

## IMPROVE YOUR SOCIAL NETWORK AND HAVE THE ADVANTAGE IN THE EMPLOYMENT SEEKING PROCESS

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### ABSTRACT

Human resource management uses social networks to identify new employees. This research investigates if people use social networks to identify employment opportunities and how they improve their networks to get easier and quicker access to information and resources. Researchers worldwide devote their attention to different aspects of identification of new employees via social networks. The authors of the paper have done empirical research based on an online survey with 298 respondents, and the data obtained from the survey has been analysed using various statistical tools. The number of suitable candidates for employment is decreasing and companies need knowledge about the employment seeking process to have an effective and efficient recruiting strategy. This paper studies the information channel on employment possibilities, i.e. social network, and how individuals develop and improve their networks for the employment seeking process. Moreover, the authors analyse how people use social networks in the employment seeking process compared with other channels on possible employment opportunities.

KEYWORDS: *social networks, employment seeking process, communication channel, human resource management.*

JEL CODES: L14, D83, O15.

DOI:

### Introduction

Academic researchers worldwide analyse different aspects of the use of social networks for getting information on employment opportunities, as social networks are taking more and more important role in obtaining information. The current paper reflects research analysis on the use of social networks in the employment seeking process and analyses how individuals improve their social networks for the employment seeking process (Feuls, Fieseler, Suphan, 2014). The research investigates the reason why using of social networks is the benefit and interesting option for individuals. The authors seek to identify the importance of the employment seeking process compared with other opportunities to use social networks as it is reflected in previous research publications (Han, Han, 2009). The empirical part of the paper reflects the results of the survey on the topic “employment seeking process”. Respondents for the survey were selected and invited to participate in the research on the field of human resource management aiming to investigate how individuals use social networks and improve their social networks for possible employment identification. The paper also presents the survey results about the use of real social networks for the employment seeking process. The survey in-

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cludes questions about types of events, which help to improve creation, development and maintenance of social networks taking into account that individuals can create new ties and make their network grow, or they just can get more benefits from the networks (Wegge, Vandebosch, Eggermont, Walrave, 2014). However, for network members there is important the size and the power of social networks. Also, there are different opportunities to improve the network. The research is concentrating on the events related to employment seeking and opportunities to improve the network for the employment seeking process. There were investigated online and offline opportunities that can improve the real social network of individuals.

The problem of the article. The labour market is changing and digitalization changes society. Especially in Germany, there exists a structure of age distribution which heavily influences the labour market. This paper presents deeper analysis about the usefulness of social networks seeking to identify employment opportunities. Social networks are an opportunity to identify suitable and well educated individuals who are in relationship with current employees. That can support companies to improve their recruiting process and to be successful in recruiting top talents.

Companies have employer referral programs to support their recruiting strategy. Those companies use the social networks of their employees to get in touch with potential candidates and to identify suitable candidates.

The authors investigating the suitability and benefits of social networks raise a few problematic questions: “How do individuals improve their social networks for the employment seeking process?” and “How do they use social networks in the employment seeking process compared with other opportunities?”

The object of the article is social networks used in the employment seeking process.

The purpose of this article is to improve social networks for the employment seeking process for people with different social status.

The tasks of the article:

- 1) To analyse scientific publications and research results explaining social capital theory by using networks in the employment seeking process and investigating membership in social networks;
- 2) To identify employment opportunities using social networks and reveal how one can easily and quickly access information and resources by social networks;
- 3) To investigate the differences by gender and social status when using social networks in search for employment.

The research methods: analysis of scientific literature, survey, survey data analysis by indicators of descriptive statistics, statistical hypothesis testing with t-test and analysis of variance – ANOVA. Data analysis was performed using SPSS program.

## 1. Theoretical background: social capital theory and the use of networks in the employment seeking process

There is a large amount of research conducted on social networks and their application, because the importance of networks in recent years is growing daily. Social networks comprise a group of individuals and provide opportunities to exchange information and resources. The membership in a social network provides prestige to its member and the chance to get support in the employment seeking process (Provan, Fish, Sydow, 2007; Borgatti, Mehra, Brass, Labianca, 2009). The chance to get a signal about employment opportunity is greater for individuals who have many connections in different networks. Individuals are members in many networks and select their network to their preference and needs (Burt, 2001). They are using different networks depending on their needs, desires and situation. There are different opportunities to improve and use networks (Sharabi, Simonovich, 2017).

The importance of relationships in looking for an interesting position by social networks is explained in many research projects. There are many advantages if companies can recruit individuals via social networks because they know that their employees recommend only valuable candidates. The candidates know the company and get additional information about the position and company, which is very useful (Sander, Sloka, 2016). That supports the selection process of a new possible job position for potential candidates. Further, the investigated research revealed that recommended employees more often get higher compensa-

tion or interesting tasks. Also, the prestige of the employee, who recommends a new colleague is increasing in the company. Companies can use the employee referral program to get a new communication channel to potential candidates and access to needed candidates (Kilbane, 2004).

