-consuming and saving a budget. Thus, social media recruiting could be the most profitable occupational method activity to search in comparison to the traditional methods of employment.

Moreover, the high rates of usage of social media and social networking sites can be considered and observed as a powerful recruitment tool and job search method in comparison with traditional methods of recruitment. One of the leading efficient reasons for social media for organisations is that they are free to use and social, but require time and investment. In this case, investment is a content that companies are sharing along with either job groups on social networking sites or field related publications to keep the audience always in touch. As everything has its advantages and disadvantages, there is always something in behind, what could be considered as drawbacks. In this research, the author has highlighted many opportunities and benefits of social media. However, reviewing the previous works and making the analysis of the followings factors might be challenging in the world of HRM. (Steger, Hauptmann 2013)

In 2018, the average age of employment for men was in between 15-63 years old, whereas for women, it changed in the range of 15 to 60 years old. Because the old generation is not enough technology-friendly users compared to the young generation, and as the study designed for internet research, it might cause some limitations for the research. However, still, the investigation could be counted as successful as it mainly focused on active social media users. (Abdulrahimov *et al.* 2019)

1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research aim is to investigate the Azerbaijanis attitude towards social media in relation to job search and employment. To make effective outcomes, the author used both quantitative and qualitative methods of research methodology. To achieve the results of the research and receive more accurate data, for the qualitative approach the author will have In-depth interviews with the recruiters whereas for quantitative analysis as primary research data an online survey questionnaire will be conducted. The method approach will be based on (Hole 2018) previous research to investigate Norwegians' attitude towards electric vehicles where some alternations are likely to make taking into consideration intentions and motives of this research, and considering the main idea and the purpose of this research. The researcher posted the online survey on her personal social media accounts, with the kind request to complete the survey and then to share it with someone who might be interested in the same area of the subject.

2.1. Data collection

To begin with, a qualitative approach based on semi-structured e-mail interviews conducted with the hiring managers and recruiters of diverse field companies in Azerbaijan (see appendix 1 to 6). The high preference was given to human resource outsourcing companies. There are three outsourcing companies out of six companies interviewed. The reason for such preference is allowing to the diversity of job vacancies announced and looked for. The author has decided to share a number of companies interviewed in between with the big companies of specific occupations and outsourcing companies of the broad-spectrum.

Interviews with managers and recruiters of the companies helped the author to investigate, how the recruiters promote jobs, what techniques use towards recruitment, to see if social networking strategies are using popularity when it comes to hiring candidates. Moreover, to find out what are

the challenges that recruiters are facing, especially with the usage of social media in the employment processes. The interviews with HR professionals took place with the help of emails, where all questions designed to reveal the aim of the research based on the theories mentioned in the first part of the thesis.

All interview questions are designed upon the presented literature reviews and were relevant to social media and the job market, which investigate the current labour market situation in Azerbaijan. The interview answers are provided in an exact way that the interviewers were questioned. There are 11 interview questions along with two sub-questions, where initially each interviewee asked about positions and duties holding within the company. Further questions are related to the strategies, methods, techniques of the employment process along with social media motives in the labour market in Azerbaijan. Interviews are end-up with the closing question.

Table 1. Interviews with recruiting agencies and human recruitment managers

TYPE	COMPANY	OCCUPATION	INTERVIEWEE
E-mail	Gilan Industrial Group	HR Specialist	Mr. Jamil Huseynov
E-mail	NorthWest Construction LLC	HR Recruiter	Ms. Gulnar Qadirova
E-mail	Human Capital Baku	HR Recruiter	Ms. Sevil Muradova
E-mail	Azerconnect	HR Coordinator	Mr. Emil Huseynov
E-mail	Pasha Holding	HR Specialist	Mrs. Guney Hashimova
E-mail	Marketing Agency	HR Specialist	Mr. Shamhal Rustamov

Source: compiled by the author (2019)

For qualitative research, an online survey was conducted with the help of Google form for active social media users in Azerbaijan (see appendix 7). Notably, social media users who are interested in job market opportunities. Survey questions were designed regarding social media and the job search process in Azerbaijan.

The summary of the questions is based on users' motivation, notion, perception, engagement and awareness of the usage of social media and its attributes in terms of job search. The goal of the questionnaire to receive answers for research questions set in the paper and information in regard to the perception of social media as a tool of job search. The researcher decided not to utilise the cross-tabulation test to see the relationship between gender and social media usage. The same approach applied for age and social media usage. Because gender was not of the thesis benefit to determine, on the contrary, it would not be a beneficial question of the age request, simply because all connections the survey shared with are at the age between 18 and 25.

