

ANALYSIS OF E-RECRUITMENT METHODS THROUGH SNWS, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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ABSTRACT

E-recruitment as a method of recruitment is increasingly the focus of interest in companies from different industries. This method is also slowly becoming popular in companies in the Republic of Macedonia. By utilizing this method, companies in Macedonia could potentially achieve significant cost savings, as well as qualitative improvement of their day-to-day operations, and ultimately, hire suitable and skilled employees. However, only a small number of Macedonian companies fully implement e-recruitment and utilize all of its features, which indicates that the full potential of this method is not achieved in our country. The paper focuses on analyzing the method of e-recruitment in terms of its real application in enterprises and its' new shift on social networks, with particular focus on its implementation by companies in the Republic of Macedonia.

The paper is aimed at presenting the practical aspects of this technology through the benefits offered, as well as analyze the level of usage in the Republic of Macedonia. The paper explores a contemporary topic in the field of Internet technology and social networks, with a special emphasis on implementing e-recruitment in the Republic of Macedonia.

KEYWORDS: E-recruitment, social networking, internet technology, strengths, weaknesses, barriers

JEL CLASSIFICATION: O15

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1. INTRODUCTION

Recruitment is defined as the process of attracting individuals on a timely basis, in sufficient numbers and with appropriate qualifications, to apply for jobs with an organization (Mondy, 2008). Internet technologies in recent years have sparked a revolution in the field of recruitment, especially with the utilization of social media networks (SNW) such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. This led to the emergence of the e-recruitment method, which implies all activities related to the recruitment process, including finding, attracting and evaluating potential candidates, to be carried out with the help of Internet technologies. Through e-recruitment, companies will be able to segment the market and more effectively target candidates with job offers on a global scale. LinkedIn data demonstrates that the top channels people use to look for new jobs are online job boards (60%), social professional networks (56%) and word of mouth (50%), while over 75% of people who recently changed jobs used LinkedIn to inform their career decision (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2017). Additionally, 37% of respondents consider the development of SNWs as the main trend in the development of the recruitment process (Gager S., et al., 2015). Recent statistics show that the number of internet users in 2018 is 4.021 billion, up 7 percent from 2017, while number of social media users in 2018 is 3.196 billion, up 13 percent from 2017 (We are social & Hootsuite, 2018). Employers, understanding these trends and statistics, are beginning to show great interest in the extensive use of Internet technology and SNW as a means of searching and recruiting new candidates.

2. METHODOLOGY

Data collection, systematization and analysis was done during the preparation of this paper in order to research e-recruitment processes in detail, as well as present statistics for the Republic of Macedonia. The following scientific methods were used:

- Empirical method - used in order to perceive the experiences, ie the practice of applying e-recruitment by companies.
- Statistical method - mainly used for grouping and processing of the numerous data obtained during the survey.
- Analysis and synthesis method - this method is used for logical representation of the subject of research, that is, the efficiency of the recruitment process with the introduction of the e-recruitment method, the analysis of the traditional

methods of recruitment, and the drawing of final general conclusions regarding the state of e-recruitment in the Republic of Macedonia

The primary data are of exceptional importance for the preparation of this work, because in the Republic of Macedonia there is limited information from secondary sources. The data were acquired through the implementation of a survey questionnaire on the companies in the Republic of Macedonia, as well as its further quantitative and qualitative analysis, further described in the research part of the paper.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

E-recruitment trends date as far as the middle of the last decade, with authors such as Minton-Eversole (2007) claiming that e-recruitment is the fast-growing method of recruiting workers, given the fact that more and more individuals publish their online summaries in search of a better future. E-recruitment can be included in any or all of the major processes of attracting (planning / recruiting), selecting and evaluating (screening and selection), socializing and integrating the newly recruited, and supporting the systems for monitoring applicants and workers processes. The most comprehensive coverage of the essence of the term e-recruitment is its definition as a practice of using web-based resources for activities related to search, recruitment, interviewing and employment of new employees. Until recent years, E-recruitment was divided into two types of uses: corporate web site for recruitment and commercial jobs boards for posting job advertisements (Kaur P, 2015). With the emergence of SNWs, e-recruitment practices are under constant evolution and revision, implementing these platforms in every step of the process. In summary, e-recruitment encompasses the following digital human resource management (HRM) practices: advertising job opportunities for job databases, career portals, social network pages, corporate websites and intranets, and other online resources; e-recruitment systems for submitting applications, monitoring, evaluating and managing the candidate, summary database and web browsers, etc. (Holm, 2012).