Networks are defined in this paper as a group of people with connections. The objective of a network can be private, e.g., sport club, or professionally related, e.g., guild or a group of individuals with similar interests, for instance, a group of students from the same course. The connections between individuals and a position in the network can have different structures. The structure of the network can enable people to have more benefits than other network members (Castells et al., 2004; Burt, 2000). Individuals are in many different networks.

The social capital theory is a network theory, which explains how networks operate and the reasons why individuals use social networks. As it was mentioned in scientific publications, the most important reason of individuals to use networks is trust. Network members trust each other on the main and most important aspects of their values and that enables them to share and exchange information and resources (Adler, Kwon, 2002; Bakker, Leenders, Gabbay, Kratzer, Engelen, 2006). The theory explains that individuals share information and resources because that creates obligations or they have another benefit from exchanging resources and information, e.g., they can influence somebody to apply for an open position. They invest in the network because they expect to get something back for their investment in the future. Another reason to share information is to influence other individuals and that provides an advantage, for example, for recruiter post in groups at social network sites open positions to motivate their connections to apply for a position (Wasko, 2005). This kind of recruiting reduces the transaction costs for employer and candidates. The potential candidate and employees have via the network similar cultural background which makes the communication more quickly and easily, avoid misunderstanding and reduce the time to communicate (Fussell, Harrison-Rexrode, Kennan, Hazleton, 2006). The employment of a friend has a benefit for the employee because the employee gets the support from this friend and creates obligations. That increases the power of the employee who refers friends and improves the reputation. The value of the connection can be defined with the access to beneficial resources and information. The tie between two individuals can be strong or weak. The strength of the tie depends on the closeness of the two participants e.g. experience with each other, time to know each other and how the two individuals are embedded in the network (Granovetter, 1973; Schilling, 2012). The theory expects that individuals use the networks to have an advantage and they can use their networks to reach an objective.

The social capital is part of the social network and social capital theory explains the operations of social networks. The influence of social capital on the employment seeking process and importance of social networks is researched very well (Erickson, 2001; Granovetter, 1995). The research investigates the influence of new technologies to improve the real social network and if social networks are still important in the employment seeking process. The importance and power of social networks is the quickly and easily access to individuals. The distance between unknown individuals are round about six degrees. That means that anybody can get in touch with an unknown person via six connections (Shu, Chuang, 2011). The size of the network increases the chance to reach somebody quickly and easily. This is a reason for individuals to increase their network and to use events or tools that their network is growing (Hampton, Wellman, 2001). That is the power of networks which companies would like to use and to get via the network of their employees' access to millions of potential candidates. Another advantage is that individuals trust the information which is provided by the networks and the information of networks have a deeper influence on individuals compared with official information from companies.

The general reason to join and use social networks is the exchange of information and resources as a benefit for individuals. The exchange is a kind of social capital (Teh, Huah, Si, 2014; McDonald, 2011). The companies are in competition to identify suitable candidates. Official representatives of human resources management need to know how to use recruiting channels efficient and effective (Sander, Teh, Majláth, 2015). The search for talents is difficult and the number of suitable candidates decreasing. This support the human resources management and for this department it is very important to know how and why individuals use social networks (Beaman, Magruder, 2012; Fernandez, Castilla, 2001). Those companies can support their employees to improve and increase their networks. That they get more access to other well educated individuals, that companies can use the social network of their employees. Some companies ask their em-

ployees to publish on social network sites company relevant information to advertise their products or open positions for example (Li, Bernoff, 2011). The importance of social networks is important for the daily life for individuals and has an influence on the society.

The paper includes results of empirical studies based on methodological approach that is widely used in other countries (Evans, Mathur, 2005; Wright, 2005) and this approach is also used in our research.

## 2. Investigation of membership in social networks: results of empirical analysis

The empirical part of the study on using of social networks in the employment seeking process is based on a survey conducted in Germany. The target group were young people and students who belong to the generation of social networks and are in the process of seeking for employment.

The method used for investigation was an online survey designed to answer the research question. The invitation to participate in the survey and the link to it was distributed in October-November of 2016 seeking to investigate the employment seeking process. Seeking to receive participant evaluation the evaluation scale from 1 to 6 was used (where 1 – the highest evaluation and 6 – the lowest evaluation), which corresponds to the evaluation applied in German schools. The research was done in cooperation with a project at the University of Ludwigshafen, inspired by methodological approach widely used in other countries (Evans, Mathur, 2005; Wright, 2005). The scale used to evaluate the factors was chosen from one to six, because this scale corresponds to the German school mark system. Thus it made easier for German people to evaluate the answers as they were familiar with this scale. The survey had 298 respondents from Germany and the participants were mainly under 30 years.

