

ARE SOCIAL NETWORK WEBSITES EFFECTIVE TOOLS FOR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION IN TOURISM SECTOR? AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY

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Abstract: *This chapter is aimed at obtaining empirical data with regard to the research question, how both recruiters and job seekers take advantage of the integration of social network websites and recruitment & selection processes. Two major social network websites, LinkedIn and Facebook, have been examined due to the fact that they are mostly being used by human resources professionals and job seekers. Qualitative content analyses have been carried out by collecting data via in-depth and focus group interviews with recruiters of a holding that also operates in the tourism sector and with job seekers looking for a job in this sector. It has been observed that the purpose of job seekers' usage of social network websites is to build networks, connections and reach new job opportunities. Likewise, businesses also aim to reach and attract candidates and communicate at the beginning of the recruitment process.*

Keywords: *LinkedIn, Facebook, Digital human resources management.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of the population changes along with their quantity in the world. A generation that has never experienced a world without the internet and mobile technologies exists in working life. In parallel with this, the recruitment strategies of businesses are changing in order to reach and attract the aforementioned generation. While the opportunity arises for businesses to strengthen and spread employer brands through recruitment strategies, the use of new technologies for job seekers facilitates the job search process.

In this context, social network sites have become one of the important social dynamics of social life with billions of users. For this reason, it appears to have an impact on many issues, including working life. This situation has made social networking sites the center of attention of businesses and academic research. In recent years, it is seen that the use of social networking sites has increased in order to get the parties to know each other in business life. Academic researchers and experts argue that social networking sites are a useful tool especially for businesses in the recruitment process (Doherty, 2010: 12, Nikolaou et al., 2015: 93, Hartwell, 2015: 33-34). This situation frequently encountered in human resources management practices, especially during the recruitment process; it emerges as a phenomenon that needs to be explored and based on scientific foundations. In this way, it will be possible to use the current state of affairs supported by scientific evidence more effectively and efficiently. In addition, both career seekers and human resources workers; for both parties, it will be able to reveal the opportunities and threats accompanying it. While there are more studies in the literature dealing with the aspects of this issue related to businesses, the scarcity of studies on job seekers draw attention.

Thus, revealing the opportunities and threats in the use of social network sites will contribute to the positioning of this new subject within the human resources management discipline. The

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subject, which was mostly examined by business or job seekers in previous studies (Micik and Eger, 2015: 271 Bohmova and Pavlicek, 2015: 28), will fill the gap in the literature in the context of examining the views of both sides together in an exploratory qualitative research design. Based on this, it has been determined that social network sites are effective in the recruitment process, its usage has strengthened communication, time and cost advantages. On the other hand, it has some disadvantages about having negative image and unethical use.

2. RECRUITMENT PROCESS IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The recruitment function of human resources management discussed in this study includes the stages of recruitment and selection. Traditionally, recruiters have options to search for new candidates; newspaper advertisements are in the form of purchasing databases from external sources or getting support from specialized human resources consultants who are headhunting to reach suitable candidates. However, it has recently become possible to use online tools. There are six basic methods to search for staff in a virtual environment. These are job posting sites, job posting collectors (gathering job postings from different platforms on a single platform), job and employment agencies, businesses' websites, specialized interview forums and social networking sites (Bohmova and Pavlicek, 2015: 24).

The selection phase should be organized in a way that it allows businesses to identify people with the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities and other qualifications. Such a strategic approach requires measuring the effectiveness of selection tools. The scientific evaluation criteria of selection methods appear as follows:

- The method should provide reliable information.
- The method should provide valid information.
- Selection criteria should be legal (Noe et al., 2011: 158-160).

However, while evaluating selection methods, criteria such as cost, speed, diversity and efficiency should also be taken into account. While reducing costs without sacrificing quality remains a managerial concern, how quickly the process takes place is another important criterion. Since different methods used in the recruitment process will reach different subgroups in different labor markets, the selection of the recruitment method of the enterprise may have important consequences in terms of the diversity of the candidate pool (Kulik T. C., 2004: 29-30). While the recruitment phase is the process of attracting people who fit these characteristics, the selection phase is to measure the differences between these candidates in order to find the person with the profile that best suits the person characteristics determined by their job description or characteristics. After all these contents are defined and decided, evaluation tests and interview methods are applied to candidates associated with their skills and personalities. The key point emerges as to find selection methods with valid and reliable characteristics that can distinguish good from bad employees (Newell, 2005: 116-127).

