

Do online social networks help to get a job? A study on online social networks as a recruitment method in Russia

International Business
Master's thesis
Alena Drobysheva
2010

**Do online social networks help to get a job?
A study on online social networks as a recruitment method in Russia**

Introduction

Online social networks play an important role in business practices and recruitment is not an exception. At the same time, there is a clear shortage of research about online social networks and their applicability as a recruitment method. Therefore this topic was chosen for this master thesis study.

Objective of the Research

This study aims to find out what factors make online social networks a useful tool when searching for employment and make practical recommendations on how to use social networking sites to job seekers' advantage. The study will be geographically limited to Russia since different cultural factors can influence the choice of job search methods in different countries and in order to net out this effect one country was chosen.

Methodology

The multi method research approach was used in this study. Data was collected utilizing observations, online questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and secondary data.

Findings and Conclusions

It can be concluded that SNSs are emerging as an important recruitment method in Russia. It was found that job candidates regard online social networks as a very good way to be passively looking for a job as well as receive up to date information about job offerings. Recruiters consider online social networks to be a useful recruitment method due to large candidates' pool, cost savings and educational benefits. The use of SNSs as recruitment method is expected to grow in the next few years.

Keywords

Online social networks, recruitment, recruitment method

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION -----	5
1.1	BACKGROUND	5
1.2	RESEARCH PROBLEM	7
1.3	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	8
1.4	DEFINITIONS	8
1.5	STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY	10
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1	SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES	11
2.2	SOCIAL NETWORK THEORY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL	19
2.3	SOCIAL CAPITAL, NETWORK THEORY AND CAREER SUCCESS	22
2.4	SOCIAL CAPITAL AND ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS	26
2.5	ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS AND RECRUITMENT PRACTICES	29
2.6	RECRUITMENT METHODS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS	33
2.7	RECRUITMENT IN RUSSIA	36
2.8	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	37
3	METHOD OF RESEARCH -----	40
3.1	RESEARCH APPROACH	40
3.2	RESEARCH METHODS	40
3.3	DATA COLLECTION METHODS	41
4	EMPIRICAL FINDINGS -----	46
4.1	OBSERVATIONS AND SECONDARY DATA	46
4.2	CANDIDATES' PERSPECTIVE	51
4.3	RECRUITERS' PERSPECTIVE	56
5	DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS -----	62
6	CONCLUSIONS -----	66
7	MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS -----	68
8	RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS -----	69
	REFERENCES -----	71
	APPENDICES -----	81

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE	81
APPENDIX 2 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	85

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Popular social networking sites by region/continent/country.	12
Table 2: Social networking sites with more than 50 million registered users.....	13
Table 3: Number of respondents registered on each social network.....	51
Table 4: Age of the respondents	52
Table 5: How often do you log onto SNSs?	52
Table 6: The most influential sources of information about job opportunities	53
Table 7: Motivation for using LinkedIn	54
Table 8: Motivation for using Facebook	54

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Timeline of the launch dates of many major SNSs and dates when community sites re-launched with SNS features.	14
Figure 2: Methods Employed Workers used to Find Their Current Jobs.....	25
Figure 3: E-recruitment model	31
Figure 4: Theoretical Framework.....	39
Figure 5: Facebook Profile	48
Figure 6: Example of a LinkedIn member network	50

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Online social networks “*represent a dramatic and permanent upgrade in people’s ability to communicate with one another*”. (“A world of connections”, 2010, p.3)

"In recruiting we've known for a long time that leveraging a personal network is the best way to identify talent. Social networking allows us to automate the networking process" Paul Barnes, employment and executive search manager for BB&T

Social networking has already been called “a global consumer phenomenon of 2008” (Global Faces and Network Places, A Nielsen Report on Social Networking’s New Global Footprint, 2009, p.1). Online social networking sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, Orkut and LinkedIn are present in the top of league tables by the number of total unique monthly visitors (“A World of Connections”, 2010). Many social networking sites have recently seen the number of their registered users increased. For example, Facebook claims to have more than 400 active users and LinkedIn now reports more than 58 million registered users worldwide.

More and more companies in different industries are turning to social networking sites in attempt to attract new customers and boost their revenue. According to Kasina LLC, a New York-based research and advisory firm, 84% of respondents from asset management industry believe that social media is "here to stay" and will have a "significant impact" on financial services (Steyer, 2010, p. 2).

Social capital as source of job-related information has been a popular research topic since the seminal sociological work by Granovetter (1973). Recently

researches turned their attention to online social networks logically assuming that they will exhibit the same or similar patterns of behaviour to offline social networks. The role of social networks in both passive and active recruitment has been a popular topic in the recent HR-related research.

At the same time there is a clear shortage of research on online social networking, its impact on individual's social capital and on career success. The research topic is especially valid today when the economic crisis is in full swing. There is evidence that the number of members of such professionally oriented networks as LinkedIn has increased considerably during the current economic crisis as the number of people searching for work utilizing non-standard methods has increased (Dutta and Fraser, 2009).

Russia has been known as a country where social networks play an important part in everyday life and job search is not an exception (Gerbert and Mayorova, 2003; Yakubovich, 2005). Therefore, in order to fully understand recruitment dynamics in Russian labour market, it is important to gain a good understanding of social networks characteristics.

At the same time Russia is one of the largest online social networks market in Europe. Russian audience has one of the highest levels of engagement on online social networking services in the world according to comScore. Online social networks in many ways exhibit behaviour similar to physical social networks, for example, they can play important part in generating and maintaining social capital and preserving individual's social network (Boyd and Ellieson, 2007; Recuero, 2005). Consequently, a study of the use of online social network in the recruitment process can yield important results for candidates, companies engaged in recruiting activities and professionals in charge of recruitment.

This study aims at providing an overview of the use of social networking sites as a recruitment source in Russia from both candidates' and recruiters' perspective.

1.2 Research Problem

The research problem of this study is *“how online social networks can improve candidate’s chances to get a job in Russia”*

This study aims find out what factors make online social networks a useful tool when searching for employment and make practical recommendations on how to use online social networking sites to job seekers’ advantage. The study will be geographically limited to Russia since different cultural factors can influence the choice of job search methods in different countries and in order to net out this effect one country was chosen.

The reason for choosing this topic is researcher’s personal interest, recent popularity of social media and very limited amount of studies conducted on online social networks and job search process.

Originally a study on how social networks help to get a job and how they should be used to achieve better job search efficiency was planned. However, the research on social network in the recruitment is abundant and has already been done in many different cultural environments (Erickson, 2000; Seibert, 2005; Fernandez at al., 2000).

At the same time the researcher has been a member of the most popular online social networks for three to four years and based on own observations of the connections’ activities on social networking sited concluded that asking for job related information through this media (for example, by updating personal status with “I am currently looking for a job”) has currently become popular. However, this modern trend has received little attention in the academic literature. Moreover, the phenomenon of online social networks has currently been not studied enough (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Kim, 2010).

In this research literature from different business and sociology fields is combined to give background information: social networks, social capital, job search and recruitment.

From international business perspective, this study aims to contribute to the research on Russia labour market.

1.3 Research Questions

To thoroughly analyze research problem stated above, I identified three research questions:

1. Are social networking sites an important source of job related information for job candidates in Russia?
2. Are social networking sites a useful recruitment method for companies recruiting in Russia?
3. What particular aspects of online social networks participation help to draw recruiters' attention to the candidacy and help to get a job?

1.4 Definitions

Generally speaking, social networking sites are “web sites that allow people to stay connected with other people in online communities” (Kim et al. 2010, p.217) According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), social network sites or SNSs are “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system”(p.1)

Fondeur and Lhermitte (2006) define online social networks as “social network formalised with the help of information and communication technologies especially designed to facilitate the formation and maintenance of social ties” (p.9)

Social capital as "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less

institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 14).

Recruitment "includes those practices and activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees" (Barber, 1998, p.5)

According to Heneman et al. (1997) recruitment is part of the staffing process whereby the individual and the organization become matched to form the employment relationship. Myers (1992) defined recruitment as the human resource management activity of developing external and internal sources of qualified applicants (Lee, 2005).

Breaugh (2008) termed recruitment methods as "ways an employer tries to make individuals aware of job opportunities" (p.108).

Recruitment process is usually defined as process of attracting, screening, and selecting qualified people for a job (Barber, 1998; Breaugh and Starke, 2000)

Lee (2005) defined e-recruitment as "practices and activities carried on by the organization that utilizes a variety of electronic means to fill open positions effectively and efficiently" (p.58)

According to Barber (1998), recruitment process consists of three main stages: generating applicants, maintaining applicant status, and influencing job choice decisions. Lee (2005) identified the following phases of the recruitment process: identification of hiring needs; submission of job requisition and approval; job posting; submission of job applications; screening of résumé/application; interviewing; pre-employment screening; and job offer and employment contract.

1.5 Structure of the Study

This study consists of eight parts. First part gives a general introduction and overview of the chosen topic; states research problem and research questions. The second chapter gives an overview of existing research on social networking sites, social capital and the linkages between these three topics as well as presents a brief overview of recruitment methods and recruitment practices in Russia.

In the third chapter the method of research is described in details as well as data collection methods. In the fourth chapter empirical findings are presented. Chapter five aims at presenting a discussion of empirical findings of this study. Chapter six includes conclusions. In chapter seven managerial implications of the results of this study are discussed. Chapter eight presents an overview of this study limitations and suggestions for further research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims at presenting an overview of the literature related to the research problem.

There are seven sections in this chapter each presenting the overview of academic literature available on each subtopic. The seven subchapters are: analysis of available research on social networking sites, overview of social capital literature, analysis of the research which bridge social networks, social capital and career success, overview of available studies about online social networks and social capital, review of available research on recruitment methods and a short overview of the research about recruitment practices in Russia.

2.1 Social networking sites

This section will give an overview about available literature on online social networking sites.

As online social networks are a fairly recent phenomenon, there are very few scholarly articles about this topic but there are quite many trade publications and magazine articles (Kim at al., 2010). Another important source of information is internet with many blogs and statistics reports available.

Existing research about online social networks is limited to several topics among which are general overview of SNSs, privacy, impression management, network structure, online connections and social capital (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).

The large number of social networking sites which exist today forced the creation of special searching engine designed exclusively for SNSs. There are even special university courses entirely devoted to the creation and marketing of facebook applications.

Another important characteristic of social networking sites is their geographic heterogeneity. Some of the SNSs originated in the US but became very popular

elsewhere. For example, the predominant population of Orkut comes from Brazil or India, whereas 87% of internet users in Philippines are registered on Friendster (Kim at al., 2010). The “Brazilian invasion” of Orkut found a reflection in a popular song in this country “I’m going to delete you from my Orkut” (Kim at al., 2010). Further data about popularity of social networking sites in different counties and continents can be found in table 1.

Continent/Region	Dominant social web site
Africa	Hi5 (Angola, Central Africa), Facebook (Egypt)
America (North)	Facebook , MySpace
America (Central, South)	Orkut (Brazil), Migente, Hi5, Sonico, Facebook (Panama)
Asia	Friendster (Southeast Asia), Orkut (India, Pakistan), Xianonei (China), Cyworld (South Korea), Hi5 (Thailand, Mongolia), Mixi (Japan)
Europe	Facebook (UK), Hi5 (Portugal, Cyprus, Romania), Tagged, XING, Skyrock (France, French speaking region), StudiVZ, XING (Germany), Hyves (the Netherlands), vkontate.ru (Russia)
Middle East	Facebook (most Arab countries)
Pacific Islands	Bebo (including New Zealand)

Table 1: Popular social networking sites by region/continent/country.
Source: Kim at al. (2010), p.218.

The list of top social networking websites with more than 50 million registered users is presented below in table 2.

Site Name	Users (in millions)
Facebook	309
MySpace	253
Windows Live Spaces	120
Habbo	117
Friendster	90
Hi5	80
Tagged	70
Orkut	67
Reunion.com	51

Table 2: Social networking sites with more than 50 million registered users.

Source: Adapted from Kim et al. (2010), p.218

The first social networking site, Sixdegrees.com, was launched in 1997. The users were able to create their profiles and make a list of their friends. Sixdegrees.com was originally designed to help people connect with each other. Despite the fact that the site attracted many users, the client base was not sustainable which led to the closure of service in 2000.

In 2001 the opening of business-oriented networking service Ryze.com marked the beginning of new era in the field of online social networks. At the same time, other sites designed to leverage professional networks, such as LinkedIn, began to emerge (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). The precise timeline of social networking sites is shown in figure1.

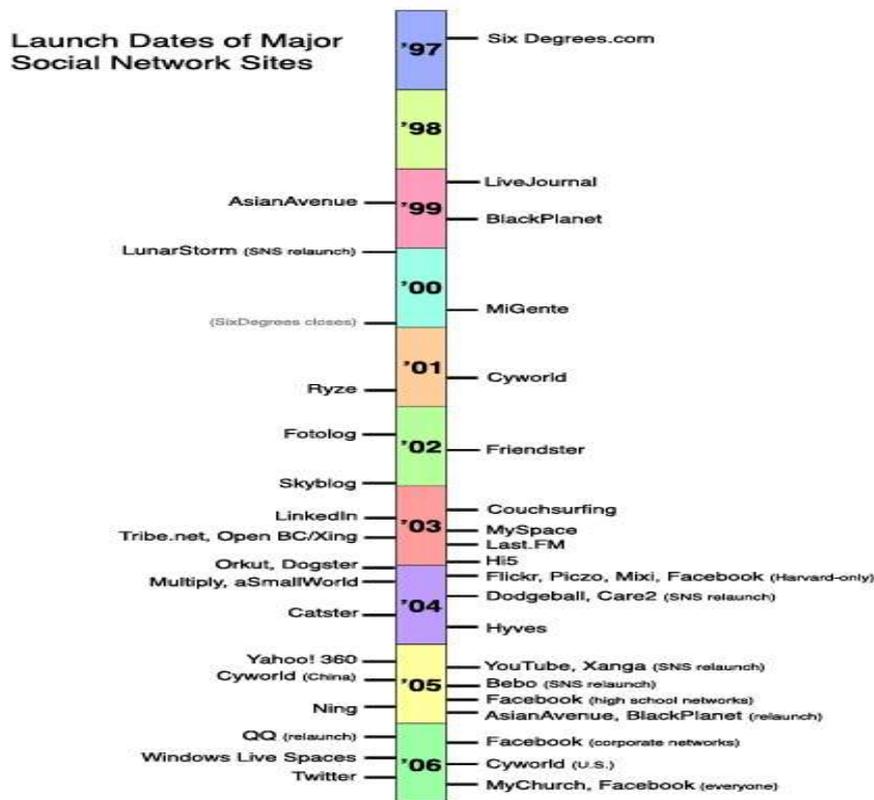


Figure 1: Timeline of the launch dates of many major SNSs and dates when community sites re-launched with SNS features.