The two questions which were used in this paper for empirical research part were “Why do you need social networks?” and “How important are the following factors seeking to improve your network?”. Both questions are part of a survey, which is under the focus of employment seeking and employer branding topics.

The first question “Why do you need social networks?” had the response categories as: “only for private reasons”; “to search for employment”, “to exchange information” and “to cultivate business contacts”. The participants evaluated their answers on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 stands for ‘anytime’ and 6 – for ‘never’. The results of this question provide deeper results about the prominence of social networks and why individuals use social networks. The results on the response “to search for employment” has especially big importance in finding out if social networks are used in the employment seeking process today. Business contacts are an important source to acquire potential employment opportunities. The reason to provide the answer “only for private reasons” is to investigate the importance of networks in the employment seeking process. The answers provide the opportunity to compare the motivation of using social networks when seeking for employment and for private reasons. It could be that people use social networks to identify employment opportunities but the main reason to be a member in social networks are not related to employment. Probably people are not aware about the potential of social networks. A search for a job is not a reason for them to join a network and at the first moment it does not seem as benefit for identification in networks employment opportunities. As it was mentioned above, the most common reason to join and use social networks is the exchange of information and resources, which is benefit for individuals. The exchange of information via social networks is a kind of social capital (Teh, Huah, Si, 2014; McDonald, 2011). *Exchange of information* as a factor in the question is an additional tool to compare the order of importance for people in using social networks. It helps to evaluate how important the employment seeking process is compared with the general exchange of information.

There are different opportunities to improve networks of individuals. This paper compares two different opportunities to improve social networks. One way to improve the network of an individual is to enter new networks or to amplify existing networks (Routledge, Amsberg, 2003). The second analysed question is “How important are the following factors seeking to improve your network?”. The evaluated factors are events and tools to improve the network. The research is related to employment seeking and therefore the factor “job fairs” is considered. Job fairs are exhibitions for companies to present their company, culture and open positions to potential candidates and to transfer information about their employer branding. It helps

people to be aware about the company and companies to receive special attention from potential candidates. Those fairs are intended mainly for graduates and students. Individuals can visit job fairs to get in touch with companies, especially recruiters, to create a network with the company. This network can be useful to identify employment opportunities, also, the meeting at the booth at the job fair can be used to present themselves to a company. Social media, e.g., *LinkedIn*, is an important place to identify valuable individuals searching for job. A tool of social media support individuals in exchanging and sharing of information, and it serves for enlargement of social networks (Chiang, Suen, 2015). Internal networks in companies are very important for career success. Those individuals create a network in a company to get access to career relevant information, e.g. open positions. The assumption is that individuals improve their chance to get information about employment opportunities with the creation of ties among employees in companies. Individuals with a good network in companies can influence other individuals and have power of knowledge because they receive more information, quickly and easily (Provan et al., 2007). The next item to improve the network for the employment seeking process is alumni clubs. Alumni clubs are organisations with former students of a university. For example, these networks support their former university and students seeking to identify employment. The membership in these clubs can help individuals to identify employment or the employment opportunity. The power and importance of alumni networks has been deeply researched stating them as a good place to identify employment opportunities (Ibarra, Hunter, 2007). The last analysed factor is maintaining contacts. It suggests that current social networks need investment. Moreover, individuals gain the benefits from networks: for example, a chance to identify employment. The identification and use of new contacts in existing networks is one alternative to improve the chance to identify employment opportunities (Kim, Lee, Elias, 2015). Another alternative to improve networks of individuals is to maintain the already existing contacts. That increases the size of the social network and strengthens ties between the network members. A strong tie is useful to get more and beneficial information, e.g. confidential information.

### 3. Method used to investigate the research field

As it has been mentioned above respondents who were selected for participation in the survey were invited to fill in an online survey. There is a bias with the gender distribution. Mainly higher educated individuals took part in the research. There were 42.76% of respondents who reported they were students. This group can use alumni clubs to support their employment seeking process. Also, 28.52% of participants had a university degree and 28.86% of respondents had a practical training degree. Education is important to identify valuable employment in Germany. The demographic details are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of demographic indicators of respondents: age, social status, educational level and gender (in %)

Age n = 298	Results in %	Social status n = 297	Results in %	Educational level n = 298	Results in %
under 21	9.06	Employed	43.10	No degree	0.34
21 – 25	48.99	Unemployed	2.69	School degree	28.86
26 – 30	13.42	Student	42.76	Apprenticeship degree	42.28
31 – 35	8.38	School student	9.09	University degree	28.52
36 – 40	2.34	Retired	2.36		
41 – 45	4.36				
46 – 50	1.67	<b>Gender</b> n = 295	Results in %		
51 – 55	5.03	Men	38.3		
over 55	6.71	Women	61.7		

Note: Tom Sander conducted a survey in 2017 (n = 298).