All ten questions are designed within the topic, and the context of the theories presented, and background information received from the previous research in a similar area. The questionnaire was shared via two leading social media channels that statistically has popularity in Azerbaijan (Facebook and LinkedIn). The answers received will be a valuable source in order to achieve an in-depth sense of the social active user's understandings and needs concerning the job market. The author believes that, with the information gained through this research, the effectiveness of social media in the usage of job search and employment process in Azerbaijan can be observed and examined to a more significant extent.

2. RESULTS

In this chapter, the author introduces the data analysis and outcomes of the study. This research data was collected on a mixed-method approach. The author will analyse the outcomes of the gathered interviews and the online survey questionnaire. Results achieved through the research have been given a broader understanding of the current labour market situation and the social media practices used by both employers and job seekers towards the employment process. Therefore, outcomes shown in this study can be considered as a successfully achieved and data collected evaluated below with disclosing facts and comments involving the gathered data background.

3.1 Qualitative findings

In this chapter described the results of the qualitative approach, where it can be clearly seen that social media has a high impact on the employment process over social media. Almost all companies and professional recruiters represented confirmed the essential usage of social media during the candidate search. Despite the fact that few companies stated holding and being concentrated initially in company's database, where they already have full of candidates lists, but yet when they are not satisfied with the results of the database, they definitely utilise social media. Accordingly, social media is the best way to promote vacancies and find suitable candidates.

During the analysis of the interviews, the author has noticed that many companies approach LinkedIn for more superior positions search, whereas for the job that required fewer skills they are also sharing the vacancies over the Facebook. That was an interesting fact, which they clarified in a way that, the young less skilled and experienced people are searching mostly jobs over the Facebook, whereas LinkedIn is using more among experienced, highly skilled candidates. All the

companies agreed that social media is working as a marketing tool. It also founds many candidates reaching quickly through social media, which also increases the popularity of SNS. Three out of six companies, consider the advantage of social media as the fastest way of communication with candidates, whereas the rest are considering the screening candidate profile being beneficial function. Almost all companies, agreed that the best suggestion for future successful potential is to put plausible, correct and enough information onto the profile. (see Figure 3)

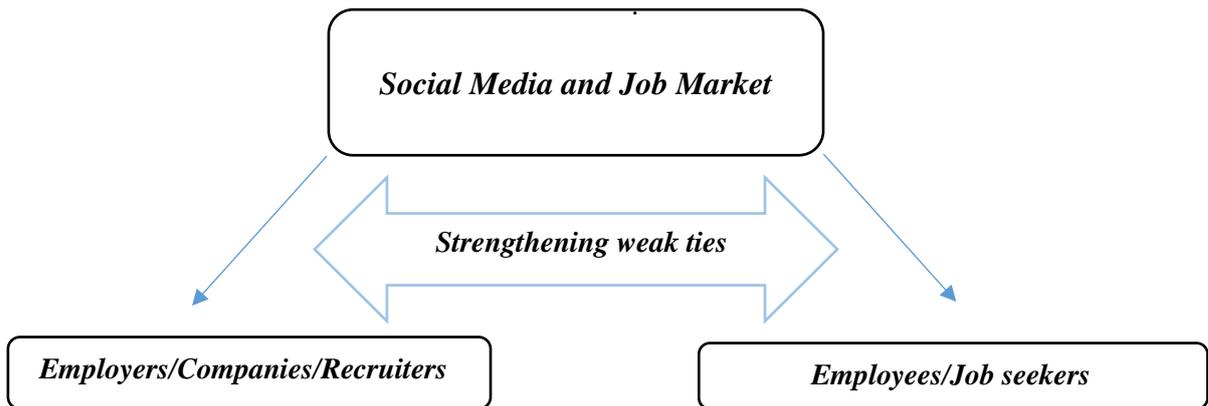


Figure 3: Qualitative results.

Source: Compiled by the author (2019)

As per Figure 3, the author tried to demonstrate the correlation between recruiters and employees in search of jobs and how social media plays a vital part in the process. Even though there are challenges that can be observed from both perspectives, yet is not a case for almost majority of companies and job seekers to avoid social media as a mean of job search. The significant obstacle on the way to use the SNS in the practice of hiring is plausible information provided by candidates. Almost all hiring managers confirmed being faced with either irrelevant or not plausible information on the profiles of the candidates. On the other hand, they confirm that sooner or later they for sure reveal the truth, but it is time consuming process and waste of the time.

Moreover, it is not considered to be as a good practice for the candidate for the future opportunities. Recruiters disclose it also from the point that recruiting agencies might have mutual cooperation agreement, which means the usage of common databases or exchange of candidates is a regular

and usual process. Therefore, a candidate providing false data might be rejected not only from the one company, but instead being rejected for many cooperated agencies in chain in regard of the future opportunities. This is a challenge from one point, but also is a good threat from another. In case of revealing the candidates background agencies in cooperation are able to find the best and most suitable and trustful candidates most of the time.