Source: Boyd and Ellison, 2007

In 2004 one of the most popular SNSs, MySpace, was launched in California. Very soon the site became very popular between musicians and continued to grow between college crowds. By 2006 online networking sites became “a global phenomenon” (Boyd and Ellison, 2007, p.5). While MySpace continued to be popular predominantly in the US, Orkut became increasingly popular in Brazil and India, Cyberworld was taking over Korea, Bebo grew in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) proposed a classification of SNSs. They distinguished several groups of online social networking sites:

1. Profile-centric sites (Friendster, Facebook)
2. Professional sites (LinkedIn, XING, Viadeo)

3. Passion-centric SNSs like Dogster, which connect people with common interests and hobbies and based on user-generated content such as Flickr, which is dedicated to photo sharing.

According to Kim at al. (2010), social networking sites can be divided into general and vertical. Both general and vertical sites can be further divided into open and close sites. Open sites can be accessed by all the internet users whereas closed sites are only open to members of particular groups, such as students of particular, association members etc. Generally open sites can have certain close groups, for example, Facebook has a number of groups that only members in a possession of a school or corporate email address can join.

The following sites can be classified as vertical (Kim at al. 2010)

1. Sites meant for connecting with former colleagues, classmates etc (Facebook, Friendster, LinkedIn)
2. Sites for connecting with people based on gender, certain age, religion, ethnicity (Blackplanet)
3. Based on common hobbies or interests, such as sports, foreign languages, pets etc.

Social networking sites differ in the features; moreover, the majority of web sites is very dynamic and is constantly adding or getting rid of certain attributes. Nevertheless, Kim at al. (2010) defined several essential features of online social networking sites which are essential to serve primary objectives of site existence:

1. Personal profiles
2. Online connections
3. Online groups participation
4. Communicating with online connections
5. Sharing user-created content
6. Expressing opinions
7. Finding information
8. Holding the users

Personal profile is essentially the user homepage on a particular networking site and includes essential information about the user, such as name, photo, gender, date of birth, geographical location, interests etc. On the majority of SNSs it is not obligatory to provide all the information about the member.

Essential feature of social networking sites is a possibility to search for potential connections between members already registered on the website. This process can be facilitated by importing a contact list from an email address or messenger. On many social networking sites the bilateral confirmation is required in order to establish a relationship. For example, on Facebook a member who has just got added as a friend will receive a notice called “friend request” about it and will be asked to confirm a relationship (Boyd and Ellison, 2004)

One way to share information with other network members is to join a group on the SNS. Members are allowed to create their own groups and subgroups. Groups can be divided into public and private. Any member can join a public group whereas for a private group membership a specific email address may be required. Usually the content of the group is available to all members whereas only members can post in the group.

Various communication facilities are available to SNS members. They include private message, chat, private and public bulletin boards. For example, Facebook has a newsfeed which features friends’ status updates; content published by friends and other activity updates. LinkedIn allows its users to post on discussion boards, sending messages to members is also an important way of communication.

Sharing of user-created content is an important SNS feature. Facebook and MySpace allow and encourage sharing of photos, videos, interesting links etc. LinkedIn also has a function which enables its users to post a link to an article or interesting publication. SNS feature of expressing opinion is closely related to sharing user-created content. LinkedIn and Facebook allow users to comment on the shared content as well as on status updates, wall posts etc. On Facebook users

can also “like” posts done by their friends. In contrast, vkontakte.ru, another site which will be explored in this study has no such function at present.

Naturally online social networking sites want to keep users on their pages as long as possible. It is achieved by providing users with special interest pages, different applications such as “Where have you been” which allows the users to construct a map of places a user visited or different quizzes.

In order to fully understand the phenomenon of SNSs it is important to understand who and why uses online social media. Kim et al (2010) presented an interesting taxonomy of users of social web sites. They divided users in three general groups: individual users, businesses and government. Communicating with friends and acquaintances, getting knowledge, participating in online communities and self-expression and finding people were cited among the most popular reasons why individual users spend time on SNSs. Social web sites as a source of knowledge is especially interesting to look into. According to Kim, SNSs can be a source of collective knowledge. For example, a person can post a question such as “When do the lectures start tomorrow?” and get replies. In addition very often users share their interests information on their profiles, such as favorite books, movies etc., which can be a source of different ideas on how to spend your free time. Facebook can also be a very important source of entertainment activities information since it allows users to send invitations to parties and other events. Invited guests can confirm their attendance online or politely decline an invitation by writing on the event’s wall.

The main reasons why businesses are using SNSs are the following: marketing and customer relationship management, networking with peers and getting access to additional information about employees and prospective job applicants (Kim et al., 2010).

Government, rather similar to business, is interested in advertising and legal enforcement and election campaigns.

Privacy in the online social networking sites has been one of the most widely studied topics. Gross and Acquisti (2005) studied threats to privacy on Facebook. Results of later studies conducted by Stutzman (2006) and Barnes (2006) suggested that very often users, especially younger audience consisting of university and high school students are not fully aware of risks to their privacy when using online social networks. Researchers such as Hodge (2006) also investigated legal aspects of privacy controls on Facebook and whether the actual situation with privacy is consistent with users' expectations.

Impression management has been another popular research topic. Boyd (2004) examined self-presentation on Friendster while Donath and Boyd (2004) concentrated on presentation of linkages in SNSs members profiles and examined "public displays of connections" in details.

Networks and network structure were studied by such scholars as Golder, Wilkinson and Steinfield (2007) who analyzed the structure of profile elements and the number of friends a profile has. Furthermore the structure of friendship was studied, in particular Herring et al. (2007) concentrated on the links between language and the topology of friendship, Liben-Nowell et al. (2005) studied the geographical aspect of friendship links and Backstrom et al. (2006) researched motivation for joining particular communities online.

Other research SNSs related research topics include the role of national identity (Fragoso, 2006), gender-related issues on SNSs (cross-cultural comparisons of SNSs (Hjorth and Kim, 2005) and cross-cultural comparison of different SNSs. In the study conducted by Hjorth and Yuji (2008) Japanese use of Mixi and Korean use of Cyberworld was compared.

Practically-oriented research on applications of online social networks in libraries (Charnigo and Barnett-Ellis, 2007), education establishments (Hewitt and Forte, 2006) and science has been growing in popularity.

Currently no studies about LinkedIn have been published, but quite many articles in the magazines are available.

Annie Shanklin Jones, the head of IBM US recruiting expressed a very positive opinion about LinkedIn): “LinkedIn is the most important social-media site for reaching prospective hires”.

A good description of LinkedIn is given by Stein (2009): LinkedIn “enables users to maintain contact information of people they know and trust (their first degree connections or friends), and to discover the friends of their friends (their second degree connections), and to access the friends of the friends of their friends (their third degree connections)” (p.1).

LinkedIn has recently enjoyed a very positive reviews from the recruiters published in different magazines. For example, Kirkpatrick (2008) believes LinkedIn helped Symantec recruit 2 percent to 5 percent of senior-level positions last year. On average, and his team of 20 recruiters make more than 2,000 hires domestically each year.

2.2 Social network theory and social capital

Definitions of social capital are abundant and sometimes contradictory.

Pierre Bourdieu, whose seminal work is one of the mostly cited papers on social capital theory defined social capital as "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 14).

According to Coleman (1988), the term social capital refers to “the resources accumulated through the relationships among people” (Boyd and Ellison, 2007, p.1). Lin (2001) argues that “the premise behind the notion of social capital is rather simple and straightforward: investment in social relations with expected return” (p.3). Raquel Recuero described social capital as “the value that circulates within a social network” (Recuero, 2008, p.2).

This literature review will be centered on three most relevant approaches to social capital: the “Strength of weak ties” theory by Granovetter, structured holes theory by Burt and the Social Resources theory by Lin.

The concept of tie strength was introduced by Granovetter in his seminal paper «The strength of weak ties” (1973). Granovetter termed as “strong ties” (Granovetter, 1983, p.201) a person’s close connections, with which substantial amount of trust is developed. In practice relatives and close friends are likely to be an individual’s strong ties. Weak ties are those which serve as a bridge between strong ties such as acquaintances or friends of friends. The following parameters which characterize a tie can be used to measure strength: amount of time, emotional intensity, intimacy and reciprocal services (Granovetter, 1973).

In his research Granovetter showed that weak ties can be a very valuable resource in everyday life. Weak ties help us to gain more knowledge of the world outside of our immediate network, knowledge not available through immediate friends. Therefore an individual with many weak ties has better access to ideas, news etc than an individual with fewer weak ties.

Granovetter used finding a job as an example of weak vs. strong ties comparison. On one hand strong ties are generally more motivated to help, but since the circles of acquaintances of an individual and his strong ties often overlap, strong ties are not likely to have information which is not already available to an individual himself. Weak ties, on the other hand, are more likely to have contacts that are not yet available to an individual since their acquaintance circles are different. Based on the findings of the study, Granovetter argues that weaker ties are more helpful in gaining employment and most job referrals come from our distance acquaintances such as former school friends, co-workers etc. (Granovetter, 1973)

In his later paper “The strength of weak ties: the network theory revisited” (1983), Granovetter pointed out the importance of strong ties as well. Strong ties can be more helpful when, for example, an individual is in urgent need of help or emotional support.

Putman (1995) introduced a similar concept. He distinguished between bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital is derived from relationships built based on strong and frequent contact. Bridging capital comes from connections with diverse networks.

Burt (1997) offered a slightly different point of view on social capital. His structured holes theory of social capital describes social capital “as a function of brokerage opportunities in a network” (p.241). “A structural hole argument defines social capital in terms of the information and control advantages of being the broker in relations between people otherwise disconnected in social structure” (p.241). The “structural hole” is seen as an opportunity to facilitate information flow between people that belong to different social structures.

Burt makes a distinction between cohesive contacts and equivalent contacts. Cohesive contacts are “strongly connected to each other” and therefore are likely to have similar access to information and offer “redundant information benefits” (p.242). Nonredundant contacts offer access to different sources of information and therefore offer “additive information benefits”.

The social resources theory by Lin argues that it’s the characteristics of resources embedded in the network that actually “convey advantage” rather than weak ties (Lin, Ensel and Vaughn 1981 a, 1981b). According to this approach, “an alter who possesses characteristics or controls resources useful for the fulfillment of the ego’s goal can be considered a social resource” (Lin, 2001, p.6). Individuals who provide career advice can be considered a social resource for the achievement of ego’s career goals.

Lin (2001) offered three explanations why social networks contribute to social capital:

1. Information flow. Social ties can sometime provide an individual with information otherwise not available
2. Certain ties have influence on agents such as for example recruiters who have influence over recruiting decisions in the company

3. Social tie resources can serve as “social credentials some of which the individual’s accessibility to resources through social network relations” (p.4)

2.3 Social capital, network theory and career success

The role of social capital for finding employment and career success received a lot of attention in the research. This section contains the review of studies that bridge social capital and social networks theories presented in the previous section with the job search process and career success.

Burt (1997) defined a network as “the pattern of ties linking a defined set of persons or social actors” (p.6).

Earlier research suggested that human and social capital have positive impact on the organizational success (Friedman and Krackhardt, 1997). According to research conducted by Burt (1997) those individuals who are better positioned in the network and therefore with more social capital get promoted faster. Seibert at al (2001) also found that social capital has positive impact on promotions and career success.

Erickson at al. (2000) emphasized the value of social capital in itself. They pointed that social capital is especially important when getting hired for higher level positions, regardless whether a job was obtained through personal contact or advertising. Erickson found that employers demand more diverse social networks for positions such as managers, sales people and investigators. He also argued that effect of social capital on income is just as strong as effect of education and previous experience.

Seibert at al (2001) attempted to merge current literature on network theories of social capital and career success.

They found that information and resources access play an important role in the relation between social career network and career success.

For potential applicants social network is regarded as a good source of additional information about the company and employment opportunities (Holzer, 1988).

According to Lai, Lin and Leung (1998), people with greater social capital are able to find jobs with higher status through their personal network.

Lin and Huang (2005) looked into the effects of both human and social capital on career mobility and how the combination of the two can influence positive career outcomes. In their study they compared individual's social capital by measuring network centrality. They argue that central position in the network would measure the individual's access to resources and work-related information.

In their study human capital is defined as "individuals' rational choice regarding their time and money investment in education, training and experience" (p. 194)

Lin and Huang argued that human capital is related to social capital. Individuals with high level of human capital have better expertise and therefore are likely to be respected by others in the organizations. As a result, these individuals are likely to be asked for advice and have impact on others thus forming social capital.

On the other hand, individuals who occupy central network positions are more likely to take advantage of their human capital in comparison to those who occupy more peripheral positions because a central network position would allow expressing knowledge and expertise (Burt, 1997). Therefore individuals in central network positions are more likely to get better career outcomes.

Flap and Boxman (2001) concentrated on studying social capital at the beginning of an individual's career. According to their research, it is important to take into account that both employer and applicant characteristics when analyzing the job search process (2001). The research is based on the assumption that when making their first job choice young graduates have a choice of either looking for a job

through standard application channels (recruitment web sites, agencies etc) or using their personal connections. They assumed that the greater social capital an applicant has, the more he or she is likely to use informal channels to search for employment.