The interviews held during the selection phase are divided into two as pre and post interviews and their number varies from business to business. Here, it is suggested to the businesses that the interviewed candidate leaves the interview room at the end of the interview with positive feelings and thoughts about the business and a stronger desire to work. Otherwise, the candidate may damage the image and reputation of the business by sharing his negative views about the business in social and digital environments. In order to prevent this from happening, the candidate must be informed about the result in detail at the end of the interview with justifications. In the resume research conducted after all these stages are completed, it is aimed to avoid the costs that may arise from the recruitment

of the wrong person and to complete the process healthily. Previously, the only way for businesses to protect themselves from resume frauds and fake competency information was to request verification or proof from candidates before or after hiring (Mathis and Jackson, 1997: 268-270); today, such cross-checks can be performed using the facilities of social networking sites. Businesses also examine social network site profiles at this stage in order to observe the social behavior of candidates and obtain information that can support election decisions. Providing up-to-date information about the candidate, especially beyond the static resume, makes it attractive for businesses to choose to use these platforms at the selection stage. This usage also varies according to national and local legal regulations.

However, at this stage, businesses want to gain time and cost opportunities by using social network sites both for actions such as resume research and to conclude the recruitment process as soon as possible.

How the recruitment process is perceived by candidates also plays a critical role. Candidates can react very negatively to rejection decisions, regardless of how healthy and objective the election decisions are made. At the end of the selection phase, many people with negative outcomes may remain and many of them attribute this situation to the process rather than themselves. Businesses can reduce the negative perceptions of the process, but they cannot completely eliminate the negative feelings of rejected candidates. In this context, it is recommended for businesses to regularly observe the data that reveal their perceptions of recruitment tools. Maintaining interest in businesses is not only dependent on the efforts of the recruiters who are effective in the recruitment process of the businesses and the appearance validity of the procedures, it is also related to the actions of the competing companies in these matters (Farr and Tippins, 2010: 129-143). However, social networking sites, which play a key role in conveying the employer brand, which means the image created by business activities, to potential candidates in the labor market, also have a strategic importance. Just like the social influencers of society, the digital world has its own digital influencers. Users who can create active content on these platforms can create and spread positive and negative images about businesses by sharing their views in the digital world. The messages of digital influencers can affect the public more in terms of quantity and quality, as they are more sincere and attractive to people than corporate messages created and shared by businesses. In this context, enterprises consider the messages of digital influencers as part of their strategic communication processes and want to include social network site users in this process in order to increase the attractive effect of their corporate brands and images on potential candidates (Maden, 2018: 71-86). In summary, the image of businesses clearly affects the activities that attract potential candidates in the recruitment and selection process (Breugh and Starke, 2000: 410-431).

There is also a social aspect that does not appear in the evaluations of the candidate such as resume, test and interview. Today, social networking sites are used to monitor the social behavior of candidates. This use not only provides up-to-date information about the candidate and simultaneously with the recruitment process, it also improves and spreads the image of the business (Doğan, 2011:58).

3. MAJOR SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND ITS FEATURES

Social networking sites, which first appeared in 1997, are websites where people freely communicate, share and discuss information about each other and their lives (including multiple media in the form of personal information, pictures, videos and sounds) (Sharp, 2013: 6). According to another definition, they are internet-based applications that are built on the ideological

and technological foundations of Web 2.0 technology (the technology that allows everyone to shape websites) and based on the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009: 61). Most social networking sites also provide a mechanism for users to post messages on their friends' profiles. This salient feature is typically called „leaving comments” (Boyd and Ellison, 2008: 211-213). Users are encouraged to complete their profiles with praise and approval comments from their colleagues and customers about their performance or abilities (Chiang and Suen, 2015: 517).

Established in 2002 and started operating in 2003, LinkedIn has become the strongest among professional social networking sites and maintains this position today. Facebook was established in 2004 only for Harvard University members; it was made available to high school students in 2005, and finally to everyone in 2006. Twitter was established in 2006, allowing users to express themselves with short messages limited to a few sentences. With the increasing popularity of social networking sites around the world, many businesses supported social network sites, gave advertisements, and invested money and time (Boyd and Ellison, 2008: 213-218). According to the number of active monthly users in April 2018, the main social network sites available are; Facebook (~2.2 billion), YouTube (~1.5 billion), Instagram (~810 million), Tumblr (~780 million), Twitter (~330 million), LinkedIn (~260 million), Snapchat (~255 million), Pinterest (200 million) and Google+ (Statista, 2018). The total number of active users of social networking sites in the world, 3.1 billion, stated that the average prevalence is 42% compared to the population; Turkey is ranked twenty third with 63% (Reporter Global Digital Yearbook 2018: 51-54). In Turkey, the number of people between the ages 16 and 64 is 51 million, who are active users of social networking sites as specified. In a survey, occupancy rates of these users with social networking sites comprise Facebook 53%, Twitter 36% and LinkedIn 20% (Digital in Western Asia, 2018: 199). If a brief preliminary examination is made, it is seen that Facebook focuses on expressing and promoting itself, and LinkedIn is focused on professional performance and experience. If a user keeps his LinkedIn profile active while sharing very little personal information on Facebook, it is possible to say that he/she attaches importance to their privacy (Dijck, 2013: 211-212). In the light of this information, it seems possible that platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook can be used to observe the social behavior of employees and thus to evaluate their professional values. Below, the two main social network sites LinkedIn and Facebook will be briefly introduced as they are the common intersection point of the most commonly used sites in the recruitment process of recruiters and job seekers.