Especially under consideration are evaluations on “a period of time passed after the respondent’s last search for employment”. Those two demographic factors have the largest influence on the current situation of individuals, especially on the employment seeking process. Social networks need investments to operate and get benefits from the network. Therefore, the authors made the assumption: “If investment into search for employment is far away in history, then this issue has less influence on the use of networks in the employment seeking process”. Table 2 presents statistical distribution (in %) the respondents’ information on the indicator “period of time that passed after the respondents’ last search for employment”.

Table 2. A period of time that passed after the respondent’s last search for employment (in %)

Answers	Results in %
I have never searched for work	24.9
Less than six months	31.7
More than six month, less than twelve months	11.6
More than twelve month, less than two years	9.6
More than two years and less than three years	5.1
More than three years	17.1

Note: Tom Sander conducted a survey in 2017 (n = 239).

The survey data has been analysed using indicators of descriptive statistics: median, mean, mode, standard deviation, range. LSD ANOVA was applied seeking to evaluate the differences in evaluations by several demographic factors, whereas t-test was used to evaluate the differences between the evaluations by gender; correlation analysis was also applied. The paper presents only statistically significant results.

#### 4. Statistical results

A social network is an important communication place and provide benefits to their members. The first question in the survey was “Why do you need social networks?” This paper concentrates on the benefits that individuals in Germany gain being members of social networks. The research concentrates on the employment seeking process and the results demonstrate two tendencies: the evaluations show a tendency that respondents have never (evaluation – 6) “searched for employment” and “cultivated business contacts” via social networks. It means that the most often chosen evaluation by the respondents was 6 which suggests that the respondents do not use social networks for exchanging or sharing of relevant business content. However, the other two statements “only for private reasons” and “to exchange information” received evaluation ‘1’, i.e. they use social networks for the mentioned reasons anytime. The results of the evaluations by respondents on the all main statistical indicators are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Main statistical indicators on evaluations of responses to the question “Why do you need social networks?”

Statistical indicators	Only for private reasons	To search for employment	To exchange information	To cultivate business contacts
n	288	285	284	280
Mean	2.16	3.93	2.54	4.05
Median	2	4	2	4
Mode	1	6	1	6
Std. Deviation	1.355	1.720	1.509	1.721
Range	5	5	5	5

Note: Tom Sander conducted a survey in 2017 (n = 239). Evaluation scale 1–6: where 1 – anytime; 6 – never.

Over 83.7% of respondents chose the first three stages on the evaluation scale for the statement “only for private reasons” and this statement has the strongest tendency to ‘anytime’ (evaluation – 1). The second place (77.5% of respondents’ answers) received the evaluation of the statement “exchange of information”. All the tendencies are presented in Figure 1.

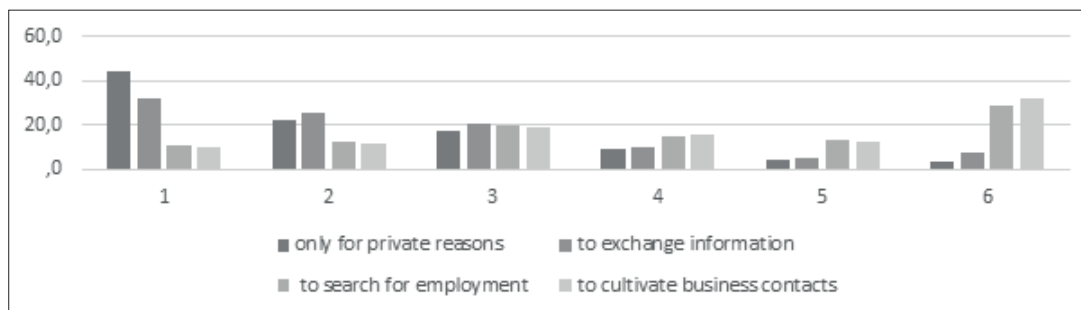


Fig. 1. Distribution of evaluations by respondents on the question “Why do you need social networks?”

Note: Tom Sander conducted a survey in 2017 (n = 288). Evaluation scale 1–6: where 1 – anytime; 6 – never.

However, quite a different situation is observed with business related statements. There are 56.9% of the evaluations on the last three stages for the statement “search for employment”. The evaluations by respondents for the statement “cultivate business contacts” are on the last three places on the evaluation scale (59.8%) and have the strongest tendency to ‘never’ (evaluation – 6). This is an interesting result from the point of view of human resource management.

