

THE ROLE AND TENDENCIES OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Ilze Boitmane, University of Latvia

Inesa Voroncuka, University of Latvia

Abstract. Social media as a topicality in human resources management has gained significance during the recent years.

The goal of the article is to determine the role and priorities of using social media and to examine the types of social media currently used by organisations.

The theoretical frame of the research is based on the structure of social media, characterised by two directions: personnel development that includes the inner environment of an organisation and the brand management of the employer that includes the outer environment. The main topicality and problem of the research is that employers are unable to provide companies with labour force, and employers' activities in the social media environment are insufficient and not organized professionally in the context of human resources management.

The quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in the research. The purpose of the article is to study the habits of using social media in small and medium-sized enterprises. It is based on a pilot study with non-representable sampling, where 79 small and medium enterprises both from the private and public sectors were surveyed.

The results of the research showed that, currently, organisations use the social media at a low level in their operations, and maintain and develop their social media profiles. The employees of the organisations are involved in maintaining the social network profiles. The data collected in the research reflect that organisations associate the use of the social media with human resources selection, attraction, publishing of the vacancies, and developing content in their social media profiles.

The data provided in the conclusions show that small and medium-sized enterprises use social media in human resources insufficiently. The proposals are to increase the intensity and competence of corporate social media use.

Key words: *human resources management, social media, social networks*

JEL code: O15, M31, J24

1. Introduction

The topicality of the article is established by the global problems of recent years that present enterprises with difficulties to ensure personnel, which is related to the soaring problem of shortage of labour in Europe. Rapid outflow of employees and their migration to other states do not allow enterprises to implement timely and systematic policy of employment planning. An essential impact is created by the demographic problems and inability to attract the leading and emerging talents of the industry, as well as the inability to address them through appropriate informative and communication channels.

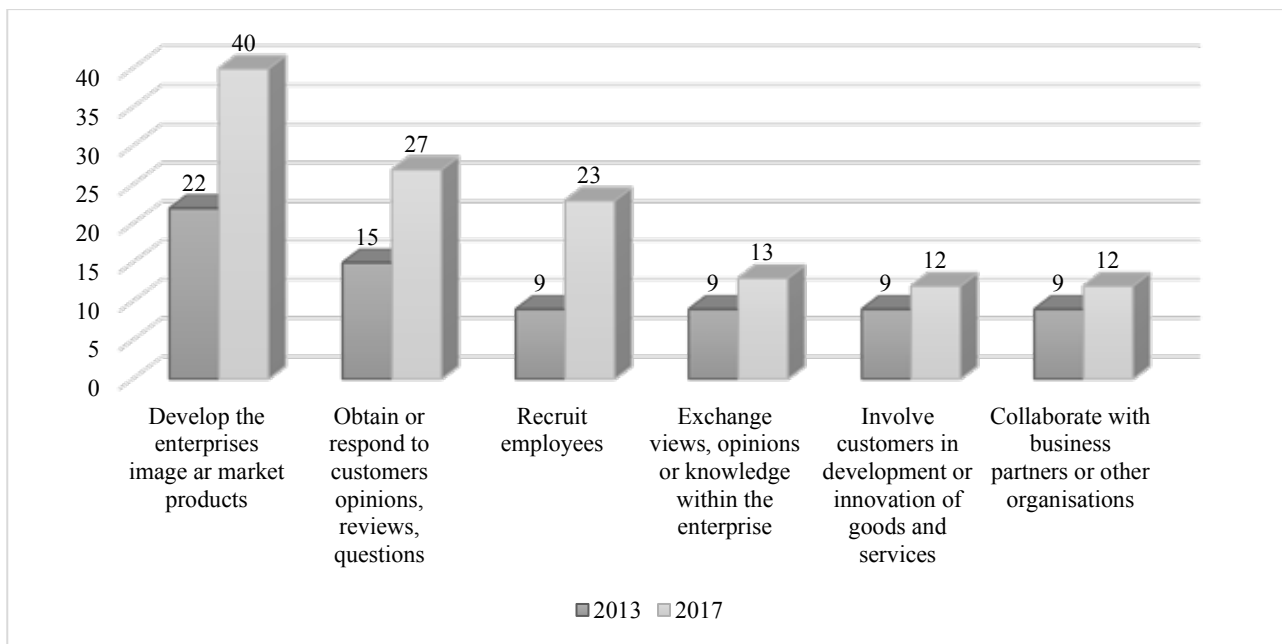
The German scientists already in 2006 indicated that the main problems in human resources management, especially in human resources attraction, were shortage of qualified labour force, global demographic problems in Europe, lack of

