ON E-RECRUITMENT AND FOUR WAYS OF USING ITS METHODS

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Abstract. E-recruitment is the fastest growing group of methods of recruitment. Its application encounters less and less obstacles even in countries that are not a leaders in new technologies, as will be shown on data from Poland. The aim of the article is to present a typology of 4 levels of e-recruitment methods and assesses the application of e-recruitment methods in Poland and the USA. The proposed classification allows to show that although access to the Internet is similar in Poland to the US, higher level e-recruitment is decidedly less widespread in Poland. The text also shows that a positive image of a company is a necessary condition for e-recruitment to be successful. It states that employer branding research has to be connected with total rewards theory from the HRM domain (Armstrong 2010), rather then being based on analogical thinking and brand equity theory, or two theories explaining the impact of a potential employer's image-creating activities – signal and cultural value fit.

Keywords: e-recruitment, e-recruitment methods, employer branding, fit theory, signal theory.

JEL classification: M12, M51, M31, J24, J23.

1. Introduction

Online recruitment is one of the fastest growing areas in contemporary recruitment (Listwan 2010). Its use is increasing and meeting with ever fewer barriers related to Internet access among potential employers and employees. However, the variability of its methods hampers its understanding by science and the creation of recommendations for its effective management. This does not facilitate its spread, and lack of competence on the side of employers is mentioned as one of the barriers to its becoming universal (Woźniak 2013).

The aim of this text is to present the four stages that can be distinguished in the development of e-recruitment. Research struggles with the constantly changing methods in this area, especially because of the development of Internet technologies. The main goal of this text is to resolve a problem of a scientific nature – namely the lack of classification of e-recruitment methods. The classification based on successive developmental stages that we propose can be of help for planning further research. It will be shown that the use of e-recruitment in the context of Web 3.0 and Web 4.0 is conditioned by a company's employer branding competence. In this sense, the first goal of the text is analytical, presenting the results of an investigation of scientific literature to be found in another of my works (Woźniak 2013). The second goal is to describe the current use of e-recruitment methods in Poland and the US.

With the proposed classification it will be shown that although access to the Internet is similar in Poland to the US, higher level e-recruitment is decidedly less widespread in Poland. This part of the text is based on statistical data that the Main Statistical Office makes available in Poland (part 1 of the text), and chosen Polish and American consultancy reports from this sector (part 3). From the perspective of scientific goals, it is an illustration of the classification-related problem mentioned above, and shows the real incidence of the four e-recruitment tools described in the text. The relatively low incidence in Poland of the higher levels, as compared with the US, is shown. The third goal of this text is to show the lack of consequence and shortcomings characteristic of e-recruitment research, and to propose a different approach. It summarizes the results of a broader overview of the literature described in another of my texts (Woźniak 2013). Research into recruitment shows that potential employees are influenced in deciding on a prospective employer not only by the package of direct benefits they will obtain (instrumental factors such as remuneration, location, types of tasks, and possibilities of advancement or career development) but also by less tangible symbolic benefits such as the realization of ecological values, social service, or care for marginalized groups in the global economy. However, empirical study and understanding in this area are based on ad-hoc information about brand creation by analogy to the marketing effectiveness

of factors shaping the image of consumer products. The weakness of this approach will be shown in the theoretical part of the text and a proposal will be made to base research into employer attractiveness on total reward theory.

The text is organized as follows: The first part gives a characterization of e-recruitment and its potential reach in Polish society; the second section, which is the main part, presents four separate stages in the development of e-recruitment tools, with a short summary of their advantages and limitations; and the third part contains a brief description of the present situation of e-recruitment methodology in Poland and the USA. Readers who are interested in a broader look at the subject are directed to my other work (Woźniak 2013). The fourth part is devoted to an explanation of the limitations of the research approach used in the area of employer branding, and a new research program will be described: that is, it will be proposed that total reward theory should be used for this purpose.

2. On-line recruitment – its scope and definition

"Obtaining candidates for employment through the Internet, so-called e-recruitment" is a dynamically developing group of recruitment methods (Listwan 2010). The present scope of e-recruitment is variously estimated, depending on the sector, country, type of position being recruited for, and type of organization. Data on the spread of e-recruitment suggests that 3/4 of all large organizations – according to research in the United States in 2010 – (Stone *et al.* 2013), all state governments (Selden, Orenstein 2011), and 2/3 of companies in Europe make use of recruitment portals (Zając 2012).