Also hiring managers are opinion of that creation of the groups, where would be possible to make job posts in exchange of even little price can worth of it and be contribution to the job search process. Recruiters explain it in a way that such kind of groups would be taken and assessed as a serious announcement. It is a real psychological fact, that when people pay for something they take it much serious and feeling responsibility for any actions towards that. From potential prospective candidates approach such groups can be assessed as a serious place to look for jobs and might reduce they attempts of false information. It is explained by a simple factor, that in such groups not only job publishers can comment and make awareness of each group member, but it is also a live channel of network of people. And people do like to highlight either best or unsuccessful experiences of each other, so it definitely might slightly solve an issue of candidate's background information.

Deriving from the interviews done, the author can definitely state that almost all companies, has two mainly common issues of social media brings out: less information stated by the candidates on their profiles, not verified profiles of the candidates, which not allow them to analyse the candidate in a deep. Moreover, the weak flow of information, confirms the theory of Weak Ties being suitable and being able to cover the research problem. Unfortunately, often the vacancies either announced or published in SNS channels might reach candidates late. One of the reasons, either posts are pending or messages not able to candidates' due to non-availability of the premium functions on SNS. These factors are clearly stated in the theory of strengthening weak ties and bridging tie (see Figure 1). Therefore, access to the internet, social media and its attributes is not the whole solution to it. The correct and strategic usage of SNS might resolve the research problem to the new end and bring out its outputs in an effective way for both, either employers or employees. All in all, it has been clear enough to state that social media is the right place to promote jobs and to find successful candidates. Main reasons for that are cost-effectiveness, the popularity of the SNS, easy access on the mutual connection and broad networking.

3.2 Quantitative findings

In a quantitative method, the total number of respondents is 100. The first question was given to active online social media users as if they are employed or not, where responses changed from 77% to 23% relatively to. The question about what is the most suitable SNS in regard with the job search was responded at 79% of highest popularity for the LinkedIn, and 53% for Facebook (see Appendix 7), which almost matched the same popularity share of the results associated with employers given in the appendix 1 to 6 gathered from the interviews.

More than half of the respondents consider social media and SNS being an advantage of accessible communication and networking. To the author's surprise, almost half of the respondents (49%) replied that social media is beneficial due to access from any device. Only 34% of the respondents confirmed being active via posts and comments on social media, which give a clear answer that it is not plausible and useful for recruiters to assume candidates' active actions over the social media as a sign of characteristic of a potential.

As per results, 60% of the potential online audience does not consider Twitter as a place to search for jobs at all. Only around 8% of the respondents taking the popularity of Twitter in a job search process. The vast majority of respondents at 66% are either employed or have been employed with the usage of social media means, which shows the effectiveness of the SNS in the employment process. Furthermore, 48% of the respondents declare that they use job portals to find jobs. Almost half of the respondents, 49% to be precise are confirmed following the fan pages of the companies to be involved in the job updates. According to Granovetter (1973) the flow of information is the source that eligible to unite individuals and maintain networking.

CONCLUSION

The research designed to evaluate and explore the impact of social media on career opportunities and networking between employers and job seekers. Results showed that the involvement of social media into organisational strategies in the direction of human resources could impact companies and the labour market in different ways. Many modern and big organisations have already moved to the usage of social media techniques as a productive tool for communication and collaboration, thus replacing the traditional techniques of recruitment. HRs are now utilising social media as career pathfinder. Mainly, Facebook and LinkedIn are using to screen candidates' prior and get more clear background on prospective. Most of the time, hiring managers even utilise social media platforms instead of email communications, replacing by that the traditional methods. It is essential to have a clear vision behind the strengths of networking using social media.

Overall, if the author unites the respondents from the online survey and interviewers' responses, it is commonly can be stated that: Social media using high popularity in the employment process in Azerbaijan. Although some of the interviewees stated that they apply to social media techniques only after examination of the having database of the companies, in the final stage along with other respondents they are looking for potential over SNS. Especially, LinkedIn and Facebook are holding leading positions in the labour market fulfilment in the country. Moreover, the internet with the usage of social media turns into global and reliable job search arena, where job hunters and hiring managers can easily interact and communicate with each other on a fast and practical end. The internet provides immense opportunities starting with expressing one's own opinions, maintaining relationships and communication, living professional and everyday lives over the internet.

