The Use of Social Media in Human Resource Management

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The use of social media in various areas of business and public administration creates new challenges and opportunities. Recently, more attention is given to the adaptation and use of social networking sites in human resource management. Thus the aim of this article is to reveal opportunities for the use of social media in human resource management. The article was designed in accordance with the methodological principles of qualitative research. The main method of the research presented in the article is meta-analysis of published results, which enabled defining the main opportunities for the use of social media in human resource management and identifying some potential threats. The article presents the findings of the research carried out from April to July 2018, which allow to state that the most widely-analysed areas of human resource management include recruitment, communication, and professional development. However, there is lack of more comprehensive and systematic approach to the analysis of opportunities for adaptation, socialisation, and cooperation. Scientific literature shows that the role of social media in all the distinguished dimensions is important; however, there is lack of research-based evidence.

Keywords: social media, human resource management, recruitment, cooperation.

Introduction

Advanced technology and new forms of media create favourable opportunities in the modern knowledge society to exchange information, communicate and cooperate beyond the boundaries of state, race, or nationality, and can be used in various areas of human activity. This phenomenon, present in every sphere of social life, has been widely analysed in recent scientific publications (e.g., Al-Rahmi, Othman, Yusuf, 2015; ; Kluemper et al, 2016; Dabija, Babut, Dinu, Lugojan, 2017 etc.). Research into social media as such and into their application in business has become commonplace (e.g., Vilkaitė-Vaitonė, 2015; Trakimavičiūtė, 2017 etc.), and more often the aspect of interaction and communication between generations is chosen as the main subject of analysis (e.g., Levickaitė, 2010). The use of social media in management, especially human resource management, has affected businesses across all industries and dramatically changed the way human resource professionals do their jobs. Therefore, human resource management is one of the areas in which intense development and application of modern technologies and integration of social networking sites has become an integral part of the process.

While the phenomenon of social media is widely described in scientific publications (Kietzman et al, 2011; Armstrong, 2014; Kluemper et al, 2016, Koch et al, 2018), various analyses and interpretations of opportunities to use social networking sites in human resource management are initiated and individual fragmented researches are carried out, there is a lack of a generalised and holistic approach to the phenomenon in question. Taking into consideration the aforementioned facts, the **scientific problem** analysed in this article is the intersection between social media and human resource management.

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The subject of this article is the use of social media in human resource management.

Research methodology. The article was designed in accordance with the methodological principles of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009), which lead to an in-depth understanding of the analysed phenomenon (Suter, 2012) and defining of the most significant problem areas. The method of the research presented in the article includes meta-analysis of published results (Konstantopoulos, 2008), which enabled defining the main opportunities for the use of social media in human resource management.

The article presents the findings of the research carried out from April to July 2018. The research involved searching freely-accessible scientific publications data bases for publications meeting certain criteria: 1) they had to be recently published (not more than 5 years ago; a few publications older than 5 years, but not older than 10 years,

were included as they met the second selection criterion), 2) they had to have been published in various scientific journals in different regions around the world (Europe, America, Asia, Australia), 3) they had to be published in English. The following main themes to be analysed in the qualitative content analysis were selected based on the content of the publications: recruitment, cooperation, socialisation and adaptation, spread of information, representation, professional development and learning.

The analyses of social media in human resource management

In organisations, social media can be used in different areas. According to authors (Aral et al, 2013, Ouirdi et al, 2015; Kluemper et al, 2016), social media are usually used in marketing, public relations, recruitment (attracting and selecting staff), research, generating ideas, spreading information, and feedback. The analysis of human resource management and its functions within organisations has recently shown that social media are used in attracting and selecting new employees, staff motivation and retention, communication within the organisation etc. (Davison, 2011).

Armstrong (2014) claims that the majority of organisations tend to confine to only the main functions of human resource management: staff selection, recruitment, and training, leaving aside the other processes related to the concept of human resource management. However, as smart technologies have been penetrating deep into private spaces, they have been gaining wider use in professional spheres as well. Thus, based on the systemisation of recent scientific research into the intersection between human resource management and social media (Brezoiu, 2014; Stone et al, 2015; Kluemper et al, 2016;), it may be stated that the mostly analysed areas include attracting and selecting new staff (recruitment), socialisation and adaptation, communication, professional development and training, and team-building (cooperation).