graduates in the most demanded and topical industries, continuous economic tension, very high demands by the employers towards the candidates, inability of candidates to find a balance between work and private life, high staff turnover and the globalisation in this particular aspect (DGFP, 2006).

The main variables of the article are the social media and human resources management. The authors of the article provide an insight on the main terms that will be discussed in this article because terminology in the context of this article can be interpreted differently in different sources and languages. The definition of social media is ‘websites and computer programs that allow people to communicate and share information on the internet using a computer or mobile phone’ (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). The use of the social media from a communication platform used by individuals has evolved into a corporate social media tool used by organisations for the purposes of human resources management. Organisations transform the traditional communication tools to the environment of social media, where the main actions are brand management, attraction of human resources and mutual communication (Bondarouk T., Olivás-Luján M. R., 2013). Within the context of contemporary human resources management, social media are studied from the aspect of external human resources marketing. It is an essential function of human resources marketing, which ensures the communication of an enterprise with the external environment that is the society, job seekers, students and other concerned target groups (Fahrbach S., 2013, Bärman F., 2012).

The above mentioned problems motivate organisations to use new tools and approaches in human resources management. Therefore the role of social media grows because it is one of the instruments that will help enterprises to solve the above mentioned problems. In the nearest future, the corporate use of social media for human resources management will become more topical in relation to the above mentioned problems and transformation of habits of generations. Enterprises will need a strategy of human resources marketing in order to attract new employees purposefully, where external human resources marketing is one of the solutions. One of the external marketing tools is social media.

The novelty of the article is characterised by little global research on the use of social media from the aspect of human resources management. The use of social media during the so-called ‘period of Web 3’ will become one of the main communication platforms between an employer and a job seeker (Kryger Aggerholm H., Esmann Andersen S., 2018). The authors of the article found out that there is no in-depth study performed on the use of social media in Latvia in the context of human resources management, as well as there is little global research. The other aspect of the novelty of the article is the available statistical data. The use of social media in enterprises grows dynamically, and there are tendencies of their use in human resources management. Despite this development, scientifically this aspect of development, and the term from the point of view of human resources management, is studied little. A study performed by Eurostat shows the significance the enterprises assign to the presence of the internet. Enterprises strive to improve the quality of use of the internet, using the possibilities provided by social media. In 2017, more than two thirds of EU enterprises, which employ more than 250 employees (68%), had an account and they used at least one social media network. Whereas slightly more than every fourth enterprise (43%), which employ 10 to 49 employees, used social networks. In Figure 1.1., the use of social media is compared in 2013 and 2017. It is shown in the Figure that social media mostly are used by enterprises in the context of human resources management – the development of the image of the employer and seeking for employees, and product marketing. It can be seen in the Figure that the proportion of the purposes of seeking for employees and development of the image of the employer has increased. Both indicators testify the topicality and novelty of the theme of the article. The topicality of the article is confirmed by the geography of the above mentioned study, which certifies that Latvia in terms of using social media in entrepreneurship and human resources management has comparatively low figures in relation to other EU states (Eurostat, 2017).



Source: author's construction based on Eurostat

Fig. 1.1. Enterprises using social media, by purpose of use, EU-28, 2013 and 2017 (% of enterprises) (Eurostat, 2017)

2. The Theoretical Framework and Problem Questions of the Research

The theoretical framework of the article is based on topicalities of social media use in human resources management, the rapid growth of the use of social media in the world; and separately the usage goals of the above mentioned media or the habits of organisations are highlighted. The use of social media is possible as means of ensuring communication, brand management of the employer, marketing of human resources management, attraction and selection of personnel.