3.1 E-recruitment advantages

Possibly the biggest advantage of implementing the e-recruitment process is **time and cost reduction**. Due to the rapid exchange of information, applications are

sent directly to the recruiter or mediator (internet portal), and thus the candidate receives a response significantly faster. On average, the e-recruitment process is about 70% faster than traditional methods, and the recruitment cycle is accelerated at every possible stage, from the release of the vacancy, to the acquisition of biographies, filtering and managing contacts and workflows (Ramaabaanu and Saranya, 2014). Using a few key words when looking for job positions online is considered significantly easier and faster than newspaper search, as applying for online advertisements is much simpler than delivering resumes in paper form (Marr, 2007).

Another significant advantage of e-recruitment is the **ability to access a wider group of candidates and employers**. Unlike traditional methods, e-recruitment allows the storage of databases with data on current, future, active and passive talents that cover all geographic regions and industries. This advantage is crucial for those companies that need to attract specific or highly qualified personnel (Holm, 2012; Dhamija, 2012). Experience shows that not only e-recruitment attracts a larger group of applicants, but also often they are more qualified than those recruited through traditional methods (Delion, 2013).

E-recruitment also appears as a **powerful tool for promoting and strengthening corporate image**, brand and reputation. Website design and corporate image play a key role in the impression that companies leave to job seekers (Thompson, Braddy, & Wuensch, 2008). Undoubtedly, the brand is of paramount importance to companies, and this is indicated by the fact that 56% of global talent leaders consider it a top priority (Gager et al., 2015).

Another advantage of e-recruitment is attracting the interest of highly skilled people who do not require active work, still known as **passive candidates**. This phenomenon is closely related to the concept of SNWs that occurs when a particular individual subscribes to receive notifications and information regarding newly created positions of a particular company and then transfers the information to friends and colleagues or recommends a potential candidate directly to the company (Kaplan - Leiserson, 2005). The majority of global professionals consider themselves passive talent, and yet, only 61% of companies recruit passive candidates. Companies can close the gap by developing a strategy for recruiting active and passive candidates (Gager et al., 2015).

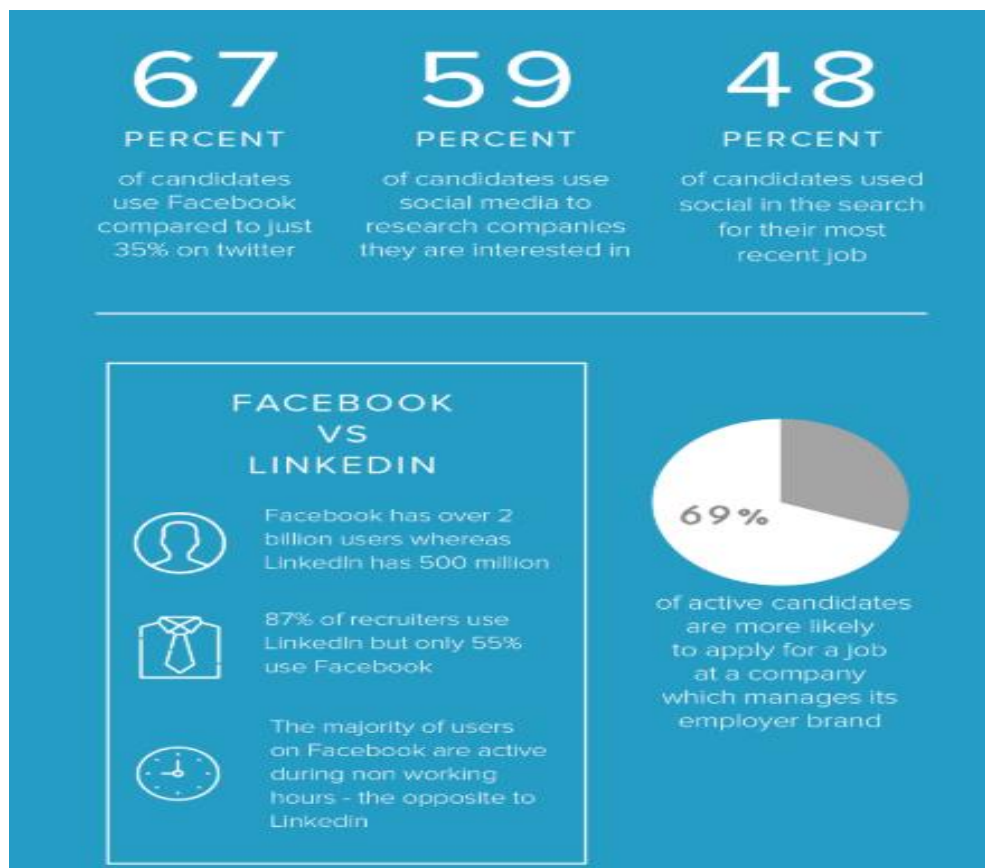
3.2. Implementation of SNWs in the e-recruitment process