Scientific publications provide controversial approaches to social media and their use in human resource management. Various scientists have developed different general classifications. For example, a group of scientists (Kietzman et al, 2011) distinguished seven main functional building blocks: identity, conversation, shearing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups. Kajanova (2014) defines and emphasises slightly different characteristics of social media: involvement (social networking sites encourage active involvement in various fields of activity through comments and discussions, breaking boundaries between those who give information and those who receive it), openness (social networking sites are open and allow active involvement through commenting, evaluating, and adding information), communication (an opportunity to take part in conversations with an emphasis on a two-way dialogue), community (social media enable fast creation of communities and affinity/social groups, and effective communication), connection (social media thrive due to their links to other social networking sites and social media, resources and people). Kluemper et al. (2016) analysed and defined human resource management areas in which social media can be used: branding; organizational image; applicant attraction; employment selection; employee productivity; employee engagement and teamwork; employee training; knowledge management; social capital; organizational culture; leadership; cyberloafing; disciplinary action. Taking into consideration the results of various scientific research studies, this research analysed the intersection between human resource management and social media using open coding and distinguished and defined the following criteria: interactive communication (communication process), recruitment, staff qualification development, information search and dissemination, cooperation, adaptation and socialisation (Table 1).

Table 1. Social media in human resource management

uthors	Recruitment	Communication	Qualification development	Information search and dissemination	Cooperation	Adaptation and socialisation
iVall, Kirwin (2012)						
eonardi et al. (2013)						
spridis et al. 2013						

umby, Anderson, Hugman (2014)							
ao (2014)							
ashmi N., Garima N. (2015).							
uirdi (2015)							
tone et al (2015)							
reenhow, Lewin (2016)							
luemper et al 2016							
rakapas, Prakapienė (2016)							
obaih (2016)							
elinas, 2017							
imala (2017)							

The analysis of scientific literature on the use of social media in human resource management (Broughton et al., 2013) revealed that major attention is given to new staff recruitment. Some authors (Melanthiou et al., 2015; Gelinas, 2017) see social media as a tool enabling a more efficient and less lime-consuming recruitment process. For example, Koch et al. (2018) analysed the impact of social media on recruitment comparing LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook in South Africa. The findings of this research confirmed that the use of social media for recruitment in South Africa is high among recruiters and is an important part of their sourcing process. These authors note that, similarly to elsewhere in the world, the use of LinkedIn in South Africa is much higher than the use of Twitter and Facebook. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) state that use of social media in recruitment is cheaper than traditional channels. Digel and Yazdanifard (2015), in their analysis of social networks, state that recruiters utilize these sites to accumulate character data about job seekers without the candidates perpetually comprehending what data was considered. The authors distinguish the following benefits gained by the recruiters: cost saving, increased visibility of talented candidates, communication responsiveness, and increased quality of hire. Nevertheless, recruiters using such tools should pay attention to the accuracy and accessibility of information through lists of candidates, privacy issues, costs and benefits, as well as be prepared to face with high numbers and a variety of applicants (Broughton et al, 2013).

Scientists (Stopfer, Gosling, 2013; Nikolaou 2014) state the use of social networking sites is promoted by job search. According to Zide et al (2014), social networking sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter are especially useful tools for placing advertisements and sharing public information. These platforms help to save time and widen the geographic range of search, provide opportunities to communicate with audiences, candidates, and those who are not candidates themselves but know people who would like to apply for the job advertised. However, Ouirdi et al. (2015) note that candidates tend to share on their social media platforms not only professional content, but also content which might be inappropriate and damaging to their professional image. Other researchers (Bohnert, Ross, 2010; Iddekinge et al, 2013, Kluemper et al, 2015) claim that candidates whose profiles contain information about their professional life and show them as family-orientated individuals receive more positive attention in comparison to those who share uncensored images of parties or other activities towards which the society is less tolerant.