Marmaros and Sacerdote (2002) studied the use of different job search strategies of the Dartmouth College seniors. They found that students perceive networking is rather important in the job search process. Moreover, different type of networking is to be used by the students depending on the gender, age and job type.

Several studies analyzed the effect of informal social networks on job search results without relating it to individual social capital. However, even though the researchers agree that the use of personal networks have a positive effect on job search rates (Pellizzari, 2010), whether personal networks have positive influence on positions obtained and wages is still a question of debates (Fernandez et al. 2000, Granovetter 1973).

Ioannides and Datcher Loury (2004) argued that the effect of social networks on the level of pay will be different for different countries. Pellizzari (2010) confirmed their findings and argued that “informal search channels lead to significantly better paying jobs in Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands, whereas the opposite is true in Finland, Greece, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom” (p.495). At the same time no significant wage differences were found in the USA and other EU countries (Pellizzari, 2010).

In the study Pellizzari used a data collected with the help of a questionnaire distributed in the 15 pre-enlargement EU countries. The respondents were asked to identify which method helped them to get their present occupational position. As can be seen in figure 2, results varied significantly between countries. Other interesting findings of this study include that younger and less experienced workers are less likely to get the job through personal contacts. The use of informal methods was also found to be more effective to get employment in small firms.

Networking as a job search behavior was separately studied by several researchers. Networking in the job search context is defined as “individual actions directed towards contacting friends, acquaintances, and other people to whom the job seeker has been referred for the main purpose of getting information, leads, or advice on getting a job’ (Wanberg *et al.*, 2000, p. 492).

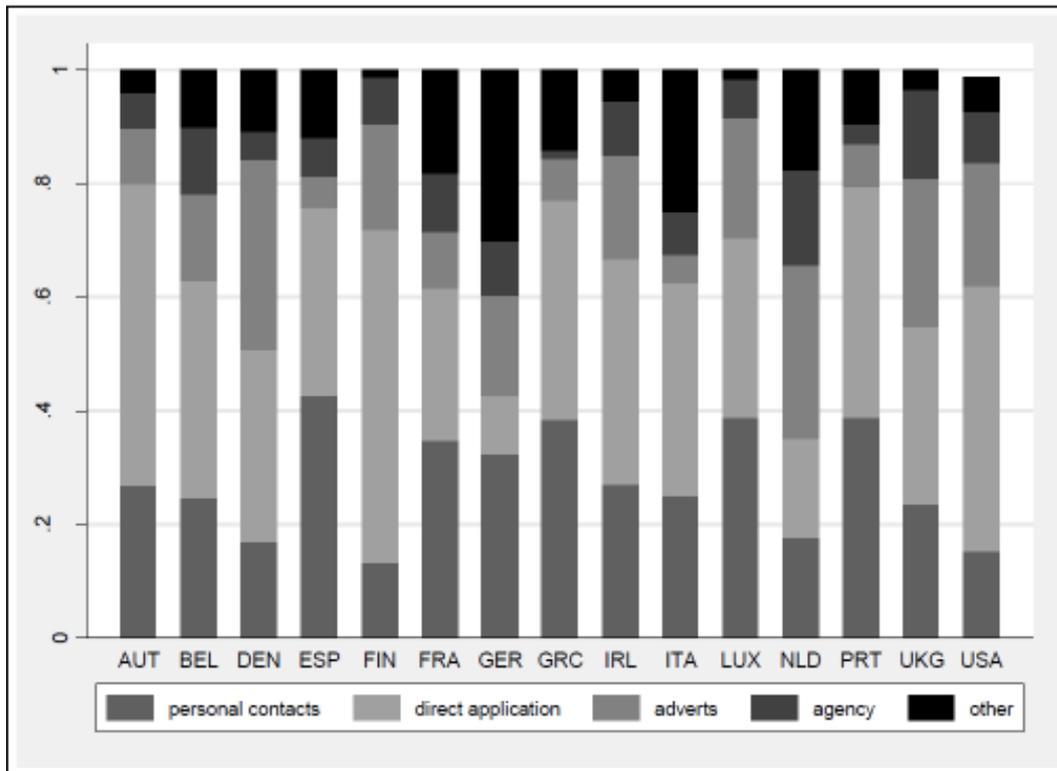


Figure 2: Methods Employed Workers used to Find Their Current Jobs
Source: Pellizzari, 2010, p.499

Van Hoyer *et al.* (2009) classified networking as “a specific kind of preparatory job search behavior” (p.663). They studied the time spent networking as a function of the job seeker’s network size, tie strength and tie status. According to results of this research, job seekers with larger social network and greater number of stronger ties in their network tend to spend more time networking thus confirming the hypothesis that the network structure is an important predictor of the job search behavior. The study also supports earlier findings that the effectiveness of job search behavior is dependent on the tie strength and tie status. Based on the results of this study, job seekers are recommended to invest more time into

networking with their weak ties since they are more likely to be a source of job opportunities. At the same time, job seekers with stronger ties in their network showed a somehow more intense networking behavior. The last finding may have important implications for the recruitment practices in organizations: in order to improve the effectiveness of the job search process they can encourage their employees to forward the information about existing job opportunities to their connections.

To conclude, big and diverse social network is likely to be an important source of information about job opportunities. “Weak” or “bridging” ties such as friends or former colleagues can be especially helpful when looking for a job. Individual social capital is positively related to using informal methods of job search, such as personal connections, and individuals with greater social capital are likely have better chances of career success.

2.4 Social capital and online social networks

The effect of online social networking sites on the formation of bridging social capital has recently received attention in the research literature. Due to technological features, online networking sites make it easier for an individual to maintain relationship with big amount of loose ties by commenting photos, becoming members of the same online groups etc. This can potentially lead to the increase of individual bridging social capital. Donath and Boyd (2006) argue that SNSs could help to increase the number of weak ties “because the technology is well-suited to maintaining such ties cheaply and easily” (p.4) and that the intensity of Facebook use with have a positive effect on individual’s perceived bridging and bonding social capital.

These findings are in line with Pew Internet Project (2007) which was conducted to examine the role internet plays in people’s everyday life. The findings suggested that increase in bridging social capital can occur because internet does

facilitate new connections. These new connections, as a consequence, can lead to the augmented bridging social capital.

At the same time, according to Williams (2006), the researchers have not paid enough attention to the positive effect of online interactions on bonding social capital.

Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007) coined the term “maintained social capital” (p.3) which define “maintained relationships with high school acquaintances as opposed to close friends”. The authors argue that this term is especially relevant for the relationships maintained with the help of online social networks. Nowadays many people have to move to a new location because of work or studies and thus have to construct a new social network from scratch. In this context, the role played by online social networks become especially important. According to Ellison et al. (2007), when young adults move to a new place to start work or studies, they abandon their friends and therefore are risking losing their social capital. The same authors suggested that the use of Facebook will be positively associated with the perceived maintained social capital. The research also showed that there is “a positive relationship between certain kinds of Facebook use and the maintenance and creation of social capital” (p. 12).

Recuero (2008) conducted a research on Brazilian weblogs. Since weblogs share many characteristics of online social networks, her findings can be used to analyze social capital on Facebook. Recuero argued that social visibility, achieved by creating personal space and commenting on the other users’ personal space, “is central to bridge capital” (p.3).

In her research, Recuero connects types of memes, published on weblogs with perceived values and types of social capital according to Putman’s methodology. The following values perceived are cited: visibility, interaction, social support, reputation popularity and authority. Interaction, which Recuero categorizes as a “value in itself” (p.4), can be attributed both to strong and weak ties and can

therefore indicate bridging, bonding or maintained social capital. Visibility, measured by comments received from other users, is associated with bridging and maintained social capital. Contribution and authority, on the other hand, are more linked to bridging social capital because individuals posting information are more interested in actually having an audience than sharing their intimacy views with their strong ties. Popularity is a product of weak ties for the same reason. Overall Recuero's research showed that informational memes are more connected to bonding social capitals whereas interactional memes are mostly associated with bridging and maintained social capital.

Recuero found out that the following were the most common motivations for blogging: a) creating a personal space; b) sharing interaction; c) sharing knowledge; d) authority; e) popularity. These motivations were attributed to different types of social capital according to Putman's terminology and "classified as bonding, bridging and maintained values" (p.6).

At the same time existing research suggests that online social networks are mostly used for keeping in touch with people who already know each other in the real life than for getting to know complete strangers (Ellison et al, 2006). Thus the direction of formation of online connections can mostly be described as offline to online.

It can be concluded that online social networks are mostly used to maintain the existing offline connections, to put it in other words, stay in touch with people individuals are acquainted with in the real life. Those connections are likely to be weak ties, since to stay in touch with strong ties other more personal communication channels are likely to be used. Thus SNSs play important part in maintaining personal networks and can have a positive effect on the individuals' social capital.

2.5 Online social networks and recruitment practices

While the role that online social networking sites play in modern HR is yet to receive attention from scholarly journals, recent trade publications presented a fairly good overview of social media and its influence on recruitment. For example, Economist has recently published “A world of connections” (2010) - a special report about online social networks and their benefits for both sides: the employer and employee.

There are some studies which look at the role played by SNSs in HR practices from both applicants and recruiters perspective.

The attitude of potential applicants to SNSs has not yet received enough attention of the researches. Some research has been conducted between students in order to examine the attitude of potential graduates to online social networks as a source of information about recruitment opportunities. For example, a study conducted by Shailja and Mital (2009) shows that Indian students are using SNWs to understand the business environment, improve job prospects, and participates in formal discussion forums in order to facilitate finding a job after graduation both in India and abroad.

Another study conducted in the early 2009 by Dr. Hope Koch Management Information Systems Leadership class reported that the preferable way for students to search for jobs is social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace (Elmor, 2009). Students revealed that they have more trust in Facebook than corporate recruitment sites with 66 out of 76 students claiming that they would take seriously a recruitment approach done via Facebook. According to Koch’s class research, 73% of students used social networking sites to search for jobs, 84% said that would join employer group established on the online social networking site.

According to Adams (2010) Facebook is used in banking recruitment, but it is more targeted to younger applicants, for example, graduate program candidates.

“It's free and it lets younger candidates know who we are” says Chris Anderson, a spokesperson for Country Financial in Bloomington in the US.

Research on benefits of SNSs from recruiters' perspective is also rather limited. As Ruiz (2008) points out, not all online networking sites are equally equipped to deliver benefits to the recruiters. LinkedIn allows recruiters to scour for talent using important search criteria like a previous place of employment or past professional titles. By contrast, general social networking sites usually do not provide these opportunities of specified search. However, such widely used sites as Facebook provide access to a large pool of young, entry-level talents.

In their exploratory study Girard and Fallery (2009) examined the benefits of social network usage from employer's point of view. According to this research, “making use of one's own network or that of the staff should limit the number of applications whilst simultaneously ensuring their quality and also reduce absenteeism and turnover. This method is both less expensive and more effective because of the confidence there is in the applications” (p. 3)

Gilbert mentioned the following online tools to be the most widely used in the recruitment:

1. Blogs, which can be created by employees, employers and headhunters alike
2. Online social networks, such as Facebook and LinkedIn
3. Corporation websites
4. Identity management websites, as for example, Ziki, it allows the user to improve the visibility in the internet by synchronizing profile page with, for example, a blog
5. RSS Feeds (Real Simple Syndication). With the help of this application updated information about job offers can be automatically posted on search engines. This approach is, for example, widely used by Societe Generale.

- Video Platforms, such as YouTube, where companies have a possibility to present their job offers.

According to findings from this study, many companies are thinking in terms of competences rather than previous positions. Social networking websites are considered useful for employer branding and “to be means of communication and differentiation” (p.5).

As the same it is pointed out that online social networks give an opportunity “to increase their social capital by creating new relationships and reaching out to potential applicants.” (p.6). Of special interest for the companies are so called “passive jobseekers” who may not be looking for a job right now, but at the same time are exploring new opportunities.

Based on the earlier model developed by Ruel et al.(2004), Girard and Fallery, (2009) developed E-recruitment model (p.7)

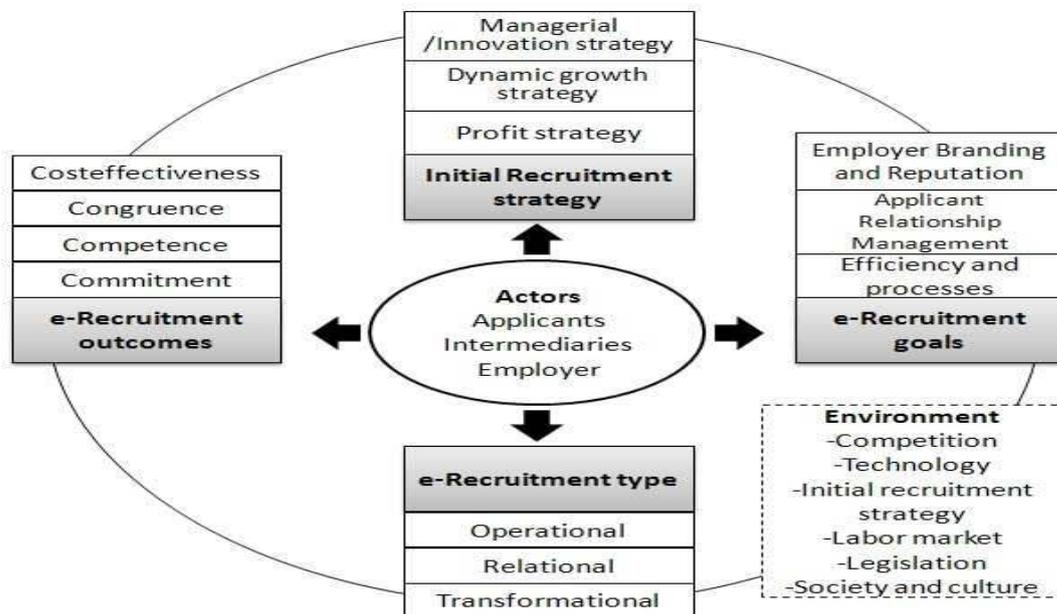


Figure 3: E-recruitment model
Source: Girard and Fallery, 2009, p7.