Internet technologies significantly reduced the time required to search and reduced costs and offered a transparent method for informing candidates (Salmen, 2012). Modern Web technologies or Web 2.0 has forever changed the way of acquiring talent. Most Global 500 companies use some form of online recruiting. Experts state the recruitment process can be optimized by as much as 20% more via SNWs and that companies should take this strategy into account (Sills, 2014). 80% of employers say social recruiting helps them find passive candidates, 67% of recruiters expect competition for candidates to increase, while 70% of hiring managers say they've successfully hired with social media¹. LinkedIn is the most popular and most used social network for recruitment that experts claim that as many as 60% of recruiters have successfully employed a candidate through her (Lewis et al., 2015).

SNWs can be generally utilized in three different ways during the recruitment process (Grensing-Prophal, 2009). The first is posting open positions on SNWs, although applications should be selectively used, instead of being treated as a game of numbers and posted on the entire web-site (Lewis et al., 2015). The second way is to headhunt potential candidates. This strategy is more targeted because social networks have tools that allow companies to search for individuals by qualifications, work experience and geographical location and similar features that companies are looking for. Alternatively, companies can use employees who have profiles on social networks, in a way that employees will share their posts with open posts, creating a potential spiral of sharing (Breugh, 2009). Lastly, companies can screen potential candidates, since SNWs make it easier to find information for applicants in order to speed up the recruitment process. However, since the introduction of GDPR and data protection laws, screening candidates on social media usually violates the rights of the candidate (Josimovski et al., 2018).

¹ https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/17-social-recruiting-statistics-2018-laurie-wood/?trk=aff_src.aff-lilpar_c.partners_pkw.123201_net.mediapartner_plc.adgoal%20GmbH_pcrd.449670_learning&veh=aff_src.afflilpar_c.partners_pkw.123201_net.mediapartner_plc.adgoal%20GmbH_pcrd.449670_learning&irgwc=1

Graph 1. SNWs e-recruitment statistics



Source: <http://www.jobcast.net/26-social-recruiting-stats-and-facts/>

As shown in graph 1, SNWs become the prime location to uncover job seekers and potential candidates. 87% of recruiters utilize LinkedIn in their recruiting process, compared to Facebook with 55%, making them the two most popular SNWs. Worth noting is also that 48% of candidates looking for employment used SNWs to search for open job positions.

3.3 Influence of smartphones in the e-recruitment process

The rise of the mobile revolution is due to the fact that many active jobseekers are interested in applying through their mobile devices (smartphones). Regardless of whether it is an active or passive candidate, the use of smartphones does not change, with 72% of active job seekers and 62% of passive job seekers stating they visited a corporate website in order to learn more for a career in the particular company (Sonru, 2014). A survey conducted by Deloitte shows that 90% of candidates are checking their mobile device in the first hour of awakening. Individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 check the mobile device every 5 minutes. 50% of respondents check their

smartphones at least 25 times during the day, and 10% do it more than 100 times a day. It's easy to notice how this affects the e-recruitment process:

- 45% of job seekers say their smartphones is utilized in the process of finding a job at least once a day;
- 89% believe that mobile devices are an important tool in the search for work;
- 59% say it is particularly important to be able to save a job (advertisement) from their mobile device and then to apply from their computer; and
- 48% think mobile devices will become the most common way to recruit in the next two years.²