The next question asks “to evaluate the opportunities which are used to improve the network”. Seeking to improve the network in the employment seeking process investments can be made using different opportunities. There are different applications of these opportunities. One of the most important tools to improve the value of the network is “maintaining private contacts” when median of the evaluations is ‘2’ and mode – ‘1’. Median ‘2’ and mode ‘2’ received “social media” and “efforts to improve the network within a company”, i.e., social media and colleagues’ contacts are used to support the development of networks. It helps to set valuable connections and enhances opportunities to get a valuable position. On the next place with median ‘3’ and mode ‘2’ are “job fairs”. *Job fair* events do not help to improve the network of individuals and are not as good at creating chances to be employed compared with the other statements mentioned before. The “job fair” is a place where companies try to get in touch with people to offer them employment opportunities: these fairs help companies to hire new talents, create a talent pool or provide a chance to get in touch with companies and learn more about them. However, the respondents do not evaluate job fairs as a place where they can create ties with companies for their future career. The last in the evaluation list are “alumni clubs” with median and mode ‘4’. It suggests that alumni clubs of universities are not providing the expected value for the respondents and do not improve their network greatly compared with the other opportunities.

On the evaluation scale, 88.8% of the respondents selected the statement “maintaining private contacts”. The majority of the respondents agree that social networks are important in maintaining friendship and connections. The advantage to create a network within companies or via social media is positively rated on the first three stages of the evaluation scale: respectively 82.7% and 79.2% of the respondents’ answers. This is a significant vote and demonstrates how important this advantage is in the improvement of social networks. The most unimportant places to improve the network are “job fairs” with 45.3% of responses and “alumni clubs” with 59.9% of responses on the first three levels of the evaluation scale. The gap between the places is observed in detail in Figure 2. The best place to improve the network is the use and maintenance of the existing network.

Table 4. Main statistical indicators of respondents' evaluation on the question "How important are the following factors seeking to improve your network?"

Statistical indicators	Job fair	Social media e.g. LinkedIn	Internal networks in companies	Alumni clubs	Maintaining private contacts
n	289	289	287	287	291
Mean	3.39	2.60	2.48	3.67	2.02
Median	3	2	2	4	2
Mode	2	2	2	4	1
Std. Deviation	1.567	1.356	1.458	1.523	1.205
Range	5	5	5	5	5

Note: Tom Sander conducted a survey in 2017 (n = 291).  
Evaluation scale 1–6: where 1 – very important; 6 – very unimportant.

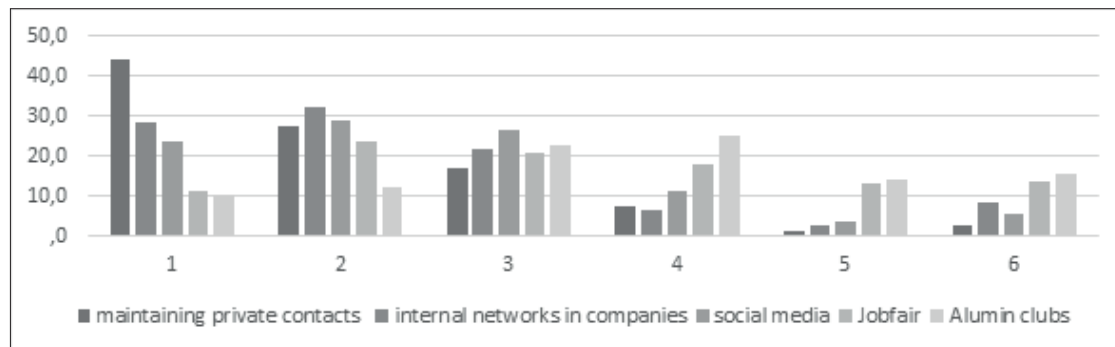


Fig. 2. Distribution of respondents' evaluations on the question "How important are the following factors seeking to improve your network?" (in %)

Note: Tom Sander conducted a survey in 2017 (n = 291).  
Evaluation scale 1–6: where 1 – very important; 6 – very unimportant.

There is only one relevant correlation coefficient between *age* and *job fair*. The correlation coefficient is statistically significant with the significance level – 0.009 (both sides tailed): 289 participants were involved in this analysis. This is an indication that age has impact on the use of job fairs.

Further, the research results were analysed by LSD ANOVA seeking to point out additional factors as they provide deeper information about the use of social networks. There are two significantly relevant factors: "a time span after the respondent's last search for employment" and "to exchange information". This suggests that there are differences in evaluations which can be explained by the period of time before the last search for employment. People who have searched for a job more than 12 months and less than 2 years ago have the most relevant significant differences in evaluations of the factor "to exchange information in social networks" compared with the other groups.

The results of evaluations indicate that the current social situation of participants has influence on their behaviour of using networks and this was confirmed by LSD ANOVA. There are statistically relevant differences in evaluations between unemployed participants and participants of other status, e.g., employed, university student, school student and retired.