Despite the fact, that some of the interviewers firmly stated that they are not taking into consideration personal sharing and posts related to the professional life, in contrast, more than half

of the hiring managers confirmed social media as an arena of screening candidates. Therefore, it can be concluded that for the candidates that are eager to find jobs to keep on the area of attention the posts that are shared, comments and reviews left either on personal profile pages or groups. Smooth, quick and easy interaction might lead to favourable changes for the employment process this what statement by both side, job seekers and the company managers. Nowadays, social media can be disclosed and identified as an advanced technology method in the labour market.

Professional sites that are still having popularity, having more strong impact on the brand of the company. It can be seen from the survey as well, that still many people using job portals as a source of search engine. Moreover, companies themselves as well, confess that still job portals have been using. However, sometimes official webpages or in other words hiring web pages are staying unattended, while intensively taking part in discussions and postings on social networking sites. Consequently, it is advisable to be active in every possible platform and web pages, as hiring managers stated that if the candidate wants to find a job will look for carefully and everywhere.

Mentioned above factors prove social media of being a supplementary source in the employment processes. In order to maintain the position on social networking sites and keep strong social networking relationships advisable for employers to interact with potential profiles, groups with essential and valuable contexts provided for its followers so that the active and passive users remain in the followers. In contrast, it seems one of the significant challenges that hiring managers to face is the false information provided by candidates. This creates a difficulty in belief to social media users and to see them as potential candidates for the future.

As the internet is an inexpensive way to proceed with the flow of information, it is a beneficial way for the employment processes. However, one of the interviewers clearly responded that taking into account social media usage by loads of people, it is beneficial to invest in it. The investment herein, consists of paid posting procedures that will stop pending posts and facilitate fast allowance of the publications in different job-related groups. It explained by the involvement group admins into the process, where they will have a keen interest in the process. Consequently, post and job announcement will proceed timely and fast. Prospective employees, on the other hand, are eligible to apply not leaving home, work and get a fast response, which also avoids time consumption and smooth interaction. From the author's point of view, herein, the companies are the ones who are

getting more profits due to the comprehensive information received mainly from the candidates' side.

Reviews come to such a conclusion that social media is going to be a potential and useful tool in HRM practices. SNS will have a stronger impact during the job search for potentials. Social media notion and job market will draw strong direct relation. However, the fact that the older generation is not technology-friendly users in comparison with the Generation Y makes author decide that such conditions will enable us to draw precise and accurate statements for the current period for the older generation (Eisner 2005). Also, even though similar studies, reports and analysis previously were done, they were no studies, where most of the questions of the paper gathering together analysed along with the designed way of the survey implementing. Therefore, the author thinks that the findings revealed and conclusions drawn might have some impact on future in-depth analysis or researches in similar topics.

The author is deriving from the literature analysis aimed to disclose and provide an understanding of the reviews and make more specific and precise discussions about what leads to successful employment. The systematic approach is the most active research areas of social media taken into account in order to predict its usability in the HRM and job search techniques. Moreover, the data collected concludes the main research question if the social media can be considered as a tool of communication in the employment process, being able to confine the gap of communication and interaction between employers and employees.

The study reveals that social media features such as content, to keep involved users, posting job announcements and similar tactics are the highlights provided by the companies. In order to make a clear and distinct view of the results of the research, the following answers are considered to be the final part of the thesis.

RQ 1: What are social media and social networking sites perception?

(Sub question: What are social media channels mostly used for job search purposes in Azerbaijan?)

Findings: In the current situation, in Azerbaijan, LinkedIn and Facebook are considered the most frequently used SNS for the purposes of job search and job announcement. While LinkedIn

considered to hold and announce positions for mainly superior levels, Facebook is used by middle-level jobs searcher by companies.

RQ 2: How does SNS influence job search and recruiting practices in Azerbaijan?

(Sub question: How can social media centralise and maintain two-way communication between employers and employees?)

Findings: Social media platforms and social networking sites are holding leading positions from both employers' and employees' perspectives. Based on the interviews and survey analysis, the author thinks that creating either online platform or social groups, where candidates will be sorted out due to the skills and jobs due to hierarchy of levels can create the ideal and unique place for networking. Thus, it will enhance the ties between job seekers and hiring managers. Also, trustful and confirmed data policy should be applied for candidates, so that ensure HRs in the right choice of the candidate and valid information background behind a potential. Due to the fact, that almost all interviewees see the social media an arena to hunt on skilled candidates, whereas job seekers observing the SNS as a place to find suitable jobs – similar attempts would have been a solution to the communication and networking gap existed.

To conclude, latest updates in the e-recruiting world allow hiring managers not only to save time on a couple of stages of the processes but also decreasing expenses, providing a wider variety of potentials, whereas keeping plausible and correct information on profiles of the candidates will lead to the successful career opportunities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview with company 1.