It was established in an international research on working places by a human resources management association that enterprises increasingly often use social media for marketing, human resources management and public relations, and some enterprises limit the user access to their social media (Bill L, 2012). German researchers delved into importance of social media in human resources management already in 2011 by stating the main developmental tendencies that are essential for an enterprise in relation to external communication using digital technologies. The authors emphasize that employers use the digital technologies – social media and other search tools – for purposes of finding employees (Eilert M., 2011). Whereas in 2018, the Centre of Human Resources Information Systems (CHRIS) of Universität Bamberg and Friedrich Alexander Universität Erlangen Nürnberg in cooperation with Monster Worldwide Germany GmbH performed a comprehensive annual research on use of social media in German organisations. The results showed that a large proportion of organisations use social media in search for employees and that the use of social media for this purpose becomes increasingly innovative and creative (CHRIS, 2018). The use of social media as a unified human resources management cooperation system combines the traditional human resources management structure with time resources and communication channels. In the pilot case studies, the researchers applied the model to map social media usage at organisations. The results confirmed rapidly increasing dynamics and role of using social media in human resources management (Wolf M., Sims M., Huadong J., 2014). ‘The social media develop faster than society,’ researchers indicated. During the research, the researchers concluded that the use of social media in human resources management is essential in making decisions in human resources management. Organisations actively use social media in search for employees.

There is a substantial probability in the future that new methods and approaches will be invented on how employers will establish communication in social media with the potential candidates (Roth P. L., Bobko P., Van Ideeking C., H., Thatcher J., B., 2016). German researchers delved into importance of social media in human resources management already in 2011, by stating the main developmental tendencies that are essential for an enterprise in relation to external communication using digital technologies. The authors emphasize that employers use the digital technologies – social media and other search tools – for purposes of finding employees (Eilert M., 2011).

The authors of the article conclude that the insight in the researches performed indicate that the use of social media in human resources management in the world will increase rapidly. The goals of attraction and search for employees using creative and innovative methods are particularly explicit. Over the years, these methods will obtain a new shape and technological advancement will enable the establishment of communication with potential candidates more effectively. However, too extensive utilization of social media would induce problems for enterprises, thus limiting the vast access to the corporate social media. Nevertheless, the researches do not present in depth the directions of use that discover the vast possibilities of human resources management. Separate theoretical aspects reveal other problems associated with the use of social media in human resources management.

Researchers, using quantitative and qualitative research methods, found out that social media provided an opportunity to increase the strategic role of human resources management specialists, the strategy of employers' brand, development of internal skills and larger involvement of managers in the process of employee selection (Girard A., Fallery B., Rodhain F., 2014). In other researches, performing experiments in a social network, the authors of the research concluded that, contrary to the hypothesis, most of the research participants acknowledged the social networks, one of the elements of social media, as an effective means of communication in the academic environment (Frasca Keely J., Edwards Martin R., 2017). In other researches, the authors with an integrating research model evaluated the influence of various factors on exchange of knowledge in social media and their impact on performance of innovations in small and medium enterprises. In the research, the authors aspired to ascertain if the exchange of social knowledge in social media could become a mediator between human resources management and performance of innovations. The researchers found out that social media as a technological and organizational tool had a larger impact than the exchange of environmental and social knowledge (Soto-Acosta P., Popa S., Palacios-Marques D., 2017).

Some of the mentioned research aspects suggest that, in the future, the digitalisation, which currently can be observed from the point of view of the use of social media, will massively integrate into operations of any enterprise. The involvement of human resources managers and their role in the utilisation of social media in enterprises will be substantial. Social media will be used as a technological tool in the corporate communication with the society. These are just some of the insights in the developmental tendencies that the author of the article found out during the theoretical research.

2.1. The Aim and Tasks

The aim of the article is to identify the role and priorities of the use of social media and to examine the types of social media currently used in human resources management in medium and small enterprises.