3.1. LinkedIn

Established in 2003 to create a professional business network, LinkedIn today continues to exist as the world's most used professional network among social networking sites with more than 550 million users in approximately 200 countries. At least one senior manager of each of the businesses on the Fortune 500 list is among its users. LinkedIn is an American-based enterprise, with nearly ten thousand staff and offices around the world, serving in twenty-four languages. Businesses upload job postings, job-seekers' job experiences, formal and vocational training, skills and abilities, and their resumes to the system. Thus, LinkedIn allows its users to make connections with each person in the social network where they can showcase their professional relationships in the real world. Users view the information of their connections and their connections, to question whether these connections work in a business they are interested in, to view the job opportunities suggested by the people in their connections, to review the profiles of the recruiters in their connections, to search businesses' pages to see female/male employee

ratios, the percentage of the most used titles and positions and current and former employees, and appreciating and congratulating the current developments on the job status of their contacts and their new positions. Since 2011, LinkedIn has allowed businesses to add an “Apply with LinkedIn” button on their job posting pages. Thus, potential employees were allowed to apply for open positions using their LinkedIn profiles as their resumes. Since 2012, a feature has been added that allows users to validate others’ abilities and skills. This feature also encourages users to create links by enabling them to effectively support comments on other users’ profiles. LinkedIn also has special platforms for job seekers and recruiters. Global businesses such as Nestle, Siemens, Amazon and Dropbox are working in connection with these platforms of LinkedIn (LinkedIn, 2018). The exposed personality traits of a LinkedIn user who is well connected, social, and also multi-skilled go far beyond what the simple qualities of a resume tell. In this context, recruiters are committed to finding the best future employee; and to employees as a new way to keep their eyes open for many open job positions and professional opportunities (Papakonstantinidis, 2014: 47).

3.2. Facebook

Facebook, which was established in 2004 in the United States by Marc Zuckerberg and his friends as a platform for Harvard University students, was soon opened to the use of other major universities such as Stanford, Columbia and Yale. The number of users of the site, which became available to everyone in 2006, reached a billion worldwide in 2012, and its administrators also bought Instagram, another popular platform among social networking sites. In 2015, it became a site where forty million small and medium-sized businesses have an active profile page and are used by approximately one billion people a day. In 2016, the messaging program alone was used by more than a billion people a month. In the same year, its application for businesses (Workplace for Facebook) was launched. As of the end of 2017, with more than twenty-five thousand employees, an average of 1.4 billion daily and 2.1 billion monthly active users and thirteen offices in the United States and forty-two offices in other countries, it has a dominant position as the most popular platform among social networking sites. Facebook has twenty-seven thousand employees worldwide (Facebook, 2018). 58% of approximately 2.1 billion users are between the ages of 18-34 (We Are Social, 2018). In a study conducted in fifteen countries with 1388 white-collar employees between the ages of 18-30, 1524 white-collar employees between the ages of 31-50 and 827 human resources employees, it was seen that the most preferred application for smartphones was Facebook (Cisco, 2014). According to „Facebook.com” statistics, more than half of active users regularly connect to Facebook every day. On average, every Facebook user has at least 130 friends and users spend more than seven hundred million minutes a month on the site (Facebook, 2017).

4. RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Social networking sites aim for combining the needs of their users to express and promote themselves. There are three stakeholders in the operation of social networking sites. Users build connections, showcase their skills and talents to different audiences; businesses obtain accurate information about the behavior of potential candidates and monitor the online behavior of their current employees; platform owners also want the connections to be maximized. Businesses use social networking sites for recruitment process and business communication purposes. Recruiters, on the other hand, want to be able to select prospective employees more accurately by going beyond static resumes. Naturally, businesses also use these various posts of social network

site users effectively when evaluating candidates for employment (Dijck, 2013: 211-212). It is necessary to understand that the presenting present on social networking sites today is not just a static situation similar to a store window like in the times of old internet technologies called „Web 1.0”. On the contrary, internet technologies called „Web 2.0” enable interaction during the recruitment process, and two-way communication is encouraged and supported. One of the main purposes of using social network sites is to ensure the continuity of business-related information and images (Micik and Eger, 2015: 271).

In order to provide an overview, the following table shows the use of traditional methods and social network sites in the recruitment process; nature of the interaction, talent pool and networking.

Table 1. Changes in Recruitment Practices

	Traditional Way	New Way
Nature of Interaction	Two-way communication (applicants send in resume, organizations sends feedback through hiring decision)	One-way communication (applicants send out a variety of signals that “cue” organizations to make decisions)
Talent Pool	Employers use geographically limited talent pool	Social media allows organizations to recruit from a geographically dispersed talent pool
Networking	Employers rely on word-of-mouth, recommendations or reputations to learn “true nature” of job candidates	Employers use social media to gain valuable information about job seekers, including attitudinal and individuating information

Source: Wade, 2015:4.