Email interview with Social Media Manager/Recruiter of Human Capital Baku
23rd of November 2019
Interviewee Ms. Sevil Muradova

What is your job?

A: Currently, I am employed at Human Capital Baku, where performing as Recruiter and Social Media Manager. Human Capital Baku (HCB) is the recruitment company in Azerbaijan has been established since 2003.

Do you use social media for hiring employees?

A: Yes. Social Media is also one of the methods that we use to find good candidates. However, because we work with big corporations mainly, we have our own database to go first, so sometimes there is no need to approach to social media as either we can find appropriate candidates over our database or candidates approaching us themselves.

How often do you post job ads or looking for employees over social media platforms?

A: It depends. About twice a month. Because it depends on a job nature. When for example, we have superior positions and requested to find candidates we first utilize our database, where we have already sorted out candidates initially in terms of their skills and abilities. Later, if we see that if we cannot proceed with the candidates that are available for us then we are approaching to the usage of social media help.

What social media platforms do you mostly use for job announcements? Why?

A: Most of the time when we receive candidate requests we start looking them on LinkedIn. It does not matter if these connections already established or we are newly looking them for. The main thing is that positions that we require and might be short of – superior positions. And for management positions - LinkedIn (more professional).

Do you think social media and social networking sites are potential and more effective tools to attract employees rather than the job websites?

A: It is an obvious that now people are looking for almost everything online and even jobs. But, I think people who are searching jobs properly, they still definitely approaching job websites too. Nevertheless, social media might be more effective, yes.

To what extent are you hiring candidates over social media means? Why?

(Appendix 1 continued)

A: We have enough candidates from our database and our recruiting company is very popular in Azerbaijan. So, we receive many resumes. But if we cannot find any from our database only then – social media comes to help. Due to the large population to choose.

Do you think potential candidates are also using social media methods for the employment?

A: Yes, if they are looking for jobs and they are quite successful candidates then they will find many ways to approach.

How social media means help in the hiring process communication and what is an advantage of it over the traditional methods for you?

A: Social media helps a lot if the candidate that we are searching puts enough information on their profiles. Because most of the times on resume so much info, but when you go to for ex: LinkedIn profile of a candidate you do not see all of this info. Then it causes some sort of trouble to find out and match candidate's skills and abilities. Advantage is preliminary screening of a candidate's experience.

What kind of challenges you meet while looking for candidates over social media? What kind of feature would you like to change/add into social media for more effective usage?

A: Plausible information. Recently, we had a case, where one candidate put onto resume many skills, the resume was very professional and showed successful background. But when the candidate came to the interview, of course, all the information revealed to be fable. I would like people not to include or share false information.

What are the things you are focus on while choosing a candidate over social media?

A: The very basics, we do not evaluate candidates towards to posts or comments they put in regard to their personal lives for example. Because person might be very talented but behave in everyday life differently, so we never judge people on something over social media unless it is not against general norms and rules.

What is advice for potential candidates looking for jobs over social media means?

A: To make sure that they organise all information correctly and based on true facts and looking for jobs not only over social media, but also job web pages. Because as I said we do not regularly post jobs on social media. Maybe twice a month or something the like.

Appendix 2. Interview with company 2.

Email interview with Recruiter Specialist – Gilan Industrial Group

17th of November 2019

Interviewee Mr. Jamil Huseynov

What is your job?

A: Recruitment Specialist - preparation of vacancies on demand from structural units, posting on vacancy channels, reviewing incoming CVs, selecting suitable candidates and inviting for interviews. Review the candidate's comments and make sure that objective feedback is provided, the candidate's documents, the security section for the candidate's security checked. Most candidates are sent for medical examination, receiving medical examinations, referring to the human resources administrator for the formalization of the candidate, orientation training for the candidate on the first working day, directing the candidate to the work unit and providing guidance for the candidate. Receive feedback within a month.

Do you use social media for hiring employees?

A: Yes.

How often do you post job ads or looking for employees over social media platforms?

A: At least 15-20 vacancies each month (1 post every 2 days, sometimes 2 announcements per day).

What social media platforms do you mostly use for job announcements? Why?

A: Company recruitment portal (required by the company). LinkedIn (easy to find professional and highly qualified employees, as well as headhunting for critical tasks). Recruitment sites (jobsearch.az for higher positions) - because the candidate base is much larger. Vacancy groups and pages on Facebook - with more than 30-50 pages shared, it is possible to find more workers and a relatively small number of professionals.

Do you think social media and social networking sites are potential and more effective tools to attract employees rather than the job websites?

A: LinkedIn is good for top positions, with Facebook groups being weaker than most popular business sites.

To what extent are you hiring candidates over social media means? Why?

A: The majority of candidates are recruited by referendum. At best, one in every 20-25 employees recruited comes from social media.