The statement "to exchange information" is on a significant level for both demographic factors. The exchange of information depends on the employment level of the survey participants. They benefit from being members of a network and supporting individuals in the employment seeking process.



Influence of demographic factors with statistically significant results were observed in evaluations on the social status for the questions “Why do you need networks?” and “How important are the following factors seeking to improve your network?”. Thus, it indicates that social status has impact on evaluations and on the differences between those groups.

The factor *job fair* has two significant results. One result with big differences in evaluations is “I have never searched for work” among other groups, and “More than 12 months, less than 2 years” is the second result with significant differences. This is an indication that the influence of a time span between the respondent’s last search for a job has a strong influence on the importance to improve the network.

Consequently, social status has impact on the evaluations “internal networks in companies” and “alumni clubs”. This is again, an indication that social status influences the behaviour of individuals in the employment seeking process. There are two factors which are significantly influenced in evaluations by the social status, whereas gender has influence only on two evaluations.

The evaluations received for the question “How important are the following factors in seeking to improve your network?” have statistically relevant results for the t-test so that to investigate the differences in evaluations by gender. There are significant differences in the evaluations for “job fairs” and “internal networks in companies” assigned by men and women. Thus, men and women use opportunities to improve their networks. The more detailed results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Testing of differences in evaluations by gender by t-test on the question “How important are the following factors in seeking to improve your network?”

Gender and “How important are the following factors in seeking to improve your network?”		Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Job fair	Equal variances assumed	0.003	0.958	2.109	284	0.036	0.401	0.190
	Equal variances not assumed			2.109	222.906	0.036	0.401	0.190
Internally in companies	Equal variances assumed	0.284	0.594	2.655	283	0.008	0.469	0.177
	Equal variances not assumed			2.616	215.548	0.010	0.469	0.179

Note: Tom Sander conducted a survey in 2017 (n = 291).  
 Evaluation scale 1–6: where 1 – very important; 6 – very unimportant.

Women prefer their evaluation for “job fair” on the first three stages of the evaluation scale, and it indicates a clear majority with 62% of evaluations by women and 46% by men. On the last three stages of the evaluation scale received the factor “job fair” by men (54%) and by women (38%). Men and women prefer different evaluations of “job fair” seeking to improve their network. The second statistically relevant difference of the evaluations between men and women is for the factor “internal networks in companies”. However, the result is not as clear as for “job fair”. The majority of respondents’ evaluations are on the first three stages of the evaluation scale. Men received 80% of the evaluations on the first three stages and women have 85% of the evaluations on the first three stages of the evaluation scale. The difference on the first stage of the evaluation scale is 18% between men and women. Therefore, it suggests the tendency that the evaluations by women were ‘more intensive’ to ‘very important’.

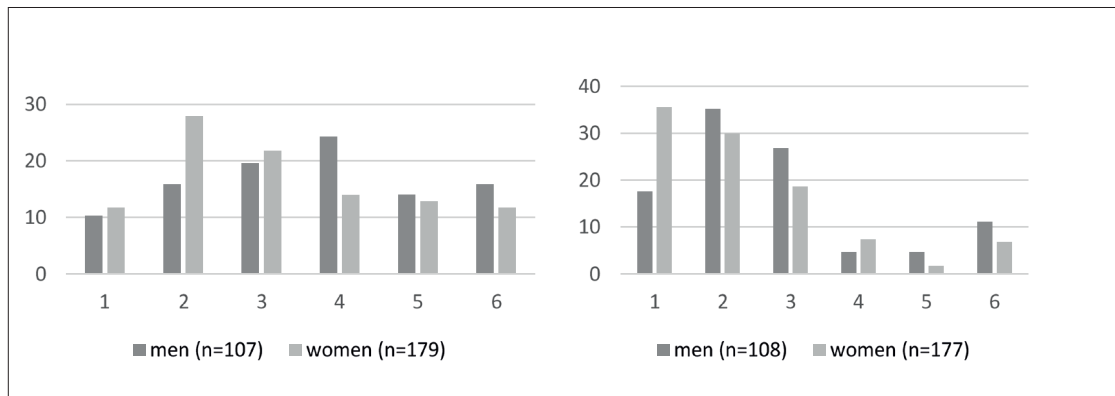


Fig. 3. Distribution of responses (in %) by gender on the question “How important are the following factors seeking to improve your network by ‘job fair’ and ‘internal networks in companies’?”

Note: Tom Sander conducted a survey in 2017 (n = 291).

Evaluation scale 1–6: where 1 – very important; 6 – very unimportant.

There are some differences in evaluations regarding the demographic factors, which have significantly relevant results. This information is important seeking to improve the use of social networks in the employment seeking process. Moreover, human resource management may use social networks in the recruiting process.