Below, different methods in the recruitment process and the advantages and disadvantages of these methods are compared.

Table 2. Comparing the Different Means of Recruitment

	Job board (jobs.cz)	FB	LinkedIn	Corporate websites
Kind of employees	junior and senior management, graduates	young people, graduates	specialists, senior and top management	active jobseekers
Advantages	many responses CV database seeking, almost non-limited advertisement	existence of digital footprint, increasing visitors of corporate FB page	CV presentation, references, circles of friends, interest groups	responses of active individuals who are interested in a particular company
Disadvantages	price, a large number of irrelevant responses	uncertainty that someone replies distrust in FB	activity must make HR	limited distribution low response

Source: Bohmova and Pavlicek, 2015: 29.

There is no doubt that social networking sites will continue to exist. For this reason, businesses need to understand fully the potential benefits and pitfalls. Thus, businesses and recruiters will be able to use the right social network tools that can meet their employment needs (Doherty, 2010: 12).

4.1. The Prevalence of Social Networking Sites

With the publication of the first articles on internet use in recruitment since the early 2000s in the academic literature, many things have changed in the field, which has significantly encouraged scientific research and business practices related to the recruitment process. While this situation causes many problems that still seem more important such as security, privacy, documentation, evaluation conditions control and access equality; with the emergence and increasing use of Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs, micro-blogs and other social networking sites, many other problems have surfaced. The main feature of applying these technological advances to the recruitment process is that these innovations allow a high degree of interaction between potential intermediaries such as businesses, recruiters, job seekers and third-party suppliers, and the parties can be highly involved in this online assessment (Nikolaou et al., 2015: 87).

Many studies have been conducted to determine the prevalence of social networking sites in the recruitment process of businesses. Valuable information and results have emerged from the research conducted by global management and consultancy institutions such as SHRM, Adecco, Randstad, Jobvite, Wilson HCG in the last decade. According to the research conducted by Adecco with seventeen thousand job seekers and fifteen hundred recruiters in twenty-four countries, five out of ten job seekers use social network sites to search for jobs, while seven out of ten recruiters use social networks for daily human resources activities. 29% of job seekers contacted human resources employees at least once through social network sites, and 9% received a job offer. LinkedIn (68%) and Facebook (52%) are among the most used social networking sites. Approximately 30% of human resources employees who use social network sites for recruitment have attended training courses on the subject (Adecco Group, 2017).

Jobvite conducted a survey in 2016 with 1600 recruiters from various sectors. According to the results, social networking sites are among the new methods to be invested to reach talented employees. As can be seen in the table below, in the expenditure budget allocated for the recruitment process, recruitment activities via social network sites appear as the third priority area to invest with a rate of 29%.



Figure 1. Where Recruiters Are Investing?

According to another study conducted among 2380 recruiters, 57% of the participants were less likely to call a candidate who does not have any social networking site membership, 54% decided not to hire a candidate based on the profile of the candidate on social networking sites. While half of their current employees check their social networking sites profiles, more than one third of them warned or fired their employees for inappropriate content on the social network sites, while 70% of the participants stated that they use social networking sites to eliminate candidates (Careerbuilder, 2017). In a study conducted with three hundred recruiters, 91% of the participants used Facebook (76%), Twitter (53%) and LinkedIn (48%) platforms to eliminate candidates during the recruitment process; 47% of them used after the application was received and 27% used it after the first interview with the candidate; while 69% stated that they rejected the candidates at least once based on the information they obtained from social networking sites, 26% stated that they never rejected; based on the information they obtained from social networking sites, 68% stated that they hired candidates at least once and 27% stated that they never recruited in this way (Reppler, 2011).

In a study in which 286 recruiters in the Czech Republic were asked „How do you reach new employees that you will recruit to your organization?“, 87% of the participants use job advertisements, 75% use the websites of their businesses, 61% are recommendations received through acquaintances; it was stated that 37% of them reached through internet research, 30% through advertisements they posted on social networking sites, and 28% advertised in the newspaper (Bohmova and Pavlicek, 2015: 28).

4.2. Antecedents and Outcomes of Using Social Networking Sites

The attitudes of the young generation towards work change with information technologies. Just as the needs and priorities of the next generation of employees affect the development of the labor market, how they adapt to these trends will affect the competitiveness of businesses in their struggles for talented employees in the future. Today, those born in 1980 and after, who use the Internet, mobile and information technologies quite often that even make them a lifestyle, work in middle and senior management positions and are the numerical majority in the labor market; it shapes the dynamics of the market according to the way this generation lives. Since the generation in question has never experienced a world without internet, information technologies are indispensable for them (Cisco, 2014). Another issue is that businesses want to save time and money is among the objectives of the recruitment process. However, this austerity policy does not affect the quality of job applicants. For this reason, it is the smart use of social network sites where more information is disclosed than that revealed in interviews and traditional recruitment process methods in order to ensure the continuity of the quality level of the candidates, although the costs that companies should focus on will decrease (Bohmova and Pavlicek, 2015: 24-25).