According to Fondeur and Lhermitte (2006) professionally – oriented online social networks such as LinkedIn can emerge or have already done so as an

important source of recruitment via internet. That online social networks are able to transmit information based on the strength of weak ties concept “multiplied by the effects of internet” (p.28). However, researchers pointed out, the phenomenon of online social networks is still very young and constantly evolving.

For HR professionals professional SNSs present a good way of locating passive candidates, the category which is really thought after by the recruiters.

For recruiters SNSs present more cost effective method of finding potential employees in comparison to standard online CV databases. Another advantage is higher rate of visits. Fondeur and Lhermitte (2006) argued that on CV databases and online job boards candidates post their CV or save the results of job search and do not have any incentives to come back to the web site before they receive a message that an interest in their candidacy has been expressed. In contrast, on online social networking sites users are encouraged to maintain their professional profile and actually use the service for staying in touch with colleagues or taking part in professional discussions.

At the same time Fondeur and Lhermitte (2006) pointed out that the demography of SNSs is still rather specific. According to the data used in their research the majority of SNSs members are employed in the following fields: IT, marketing, finance, communication and human resources and therefore the profiles of candidates in certain working fields are simply not available in SNSs.

The fact that the success of the use of social media in the hiring process will largely depend on the industry norms was further confirmed by Joos (2008). He found that social media can be especially effective when recruiting for the IT industry. Important differences also exist when recruiting different age groups. For example, recent graduates are likely to be more responsive to the use of SNSs in the recruitment process: “College recruiting, particularly of millennials, is a high-growth area for social media. This group, with their past and current exposure to technology, responds extremely well to the social-media environment” (p.58). In line with earlier research, Joos also emphasized the importance of social media for passive recruitment: “one of the best uses of social

media is to attract the about 30 percent of people who are lurking about looking for better opportunities but are not yet committed to a full-blown job search. Many managers have ultimately arrived at the conclusion that the best way to win in the ongoing search for talent is to entice those already employed elsewhere”(p.58).

In conclusion, candidates consider SNSs to be a useful source of job-related information. For recruiters SNSs present an important source of recruitment via internet and an excellent opportunity to reach passive job-seekers.

2.6 Recruitment Methods and their Effectiveness

To fully understand the role played by SNSs in recruitment, it is important to have a good overview of other recruitment methods. The list of recruitment sources presented in this section will also be used later in the questionnaire construction.

Different recruitment methods commonly used by companies nowadays are a well researched topic. A number of different classifications of recruitment sources exist in the modern literature.

Ullman (1966) suggested a two-dimensional categorization of recruitment methods. According to his study, all the recruitment sources can be categorized as either formal such as newspaper ads and employment agencies or informal such as for example different referrals.

According to Wanous (1992) recruitment sources can be grouped into three categories: internal (“inside”) sources, external (“outside”) sources and walk-ins, which are in practice either direct applications for an advertised position or unsolicited applications.

Such sources as, for example, referrals, internships, rehires are called internal because they give the applicant an opportunity to receive information about the

job before being hired. External sources, such as employment agencies, job advertisements or school placements offices do not usually provide candidates with this first-hand information.

Moser (2005) included the following list of recruitment sources in the research questionnaire for his study: job advertisement, unsolicited application, public employment agency, industry fairs, graduate fairs, contacts resulting from an internship, contacts resulting from a diploma thesis, contacts made during a site visit, other personal contacts with employees and direct, personal recruitment from the company.

Since this study is mostly concerned with studying connections which can potentially lead to job offers, in the literature review I will concentrate on the internal recruitment sources.

Internal or informal sources are generally assumed to be more effective recruitment method than external sources.

Ullman (1966) explained higher effectiveness of informal recruitment sources in terms of lower discharge rates. He argued that this happens because of pre-screening effect which exists not only because the existing company employees who do referrals are well positioned to assess the candidates' suitability for the job and potential candidate's fit with organization, but also because candidates themselves are better informed about the position.

The findings of Hill (1970) are similar to the ones of Ullman although he used performance rating as a measure of recruitment effectiveness.

Reid (1972) argued that informal sources are more effective because referrals have more amount of information about the candidate and what's really important this information is also more accurate. Reid used job survival as a measure of recruitment method effectiveness. This idea was further developed by Decker and Conard and Ashworth (1986) compared job survival rates for the applicants who used job referrals as a recruitment source and those which used newspaper ads. Referrals had higher survival rates. Williams at al. (1993) found that applicants

who used informal sources had more realistic expectations and greater pre-hire knowledge than candidates who relied only on formal sources.

In general inside/informal sources are likely to provide more information in comparison to formal sources.

Employees' referrals are the most relevant insider methods for this study since they actually imply the use of both individual and organizational social network in the job search process. There are number of studies focused especially on employee referrals and a short review of them will be useful for constructing the theoretical framework of the present study.

According to the study conducted by Fernandez and Weinberg (1997) in a bank, applicants referred by current employees were more likely to get interviews and receive job offers than applicants who used other recruitment methods.

Fernandez, Castilla and Moore (2000) studied applicants for a call center jobs. The hypothesis that referrals would be better suited to the position applied for and therefore more likely to receive a job offer. This prediction was to a large extent supported by the research results. It was reported that referrals had better chances of getting interviews and receiving an offer.

Castilla (2005) conducted a study of call center employees with focus on applicants' performance. He reported that referrals exhibited better job performance at the initial stages of employment but this difference tends to disappear gradually.

Based on the studies mentioned above and several others, Breaugh (2008) concluded that "many employees believe that employee referrals offer important advantages over other recruitment methods and therefore rely heavily on them for staffing the work forces" (p.110).

To conclude, all the recruitment sources can be broadly divided into either informal (internal) or formal (external). Informal sources such as employee referrals generally no only present better opportunities for candidates to get

interviews and being offered a position, but also they usually result in better employee performance and job satisfaction rates.

2.7 Recruitment in Russia

There is a considerable amount of research done on Russian labor market. The most important and widely cited studies have been published by Yakubovich and Koziina (2000), Gerber & Mayorova (2003), Gimpelson and Magun (1994); Yakubovich, (2006), Didkovskaya and Onegov (2009).

Yakubovich (2006) argued that an attractive job in the Russian labour market is likely to be filled by a candidate found through a personal network. At the same time he argued that “the less specific is the job, the more likely the job will be filled through passive recruitment” (p.314).

“The contribution of new labor market intermediaries to the allocation of labor is relatively insignificant, though; jobs are obtained primarily through personal contacts (p.308).” “The social contacts of a firm’s current employees enjoy preferential treatment in hiring; as a rule, employers advertise vacancies only if social networks cannot fill them” (p.3). For example, the maintenance of so-called “waiting list” (p.311) is common in Russia enterprises. A waiting list is a semi-formalized way to keep in mind the names of people who would like to be contacted in case an opportunity of employment arises. Yakubovich also pointed out the importance of return mobility when employees who once left their employers or fired eventually come back. This phenomenon represents an addition to personal networks (Yakubovich, 2006).

Gerber and Mayorova (2003) argued that “younger Russian would have lower labor market returns to networks than older workers” (p.6). This happens due to the fact that younger candidates simply did not have enough time to construct a wider personal network. At the same time they pointed out that older and better experienced candidates are less likely to use personal network for the job search

since they possess enough competitive advantages in the form of job experience and knowledge than to successfully respond to a job advertised openly. “Younger Russians who obtain new jobs are more likely to have used networks to do so than are older Russians” (p.8)

Yakubovich (2005) tested the strength of weak ties theory in the Russian city Samara. His findings suggest that in the Russian labor market weak ties are better equipped to deliver jobs “because they are better positioned to provide information and direct access to employers” (p.418)

According to Didkovskaya and Onegov (2009) first job placement is one of the key stages of a successful career and therefore it is important to understand how young people gain their first employment position. Didkovskaya and Onegov studied the evolution of graduates’ job placement between 1998 and 2001, the results of their study showed that 58% of respondents found their first job by themselves (without assistance) whereas 30% got assistance of friends and acquaintances.

It can be concluded that personal contacts are one of the most effective recruitment channels in Russia. Weak ties are regarded as especially helpful when searching for a job.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

The existing research on online social networks is very limited and does not concentrate on the use of SNSs as a recruitment source. In addition, no studies on how social media can be used in the recruitment process in Russia can be found.

Existing studies on the use of SNSs in the recruitment process contribute mainly to human resources as an organizational function and do not give any recommendations for HR professional on how to use social media in their everyday work. Existing literature on SNSs from an individual’s perspective

mainly focuses on the benefits for an individual in terms of easiness of maintaining a large and geographically independent social network but does not provide advice on how to benefit from online connections in the job search process.

For the theoretical framework current research papers on the use of SNSs and how they are related to traditional social networks are important. Sociological theories of social networks and social capital and their application for the job search behavior (Granovetter, 1973; Fernandez et al., 2000) enhanced my understanding of individuals' motivation to turn to personal connections in the job search process. Literature of recruitment methods, especially studies on employee referrals (Ullman, 1966; Conard and Ashworth, 1986) gave a good overview of practical implications of using personal connections, especially from the recruiters' point of view. Studies on recruitment practices in Russia provided the researcher with a good insight on the specifics of the job search process in Russia.

Theoretical framework used in this study is presented in figure 4.

In this study SNSs as a recruitment method in Russia is analyzed both from candidates' and recruiters' perspectives. It is hypothesized that in the Russian job market where getting a job through personal connections is common, online social networks should also play an important role as a recruitment method. This statement is further enhanced by the fact that it is usually weak ties or connections we have with friends or acquaintances that transmit job related information (Granovetter, 1973; Seibert, 2006) and SNSs are especially useful for maintaining individuals' weak ties (Ellison et al., 2007).

The first research question aims to present candidate's perspective and is analyzed based on the literature review on online social networks, social networks theories and studies which bridge social capital and social network theories with career success. The second and third research questions are targeted at studying recruiters' point of view, to fully answer them research on recruitment methods as well as social network theories are used. Obviously studies on the use of

recruitment methods in Russia were utilized to answer all the three research questions.

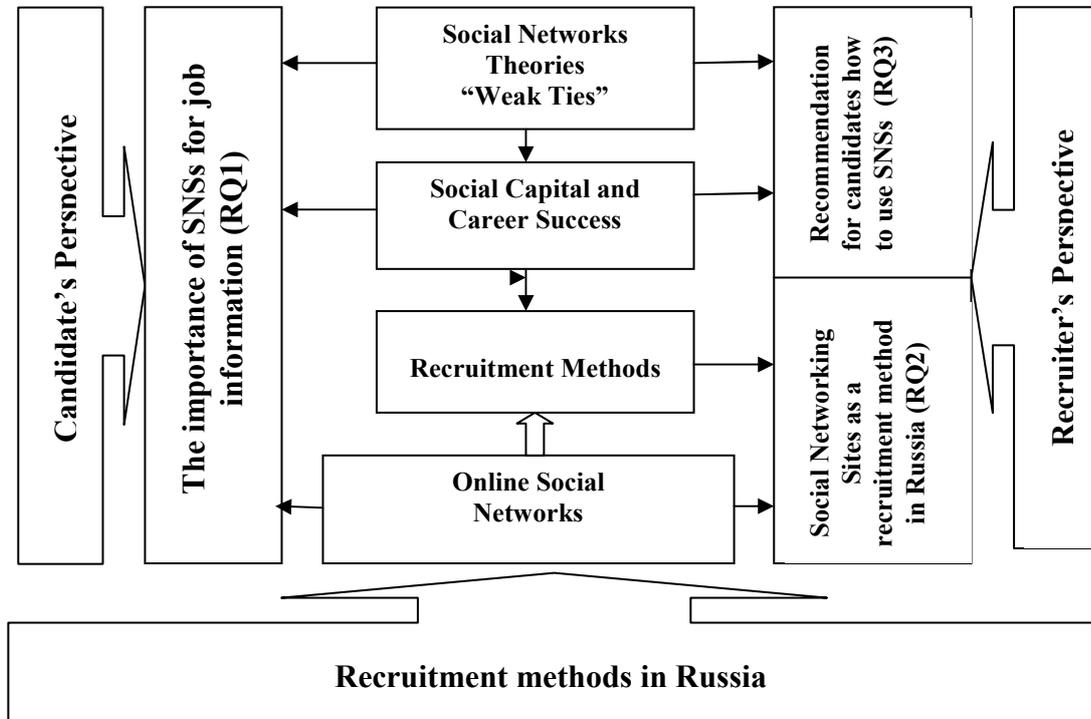


Figure 4: Theoretical Framework
Source: Own Contribution

3 METHOD OF RESEARCH

This chapter gives an overview of research methods used in the study and presents material collection techniques used in this research.

3.1 Research Approach

In this study a combination of exploratory and explanatory research approach was used. According to Saunders et al. (2003) exploratory study methods are helpful when trying to “find new insights: ask questions and to assess the phenomena in new light” (p.96). Exploratory research methods have been especially useful in studying online social networks. Recuero (2005) studied individual social capital and how it is presented in the online community Orkut with the help of exploratory studies.

3.2 Research Methods

In the present study the combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods was used. According to Creswell, the data from qualitative research can be described “means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals and groups ascribe to a social or human problem”. At the same time quantitative research methods result in “means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship between variables” (Creswell, 2007). Buckley and Clapham (1996) describes qualitative research as the “why and how”.

Several advantages of qualitative research in comparison with quantitative have been mentioned in the literature. According to Wright (1996) qualitative research is well equipped to provide answers to complex problems. Moreover, qualitative research usually takes more holistic approach and may be more suitable to particular locations, such as developing countries (Marschan-Piekkari and Welch, 2004)

According to Usunier (1998), quantitative and qualitative research can be used simultaneously for optimal results.