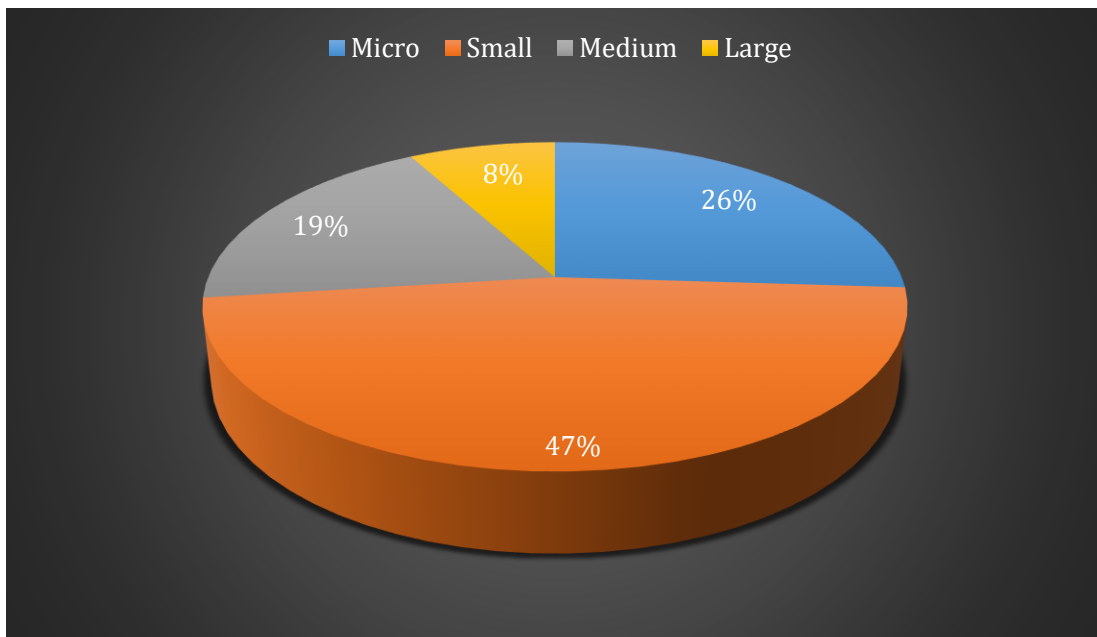
4. RESEARCH

To research the current situation regarding the usage of e-recruitment in the Republic of Macedonia, a research questionnaire was constructed, from a semi-structured type and consisting a total of 18 questions of a mixed structure (including open and closed questions). The questionnaire was carried out in digital form through the platform Google Drive. The structure itself is in order to obtain concrete statistics on the level and manner of implementation of the recruitment process in Macedonian companies. Subsequently, a quantitative and qualitative analysis was conducted in order to obtain relevant research data.

The survey was conducted in the period from 30.06.2018 until 30.08.2018, and was sent to a total of 60 companies in Macedonia, regardless of their size. 38 companies responded successfully to the questionnaire, (63% of all companies). These companies are taken as a base for research and analysis of further statistics. As mentioned, the questionnaire included all companies regardless of their size, industry of activity or geographical position in the Republic of Macedonia. The only condition for participation in the sample was the company to function in the Republic of Macedonia. The aim is to analyze the extent of use of e-recruitment by small, medium and large enterprises in the Republic of Macedonia.

² <http://www.davidgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Mobile-Recruiting-Best-Practices.pdf/> (accessed 25 October 2016)