Communication and information dissemination are an integral part of human resource management. This is explained by people's need to belong to certain groups, to feel needed and important. Social media help to fulfil such needs as people often join various groups on social networking sites in order to satisfy their social needs. Secondly, social media are very often used to search for information, to find out about different opinions and attitudes. As well, social media have become a platform that is often used to find information about various events, news etc. Finally, it must be noted that social networking sites have become important agents for socialisation.

Researchers note that this relatively anonymous space offers excellent opportunities for taking part in personal conversations and public discussions without direct contact and face-to-face communication. According to Janiūnienė (2007), an important aspect here is that social media break boundaries making distance of no importance to communication, 'a social networking site builds context and situation, and, vice-versa, a social networking site is designed according to context and situation', the wider the network is and the better-quality relationship the creators of the network have, the more efficiently it is used. Furthermore, social media enable people to establish contacts in different countries all over the world as they are free of any constraints in terms of time and space. As noted by Prakapienė and Prakapas (2016), a network which is used globally and whose creators come from different countries and are of various nationalities and races etc. can be referred to as an international network. Therefore, such type of communication can be highly relevant within international companies.

The analysis of scientific researches revealed a range of possibilities for communication and cooperation. For instance, Ingelmo et al. (2018), in the analysis of communication process via social media, state that the hierarchical level, participation in the strategic decision process and dedication of the communication practitioner, alongside with the use of face-to-face and online communication channels, and the perceived importance of communication activities conducted through social media platforms are the key factors that influence the quality of internal communication. The research revealed that communication practitioners should examine and address the difficulties involved in choosing the correct channels, devoting the necessary time to their adequate management, analysing employees' feedback and improving the engagement. Wolf et al. (2013) describe the importance of social media in human resource management as **a communication system between employer and employee and social media as an information system which can facilitate, even enable and enforce communication.** However, social media communications are more complex and provide a potential paradigm shift, in that they can be set up without management involvement and/or control (Belnave et al. 2014).

Leonardi et al. (2013) found that organisations use social media for two major purposes: communication with the external environment of the organisation (e.g., customers, suppliers, and public) and internal communication and social interaction within the organisation. The second purpose is particularly important in human resource management and shows links between the processes of communication, adaptation, and socialisation. The authors pointed out that web-based platforms allow workers to (1) communicate messages with specific co-workers or broadcast messages to everyone in the organisation; (2) explicitly indicate or implicitly reveal particular co-workers as communication partners; (3) post, edit, and sort text and files linked to themselves or others; and (4) view the messages, connections, text, and files communicated, posted, edited and sorted by anyone else in the organisation at any time of their choosing. The analysis of the use of social media in the processes of socialisation and adaptation in human resource management allows to state that scientific research studies into this area are fragmented (Sun and Shang, 2014).

Kluemper et al (2016) indicate that blending the process of communication with social media enables efficient cooperation through teamwork. Social media can be help to connect employees working in virtual teams, to spread across different geographic locations or across different cross-functional domains, to share resources and collaborate with each other on different work projects.

Another important function of human resource management is that of attracting and retaining talented employees. This is related not only to organisational culture and workplace environment, but also to the motivation system and opportunities for professional development. The aim of human resource management specialists is to improve employees' knowledge, skills, and competences through training and development systems (Stone et al, 2015, Okyireh et al. 2016). The analysis of the links between learning and social media highlights the opportunity for interaction as the biggest asset, i.e., online training, when training materials are made available through live-streamed conferences or through other simulated digital tools. McLoughlin, Lee (2010) claim that social media can facilitate interactive communication between learners, which enables continuous learning support. It is obvious that such interaction, which encourages learning and is perceived as an active process, has a beneficial impact on learning, critical thinking, and conscious engagement in the process of education. This approach is supported by Mao (2014), who distinguishes communication, information sharing, cooperation, information supply, and interactivity of social media.