Another example of the use of social networking sites to reveal information is that they can be used for macro-scale labor market analyzes, just like data mining. This situation occurs in terms of businesses as monitoring the labor market and using it in the decision-making processes of the business (Seçer and Seçer, 2017: 1091, 1101). In another study conducted with sixteen recruiters from six different countries, as a result of semi-structured interviews with the participants, four main factors were revealed as the factors affecting the use of social network sites in the recruitment process: organizational predisposition, adaptation to change, competition and individual motivation of human resources employees. The research participants had an interest in the use of social networking sites in the recruitment process and this interest increased as they read about human resources, the recruitment process and social network sites. They found many interesting ways to

search for candidates with social network sites by writing their own experiences and stated that these are slowly shifting themselves to the use of social networking sites in the recruitment process. In the process of adaptation to social network sites, the decisions of businesses to use social network sites are taken to determine the legitimacy of businesses in social networks in the labor market with the change in the technological habits of job seekers who use these sites and expect recruiters to use them (Quirdi, 2016: 54). In addition, the legal regulations and legislations of the countries regarding social network sites are among the important determinants affecting the usage.

In addition, recruiters were asked what the positive and negative consequences of using social network sites during the recruitment process were, and in line with the answers given, the results were divided into two categories as operational and relational. Time and cost, the opportunity to reach the targeted wider audience and the quality of the candidates were determined as operational results. Besides; they reported three relational results, such as proximity to candidates, social orientation of employees, and the emergence of negative reputational risks (Cisco, 2014: 5-13. Bohmova & Pavlicek, 2015: 24-25. Seçer and Seçer, 2017: 1091,1101. Quirdi, 2016: 54. Kroeze, 2015: 8,9. Quirdi, 2016: 58-60. Nikolaou et al., 2015: 88. Bohmova & Pavlicek, 2015: 28. Kluemper, 2013: 1-11. Kroeze, 2015: 8,9).

4.3. Opportunities and Threats of Using Social Networking Sites

Issues arising from the use of social network sites during the recruitment process are in a wide range of privacy, discrimination, negligent hiring, validity, reliability, generalizability, impact management, candidate responses and relevance. The problem of criterion validity regarding which criteria will be interpreted, in other words, how to predict unobserved and unknown situations from observed and analyzed situations is also one of the discussed topics. There is a need for academic research to study this phenomenon in order to discover whether the use of social network sites in the recruitment process is valid or not. Recruiters should also be aware that there is little evidence available on this important issue. Recruiters intuitively use social networking sites, but their approach does not yield valid and legally defensible results; therefore, this situation acts like a warning. There are also various issues such as lack of reliability, low generalizability and impact management that could undermine the scientific validity of this method. For example, some candidates may have used personal branding and designed their profiles for networking for business opportunities. This is about impact management and can be detrimental to validity. There may be negative reactions of candidates due to informational, procedural, sociocultural and individual factors regarding the use of social network sites during the recruitment process. As a result, negative organizational consequences such as low job acceptance rates, tendency of candidates to resort to legal remedies and damage to the image of the company may occur (Kluemper, 2013: 1-11).

One of the main advantages of social networking sites for recruiters is that they provide the opportunity to reach and attract passive candidates. With the presence of LinkedIn, passive candidates, like active job seekers, create and update their professional profiles, hoping that this will bring them closer to recruiters and job opportunities, even if they are not actively seeking jobs or responding to job opportunities (Nikolaou, 2014: 179). It is wise for businesses to standardize their evaluations and use multiple evaluators in the use of social networking sites during the recruitment process as that will help to provide more validity (Ballweg et al., 2018: 176). Checking the validity of the information obtained through social networking sites during the recruitment process is another smart method to do. No research so far has examined the content validity of information collected by businesses. Without validity provided by well-documented evidence,

profile scans of recruiters will remain vague on an unreliable basis. Moreover, this may lead to undocumented discriminatory behaviors (Kroeze, 2015: 8).

In another study, the participants stated that they found social networking sites useful because they allowed them to „get to know the candidate beyond the resume”. This situation says, “What happens on social networking sites tells a lot about who you are as an individual, what you tweet, write, and share. Your paper resume is what you do; however, your social background is detailed with the view of who you are. This social resume enables recruiters to evaluate closely the culture of the business and candidate compatibility, thus positively affecting the retention of employees in the following periods. Some of the participants stated their opinions as, „It has been determined that the candidate is more likely to work for a longer period in the business than other employment methods due to cultural adaptation in such recruitment through social channels.” Participants have limited reach to a specific target audience of recruiters, due to the difficulty of identifying suitable candidates within the right social networking sites, or because excessive use of social networking sites can affect visibility to a small and targeted audience amongst the flow of content generated by a large user base. (Quirdi, 2016: 54,55,60).