Graph 2. Company size



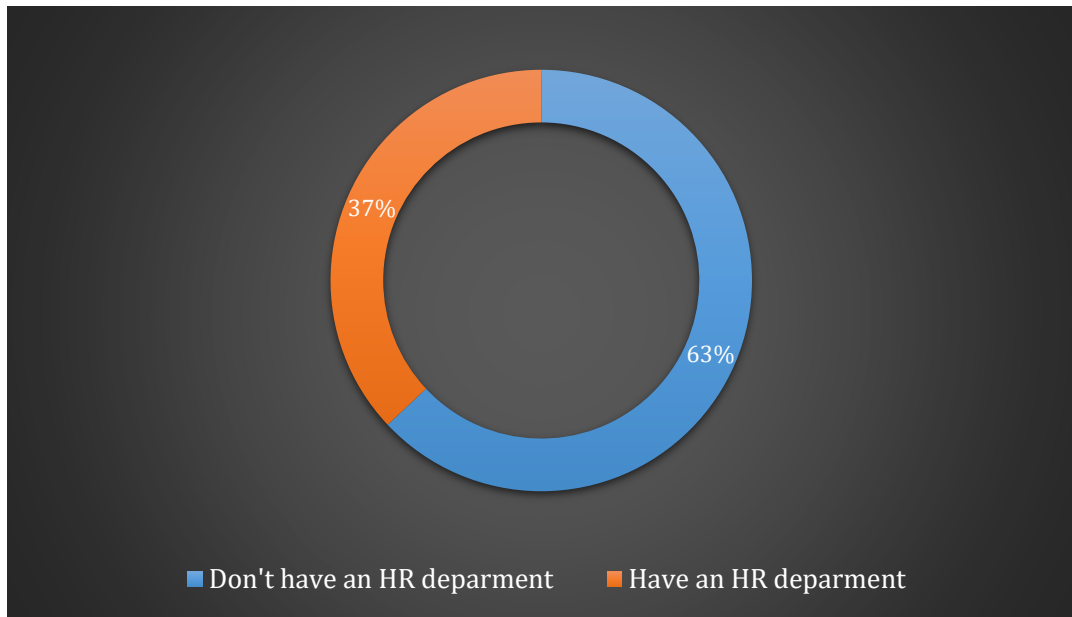
Source: Own research

Graph 2 shows that most of the analyzed companies fall into the ranking of small and medium-sized companies (66%). Micro-enterprises participate with 26%, while the smallest number of companies are in the range of large, with 8%. According to the latest data from the State Statistical Office, 79.3% are companies with 1 to 9 employees. Followed by companies without employees or an unspecified number of employees (without data for employees) with 11.0%, and companies with 10 to 19 employees with 4.5%, companies with 20 to 49 employees (2.9%), companies with 50 to 249 employees (1,9%) and only 0.3% of active companies have over 250 employees³. From the aspect of the activity of the companies, the survey includes entities from different industries, most of which are from the trade industry (19%). Included are companies from tourism, software companies, manufacturing, audio and video production, construction companies and etc.

Graph 3 demonstrates that in most of the companies there is no separate HR department (63%). This is understandable, especially because in the sample analyzed most of the companies are micro-enterprises, with up to 10 employees.

³ <http://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziSoopstenie.aspx?rbtxt=79>

Graph 3. Does your company have an HR department?

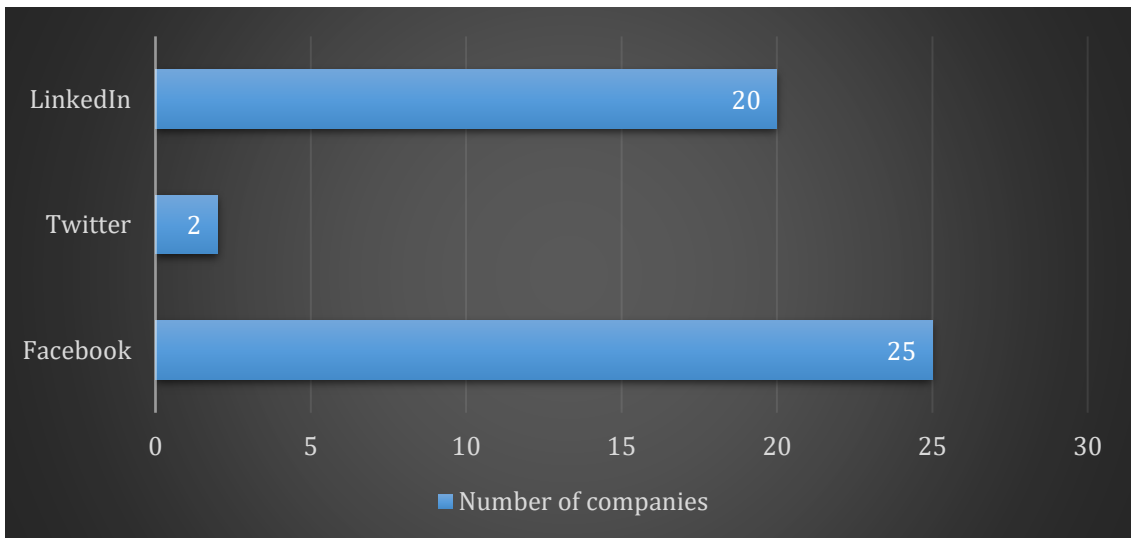


Source: Own research

Only a small percentage of companies recruit through their website (39%), while most do not use their own recruitment website (65%). It is surprising that, however, many companies (71%) use recruitment web sites. This is a good indicator that companies, regardless of their size, are open to the initial stages of implementing e-recruitment methods. The analysis shows that the most used recruitment web sites are "Vrabortuvanje.com.mk" in 94% of the analyzed companies, and "Najdirabota.com.mk" in 86% of the analyzed companies. This means that if the company recruits through certain web portals, then it usually utilizes these two portals simultaneously.

Of the companies surveyed, 73% use social networks in the recruitment process. Graph 3.5 on the next page shows the most used social networks by the analyzed companies.