Jick at al. (1979, p.609) called mixing methods for the purpose of one study “a methodological triangulation”. This method is recommended when the phenomenon is not well studied and there is relatively little theory available from the past (Gorard and Taylor 2004).

3.3 Data Collection Methods

In order to explore the current situation with the influence of online social networks on finding a job in Russia, it is essential to study how selected social media are used as recruitment platforms by both recruiters and applicants. To achieve this goal I used a combination of data collection methods: observation, semi-structured interview and online questionnaire.

3.3.1 Observations

Observation is regarded as an important tool in the international business research: “observations give us impressions that cannot easily be obtained through interviews and documents” (De Geer at al. 2004 p.332). De Geer at al. (2004) used observations as “an additional source of information” (p.331). Two types of observations are distinguished: focused observations and open observations. Focused observation is used to test a hypothesis which has already been formulated whereas open observation can be used when a hypothesis is not yet ready (Kaijer and Ohlander 1999). For the purpose of this study focused observation was used. I closely watched a list of contacts I have on Facebook, and Vkontakte in order to identify the profiles which are active and are eager to use their accounts for professional purposes. It was assumed that all the contacts I have on LinkedIn joined the site for career-related purposes and therefore no observation was conducted on this SNS. In particular I was looking for the following features:

1. Status updates which aimed at letting the community know that either the registered network user himself or his friends are looking for a job
2. Group membership, becoming fans of a particular employers and recruitment sites and publications.
3. As a result of my observation study I identified which of online social network profiles and recruitment campaigns were especially active on selected online social media.

As a result of observation study, 86 profiles which used social media for professional purposes were identified.

3.3.2 Online Questionnaire

To get candidates' perspective on social media in the recruitment, at the next stage of the research stage a link to online questionnaire was sent to the profiles identified at the first stage and all the Russian speaking profile which I found in the list of my contacts in LinkedIn. Before being sent out the questionnaire was tested on three different Russian speakers, one of whom lives in Russia and the other were based abroad. Testing of the questionnaire is recommended by the researchers (Saunders, 2003) and resulted in some wording and design changes.

The questionnaire was set up in the online platform [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com). Online questionnaires are particularly useful when reaching respondents in different geographical locations. Since the study aimed to encompass not only job seekers who are actually living in Russia but Russian speakers living abroad who are interested in the career opportunities in Russia, this method of research was particularly helpful.

The questionnaire was constructed using Likert scale and open-end questions. Overall there were 15 questions in the questionnaire. The full list of questions can be found in the appendix 1 of this study.

Throughout this study principles of voluntary participation and anonymity were observed.

According to the principle of voluntary participation, respondents cannot be forced to take part in the study. The respondents of the online questionnaire were asked to participate via email or via personal messages on LinkedIn, Facebook or V Kontakte and were sent the link to the online questionnaire. The questionnaire was completely anonymous.

3.3.3 Interviews

To get a recruiter's perspective on the use of SNSs in the recruitment process, two interviews were conducted. Interview study is defined as "one where the data and findings are based on the direct researcher-to-respondent conversations" (Daniels and Cannice 2004 p.185). During the interview it is very important to let the interviewee fully express his/her point of view. De Geer et al. (2004) even used a special term "storytelling". According to them, "storytelling" by the interviewee is an important source of "rich narratives" (p.328) which can serve as better illustration for the case. In addition interviewees' stories can touch upon topics that would not be otherwise known by the researcher as well as to "encourage the respondent to talk about the subjects that otherwise would be too abstract or too sensitive (p.329). "The role of the interviewer should be to allow the interviewee to construct his/her meaning and to be sensitive to this meaning when analyzing the interview data." (p. 328).

As storytelling can be an important source of information for this study, I constructed semi-structured interviews (De Geers et al. 2004 p.329). In the case of semi-structured interview the researcher prepares a list of more or less specific questions or topics to be asked, but the interviewee has a great deal of freedom in replying the question. Also questions do not have to be asked in a particular order. Based on the interviewee responses additional questions may be asked by the researcher in order to clarify some points or go into more details. The full list of interview questions can be found in the appendix 2. Kylan and Vestlund (1980) suggested an interview model where short open end questions are followed by

more detailed questions. This model was used in the construction of the interview book for this study.

Interviews were conducted in Russian as it is a mother tongue of respondents and of the interviewer, since choosing a language is an important part of the research process and can have implications on the study results (Marschan-Piekkari & Reis, 2004). One interview was conducted over the phone since it was identified as a preferred method by the participant. The other interview was conducted in person.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the consultant from international recruitment agency which for confidentiality reasons will be called “Agency X”.

“Agency X” is one the leading providers of specialized recruitment services. It is currently present in more than 17 countries around the globe and is fully equipped to provide professional recruitment services on the global scale. Particular areas of expertise are graduate recruitment, recruitment for financial services and consulting.

The second interviewee works as leading human resource manager in a middle-size Russian IT company which has offices in Germany, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

One of the interview participants was asked to take part in the study via a personal message on LinkedIn, based on her activity on this service.

Both interviewees and the respondents who expressed this wish will be provided with the results of the study.

Even though no sensitive company information is included in this case, interviewees agreed to participate in this study only if the principle of anonymity was to be applied throughout this study. The principle of anonymity means that no personal or company names will be disclosed.

3.3.4 Secondary Data

In order to understand the phenomenon of SNS as well as to confirm the findings secondary data was used. Secondary data was mostly collected in the internet in the openly available sources such as techcrunch reports, Nielsen reports, and statistics pages of the studied SNSs.

4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The empirical part of his research consisted of three parts.

During the first part the secondary data on three online social networks was collected. At the same time, I observed several profiles on Facebook, LinkedIn and V Kontakte.ru. The rationale for the profiles choice is presented in the section data collection methods.

4.1 Observations and secondary data

As a result of observation study, 86 profiles which used social media for professional purposes were identified. In addition, I observed several groups on the social network v kontakte.ru, which were created to communicate to the participants the new graduate positions opened in the companies. The following groups were identified: Deutsche Bank Russian Analyst Programs for Technology, Mars Graduate Program, Marketing Associate Novartis, BAT – The Challenging Initiative etc. This was done in order to identify companies which are actively recruiting candidates with the help of online social media and could potentially be contacted for interviews.

Results of secondary data collection together with my own observations of the three social networking sites chosen for this study are presented below.

Facebook

Facebook is the most popular social networking site. It claims to have more than 400 million active users, with 50% of active users logging into Facebook every day and about 17% of users being based outside of the United States According to Facebook statistics page, average user spends more than 55 minutes per day on Facebook and has 130 friends on the site. According to Nielsen Research, “Facebook has the highest average time per visitor amongst the 75 most popular brands online” (p.4)

Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes in 2004 as a college-only network. In order to create an account a prospective user had to have a valid school e-mail address. In 2006 Facebook was eventually opened to anyone, but the idea of school-exclusive membership can still be seen in the private school groups, membership in which requires a valid school email address.

The demographics of Facebook changed considerably comparing to the early days of this service. Nielsen reported that by the end of 2008 almost one third of the site's registered members were aged between 35 and 49 with almost one quarter being older than 50. These demographic changes will unavoidably have important implications for advertising. As an example, expansive brands mainly targeted at older consumers such as Rolex and Jaguar are nowadays have their fan pages on Facebook.

When analyzed with the framework given by Kim et al. (2010), Facebook has all the important characteristics of the online social networking site. Using Boyd and Ellison (2007) methodology, Facebook will fall into the category of profile-centered websites.

An example of typical Facebook profile can be found below (figure 5):

Speculating about recent and still growing popularity of Facebook, in Nielsen report on online social networks the following aspects were highlighted as explanation factors:

1. Design – organized, simple and easy-to-use interface
2. Broad appeal - the site is not targeted to one specific demographic group
3. Activity focus – the main objective of the website is connection as opposed to entertainment
4. Architecture – the website allows access to third party applications, which definitely contribute to maximizing the amount of time the users spend on Facebook.

According to Mark Zuckerberg, he designed Facebook as “a social utility that connects you with people around you” (Papacharissi, 2009, p.205). However, nowadays online social service aims also to connect people to things (Economist, 2010) by encouraging information swapping between people. This can lead to even more third party applications being present on Facebook and more networking opportunities.

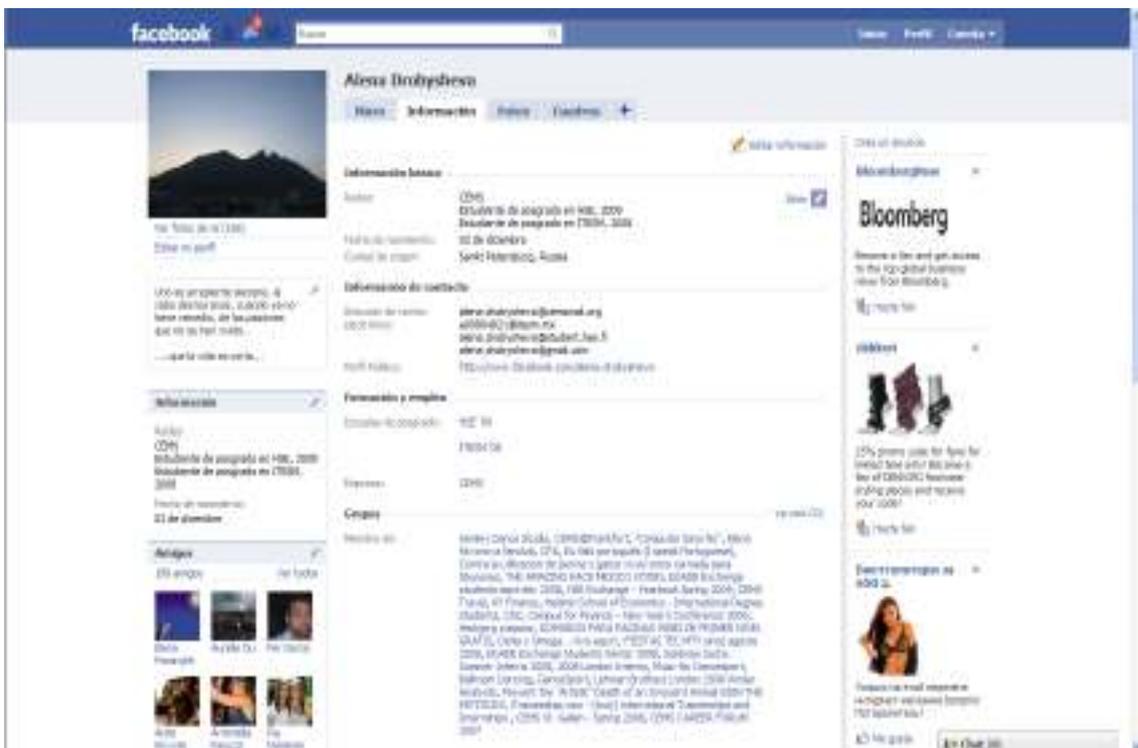


Figure 5: Facebook Profile
Source: Facebook.com

Vkontakte.ru

This online social network was founded in a rather similar way to Facebook. In the beginning the membership was restricted to the student of top universities and the information provided upon registration was carefully checked. Subsequently the site was opened to anyone but the registration is only allowed under the real name and the compliance with this rule is rigorously checked.

Currently the web site claims to have more than 40 millions of registered users (September 2009). According to TNS Gallop, vkontakte.ru is the most visited online social network in Russia. The major audience is young, registered users between 19 and 25 years old constitute 28% of total site population, according to official statistics page on vkontakte.ru.

In 2008 the application which allows to post and search for jobs was added. Nowadays around 58% of registered users are using this SNS for job search purposes.

LinkedIn “Relationships matter”

LinkedIn functions the same way as other professional-oriented online social networking sites. Signing up is always free. The new member is asked to construct a profile by filling in different fields which contain information similar to a regular CV.

As next step a new member is asked to search for or import connections. Connections can be imported for example, from a member’s email address. Members which were identified as contacts will get an invitation to connect and will become official contacts as soon as the relationship is confirmed. When sending out an invitation, a member will be asked to identify what kind of a relationship he or she has with a perspective contact. The list of suggestions consists of former colleagues, people done business with, friend. It is important to point out that in contrast to Facebook you cannot just invite a person to connect without identifying the nature of the relationship. In case you identify perspective contact as a friend you are asked to provide an email address. LinkedIn official user guidance even advises users not to accept invitations from people they do not know. An alternative to contact invitation is an InMail which allows you to get introduced to a person you don’t know. But for general level users the access to this feature is limited. In addition, some members may opt out and turn the function of receiving inMail down.

The member can set privacy setting; a user can construct a public profile and thus make only certain personal information visible to members outside of personal

network. The general level account - the one every new member automatically gets at LinkedIn is free and implies certain restrictions. For example, in order to see a full profile of a member, a contact has to belong to your networks, be your first, second or third level connection.

There are three more account level options which allow free browsing of registered users profiles and other benefits.

LinkedIn makes it possible to visualize a member’s personal network. For example, X is connected to Y and Y has a direct connection to Z, but there is no connections between X and Z (in real life that usually means people do not know each other). In LinkedIn X and Z would be nevertheless shown as connected via Y, as connections are labeled as “two degrees away”. To sum up, the longer is a member’s list of contacts, the more new contacts are accessible in the network and more profiles are visible to a member. “Your network statistics” tool in LinkedIn gives the following presentation of accessible contacts:



Figure 6: Example of a LinkedIn member network
Source: Screen-print retrieved from my own LinkedIn profile

In addition to creating a list of personal contacts, LinkedIn offers its members a number of other tools to take advantage from. Important part of networking is a group membership. Groups can be created based on school, employer, organizational members or just common interests. Currently LinkedIn is home to more than 500 000 different professional groups. According to some HR

professionals, “joining interest groups and participating in discussions is a great way to come across likeminded people and to raise your own profile”.