## Conclusions

Social networks are very important for individuals in exchanging resources and information. The importance of a network for individuals is defined on the content and depends on the current situation of an individual. The empirical data of the survey reveals that efforts taken to use social networks in the employment seeking process are not so great compared with the efforts put in using social networks for other reasons. Therefore, it indicates that members of social networks are not joined in the employment seeking process. The advantage of social networks is that individuals can identify employment possibilities without taking part in a certain network. It follows that from the point of view of human resource management, a social network is not a place preferred by individuals in search for a job or identification of employment opportunities. Individuals prefer other, more important reasons to be a network member, e.g., for exchange of information and resources. For example, individuals do not consider job fairs and alumni clubs as very important in seeking to improve personal network and make use of the contacts.

Furthermore, *social status* and *current situation* are important factors for individuals in using social networks, because the individuals’ behaviour and benefit depends on the current situation. However, the survey revealed that there are significant differences in evaluations on “a period of time that passed after the respondent’s last search for employment”. Social status has significant differences in evaluations too. That is an indication that the current situation and experience of people influence individual behaviour and it explains the use of social networks. Moreover, the proposed assumption in the paper is confirmed by the two demographic factors “social status” and “a period of time that passed after the respondent’s last search for employment”. Also, there were overserved significant differences in gender evaluations made by men and women. Human resource management should take this into consideration as those differences can influence the use of social network sites in the employment seeking process.

The priority to use social networks in the employment seeking process is on the lowest level compared with other reasons. This outcome is confirmed by the use of opportunities to improve a social network for the employment seeking process. The tendency to use tools, such as alumni clubs, for improvement of a network, is weak compared with other opportunities to improve the network. The authors’ assumption is that individuals are not aware about the networks’ possibilities to identify employment opportunities until

they need employment. The reasons why people join social networks are not for to identify employment possibilities. The value of a network depends on a personal situation and circumstances at a certain moment. Therefore, further research is needed to get a deeper insight of the reasons of using social network sites.

The aim of a member in a social network is to exchange information. This was confirmed by the social capital theory as a reason to use networks; and also, the results of the paper support the theory. Exchange of information is most influenced by demographic factors. That means the exchange depends on demographic factors which are related to a social situation or personal history of individuals in the employment seeking process.

Further research is needed to find out more and detailed information about the reasons to use social networks in the search for a job and to identify further demographic factors which influence the use of social networks. Human resource management needs more information on which social networks are valuable and can be employed in the employment seeking process.

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## SOCIALINIO TINKLO TOBLINIMAS SIEKIANT PRANAŠUMO DARBO PAIEŠKOS PROCESĖ

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Santrauka

Šiandien ypač populiaru mokslininkų atliekama socialinių tinklų analizė. Socialiniai tinklai suprantami kaip asmenų grupė, galinti keisti informaciją ir išteklius. Narystė socialiniuose tinkluose suteikia galimybę nariui gauti paramą ieškant darbo (Provan, Fish, Sydow, 2007; Borgatti, Mehra, Brass, Labianca, 2009). Galimybė gauti daugiau informacijos apie įsidarbinimo galimybes suteikiama asmenims, kurie dalyvauja skirtinguose tinkluose. Asmenys, būdami daugelio tinklų nariais, pasirenka savo tinklą, kuris atitinka jų poreikimus ir poreikius (Burt, 2001). Suinteresuoti asmenys gali naudotis skirtingais tinklais, atsižvelgiant į jų poreikius, troškimus ir situaciją. Yra nemažai privalumų, jei įmonės gali įdarbinti asmenis naudodamos socialinius tinklus, nes darbdaviai žino, kad darbuotojus rekomendavo patikimi žmonės. Kandidatai žino įmonę ir gali gauti papildomos informacijos apie jos padėtį, kuri jiems yra labai naudinga (Sander, Sloka, 2016).

Problema: darbo rinka keičiasi, skaitmeninės technologijos keičia visuomenę. Vokietijos darbo rinkoje egzistuojanti amžiaus pasiskirstymo struktūra veikia darbo rinką. Organizacijos konkuruoja tarpusavyje, siekdamos pritraukti tinkamų žmonių. Valdant žmogiškuosius išteklius turi būti aišku, kaip veiksmingai naudoti įdarbinimo kanalus (Sander, Teh, Majláth, 2015). Surasti tinkamą išsilavinimą turintį darbuotoją nelengva. Straipsnyje pristatoma socialinių tinklų nauda identifikuojant įdarbinimo galimybes. Socialiniai

tinklai gali padėti nustatyti tinkamus, puikų išsilavinimą turinčius asmenis, kurie turi ryšių su dabartiniais darbdaviais. Tai gali padėti įmonėms pagerinti naujų kandidatų įdarbinimo procesą.