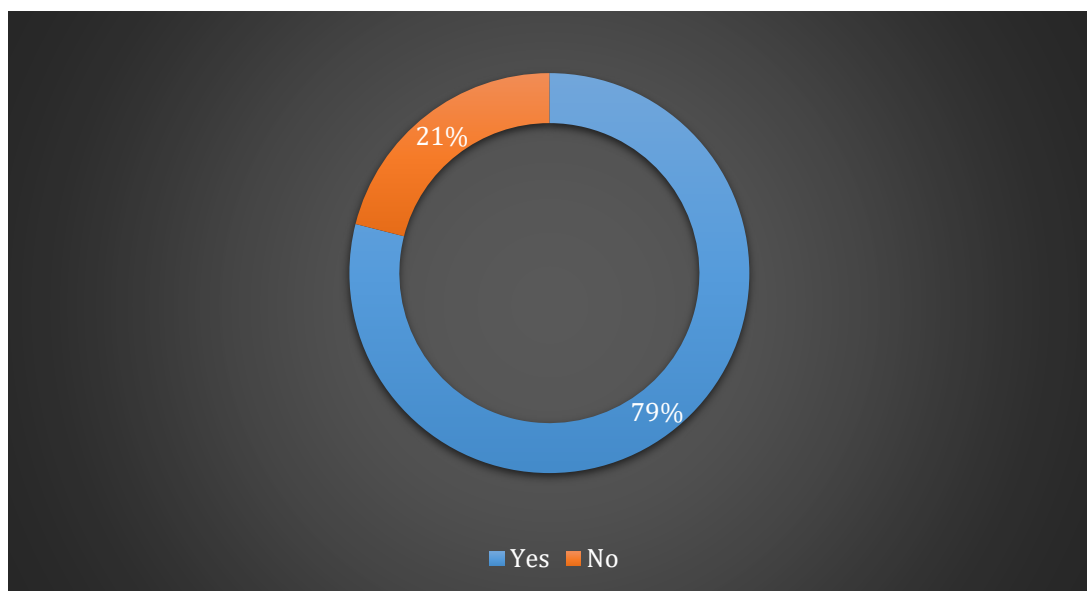
Graph 4. Social media networks utilized during the recruitment process



Source: Own research

Regarding the screening of candidates through SNWs, 65% of the companies surveyed stated that usually they screen candidates. With the introduction of the new laws for data protection at the level of the European Union, this process is heavily regulated and companies have to perform screening very carefully not breach candidate privacy.

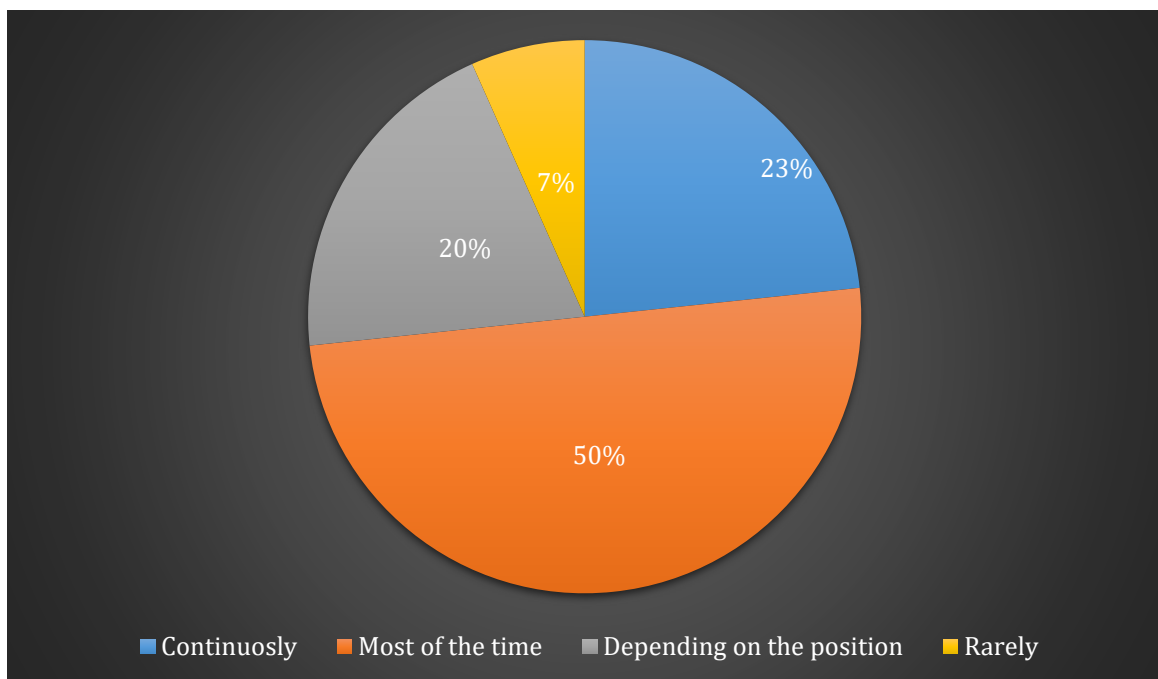
Graph 5. Does your company utilize e-recruitment processes?



Source: Own research

Graph 5 shows the use of the e-recruitment process by Macedonian companies. As many as 79% of them claim that they are familiar with the process and implement it in the employment activities. This is commendatory, since it is evident that Macedonian companies follow recruiting trends. Since the last few questions are focused specifically with e-recruitment aspects, only the companies that responded positively on this question are taken in regard for further analysis (30 companies). Graph 6 shows a brief analysis of the frequency of use of e-recruitment.