Typical social media allow individual users to share information through their profiles, react, express emotions, and post comments, opinions and recommendations (Hakami et al., 2014; Greenhow and Lewin, 2016). Publishing various information, sharing, and tagging (including other people in published information) on social media enables fast exchange of information, which, obviously, is related to the high speed of huge and quickly-changing stream of information (social networking sites, blogs, media share tools, presentation sharing tools, bibliographic management tools etc.).

The research revealed a certain trend: social networking sites should be linked to users' belonging to certain

groups. For example, DiVall and Kirwin (2012) distinguish an interesting role of social media: socialisation. Social networking sites help certain groups of individuals to pursue their social aims through socialisation; being a member of certain groups helps to solve various age-related social problems, and, in the first instance, to link interactive communication to specific learning (purposeful communication related to learning content and achievement). According to the findings of the research, this is usually related to the features offered by *Facebook*.

Despite the positive attitudes mentioned before, it should be stated that the use of social media and networking sites in human resource management also entails certain problems and risks. Scientists claim that the use of social media in the workplace creates inefficient work environment as employees waste a lot of time on non-work-related or personal activities (Andreassen et al., 2014). Belnave et al. (2014), Bizzi (2017) argue that using social media in the workplace cannot be banned or restricted, but should rather be a controlled process. This is supported by Moqbel et al. (2013), who claim that the use of social media is beneficial to both, the organisation and its employees, based on the idea that the use of social media is linked to anticipated subjective outcomes of the user, be they positive or negative. Summarising the results of their research, Holland et al. (2016) state that social media may be used efficiently in the workplace, eliminating time-waste. However, in organisations, social media remain an untapped resource which could provide management with an immediate or 'real-time' understanding of workplace issues.

Taking a systematic approach, scientists (Michaelidou et al, 2011; Mehrtens, 2013) usually distinguish the following problem areas: lack of technical knowledge, lack of confidence and fear, lack of time, negative opinion or lack of awareness of potential benefits, and lack of finance. Al-Busaidi (2017) carried out comprehensive assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the use of social media and distinguished the following major groups of barriers: individual barriers (lack of awareness of social networking sites' benefits, interest, voluntary sharing, technical skills), organizational barriers (management support, culture, and peer support, dedicated technical support staff), and technical barriers (internet connection speed and availability and information overload).

Undoubtedly, social media are a good place for sharing personal stories (usually those of success) and latest news, cooperation, etc. (Chakraborty, 2015) Social networking sites enable people to communicate directly, without geographical constraints, and relatively cheaply (internet access costs are low and communication devices vary in terms of cost). It is important that social media enable users not only to share information, but also to receive immediate feedback. The flow of information is huge and dynamic. On the other hand, because of great flow of information, users who leave the flow for a short time may easily get lost in the abundance of information. In addition, social media are full of fake users; virtual networks are unprotected from potential fraud and criminal activity or crime; there is a great threat of privacy violation. It is obvious that in order to reduce the negative effects of social media, people must learn how to use social networking sites securely and become responsible users.

Conclusions

The use of social media in human resource management is beneficial to organisations. Efficient use of social media can help to simplify, speed up, and more efficiently organise some of the major functions and processes of human resource management including recruitment, communication, employees' professional development, cooperation, adaptation, and teambuilding.

After the analysis of scientific sources, it may be stated that social media are predominantly used in two areas of human resource management: new staff search and selection (recruitment) and communication. Integration of other human resource management areas with social media is at an early stage and requires more detailed and systematic research.

The analysis of scientific sources showed lack of research into and evidence of how social media could contribute to effective management of staff activity including assessment of the current situation, overall evaluation of activity, and feedback to the employee. There are theoretical links; however, scientific publications validating such assumptions were not found.

The analysis of research studies revealed that there is no unified opinion about the value of the use of social media in human resource management. Although there is common agreement that social networking sites are a tool which helps to improve and speed up the process of recruitment, the approach to the use of social media in the workplace remains rather sceptical. Thus it may be stated that the distinguished individual, organisational, and technical barriers remain relevant and require further, more detailed scientific research in different areas of human resource management.

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