The use of this information in decision-making processes has raised the question of whether it will lead to unethical use against candidates who have widely available information such as race, gender and religion preferences on these sites (Kluemper and Rosen, 2009: 567). In his study, Kroeze mentions that there are opinions that persons lose their privacy rights when they send their information to social network sites (Kroeze, 2015: 4), which seems to be valid for Turkey as well. In Turkey, according to Law, No. 6698 issued in 2016, on Personal Data Protection of Personal Data, if their information is made public by themselves, it can be processed without requiring explicit consent. The word „public” is in the article of the law; since it is defined as „Open, in the middle, in the square, in the public” in the Current Dictionary of the Turkish Language Association, it is concluded that the information shared through social network sites became public (Official Gazette, 2017; Turkish Language Association/TDK 2019). For this reason, it seems possible to process all kinds of information of candidates on social network sites without the consent of the person during the recruitment process. As a result, there is a need for research on the ethical consequences of the possibility of recruiters’ use of social networking sites as a discriminatory tool, because many social network site profiles contain illegal information to be questioned during job interviews (Vicknair et al., 2010: 10).

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1. Aim

In the study, it is aimed to discover to what extent and how new techniques are involved in the use of social network sites in the recruitment process for sustainable competitive advantage, in one of the leading businesses in the tourism sector. With the aim of providing empirical data on the question of how businesses and job seekers can benefit from the integration of social networking sites into professional recruitment processes, the following assumptions have been made:

Assumption 1: Social networking sites are effective in the recruitment process.

Assumption 2: The use of social networking sites in the recruitment process has advantages in strengthening communication, time and cost.

Assumption 3: The use of social network sites in the recruitment process has negative image and unethical usage disadvantages.

5.2. Sampling, Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative research methods were used in the study. As seen in previous studies on social networking sites and the recruitment process (Nikolaou, 2014; Papakonstantinidis, 2014 and Quiridi, 2016), the primary data were obtained with a research design consisting of two parts: 1) Focus groups, 2) In-depth interviews, using the non-probabilistic purposeful sampling method, as seen in many qualitative studies; for the individuals to be interviewed, the criterion of whether they are related to the research subject or not was considered. Purposeful sampling rather than representing the universe allows in-depth studies of situations that have rich content. While the focus group interview was conducted as a convenience sampling, in-depth interviews were conducted using the typical case sampling method. In this context, with semi-structured interview forms prepared in the light of literature research, two focus group interviews were conducted with eight people who use social network sites at an average at national level (almost every day) and who have been looking for a job in the labor market including the tourism sector for an average year. 75% of participants were female and groups' average age was 26. All of them had bachelor's degree and were about to finish their master's degree. They were looking for a job in human resources department related to their higher education. Job seekers were asked which elements they pay attention on social network websites' corporate pages and how they are used in the job search process. In these interviews, it was tried to reveal which subjects the job seekers focused on while obtaining information about businesses on social networking sites and what they were paid attention to with content analysis. Besides, in-depth interviews were conducted with two human resources managers of one of the biggest holdings of Turkey (selected by typical case sampling based on the number of employees size group; businesses with two hundred and fifty employees or more) that has tourism & travel agency, is a member of TÜRSAB (Turkey Travel Agencies Association) and IATA (International Air Transport Association), and the collected data were subjected to content analysis. Qualitative methods are seen as the ones that will lead to the most appropriate result in studies where the main thing is the situation studied (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011: 51).

The triangulation method was made by using more than one method in order to contribute to its validity and reliability and to be closer to objectivity. The qualitative data obtained as a result of these methods were analyzed with Maxqda 12 software program. The coding process was carried out by two independent researchers. Consensus between coders; it is calculated as ~ 75.86% for in-depth interviews and ~ 87.93% for focus group interviews. The agreed code list was sent to an associate professor at the university for review.

The methodology followed is shown schematically in the figure below.

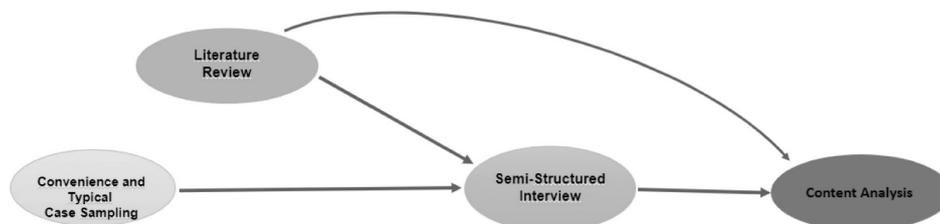


Figure 2. Research Method

The two major social network sites are the common intersection points of the most widely used sites in the world in the recruitment process and the most frequently used by job seekers in the job search process; LinkedIn and Facebook have been studied.

6. FINDINGS

After coding, the following themes about the use of social network sites in the recruitment process were reached by the researcher.