Do you think potential candidates are also using social media methods for the employment?

A: They use quite a lot.

How social media means help in the hiring process communication and what is an advantage of it over the traditional methods for you?

A: Social media gives candidates the opportunity to contact the advertiser directly and address their questions. And it allows the employer to review the candidate's profile and get first-hand information about him/her, and to get referrals from the person we know. In a very short period of time, it is possible to reach a large audience.

What kind of challenges you meet while looking for candidates over social media? What kind of feature would you like to change/add into social media for more effective usage?

A: A limited number of candidates can view their profile on LinkedIn without a premium profile. You can also see the message or delay it while writing a message to a person who is not on the connection. In most cases, administrators of vacancy groups on Facebook either approve or post late. It would be great if those posts were paid services to better communicate to the people in the group.

(Appendix 2 continued)

You can now only share a paid ad on your group or page. If this is the case for paid ads when posting to someone else's group, and the page ad gets its share of the load, then you can get even more effect. Secondly, it is not possible to provide detailed information about Facebook professional activities from Facebook. It is best if you need more information.

What are the things you are focus on while choosing a candidate over social media?

A: Candidates on LinkedIn usually record their positions in their profile even higher. Candidates write very briefly about their work, or simply fill in the title. Facebook may not have enough information about the candidate. If a candidate has language skills, including what kind of job a candidate worked for, how long he worked in an enterprise, what position he/she held at one enterprise, how much work he had changed within a year, or how often he changed his field of study.

What is advice for potential candidates looking for jobs over social media means?

A: Make a detailed record of their work, their education, in their LinkedIn profiles. Apply for a suitable vacancy.

Appendix 3. Interview with company 3.

Email interview with HR Recruiter at North-West Construction LLC

19th of November 2019

Interviewee Ms. Gulnar Gadirova

What is your job?

A: As a recruiter, my main responsibilities are to find most suitable candidates to become fully integrated, assess applicants' relevant knowledge, skills, soft skills, experience and aptitudes and apply HR recruiting best practices.

Do you use social media for hiring employees?

A: The best way to find a job is networking and the best networking includes social media. Therefore, our company practices advertising and placement of vacancies in social networks and especially LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

How often do you post job ads or looking for employees over social media platforms?

A: Actually, I use two ways to announce job vacancies; job posting on employment-related websites and LinkedIn because if someone is actively looking for a job, they are looking everywhere - job sites, social media, and their network. So, as someone posting a job, it's important to be in several places so that you become familiar to the job seekers.

What social media platforms do you mostly use for job announcements? Why?

A: LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. Because they are one of the most important branding tools for companies.

Do you think social media and social networking sites are potential and more effective tools to attract employees rather than the job websites?

A: Social Media is a way to get a first impression on people, without actually meeting them first. And social media is where can easily one connect to recruiters if have questions.

To what extent are you hiring candidates over social media means? Why?

A: It depends. Because of most usage among candidates.

Do you think potential candidates are also using social media methods for the employment?

A: I strongly believe social media is a very handy and effective tool for the job search. Now companies are looking for inexpensive and effective ways to recruit, where social media can be considered as a solution to it.

How social media means help in the hiring process communication and what is an advantage of it over the traditional methods for you?

A: Traditional recruiting methods have served well in the past.

What kind of challenges you meet while looking for candidates over social media? What kind of feature would you like to change/add into social media for more effective usage?

A: It depends on the position I'm hiring.

What are the things you are focus on while choosing a candidate over social media?

(Appendix 3 continued)

A: I'm looking at different information on candidates' social media profiles such as information that supports their job qualifications (position and job description, companies, certificates), what others are saying about the candidate (online references) and how active is candidate on social media.

What is advice for potential candidates looking for jobs over social media means?

A: First of all, not to lie about qualifications. The hiring manager can search for contact information about candidate's previous employers or school to confirm that what you say on your profile is true/false. Secondly, to be careful in publications: provocative content, negative remarks addressed to the past employer, frequent activity can negatively affect the assessment of your candidacy.

Appendix 4. Interview with company 4.

Email interview with HR Coordinator – Azerconnect

22nd of November 2019

Interviewee Mr Emil Huseynov

What is your job?

A: I carry out recruitment, selection and placement of candidates.

Do you use social media for hiring employees?

A: I mainly use LinkedIn's network.

How often do you post job ads or looking for employees over social media platforms?

A: All vacancies, except internal vacancies, are published online. Usually, job seekers who are looking for experienced professionals and managers place their job postings on social media and provide candidate engagement on social media.

What social media platforms do you mostly use for job announcements? Why?

A: Usually experienced recruiter looking for professionals and managers, based on the recommendation (recruitment network). I consider the most effective way to recruit a candidate via social media (LinkedIn).