The following are currently the largest groups on LinkedIn:

1. LinkedIn: HR
2. eMarketing Association Network
3. Executive Suits

Membership in certain groups allows a user to get a group logo on the personal profile. This feature is especially popular for the alumni groups and former employer networking groups.

For a recruiter, group membership can be important source of information about a candidate. According to Hempel (2010), recruiters often explore groups to find suitable candidates for open positions or enrich their perspective candidates’ pool. Candidates can also use status bar or a link to tweeter account to their advantage. For example, a candidate can put “is interested in job opportunities in health care industry” and thus signalize his current employment status.

4.2 Candidates’ Perspective

Overall 52 questionnaires were returned which indicates the response rate of 61%. This high response rate can be explained by the fact that the profiles were preselected at the observation stage of the study.

Since the sample was designed based on the observations, all the respondents were members of one or several online social networking sites.

Online social network	Number of respondents which are members of this network
Vkontakte.ru	48
Facebok	41
LinkedIn	32
LinkedIn and vkontakte.ru	17
LinkedIn and Facebook	23

Table 3: Number of respondents registered on each social network

Some of the respondents indicated that they have profiles on the other online social networks as well, such as XING (8), odnoklassniki.ru (5), MySpace (3), Orkut (1).

The majority of respondents fall in the age category 25-35. The detailed results are presented below.

Age categories	18-22	22-25	25-30	30-35	Older than 35
Number of respondents	8	14	20	13	7

Table 4: Age of the respondents

The majority of respondents have quite a large number of contacts on the online social networking sites. The longest contact list has 1023 friends while the shortest is just 24. The mean length of the respondents' contact list is 309 contacts.

Most respondents have already been on the online social networking sites for a while: the longest membership was started 4 years ago, the respondent who spent the least time on an SNS created his profile 5 months ago.

As can be seen from the table 5, the absolute majority of respondents (41 or 79%) log onto SNSs every day, with 11.5% of respondents reporting to log in 2-3 times per week. Nobody from the respondents logs onto SNSs less than once a month.

How often do you log onto SNSs?	Number of respondents
Every day	41
2-3 times per week	6
once in a week	2
more than 2 times per month	1
less than once per month	0

Table 5: How often do you log onto SNSs?

Judging by results of the survey, weak ties play a significant role in obtaining job-related information. Almost one quarter of respondents identified weak ties as the most influential source of information about available positions. It can also be concluded that weak ties are more important than strong ones which were identified as the most important source of information by only 13 respondents and 20 respondents identified it as the second most influential source of information.

Source of information about the available job	Overall rank
Direct application on the potential employer website	1
Personal contacts relatives	3
Personal contacts friends	2
Recruitment Agency	5
Career fair and other recruitment events	7-8
University career services	7-8
Job boards, including open applications	6
Online social networks	4

Table 6: The most influential sources of information about job opportunities

Online social networks were identified as the most important source of information by 3 respondents. In the comments section they mentioned that they received information about the current job opportunity via SNSs – two respondents via LinkedIn and one respondent via Facebook. Even though in this study SNSs are ranked as only fourth most influential source of information about job offerings, the fact that they are ranked higher than such traditional recruitment channels as recruitment agencies and career events highlights the growing popularity in the use of this media for recruitment purposes.

Based on the results of the survey, it can be concluded that LinkedIn is primary used for searching keeping in touch (4.42) and searching for a job (3.98) which is

in line with the objectives of this online service. LinkedIn is hardly used to get to know new people (1.21).

Statement	Rating average
I use LinkedIn to search for a job	3.98
I use LinkedIn to stay in touch with former colleagues and classmates	4.42
I use LinkedIn to get up-to-date information in my industry (company news, press articles etc)	2.4
I use LinkedIn to discuss business-related issues with my colleagues	2.6
I use LinkedIn to get to know new people	1.62

Table 7: Motivation for using LinkedIn

The number of respondents who use LinkedIn to discuss industry-related issues and get to date up-to date information is judging by the number of responses N/A is small. This may happen because LinkedIn is still widely viewed as “contact list” rather than a discussion board. At the same the site high rating for job search related information comes as no surprise since the LinkedIn defines itself as a career oriented online social network.

As can be seen from the table 8, respondents use Facebook for different purposes.

Statement	Rating average
I use Facebook for job search	3.2
I use Facebook to stay in touch with friends, colleagues and classmates	4.9
I use Facebook to get up-to-date information about my industry (company news, press articles etc)	2.5
I use Facebook to get to know new people	1.5

Table 8: Motivation for using Facebook

Respondents indicated that they primary use Facebook for keeping in touch with friends and acquaintances. Surprisingly, the respondents ranked Facebook quite high in terms of usability for job search. In the comments section of the questionnaire some of the participants wrote that they saw the following friends' status updates on Facebook: "is looking for a job from the 1st of April", "...knows somebody who is looking for an experienced financial manager. Please drop me a message if you are interested". I myself saw similar comments at the observation stage of this study. A rather high number of respondents who regard Facebook as a useful source of business-related information can be explained by the presence of newspaper pages and employer-specific groups on Facebook. Some participants of the survey are "fans" of The Economist of Financial Times pages on Facebook and therefore updates from these publications regularly appear in the newsfeed. Facebook just like LinkedIn is also not much is use for meeting new people even though here the average importance is a little bit higher.

Of 32 respondents who have their professional profiles on LinkedIn, 26 or more than 81% are members of professional groups on this service. The most popular groups are: 1. University students/alumni groups; 2. Employer groups; 3. Groups in related professional field

Only 4 respondents stated that they were contacted by a recruiter via LinkedIn. In contrast, 15 members replied that they have been forwarded information about a job position by their contacts.

22 or 69% of the respondents stated that they either made the recommendations for their contacts on LinkedIn or were recommended themselves. According to this study, this is the most popular service on LinkedIn.

The motivation for use of online social networking site vkontakte.ru is in many ways similar to the use of Facebook. The respondents mostly use vkontakte for keeping in touch with the people they already know. Only 6 respondent who have a profile on vkontakte said that they were members of a group created in order to promote specific employer's recruitment campaigns.

4.3 Recruiters' perspective

In order to understand if SNSs are indeed an important informational channel in the job search, it is essential to estimate their effectiveness in comparison to other recruitment methods.

According to the interviewees, the importance of SNSs in the recruitment and therefore the use of this service increased considerably in the last 2-3 years.

“As a human resources professional, I have always tried to keep up with the latest trends in my professional field. When SNSs became popular, I was probably one of the first to register and create my profile on the two most popular online social networks at that time – odnoklassniki and vkontakte.ru. But, to be honest, the benefits of these services for my day to day work did not become apparent until much later on. Nowadays, even though our company is not a big international player, SNSs are a very important source of getting information about highly specialized candidates available in the market”

“When I started working as an assistant to a recruitment consultant two years ago, one of my first tasks was to screen passive candidates' profiles on LinkedIn. At that time it was not that popular, the majority of profiles were from rather experienced candidates in finance, IT or HR, sometimes also marketing or PR. Occasionally I could find some students' profiles mostly from US business schools but I don't even remember contacting anybody with offers to take part in the recruitment process of our clients, since at that time it was still a rather new practise and the majority of profile did not contain enough information”

Both recruiters pointed out the effectiveness of SNSs for recruitment. This is especially true for the candidates since maintaining a profile on SNS does not cost anything and is not that time consuming.

“Job seekers, especially passive ones, should regard profiles on professional SNSs as a good time investment”

The effectiveness of SNSs in recruitment is growing and is expected to rise in line with the growth rate of the online social networks membership.

“This fall our company was tendered to conduct a graduate recruitment campaign for a big international company. A special application form was opened to receive candidates CVs and cover letters. At the same time I screen my university’s alumni group to identify potential candidates. From twelve potentially interesting candidates identified, two made it to the assessment centre stage and one was actually hired. This is much higher application success rate than what we usually get from the online application form”

“As more and more professionals become aware of the benefits of online social networks, more and more profiles become accessible online and this obviously has a positive impact on the effectiveness of recruitment with SNSs”

Recruiters emphasized the educational benefits of using SNSs in their everyday work:

“Participation in professional groups helps not just to get to know your colleagues from basically all around the world, but also to stay updated about the recent trends in the HR business. It is very important to know what your colleagues are doing, what kind of problems they face in their everyday business even though you might have never met them in person”

“As for an HR professional, LinkedIn enormously helps me in understanding career paths in different industries. As I am not a financial professional myself and started working in this industry just over a year ago, very often it is difficult for me to understand the requirements for specific positions even at entry level. Browsing through LinkedIn profiles helps me to get a better picture of the industry by looking at career typical career paths, education history and even paying attention at personal interests sometime helps”

Interviewees pointed out the importance of SNSs as a cost-efficient recruitment method:

“Last year (2009) due to more modest recruitment budgets than usual we did not organise as many recruitment events for graduates as in previous years. In this situation finding potentially interesting candidates on LinkedIn serves as a good

source of cost reduction. This year, even though our recruitment budget is healthier, we did the same – tried to identify as many interesting profiles on SNSs as possible and tried to contact them through contacts we have in common.”

The consultant from the recruitment agency confirmed considerable cost savings that can be achieved with the help of SNSs:

“I used to try to go to as many career fairs as possible. Even though as a well established agency with reputation we are not always charged for participation, still taking part in a career fair usually results in substantial costs due to presentation materials, transportation costs and, of course, recruiters’ time. What’s more I have to say the results of my participation in the fairs were not always up to my expectations. I used to come back with the bunch of CVs in my hands, but very few of them did actually look interesting. Last year I concentrated a couple of career fairs and tried to find interesting CVs on LinkedIn instead. This obviously resulted in both cost and time savings”.

In order to fully answer the third research question and formulate concrete recommendations for candidates we discussed practical implications of the use of online social networks by employers and recruitment agencies.

Both interviewees acknowledged the importance of maintaining a wide contacts database. Maintaining does not imply simply storing all the contacts in the “contacts” section of the profile. Members should try to keep in touch with former colleagues and classmates as much as possible. That can be done by doing reciprocal favours, such as giving an advice and helping with information search.

One interviewee said the following:

“Personally I regard LinkedIn as my business card. In reality, it shows much more than an ordinary paper presentation card. First degree connections can see my list of contacts and that already shows a lot of important information about the person. Most importantly, in many cases it can serve as an indication of individual’s networking abilities. Of course, it depends how many of his or her contacts actually have a profile online”

“My advice to the candidates would be to start building your “online social network” right in the university. Try to find those of your classmates who are already online and invite those who are still not. The same should be done at the first job, in case of job changes etc. The advantage of online professional networks such as LinkedIn and XING is that you don’t have to be friends to form an online connection”

Many career-oriented online social networks have such function as recommendation. Members can either recommend their contacts or request recommendations from former colleagues or even classmates. The interviewees expressed rather controversial point of view about this feature.

According to the interviewee who works as an HR manager, the presence of recommendations on the candidate’s profiles can draw her attention to this particular profile.

“I regard online recommendations as a positive signal; it means that somebody has taken the time to express a personal opinion about the candidate. Of course I am aware of the fact that such things can be done on a reciprocal basis, but, at least, it signals potentially good networking skills”

The recruiter from the agency is more sceptical about the practical applications of online recommendations.

“I would say it depends on the concrete profile. Sometimes I see profiles of recent graduates who already have four or five recommendations. At a closer look, I see that all of them come from former classmates. In this case I don’t treat recommendations very seriously. Sometimes a clearly professional profile with years of serious work experience has many recommendations done by former colleagues. If I see this on LinkedIn, I normally try to do my own enquiries by identifying former colleagues different to ones that have already made online recommendations and request references via my personal channels”

Nevertheless, even though online recommendations are not an essential part of a professional profile, the theoretical opportunity to ask for recommendations from former colleagues is an important reason to maintain a contact database on SNSs.

“By adding a contact to the list on SNS is a way to ensure that you can always come back to a person. I recently had a case when after a successful interview the candidate was asked to identify one or two former colleagues who can be contacted for references. The names that the candidates gave to us, even though were real, had changed their place of employment long ago and could hardly remember our candidate. From my experience, services such as LinkedIn or XING could prevent situations like this since they make it easier to track an employment situation of former colleagues”

Participation in online groups and especially professional discussions as well as content sharing is seen positively by both of the interviewees.

All of my interviewees are members of several groups in LinkedIn. All the three are members at the number one HR group on LinkedIn: Linked: HR. In addition the recruiter from the agency is a member of Talent Management Global, Talent Management Community and different scholarship groups. Also all the three members joined the alumni groups of their universities.

“For me an alumni group is important source of potential candidates. I monitor the profiles of recent graduates that join this group and if they look interesting I usually try to introduce myself through InMail or through common contacts. Sometimes, and these cases have become more numerous recently, graduates introduce themselves and ask for information about available opportunities or career advice. I also maintain good relationship with some of my professors from the university and ask them for recommendations and additional information about their current or recent students”

“Online discussions can be an important source of information about professional qualifications of the candidate. Professional discussions are usually initiated in the groups. Insightful comments and well formulated questions are always positive signals about candidates. For example, once we contacted a profile owner with the information about the vacancy because we liked the links to newspapers articles he shared almost every day. Sometimes such small things can play a very important role in hiring decisions”

Interviewee acknowledged still limited use of online social networks for post-selection HR procedures such as background checks.

“So far we have not got any requests for background checks on Facebook or vkontakte.ru from our clients. Nevertheless, I think, it is coming and despite all the regulatory constraints employers may soon start actively screening their potential employees on SNSs against such criteria as unethical behaviour, extreme views (racism etc). But again, this kind of checks is mostly requested by big established international companies. I do not expect any changes in background check methodologies from Russian SMEs.”