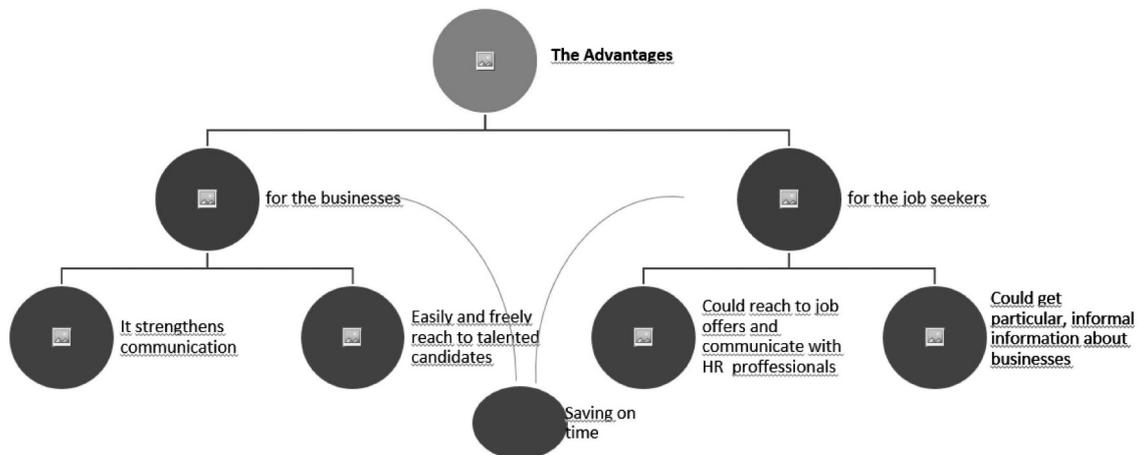


Figure 3. The Theme of Advantages

Under the theme of benefits, the following answers were taken from the recruiters in the in-depth interviews:

“... it can be much easier to open yourself up to all of your stakeholders, that is, to strengthen communication and reach them. As I said in the Human Resources section, I have a project team, and a friend at the head of corporate communication, they do very good things. Really, if you go to LinkedIn and follow something, we have a lot of following. No ads, nothing, I don’t allocate a budget, but we have a lot of followers and we are good at that. Upon that, our recruitment and stuff got stronger as an employer brand... ,”

“... We think it is a low cost and fast way.”

“... We use social media to reach candidates about our vacancies and to direct them to the application platform by giving brief information about the position. In addition, we share perception enhancing issues about our brand, such as the awards we have received and our achievements, with our followers through these tools...”

Coding was made about strengthening communication, providing easy and free access to talented employees and saving time.

Also, given in the focus group meeting with job seekers:

“... Because posts spread faster, they can be reached more quickly on social media, everyone can reach them, and we have the opportunity to see them immediately. We get to know the companies better in that respect...”

“... Because their posts spread spontaneously on social media, they come before us spontaneously...”

“... LinkedIn is a lot on that subject, so you see all the managers where they work. If we wish, we can also ask questions via messaging...”

“... There are posts, for example, they post their views or something. You can also notice what kind of opinion he has, which is actually a nice thing...”

“... We use it effectively. The job postings section of LinkedIn is a good opportunity to reach different open positions...”

In the light of his views, coding has been carried out to provide access to job postings, contact with recruiters and access to specific and distinctive information about businesses. In this context, it is seen that the findings obtained support the first and second assumptions of the research.

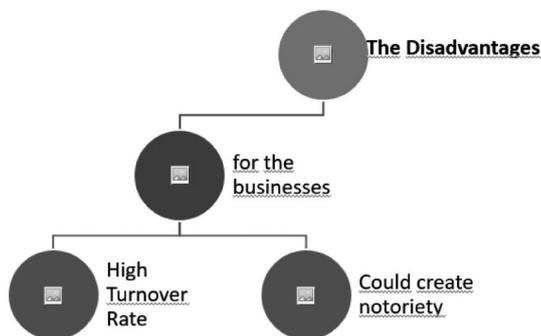


Figure 4. The Theme of Disadvantages

While there is no negative opinion about job seekers in coding under the disadvantages them, coding such as the formation and spread of bad reputation related to businesses,

“... You manage the perception, or you actually post a truth on a social media, but the power of the media is so great that it is a very serious power now. It is a very powerful tool for accessing information. There may be things you do not want in perception management...”

“... social media is also a very dangerous thing, in terms of its spread...”

was carried out in the light of opinions. In the light of these findings; it was concluded that the third hypothesis of the research is partially confirmed.