The tasks of the research article are to study the theoretical frame of the use of social media in human resources management; to analyse the data acquired in the research performed by the authors of the article on the social media usage habits in small and medium enterprises; to draw conclusions and to offer suggestions.

2.2. Research Questions and Methods

The main research questions of the article are: how many enterprises use social media in human resources management? Why the use of social media by enterprises in Latvia is high, but their use for purposes of human resources management in contrast to other states of the European Union is very low? Which social media do enterprises use most often for the purposes of human resources? How does it relate to the theoretical studies and problem-questions on a scientific level?

The research method used for the research of the article is quantitative quasi-experimental research. The authors of the article use the critical analysis of the theoretical aspects, and the secondary analysis of the data. The primary method of collecting the data is an inquiry. The data is analysed using methods of descriptive statistics.

The limitations of the subject of research article are related to the geographical limitations of the sampling of the research and improbable or small sampling of the research that only partially reflects overall tendencies, but is essential for further research.

2.3. The Sampling of the Research

The sampling of the research is 79 organisations, which is an improbable selection in the context of respective research. The research was performed on December 2, 2015, performing a survey (73 survey questions) within the framework of another research on human resources management marketing in Latvia, where the set of items was about the social media in human resources management, with corresponding 16 items or questions composed according to Likert scale.

According to Eurostat data, the social media in Latvia in 2015 were used by 9% of all registered enterprises (Eurostat, 2019). According to Lursoft data, on December 2, 2015, there were 242,929 registered legal entities (Lursoft, 2015). Thus the set of the research is 21,864 organisations. Thus, the sampling with a standard error of 5% would be 269 respondents. The criteria for selecting the sampling: registered enterprises that use social media.

The sampling of the research is smaller than necessary, thus the acquired data of the research are partially representative and may reflect the presumptions and tendencies of the authors of the article, and cannot provide a common conclusion on the whole set. The K-S test (One-Sample Kolmogorov Smirnov test) showed $\text{sig} \geq 0.05$, which indicates that the set of items corresponds to normal distribution and the research data can be analysed with the parametric methods, which is indicated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Verification of the Reliability of the Survey with One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Social media in Human Resources Management
N		79
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	43.6962
	Std. Deviation	8.74328
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0.089
	Positive	0.053
	Negative	-0.089
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		0.787
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0.566
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)		,536
Point Probability		0.000
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		

3. The Results of the Research and Discussion

Descriptive and conclusive methods of statistics were used in the research of the article. The tasks of the research article were to study how many enterprises used social media in human resources management and which media were used most often. First, the authors of the article performed the analysis of frequency distribution, which showed that, from all enterprises surveyed, most used an account of social media as shown in Table 3.1., Table 3.2.

Table 3.1.

Descriptive Statistics of an Organisation with a Social Media Account

The organisation has a social media account		
N	Valid	79
	Missing	0
Mean		3.3924
Std. Error of Mean		0.11594
Median		4.0000
Mode		4.00
Std. Deviation		1.03053
Variance		1.062
Skewness		-1.578
Std. Error of Skewness		0.271
Kurtosis		1.088
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.535
Range		3.00

Table 3.2.

Descriptive Statistics of an Organisation with a Social Media Account

The organisation has a social media account					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00 (disagree)	10	12.7	12.7	12.7
	2.00 (somewhat disagree)	2	2.5	2.5	15.2
	3.00 (somewhat agree)	14	17.7	17.7	32.9
	4.00 (agree)	53	67.1	67.1	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

In Table 3.4., the authors of the article study the use of social media by organisations from 16 potential purposes that were reflected in the survey of the research. The results show that enterprises mostly have registered a social media account for purposes of personnel needs. It is used for such goals as building the image of the employer, attraction of new talents and personnel, and for the organising the business operations. The theoretical research performed by the authors of the article coincides with the results of the research. The research shows a large proportion of organisations’ employees using social media in everyday work processes, they publish and organize social activities and publish current vacancies. These results reflect that the employees spend a lot of time on social media in order to perform diverse activities. It is worthwhile to mention that enterprises comparatively little do understand notions and their use regarding creating a personnel policy in relation to social media, they do little research on employees and their potential behaviour on social media, and they cooperate scarcely with outsourcing providers, who help to create a human resources social media policy (Boitmane, 2016).