Do you think social media and social networking sites are potential and more effective tools to attract employees rather than the job websites?

A: Social media is the shortest way to run for a potential candidate. Marketing is usually undertaken specific events to address customer groups. I consider candidate involvement into such events of HR's as an action over the social media. A more effective tool than job sites.

To what extent are you hiring candidates over social media means? Why?

A: We only engage candidates from social media.

Do you think potential candidates are also using social media methods for the employment?

A: They use it quite often. There are numerous requests for direct recruitment by candidates.

How social media means help in the hiring process communication and what is an advantage of it over the traditional methods for you?

A: Most traditional methods require more resources. Social media facilitates direct communication with the candidate.

What kind of challenges you meet while looking for candidates over social media? What kind of feature would you like to change/add into social media for more effective usage?

A: Sometimes candidates point to the skills they do not have and where they do not work. This can be difficult to verify at first. For example, it would be good if a candidate who mentioned that companies in LinkedIn were working in that company had the opportunity to confirm that they were actually working there.

What are the things you are focus on while choosing a candidate over social media?

A: Failure to record a candidate's commitment to the position if he/she is working on, makes it difficult to verify compliance with the existing vacancies. Depends on the requirements of the position.

(Appendix 4 continued)

The experience, competence and education of the candidate, his/her constant self-employment (education, training and courses) are some of the points I am focusing on.

What is advice for potential candidates looking for jobs over social media means?

A: Provide accurate and complete information on their profiles (do not post false or inflated information about themselves).

Appendix 5. Interview with company 5.

Email interview with HR Specialist – Pasha Holding

21st of November 2019

Interviewee Mrs. Guney Hashimova

What is your job?

A: Job Analysis and Recruitment.

Do you use social media for hiring employees?

A: Yes.

How often do you post job ads or looking for employees over social media platforms?

A: Most non-specific job announcements are made regularly through job search sites and LinkedIn.

What social media platforms do you mostly use for job announcements? Why?

A: Jobsearch.az and LinkedIn. The ads posted on Jobsearch.az web site attract more attention due to the quality of the site and its popularity. LinkedIn is suitable for obtaining certain preliminary information without contacting employees, and then for informal talks with the candidate.

Do you think social media and social networking sites are potential and more effective tools to attract employees rather than the job websites?

A: Yes, definitely more effective.

To what extent are you hiring candidates over social media means? Why?

A: 40-50% for respective positions.

Do you think potential candidates are also using social media methods for the employment?

A: Yes, they do. I have used it me myself as well.

How social media means help in the hiring process communication and what is an advantage of it over the traditional methods for you?

A: It helps to get acquainted with the interests of the employee, first of all, as a personality, lifestyle and behaviour in informal way. It has the advantage of getting to know candidate different perspectives.

What kind of challenges you meet while looking for candidates over social media? What kind of feature would you like to change/add into social media for more effective usage?

A: Adding validation tools for previous job descriptions and other data recorded by employees. The nature of the information that candidates are sharing and interested in.

What are the things you are focus on while choosing a candidate over social media?

A: The nature of the information that candidates are sharing and interested in. The nature, profile picture, and grammar errors of the information shared and interested. (Depending on the position)

What is advice for potential candidates looking for jobs over social media means?

A: First of all, they should make corrections to their pages, keep them appropriate.

Appendix 6. Interview with company 6

Email interview with HR Senior Specialist – Marketing Agency

21st of November 2019

Interviewee Mr. Shamhal Rustamov

What is your job?

A: HR senior specialist.

Do you use social media for hiring employees?

A: Yes.

How often do you post job ads or looking for employees over social media platforms?

A: I am using LinkedIn and Facebook for job posting. I post job ads on LinkedIn 5-6 times per month and once or twice on Facebook.

What social media platforms do you mostly use for job announcements? Why?

A: It depends. I use LinkedIn to search senior specialists and for managerial level job posting. It enables to filter by school, universities, companies etc. Generally, if your primary audience is middle-aged businessmen, then LinkedIn is the most appropriate. I use Facebook to find low and middle level of employees especially who has no strong work background in any field.

Do you think social media and social networking sites are potential and more effective tools to attract employees rather than the job websites?

A: Job websites sometimes serve for active job seekers, but it does not mean that all active user might be potential.

To what extent are you hiring candidates over social media means? Why?

A: I find 50% candidates on social media. It can make to get higher quality candidates employees. It's cost-effective and candidates who have social media presence tend to be more tech savvy and knowledgeable about current business trends.

Do you think potential candidates are also using social media methods for the employment?