Nevertheless, it was pointed out by the recruitment consultant that the certain degree of consciousness should be applied to any material that is to be published on the personal profile:

“Checking candidates Facebook profiles as a part of the background check or even pre-employment screening is a normal practice abroad and is widely applied by such well-known names as Goldman Sachs. My advice would be to regard your Facebook or vkontate profile as an informal so-to-say “fun” version of your CV. Obviously you would not like some embarrassing facts from your student or personal life to appear on your CV and seriously undermine your employment chances”

Both recruiters believe that due to above mentioned factors and constant improvement of SNSs features, online social networks are going to play even more important role in the recruitment.

“Online social networks today is one of the most easily accessible and cost-efficient way of monitoring passive candidates - the most difficult to find professionals. I expect the hiring rates done through SNSs to grow in the future”

5 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter the empirical findings are analyzed against theoretical framework presented in chapter 2.

The small sample of respondents (52) does not allow conceptualizing the results of the survey. The small number of interview respondents in the second part of the research also does not provide ground for sound conclusions. However, this study provides an overview of present usage of SNSs as a recruitment method in Russia and indicates direction for further research.

Even though in this study SNSs are ranked as only fourth most influential source of information about job offerings by survey respondents, the fact that they are ranked higher than such traditional recruitment channels as recruitment agencies and career events highlights the growing popularity in the use of this media for recruitment purposes.

In line with previous research about Russian labour market, personal connections play an important role in getting employment (Gerbert and Mayorova, 2003; Yakobovich, 2005, 2009). The majority of survey respondents consider personal connections as the most influential source of job related information. This finding was further confirmed by interview participants. Both interviewees acknowledged the importance of using personal networks when looking for a job in Russia. It was especially emphasized that in some highly thought after locations and high-income industries predominantly informal recruitment methods are used.

As can be predicted from the literature review, weak ties play a significant role in obtaining job-related information. The majority of respondents in the online survey indicated it as the most influential job information source. This is in line with previous research on social networks (Granovetter, 1973; Putman, 2000).

Another finding is that companies in Russia are becoming more and more aware of the benefits of online social networks for the recruitment process. It was

reported by the interviewees that cost savings is one of the main motivation for utilizing SNSs as a recruitment method. Both interviewees also emphasized that online social networks, especially LinkedIn, are a very useful tool to locate passive jobseekers. The results of the observation studies and secondary data analysis confirm this point since more and more companies now publish their job offers on the special section on LinkedIn. Both findings are in line with existing research, which emphasized the use of professionally oriented SNSs for passive candidate allocation (DeKay, 2009; Joos, 2008) as well as cost advantage of online social networking (Fondeur and Lhermitte, 2006).

Both recruiters and respondents seem to understand the importance of maintaining large contact database. It was explicitly stated by the interviewees that their contact database help them to identify potential job candidates, whereas many survey respondents indicated a large number of “friends” they have on Facebook. As was pointed out by one of the interviewees, the word maintenance is very important while using SNSs in the recruitment process. This usually requires some efforts from both sides and such SNSs features as recommendations (LinkedIn) or status and photo comments (Facebook, vkontakte.ru) facilitate active staying in touch. This finding is consistent with earlier research on relationship recruiting (Harris and DeWar, 2001).

Survey respondents indicated, that they mostly use the three SNSs studied in this research for keeping in touch with the people they already met in the real life. This finding is in line with previous research which emphasized offline to online direction of online social networks ties formation (Ellison et al, 2006). LinkedIn is the less applicable web service to meet new people, whereas, according to respondents, Facebook and vkontakte. ru can occasionally be used to get to know new people online.

Both survey respondents and interviewees indicated LinkedIn as the most useful SNS for recruitment purposes. Also both recruiters and candidates seem to be

becoming aware of different features offered by this website and starting using them actively. 81% of respondents stated being members of professional groups on LinkedIn. Recruiters specially emphasized the importance of university alumni groups as a source of potential candidates.

Both applicants and recruiters seem to emphasize the importance of actual participation on SNSs, such as sharing business-oriented content and taking part in online discussions. Applicants do not yet take full advantage of these features whereas recruiters strongly emphasize the benefits of actually being visible on the web.

Based on the survey and interviews results, both Facebook and vkontakte.ru appear to be less useful for a job search process with small amount of members participating in professional and alumni groups. Based on the results from the observations studies it can be concluded that vkontakte.ru is used by recruiters only occasionally and the target group of their recruitment-related online promotions are recent graduates since the only job-related groups I found on this service were related to current graduate recruitment campaigns such as BAT Challenge Initiative. Similar behaviour on Facebook was reported by earlier research (Elmor, 2009).

Recruiters especially pointed out educational benefits of professionally-oriented SNSs. Looking through profiles on LinkedIn can be a source of important information about the industry, such as typical career paths, useful skills, project examples etc. Therefore it is important to maintain reasonably large contact list on LinkedIn since the more contacts a member has, the more profiles are visible to him or her. Survey respondents reported having a large average number of contacts on SNSs, even though the distribution is highly skewed with the number of contacts varying from 24 to 1023.

Another important topic when studying the role played by SNSs in the recruitment process is background checks conducted by employees.

As can be seen from the survey results, the majority of respondents do not expect their employer to use their SNSs profiles for background checks. This was confirmed by the interviewees, who acknowledged that online social networks are currently not a common tool for background screening. At the same analysis of the articles in trade publications as well as interviewees' comments about SNSs prospects in Russian recruitment market lead to conclusion, that this practice may soon be adapted, especially by foreign companies.

As can be concluded from the empirical findings, both applicant and recruiters agreed on the fact that online social networks are an important information resource in the job search process.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Answering the first research questions, it can be concluded the SNSs are useful tools for job seekers in Russia. This can be explained by several factors.

Firstly, according to both interview participants, companies are more and more using SNSs in the recruitment campaigns. For example, many employers now publish their job offers on the special section on LinkedIn. Therefore presence and regular visits to SNSs give candidates better chances to obtain information about open positions as well as recruitment tips in the right time, maybe even faster and with fewer efforts than through other information channels.

Secondly, as this study shows, online social networks are widely used to stay in touch with former colleagues, classmates or friends and thus facilitate the formation and maintenance of bridging social capital. These bridging ties are a very important source of information about available vacancies. Therefore by helping to maintain this kind of weak ties online social networks increase the chances of obtaining job-related information.

Thirdly, as can be concluded from the interviewees' responses, online social networks can be a very good way to be 'passively' looking for a job. Even if the candidate is currently still at school or is not planning to leave his current position right now, maintaining an up-to-date profile on professionally-oriented SNSs already gives the recruiters necessary information.

As can be concluded from parts 2 and 3 of empirical part of this research, LinkedIn is the most useful site in the job search process which is in line with the main purpose of this online service. From applicants' point of view, Facebook is emerging as a good way of reaching recent graduates and less applicable for targeting more experienced hires.

Applicants also see the benefits of SNSs in offering an easier and "more fun" way to stay in touch but positively view the idea of more active use of SNSs in the recruitment process.

Answering the second research question, it can be concluded that SNSs are emerging as a useful recruitment method in Russia.

Recruiters pointed out larger candidates' pool, cost savings and educational benefits as main advantage on SNSs. The use of SNSs as recruitment method is expected to grow in the next few years due to fast growing number of registered users and better awareness of positive aspects of SNSs among HR professionals.

Answering the third research question, as a conclusion to semi-structured interviews with HR professionals the following can be identified:

1. Formation and maintenance of the contacts databases and keeping in touch with former colleagues generally facilitate access to job-related information
2. Maintaining profile information up-to-date. LinkedIn can be regarded as an electronic dynamic version of the CV where all the "selling points" of the candidacy should be included
3. Candidates should try to be active on professionally oriented social networks such as LinkedIn. Taking active part in discussions as well as group membership
4. Candidates should be selective about the information which they publish on their personal profiles, since SNSs can be potentially used for background checks

The aim of this chapter is to present some suggestions on the use of SNSs as a recruitment source for organizations recruiting in Russia.

Candidates indicated SNSs as an emerging recruitment tool which is not to be missed especially by the organizations doing graduate recruitment. Also, since according to this study it is still very common to get job-related information through personal contacts, SNSs provide a good way to reach passive candidates. As a result, it is important for companies to maintain a presence on such online professional networks as LinkedIn, to make more potential candidates aware of the organization.

Cost-effectiveness of SNSs as a recruitment method in comparison to traditional recruitment is another important reason for companies to make better use of SNS as a recruitment source.

For recruiters LinkedIn presents an important source of educational information, such as industry news as well as a good networking tool to get in touch with colleagues all around the world. Therefore it can be recommended for HR professionals not just to have a profile on LinkedIn, but also to become active members of industry-related groups and take part in online discussions.

HR professionals also should try to use LinkedIn to keep in touch with as many candidates even unsuccessful from previous real life recruitment events as possible since they can become important sources of industry information as well as information about other candidates.

In this chapter research limitations of this study are presented and possible future research directions are identified.

One clear limitation of this study is the small sample used. 52 questionnaires are not enough to draw proper conclusion from a quantitative analysis, thus current study mostly aims at highlighting main tendencies of the use of online social networks for a job search in Russia. The same criticism applies to qualitative part of the research. Data obtained from two interviews, even though helpful in setting direction for further research, cannot be used for making sound conclusions.

Another important limitation of the study of applicants' use of online social networks is the structure of respondents. Different age groups are not equally represented in the study and the same is true for professional career stages – for example, in this study no distinction between recent graduates and experienced hires was made.

No distinctions between industries in which respondents of the survey are employed were made. This is important limitation of the study since it can be concluded from the literature review that the degree of use of SNSs for recruitment varies greatly between industries (Fondeur and Lhermitte, 2006).

It would be useful to conduct a quantitative study with much bigger sample focused on one particular group of respondents, for example, recent graduates, experienced hires, MBA candidates since each of these groups have specific characteristics which can have a substantial influence on the choice of job search methods chosen.

It would be also interesting to conduct a case study of one single company which is actively using online social networks in the recruitment process.

Also in order to formulate insightful recommendations for potential applicants, different types of companies should be studied. Research can be focused on the use of SNSs in the recruitment practices of specialized agencies and in what way

it is different from the use of SNSs in the companies which recruit for their own business needs.

An interesting field of research is also an integration stage; it can be studied whether SNSs are helpful for the new employees' integration in the new company and if they can be used for corporate communication such as welcome messages, getting to know new colleagues, training invitations etc.

In my opinion, a cross-cultural study between the uses of SNSs for recruitment purposes in different cultures can be feasible. It for example can be assumed that the cultures with the high degree of usage of personal networks for job search would exhibit the same behaviour on SNSs and empirically test this hypothesis in two completely different cultures.

It can also be interesting to study evolution of the use of SNSs as a recruitment method. Right now SNSs is still a fairly recent phenomenon and there are different points of view on its future.

REFERENCES

"A World Of Connections" Special Report on Social Networking. *The Economist*, 27 Jan 2010

Barnett, E. (2010). Have business networking sites finally come of age? Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/7482116/Have-business-networking-sites-finally-come-of-age.html> 05.04.2010

Boyd, D., (2004). Friendster and publicly articulated social networks. Conference on Human Factors and Computing Systems (CHI 2004), Vienna, ACM (April 2004).

Boyd, D., Ellison, N., (2004). The Public Displays of Connection. *BT Technology Journal*, 22(4), pp.71-82

Boyd, D., Ellison, N., (2007). Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13 (1), article 11.

Breaugh, J.A., Starke, M., (2000). Research on Employee Recruitment: So Many Studies, So Many Remaining Questions. *Journal of Management*, 26(3), pp.405-434

Buckley, P.J., Clapman, M., (1996). Theory and Method in international business research. *International Business Review*, 5(3), pp.233-245.

Burt R.S., (1997). The contingent value of social capital. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 42 pp.339 – 365

Castilla E.J., Hwang H., Granovetter E., Granovetter M., (2000). The Silicon Valley Edge in Lee C-M., William F.M. and Hancock M.G. *A Habitat for Innovation and Entrepreneurship* pp. 218-247, Stanford Business Books

Choi, Jaz Hee-jeong, (2006). Living in Cyworld: Contextualising Cy-Ties in South Korea. In Burns, A. and Jacobs, J.(Eds.), *Use of Blogs (Digital Formations)*, pp. 173-186.

Creswell, J.W., Plano Clark W.L., (2007). *Designing and Implementing mixed Methods Research*. Thousand Oaks(CA): SAGE Publications

Conard, M. A., Ashworth, S. D. (1986). Recruiting source effectiveness: A meta-analysis and re-examination of two rival hypotheses. Paper presented at the First Annual Meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Chicago, IL (April).

DeKay S., (2009). Are business-oriented social networking web sites useful resources for locating passive job seekers? Results of a recent study. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 72(1), pp.101-105

Dutta, S., Fraser, M., (2009). When job seekers invade Facebook, *McKinsey Quarterly*, 3, pp.16-17

Egan, L., (2007). Passive recruitment: let the web do the work for you. *Money Management*, 21(42), pp.16-19

Ellison N., Lampe C., Steinfield C., (2009). Social Network Sites and Society: Current Trends and Future Possibilities. *Interactions Magazine* (16) 1

Ellison N., Lampe C., Steinfield C., (2006). Spatially Bounded Online Social Networks and Social Capital: The Role of Facebook, International Conference on Communication Association, Dresden, 2006.

Ellison N., Steinfield C. and Lampe C., (2007). The benefits of Facebook "friends:" Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4), article 1.

Elmor B., (2009). Social Networking Strategies. *Baylor Business Review*. Waco: Fall 2009. Vol. 28, Iss. 1; pp. 25-27

Erickson, B. H., (2001). 'Good Networks and Good Jobs: The Value of Social Capital to Employers and Employees. ', in N. Lin, K. Cook and R. S. Burt (eds) *Social Capital: Theory and Research*, pp.127-158.NY: Aldine de Gruyter

Fernandez R.M. and Castilla E.J. 'How Much Is That Network Worth? Social Capital and Employee Referral Networks.' in N. Lin, K. Cook and R. S. Burt (eds) *Social Capital: Theory and Research*, pp.85-104.NY: Aldine de Gruyter

Fernandez, R. M., Castilla, E., & Moore, P. (2000). Social capital at work: Networks and employment at a phone center.*American Journal of Sociology*,105, 1288-1356

Flap H. And Boxman E. 'Getting Started: The Influence of Social Capital on the Start of the Occupational Career', in N. Lin, K. Cook, R.S. Burt (Eds),Aldine de Gruyter, New York, pp.159 – 181

Fondeur Y., Lhermitte F., (2006). Réseaux sociaux numériques et marché du travail. *Revue de IIRES*.