Straipsnyje keliama keli problemai klausimai: kaip gali būti tobulinami socialiniai tinklai ieškant darbo; kaip asmenys naudoja socialinius tinklus ieškodami darbo, lyginant su kitomis galimybėmis?

Straipsnio objektas: socialiniai tinklai darbo paieškos procese.

Straipsnio tikslas: ištirti socialinio tinklo tobulinimo galimybes skirtingos socialinės padėties asmenims darbo paieškos procese.

Straipsnio uždaviniai: išanalizuoti mokslinę literatūrą, pristatant socialinio kapitalo teoriją, darbo paieškos procese naudojamus socialinius tinklus ir darbo ieškančių asmenų narystę socialiniuose tinkluose.

Remiantis tyrimo rezultatais, nustatyti įsidarbinimo naudojant socialinius tinklus galimybes ir parodyti, kaip socialiniai tinklai gali padėti lengviau ir greičiau naudotis reikiama informacija bei ištekliais.

Nustatyti statistiškai reikšmingus skirtumus, kai naudojamos socialiniais tinklais darbo paieškos procese, lyties ir socialinės padėties atžvilgiu.

Tyrimo metodai: mokslinės literatūros analizė, interpretacija, kiekybinis tyrimas, tyrimo duomenų analizė SPSS programa.

Žmogiškųjų išteklių valdymo procese naudojami socialiniai tinklai ieškant naujų darbuotojų. Atliekant tyrimą aiškintasi, ar žmonės naudojami socialiniais tinklais, kad sužinotų įsidarbinimo galimybes, kad galėtų lengviau pasinaudoti reikiama informacija ir ištekliais. Tyrime taikyta internetinė apklausa, kurioje dalyvavo 298 respondentai iš Vokietijos, daugiausiai iki 30 metų amžiaus. Tyrimas atliktas 2016 metais spalio – lapkričio mėnesiais. Vertinimo skalė – nuo 1 iki 6 (kur 1 – aukščiausias įvertinimas, 6 – žemiausias), tai atitinka vertinimą Vokietijos mokyklose. Ši skalė leidžia lengviau įvertinti atsakymus, nes Vokietijos piliečiai yra susipažinę su šia vertinimo sistema. Tyrimas atliktas bendradarbiaujant su Ludwigshafeno universitetu (Evans Mathur, 2005; Wright, 2005). Duomenys analizuoti SPSS programa, taikant įvairius statistinius rodiklius: medianą, modą, vidurkį, standartinį nuokrypį, ANOVA testą, t-testą bei koreliaciją. Straipsnyje pateikiami tik statistiškai reikšmingai besiskiriantys duomenys.

Atliekant tyrimą analizuota, kam naudojami socialiniai tinklai ir kaip asmenys tobulina socialinius tinklus ieškodami darbo. Kelti du pagrindiniai klausimai: kokių tikslu naudojami socialiniai tinklai ir kiek svarbūs pateikti teiginiai (kaip asmeninių kontaktų palaikymas, Alumni klubai, vidinė įmonės aplinka ir pan.), siekiant tobulinti socialinį tinklą?

Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė, kad dažniausiai respondentai socialiniais tinklais naudojami asmeniniais tikslais ir siekdami keistis informacija. Socialiniai tinklai darbo paieškos procese užima žemiausią poziciją, lyginant su kitais pasirinkimais. Tai reiškia, kad žmogiškųjų išteklių valdymo procese socialiniai tinklai mažai naudojami, siekiant nustatyti įsidarbinimo galimybes.

Apklaustiesiems, siekiant gerinti socialinius tinklus, svarbiausia yra privačių kontaktų palaikymas, žiniasklaida pvz. LinkedIn, įmonės vidinė aplinka. Mažiau svarbu yra Alumni klubai, bei darbo mugės, lyginant su kitais pasirinkimais. Tyrimu taip pat nustatyta, kad socialinis statusas yra reikšmingas veiksnys socialinius tinklus naudojančioms asmenims. Čia statistiniai skirtumai labiausiai išryškėja tarp apklaustųjų, kurie neturi darbo, ir kitą statusą užimančių dalyvių, kaip: dirbančiųjų, studentų, pensininkų ir pan. Reikšmingai skiriasi moterų ir vyrų pasirinkimai, į tai būtina atsižvelgti, nes tai gali lemti socialinių tinklų svetainių naudojimą darbo paieškos procese.

Būtina tęsti tyrimą, siekiant paaiškinti socialinių tinklų naudojimo ieškant darbo priežastis ir nustatyti demografinius veiksniai, kurie tam gali turėti įtakos.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: *socialiniai tinklai, darbo paieška, bendravimo kanalas, žmogiškųjų išteklių valdymas.*

JEL KLASIFIKACIJA: L14, D83, O15.