Graph 6. How often do you utilize e-recruitment?

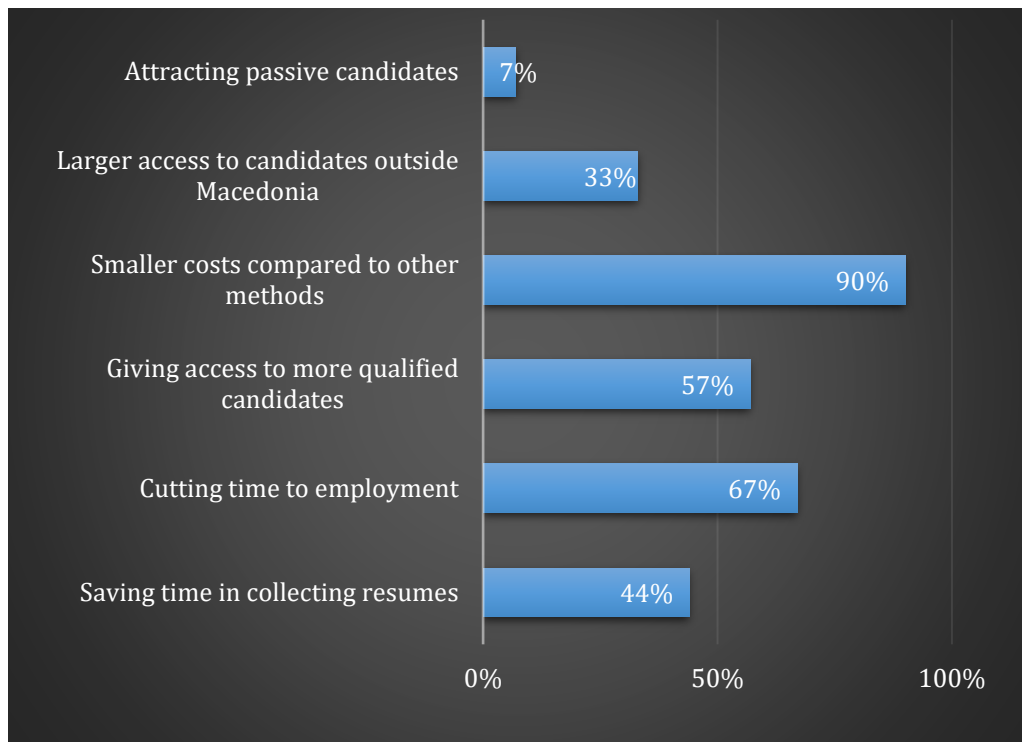


Source: Own research

Companies utilizing an e-recruitment system do it most of the time (50%) or continuously (23%). Certain companies utilize it depending on the position (20%) and a small number of companies use it rarely (7%). From the point of view of the recruitment position, the e-recruitment system is mostly used for candidates in middle level positions (86%), then for candidates for senior positions (60%) and, finally, the least for candidates in low level positions (27%) . Conclusions can be drawn that candidates applying for higher positions have the knowledge and experience in utilizing Internet technologies, working with computers and using digital tools.

Graph 7 on the next page illustrates the advantages offered by the e-recruitment for the analyzed companies.