Gerber, T., Mayorova, O., (2003).Getting personal: The use of networks for successful job searches in Russia: 1985-2001. Unpublished manuscript. Retrieved online from <http://www.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~rc28/JobsearchRussia.pdf> on 18.04.2010

Gilbert, E., Karahalios, K., (2009). Predicting Tie Strength With Social Media. *Proceedings of CHI*. Boston, MA. April 4-9.

Girard, A. and Fallery, B., (2009). E-recruitment: new practices, new issues. An exploratory study. *3rd International Workshop on Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS 2009), in conjunction with ICEIS 2009*. Milan, Italy. May 6-7. INSTICC PRESS

Granovetter M. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 78 pp.1360 – 1380

Granovetter M. (1983). The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited". *Sociological Theory* Vol.1 pp. 201–233

Gross, R., Acquisti, A. (2005). Information revelation and privacy in online social networks. *Proceedings of WPES'05*, pp. 71-80, Alexandria, VA: ACM.

Harris, M.M., DeWar, K. (2001). Understanding and using Web-Based recruiting and screening tools: Key criteria, current trends and future directions. Workshop presented at the Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, San Diego, CA.

Hill, R. E. (1970). New look at employee referrals as a recruitment channel. *Personnel Journal*, 49, pp.144-148.

Hjorth, L., Kim, H. (2005). Being there and being here: Gendered customising of mobile 3G practices through a case study in Seoul. *Convergence*, 11 (2), pp.49-55.

Hodge, M. J. (2006). The Fourth Amendment and privacy issues on the "new" Internet: Facebook.com and MySpace.com. *Southern Illinois University Law Journal*, 31, pp.- 95-122.

Holzer H., J., (1988). Search Methods Used by Unemployed Youth. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 6,1.

Ioannides, Y. M., Datcher Loury, L., (2004). Job Information Networks, Neighborhood Effects and Inequality. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 42(4), pp. 1056–1093.

Joos, J.G., (2008). Social Media: New Frontiers in Hiring and Recruiting. *Employment Relations Today*, 35(1), pp.51-59.

Kadushin C., (2004). Too much investment in Social Capital? *Social Networks*, 26, pp.75-90

Keenan, A., Shiri, A., (2009). Sociability and Social Interaction on Social Networking Websites. *Library Review*, 58(6), pp. 438-450

Kim, W., Jean O., Lee S., (2010). On Social Networking Sites. *Information Systems*, 35, pp.215-236

Kluemper, D., Rosen, P., (2009). Future employment selection methods: evaluating social networking web sites, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 24(6), pp. 567-580

Lampe, C., Ellison, N. and Steinfield, C. (2008). Changes in Use and Perception of Facebook. In Proceedings of the 2008 Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW 2008).

Lin, N., (1999). Social networks and status attainment, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 25, pp.467 - 487.

Lin, N., Vaughn, J. C.; Ensel, W M., (1981). Social Resources and Occupational Status Attainment, *Social Forces*, 59 (4), p1163-1181

Lin, N., (2001). "Building a Network Theory of *Social Capital*", in N. Lin, K. Cook and R. S. Burt (eds) *Social Capital: Theory and Research*, pp.3-30. NY: Aldine de Gruyter

Lin, S., Huang, Y., (2005). The role of social capital in the relationship between human capital and career mobility: moderator or mediator? *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 6(2), pp.191-205

Marsden P.V., (2001). "Interpersonal ties, social capital, and employer staffing practices", in N. Lin, K. Cook, R.S. Burt (Eds), Aldine de Gruyter, New York, pp.105 - 125.

Marmaros, D., Sacerdote, B., (2002). Peer and social networks in job search. *European Economic Review*, 46 (4-5), pp.870-879

Moser, K., (2005). Recruitment Sources and Post-Hire Outcomes: The Mediating Role of Unmet Expectations. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 13(3), pp.188-197

Marsden, P. V., Campbell, K. E., (1984). Measuring Tie Strength. *Social Forces*, 63(2), 482–501.

Phulari, S. S., Khamitkar, S. D., Deshmukh, N. K., Bhalchandra, P. U., Lokhande, S. N., Shinde, A. R., (2010). Understanding Formulation of Social Capital in Online Social Network Sites (SNS). *International Journal of Computer Science Issues*, 7(1), No. 3, pp.92-96

Shailja, A., Mital, M., (2009). An Exploratory Study of Indian University Students' Use of Social Networking Web Sites: Implications for the Workplace. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 72(1), pp.105-110

Sherry, R., Roach, T., (2009). Social Networking Web Sites and Human Resource Personnel: Suggestions for Job Searches. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 72(1), pp.110-114

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., Thornhill, A., (2003). *Research Methods for Business Students*. Harlow : Prentice Hall

Steyer, R. (2010). Facebook Friends. *Pensions & Investments*, 38(2), pp.1-2

Stutzman, F. (2006). An evaluation of identity-sharing behavior in social network communities. *Journal of the International Digital Media and Arts Association*, 3 (1), pp. 10-18.

Papacharissi, Z., (2009). The virtual geographies of social networks: a comparative analysis of Facebook, LinkedIn and ASmallWorld. *New Media and Society*, 11(1&2), pp.199-220

Parker, M., (2008). Can social networking sites be recruitment tools? *Strategic HR Review*, 7(3), pp.45-46

Pellizzari, M., (2010). Do friends and relatives really help in getting a good job? *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 63 (3), pp.494-510

Putnam, R. D. , (2000). *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Recuero, R., (2004). Teoria das Redes e Redes Sociais na Internet: Considerações sobre o Orkut, os Weblogs e os Fotologs.. In: XXVII Intercom, 2004, Porto Alegre. Anais do XXVII Intercom, 2004

Recuero, R., (2008). Information Flows and Social Capital in Weblogs: A Case Study in the Brazilian Blogosphere. *Proceedings of the nineteenth ACM conference on Hypertext and Hypermedia*.

Reid, G. L. (1972). Job search and the effectiveness of job-finding methods. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 25, pp. 479-495.

Ruiz, G., 2008. Recruiters Find Patience Is a Virtue with Social Networking Sites. *Workforce Management*, retrieved March 11, 2009, from <http://www.workforce.com/section/06/feature/25/44/13/index.html>

Ullman, J.C., (1966). Employee referrals: Prime tool for recruiting workers. *Personnel*, 43, pp.30-35.

Van Hove G., Van Hooft E.A.J., Lievens F. (2009). Networking as a job search behaviour: A social network perspective. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 82(3), pp.661-682

Wanberg, C. R. Kanfer, R., Banas, J. T., (2000). Predictors and outcomes of networking intensity among unemployed job seekers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85, 491-503

Wanous, J. P. (1992). *Organizational entry*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley

Wellman, B. Haase A., Witte J. and Hampton K., (2001). Does the Internet Increase, Decrease, or Supplement Social Capital? *American Behavioral Scientist*, 45, pp.

Wolk, D. (2004). Social Networking Sites Pique the Interest of Company Recruiters. *Workforce Management*, 83, pp.70-73

Yakubovich, V. (2005). Weak ties, Information and Influence: How Workers find Jobs in the local Russia Labor Market. *American Sociological Review*, 70(3), pp.408-421

Yakubovich, V. (2009). Passive Recruitment in the Russian Urban Labor Market. *Work and Occupations*, 33, pp.307-334

Yakubovich, V., & Koziina, I. (2000). The changing significance of ties. An exploration of hiring channels in the Russian transitional labor market. *International Sociology*, 15, pp. 479-500

Zottoli, M.A., & Wanous, J.P. (2000). Recruitment source research: Current status and future directions. *Human Resource Management Review*, 10, pp.353-382.

Internet Sources

Adam, N. (2008). 'Looking at', 'Looking up' or 'Keeping up with' People? Motives and Uses of Facebook. Proceeding of the twenty-sixth annual SIGCHI conference on Human factors in computing systems, April 2008, Florence, Italy, retrieved April 05, 2010 from http://people.bath.ac.uk/aj266/pubs_pdf/1149-joinson.pdf

Barnes, S. (2006). A privacy paradox: Social networking in the United States. *First Monday*, 11 (9). Retrieved from <http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/viewArticle/1394/1312#note4> on 01.02.2010

Barnett, E. (2010). Have business networking sites finally come of age? Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/7482116/Have-business-networking-sites-finally-come-of-age.html> on 05.04.2010

Kirkpatrick, D. (2008). Web 2.0 gets down to business. Accessed at http://money.cnn.com/2008/03/19/technology/web2.0_goofing.fortune/ on 15.01.2010

Russia has World's Most Engaged Social Networking Audience. Accessed at http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Press_Releases/2009/7/Russia_has_World_s_Most_Engaged_Social_Networking_Audience on 21.04.2010

Russia: the fourth largest social networking market in Europe

Retrieved from <http://www.freshnetworks.com/blog/2009/03/russia-the-fourth-largest-social-networking-market-in-europe/> on 14.04.2010

Lugovoy, G. Top Social Media Among Russian Executives. Accessed at <http://www.actionprgroup.com/blog/top-social-media-among-russian-executives/> on 05.05.2010

Global Faces and Network Places, A Nielsen Report on Social Networking's
Retrieved from http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/nielsen_globalfaces_mar09.pdf on 01.03.2010

www.facebook.com

www.linkedin.com

www.vkontakte.ru

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Part 1.

1.1 How old are you? Please tick one of the answers below

18-22

22-25

25-30

30-35

Older than 35

1.2 Do you have a profile on any of the online social networks mentioned below?

Facebook

LinkedIn

Vkontakte.ru

1.3 Are you registered in any other online social network?

a. Yes Please, provide the name of the network

b. No

1.4 How many contacts (friends) do you have on the network? (State the biggest number if you are registered on more than one network) _____

1.5 Have you ever been forwarded a job information via an SNS?

a. Yes Please, specify which SNS it was and how you were forwarded this information (on your wall, via personal message etc)_____

b. No

1.6 Have you ever posted any information about open positions on an SNS?

a. Yes Please, specify which SNS it was and how you posted this information (on your wall, via personal message etc)_____

b. No

1.7 What recruitment channels did you use/are you currently using to find your present job/in your current job search?

Please, rank the most influential channel with 1, the least influential channel with 8. Tick N/A if you did not use this channel

Source of job information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	N/A
Direct application on the potential employer website									
Personal contacts relatives									
Personal contacts friends									
Recruitment Agency									
Career fair and other recruitment events									
University recruitment centre									
Job boards, including open applications									
Online social networks									

1.8 Please, rank the following SNSs in terms of their applicability for the job search. Please, rank the most in your opinion useful SNS with 1, the least useful with 3. Tick N/A are not using these networks

SNS	Rank	N/A
Facebook		
Vkontakte		
LinkedIn		

Part 2. Please, answer the following questions if you have a profile on LinkedIn

2.1 Are you a member of any professional groups on LinkedIn?

- a. Yes Please, identify in what groups you are a member
- b. No

2.2 Have you ever been contacted by a recruiter via LinkedIn?

- a. Yes
- b. No

2.3 Have you ever applied for any job advertised on LinkedIn?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, please, briefly describe the position: industry, company size and the application outcome

2.4 On a scale from 1 to 5 5=totally agree, 1=totally disagree, please, rate the following statements:

I find LinkedIn useful for finding a job	
I find LinkedIn useful for staying in touch with colleagues and classmates	
I find LinkedIn useful for getting up-to-date information in my industry (company news, press articles etc)	
I find LinkedIn useful for discussing business related-issues with my colleagues	
I find LinkedIn useful for getting to know new people	

Part 3

Please, answer the following questions only if you have a profile on Facebook

1.1 Do you follow any potential employers' news on Facebook? (Do "you like" any of the employers' pages on Facebook?)

- a. Yes Please, give an example
- b. No

3.2 Please, rate the following statement from 5=fully agree to 1=completely disagree

I find Facebook useful for finding jobs	
I find Facebook useful for staying in touch with my former colleagues/classmates, friends	
I find Facebook useful for getting to know industry-related information (articles, groups) etc	
I find Facebook useful for getting to know new people	

Part 4

Please, answer the following questions only if you have a profile on Vkontakte.ru

4.1 Are you a member of any employment specific group on Vkontakte.ru (such as BAT Challenge Initiative etc)

- c. Yes Please, give an example
- d. No

3.2 Please, rate the following statement from 1=fully agree to 5=completely disagree

I find Vkontakte useful for finding jobs	
I find Vkontakte useful for staying in touch with my former colleagues/classmates, friends	
I find Vkontakte useful for getting to know industry-related information (articles, groups) etc	
I find Vkontakte useful for getting to know new people	

Appendix 2 Interview questions

1. Please introduce yourself stating your name and position.
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. Do you use online social networks in your everyday job tasks?
4. Which networks do you use?
5. Do you have your personal account on LinkedIn?
6. Does your company have a company profile on professional networking sites such as LinkedIn?
7. Are you a member of any professional groups or discussion topics on LinkedIn?
8. Do you advertise positions available at your company on SNSs?
9. Do you screen potential candidates with SNSs?
10. How do you find potential candidates on SNSs?
11. Do you think SNSs are helpful in passive recruitment?
12. Do you treat recommendations on LinkedIn or XING as reliable and helpful?
13. What kind of behaviour you would consider as non appropriate for a potential candidate to appear on his/her profile?
14. How does the role of SNSs in recruitment evolve over time?
15. How would you summarise benefits of online social networks for your day-to-day job?
16. Where do you see SNSs in the future?