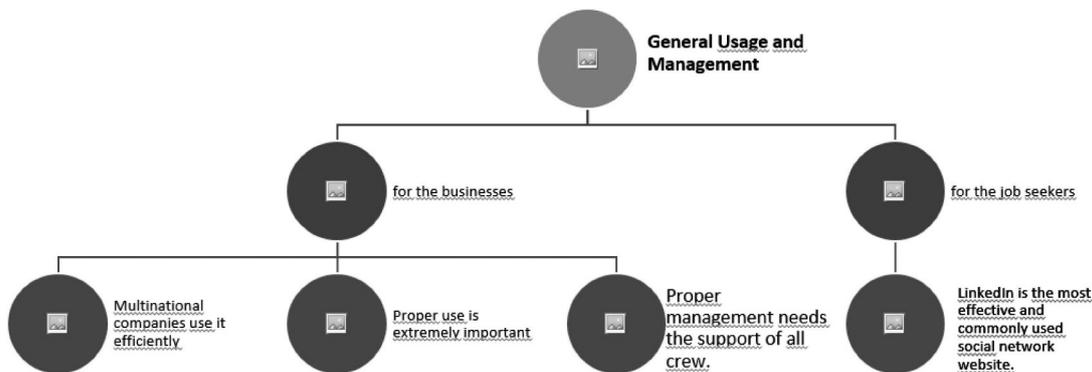


Figure 5. The Theme of General Usage and Management

The current situation under the theme of management and general use is that correct use and management is very important for businesses such as:

“... or even if you allocate this budget, if the organization cannot carry the profiles that manage it correctly, it is not enough to have an account there. I’m telling you again, you have to manage them correctly. In order to manage these places correctly, they must be at the top and bottom of your institution. So, what do I mean? It’s the right process in the head of the founder or general manager, CEO, so you go out and say my company is doing this and that, you can say because you see a path in front of it. When you say without seeing it, there is a possibility that this time „he said this, but it happened like this...”

“... Therefore, you should not only have an account, but also be able to manage that social media properly. It is possible with the right staff and the right things. I mean, imagine that you did a mass layoff after two months saying that we are doing very well or something.”

“... I think that behind a perception must be managed with real projects and knowledge...”

while being coded by means of expressions, for job seekers, LinkedIn is the most used social network site,

“... Since it is a very official site, such a supplement application is useful... There is a lot of redundant information on other sites, but because there are higher-level people on LinkedIn, their suggestions are less and more likely to enter...”

“... and this is also very useful. The e-mails constantly come from these applications. I constantly search for HR and I receive e-mails when there is a human resources announcement. This is actually useful for job seekers. „

“... You are already notified of similar postings you are looking for...”

“... Actually, for example, I registered for it this year; I started to use that media actively. Actually, I think it’s good. When we add the necessary people, since I just opened, there are about 350 people I know there, about 300 of them are on HR. I also added HR friends of my friends, I added experts etc. They share as much as they can. You know, they share job applications, for example, they will get mechanical engineers, they should send an e-mail to HR or customer service or something. I remember that I only sent over fifty or sixty e-mails there directly to people and I also get a return. You know, I think LinkedIn is active...”

“... Important for communicating with employees...”

“... Exactly. I think it is something that is done to reach a higher-level people and communicate with them in some way...”

“... That’s what I did from LinkedIn. Knowing all my managers and the backgrounds of all my managers, I was very comfortable when I got to work. After all, I knew who and where to go. ... LinkedIn has a lot of things about it, so you see all the managers where they work...”

“... There are posts, for example, where they share their views or something. You can also notice what kind of opinion he has, which is actually a nice thing. ,, appears with his views from interviews...”

6. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The study has limitations such as the limited number of interviewees. In future studies, it seems possible to reach other dimensions by interviews with more people. In summary, more academic studies need focusing on the use of social network sites in the recruitment process. Thus, it will enable both parties, career seekers and businesses, to reveal the accompanying opportunities and threats more clearly.

7. CONCLUSION

In this research, to what extent and how social network sites affect job seekers' behavior consisting of the job search process was investigated along with the access status of businesses to the target audience in terms of quality and quantity, cost and time factors, the depth of the information obtained about candidates. In addition, the criteria for job seekers to reach businesses and by businesses to job seekers, the premises and results of the use of social networking sites in the recruitment process are examined together in the tourism sector.

It is possible to summarize the results to be obtained from the research findings as follows. When the findings are analyzed:

- In the recruitment process, social network sites are effective tools used for specific purposes for both recruiters and job seekers.
- Using social networking sites is beneficial in terms of saving time and money. At the same time, it has been observed that it provides support in terms of reaching candidates and strengthening communication for both parties.
- In terms of businesses, when it is poorly managed, it can damage the business and its image. In terms of job seekers, no obvious disadvantages were found. On the other hand, it has many advantages such as accessing job offers and recruiters. In addition, there was no evidence of unethical use; therefore, the third assumption was partially supported. The research also found that LinkedIn is the most used social networking site, where job seekers obtain distinctive information about businesses. The presence in LinkedIn is distinctive for those organizations (Carpentier et al., 2019: 32). In addition, some additional findings have been found which are not included in the literature, such as the importance of correct use for businesses, and the necessity of the participation of all personnel for effective management have been reached. In this context, it is possible to say that the study brings new dimensions to the subject matter.

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