Table 3.4.

Central Tendencies and Variation Indicators for the Survey Item ‘The Use of the Social Media in an Organisation’

Question	Average	Confidence interval	Median	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Entropy
The social media account for the needs of human resources management	3.4	3–4	4	1.021	-1.588	1.156	1.345
Building an image of the employer	3.4	3–4	3	0.734	-1.329	2.178	1.378
Attraction of personnel and new talents	3.3	3–3	3	0.769	-1.105	1.188	1.494
Commercial activities in the social media	3.2	3–3	4	1.084	-1.123	-0.177	1.614
Employees use the social media/social networks daily	3.0	3–3	3	0.893	-0.657	-0.153	1.757
Information about collective activities	2.9	3–3	3	1.027	-0.675	-0.628	1.838
To visit profiles of potential employees and candidates on the internet	2.9	3–3	3	0.883	-0.833	0.267	1.644
To publish current vacancies	2.8	3–3	3	1.132	-0.369	-1.265	1.953
Employees actively participate in creating the content for social media accounts	2.8	3–3	3	1.121	-0.448	-1.159	1.918
Photos from employees’ events, employees’ articles are published	2.5	2–3	3	1.062	-0.080	-1.212	1.972
To inform graduates about human resources management activities	2.4	2–3	3	0.998	-0.082	-1.082	1.910
Organisations provide training for employees on how to use social media	2.1	2–2	2	0.962	0.464	-0.735	1.866
Use social media outsourcing	2.0	2–2	2	1.012	0.593	-0.833	1.846
The organisation has a policy on using social media	1.9	2–2	2	0.985	0.796	-0.406	1.792
Studies the opinions and behaviour of the employees regarding use of social media	1.9	2–2	2	0.875	0.655	-0.356	1.725
It is prohibited to use social media in everyday work at the organisation	1.7	1–2	1	0.998	1.308	0.473	1.547

The authors of the research conclude that the pilot-study conducted provides interesting results on the aspects of use of social media in Latvia in the context of human resources management. It gives a new direction to conduct a broader research so that the results could be attributed to the theoretical aspects, the whole sample, and be compared to world-wide researches.

The data were acquired using an electronic survey in Webropool environment. Data were analysed in the programs IBM SPSS, Webropool.

Conclusions, Proposals, Recommendations

The authors of the article, after performing the theoretical and practical study of the topic, came to the following conclusions:

1. enterprises use social media in human resources management for the purposes of finding employees, building the image of the employer, business operations;

2. the use of social media in human resources management has rapidly increased during the recent years and potentially will transform into comprehensive semantic network platforms;
3. enterprises in Latvia use social media on a low scale in comparison to other states of the European Union;
4. there are unlimited possibilities in using the social media that enterprises have not mastered.

Following the conclusions gained, the authors of the article put forward the following proposals for further research:

1. to conduct a practical survey on a representative sample so that the results obtained can be applied to the entire sample of the research;
2. an in-depth research on employee-searching functionality in human resources management using social media;
3. a wider research on social media development in the context of potential goals of utilization;
4. to find out the reasons why there is a low usage of social media in Latvia as such, as testified by Eurostat data;
5. an in-depth study of the social media goals that currently are not used widely, for instance, the behavioural peculiarities of communication with employees and job seekers in the context of generations.

The findings of the authors of the research are that there are unexplained reasons why there is a low usage of social media in Latvia in the context of other states. It is necessary to broaden the research on social media in the context of the users' behaviour and peculiarities of generations.

The recommendations of the authors of the research are that it is necessary to increase the use of social media in human resources management in medium and small enterprises in Latvia, as well as to develop further education programs for human resources management specialists to increase their digital competences. It is necessary to introduce the tools of social media evaluation and analysis in enterprises, as well as to pay attention to how to work with job seekers of different generations.

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