A: Sometimes we think social by using social media we can reach everybody and everybody to us. That's a fact there are millions of people who are missing our posts. To reach people who are in search of jobs but not using social media we apply to Government Unemployment Insurance office to reach these people.

How social media means help in the hiring process communication and what is an advantage of it over the traditional methods for you?

A: Social media enable great opportunities for communicating with groups of individuals who wish to follow the organization. In the line of advantages of social media means reduces cost of hire, increase employer brand awareness, shortening hiring time etc.

What kind of challenges you meet while looking for candidates over social media? What kind of feature would you like to change/add into social media for more effective usage?

A: Some people use social media for entertainment and personal reasons so it can be hard to measure their professional interests. You can easily misjudge a qualified employee based on the kinds of status he or she posts.

What are the things you are focus on while choosing a candidate over social media?

A: First of all, professional background is the most important factor then employee who has commitment to his career, who has technical skills are crucial etc.

(Appendix 6 continued)

What is advice for potential candidates looking for jobs over social media means?

A: Have a relevant profile and join career-relevant groups – social media is full of great groups that can connect with likeminded job seekers and offer industry-specific insights. And Highlight skills and achievements that help employers.

Appendix 7. Online questionnaire survey

Section 1. General background knowledge

Question	Measurement scales	Scale type
1. Are you currently employed?	a) Yes (77%) b) No (23%)	A nominal scale labeling the variables with mutual exclusivity
2. Do you think social media platforms help to deal with the employment?	a) Yes (94%) b) No (6%)	

Section 2. Social Media experience

3. How often do you use the following means of social media for job search purposes?	a) Always (15%) b) Frequently (24%) c) Sometimes (35%) d) Rarely (12%) e) Never (14%)	
4. How much time do you spend on social media daily?	a) More than an hour (81%) b) Less than an hour (16%) c) No everyday use (3%)	
5. When thinking about professional approach, select the following social media platforms you find most appropriate for job announcements	a) LinkedIn (79%) b) Facebook (53%) c) Twitter (6%) d) Google+ (15%) e) Instagram (9%)	
6. What makes job posts more attractive on social media?	a) Easy to communicate with recruiters (65%) b) Easy and fast access from any device (45%) c) Wide range of options (32%) d) More plausible jobs (14%) e) Trusted content and reviews of users (36%)	

7. Please rate your attitude towards social media usage for occupational purposes	a) Not at all likely (-) b) Not very likely (5%) c) Somewhat likely (28%) d) Very likely (44%) e) Extremely likely (23%)	
8. How likely are you interested in search of jobs via social networking sites?	a) Not at all likely (6%) b) Not very likely (4%) c) Somewhat likely (18%) d) Very likely (29%) e) Extremely likely (43%)	

Section 3. Social media users approach

9. Please indicate to what degree you agree with the following statements	a) I find social media use to be professional 1. 3% 2. 8% 3. 48% 4. 32% 5. 3%	1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree or disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree
	b) I follow companies' official fan pages on social media for job announcements 1. 9% 2. 18% 3. 24% 4. 41% 5. 8%	
	c) I can reach recruiters easily and mostly they are very responsive 1. 4% 2. 14% 3. 33% 4. 43% 5. 6%	
	d) I always actively present on social media with comments and reviews 1. 11% 2. 35% 3. 20% 4. 29% 5. 5%	
	e) I follow companies' official web pages to follow job announcements	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3% 2. 15% 3. 14% 4. 56% 5. 12% 	
10. Please indicate to what degree you agree with the following statements	<p>a) I am looking for jobs mainly on social media</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. 6% 7. 20% 8. 21% 9. 40% 10. 13% <p>b) I have been employed or at least I know people who employed via social media networking sites</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. 9% 7. 5% 8. 20% 9. 50% 10. 16% <p>c) I like social media because it is easy to use and access</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. 4% 7. 4% 8. 10% 9. 50% 10. 32% <p>d) I can find many job posts over social media platforms</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. 6% 7. 7% 8. 17% 9. 47% 10. 23% <p>e) I am an active participant on social media discussions/groups</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 14% 2. 27% 3. 21% 4. 25% 5. 14% 	

Table 2. State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Comparison statistics, in percentage 2018-2019						
unemployment statistic	Total	Including by age group				
		15-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	pre-pension ages	other persons a working age
Unemployed 2005	100	0.4	17.3	30.0	3.2	49.1
Unemployed 2018	100	0.0	9.5	34.3	0.7	55.5
Men 2005	100	0.4	16.4	28.5	2.9	51.8
Men 2018	100	0.0	10.1	36.1	0.8	53.0
Women 2005	100	0.3	18.1	31.5	3.5	46.6
Women 2018	100	-	8.4	31.3	0.5	59.8

Source: Labour market (2019)

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