Graph 7. E-recruitment advantages

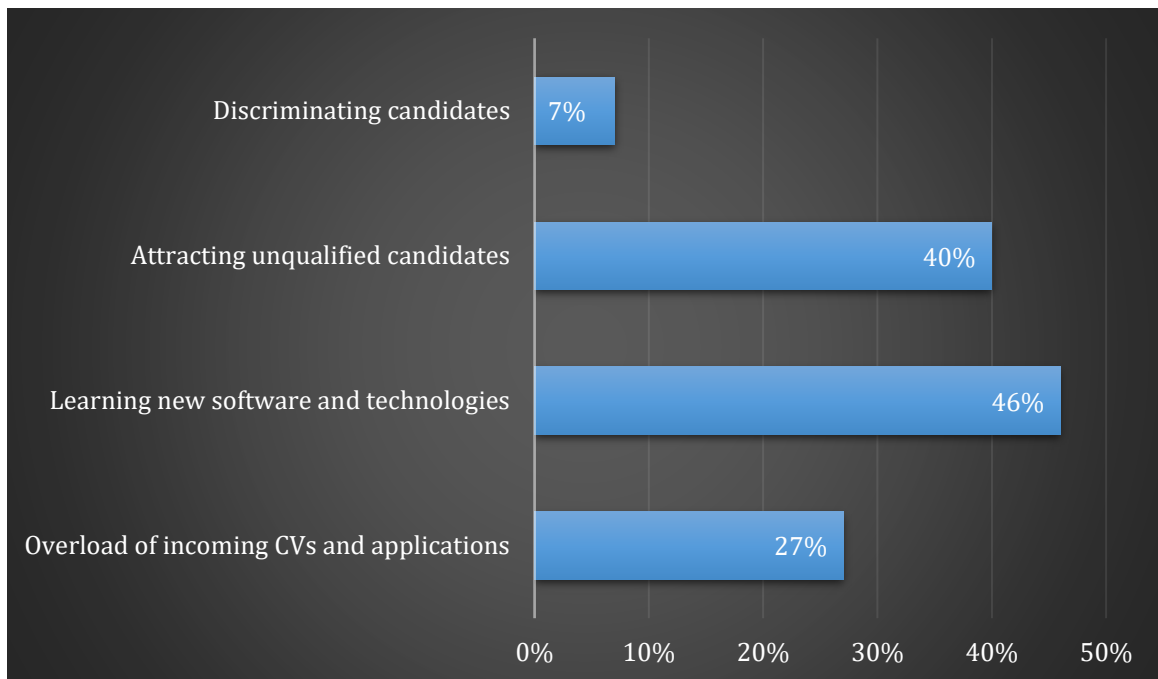


Source: Own research

From the analyzed companies that utilize e-recruitment in the Republic of Macedonia, the biggest advantage is lower costs compared to other (traditional) recruitment methods, with as much as 90%. The second advantage is the shortening of the cycle that is needed from the moment of announcement, until the right candidate is found with 67%, and on the third place is that e-recruitment gives access to more qualified candidates. From the companies surveyed, the smallest benefit is attracting passive candidates with 7%.

Regarding the legal regulations, most of the analyzed companies using the e-recruitment process stated that they are familiar with them (74%). Finally, Graph 8 presents the difficulties and barriers faced by the analyzed companies.

Graph 8. Difficulties in implementing e-recruitment



Source: Own research

Companies state the problem of learning new software and technologies connected to e-recruitment as the most common (with 46%). In second place is attracting unqualified candidates with 40%, while the third place is the overload of applications with 27%. Candidate discrimination is not seen as a problem for most of the companies with 7%.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the data obtained from the primary and secondary research, the following conclusions have been drawn on the utilization of e-recruitment process by the companies in the Republic of Macedonia:

- **Better resource utilization is the primary benefit of e-recruitment** – Macedonian companies that utilize e-recruitment state that the biggest advantage are cost-savings with 90%, followed by cutting the time to employment with 67% and saving the time to collect resumes with 44%. Time and finances are the of paramount importance of every company, so e-recruiting could yield immediate results with its' implementation.
- **Focus on mobile recruiting** – Research demonstrates that younger candidates are spending most of their free times on smartphones, usually checking their phone between 18-25 times a day. Advertising job positions on this platform can prove as a cost-effective alternative, compared to existing traditional or e-recruiting methods.
- **Revise the connection of e-recruitment methods and the current laws and regulation for data protection** – Although companies utilizing the e-recruitment process have declared that they are familiar with existing laws and regulations (54%), the question is to what extent are they familiar with the legislation and how much they adhere to it. Authorized workers, as well as all other employees working with the database of personal data and other sensitive data, should be informed by the employers about their legal obligations in the handling of personal data, in accordance with the internal acts for personal data protection. The recommendation for the employers, as well as the recruiters, is to familiarize with the Law on Personal Data Protection and to visit certified CSCU computer security training courses organized by the Directorate for Personal Data Protection of the Republic of Macedonia. In addition, the Directorate recommends that all employees

working with personal data sign a confidentiality and secrecy clause of personal data or employment contracts to insert such a provision⁴

- **E-recruitment as an upgrade rather than a substitute for traditional methods** – The exclusivity of one or the other process in the implementation can be noticed. In particular, companies often consider that they should choose between one of the two processes, ie that e-recruitment is a substitute for traditional recruitment methods. The new course of activities allows companies to redistribute tasks among members of the recruitment team, which should then be continuously viewed and changed, if need be.

The paper raises new questions for research in the area of privacy laws and protection of personal data, especially for recruiting through social networks and whether they are regulated in Macedonia and the world. Also, this paper can be used for further research on the development of e-recruitment and usage of SNWs in the process, as well as to offer guidance to recruiters and human resources managers who are considering implementing e-recruitment, as well as stimulating cultural and behavioral changes within the department HR, at the company level and at the level of the business community.

⁴ https://dzlp.mk/mk/temi_1_kont (accessed 10.10.2018)

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