Poland is not a leader in the spread of new technologies (Runiewicz-Wardyn 2008). However, here too employer Internet access has ceased to be a restriction on the use of online recruitment tools: according to the Main Statistical Office, by 2011 over 95% of businesses had such access (further data in this area is found in Woźniak 2013). The situation is worse for potential employees: lack of Internet access excludes 1/3 of Poles from taking advantage of online recruitment. However, significant lack of Internet usage is currently found only among persons over 60 years of age (as many as 80 out of 100 Poles in this age group do not make use of the Internet). In the remaining age groups, lack of Internet usage is fairly similar and affects a little less than 1/3 of each group.

There is almost complete Internet usage among persons with higher educations; slightly less (around 85%) among those with only secondary school educations; still less among those with a vocational education (46%); and considerably less

among persons with only an elementary school education (23%) (Woźniak 2013). And although these statistics would seem to indicate that online recruitment is better suited for hiring persons with higher education, employers do not limit its use solely to persons with such education, or to those prepared to work in high technology areas (i.e., the branch considered to lead in this type of recruitment method). One proof is that the most frequently published advertisements on recruitment websites are for employees without higher education (around 600,000 advertisements in 2011 were for cashiers, salespersons, and drivers – Zając 2012), and if advertisements on recruitment websites are analyzed in terms of the positions offered, the most frequently sought employees are drivers and construction workers (Zając 2012; Woźniak 2013).

Defining online recruitment precisely is not as easy as simply considering use of the Internet to be its distinguishing feature. Use of the Internet to make contact with candidates is not after all characteristic solely of the new forms of recruitment. Just as e-learning is not constituted by sending email invitations to a training session, so e-recruitment is not constituted by sending emails with interview invitations or application rejections. The natural condition for recognizing a recruitment activity as e-recruitment is the online realization of an 'important part' of the recruitment process.

Thus e-recruitment is defined as 'a way of implementing [recruitment] strategies, policies, and practices in organizations through a conscious and directed support of and/or with the full use of web-based channels' (Girard, Fallery 2010). Such a definition emphasizes the use of the Internet not for peripheral activities in the given human resources sphere, but for essential issues. In the recruitment field this means the web-based realization of a set recruitment plan for making contact with potential candidates, locating these candidates (labor market segmentation), and also collecting the information about them that is necessary for the selection process.

3. Four stages in the development of e-recruitment methods

Formulation of a precise definition of e-recruitment is hindered by continual variation in the ways Internet resources are used in the recruitment process. Researchers who have been trying to put order in the successive stages of the widening collection of web-based recruitment instruments and methods have proposed differentiating various kinds of e-recruitment by naming them 'Web'… [and various numbers] on the pattern of the nomenclature used for the development stages of communication modes created by the Internet.

Table 1. Four generations of online recruitment (source: own elaboration, based on literature from Woźniak 2013, 2014a)

Name	Distinguishing feature	Type of Internet instrument	Most important quality for the organization
Web 1.0	Unilateral communication between a company and a candidate	Company website; employment websites	Potential to place a lot of 'recruitment' information on one's own website
Web 2.0	Companies observe communications between potential candidates	Search engines; social networking sites	The possibility of appraising a candidate without informing him or her of the fact
Web 3.0	Multilateral communication between a company, candidates, and the groups to which the candidates belong	Social networking sites; image-building tools: games, blogs	Maintenance of a network of brand ambassadors in various communities
Web 4.0	Realization of recruitment tasks by persons in a company's circles at the request of the company; that is, communication with the firm is indirect	All the above, including in particular the instruments for creating communities and, additionally, rewards for recommenders (and possibly for those recommended as well)	Possibility of reaching large and varied social groups with recruitment information

In analyzing this table it should be noted that initially the Internet served for the placement of recruitment ads analogous to those in the printed press stating that a company was seeking employees (so-called Web 1.0). In this period of online recruitment the only actual difference in comparison with use of the printed press for recruitment aims was the opportunity for employees to search websites serving as employment agencies (such as Monster.com, the Polish Jobpilot.pl, or pracuj.pl). These services corresponded to a traditional search through the classified advertisements of the press – the 'help-wanted' section in the case of recruitment.

However, e-recruitment is characterized by a significant modification not only in the ways of realizing operational tasks in the recruitment sphere, but by changes in the nature of these tasks (Woźniak 2013a). This was already happening in Web 1.0; currently the larger traffic on enterprises' own sites and more capacious Internet connections have meant that companies can put more information on their websites and use a richer set of methods for transmitting it – films, testimonials, blogs, or games. As was confirmed by traditional recruitment, more information, richer means of transmitting it, and greater individualization increase the attractiveness of job offers in the eyes of candidates (Yüce, Highhouse 1998).

Recruitment in Web 2.0 is connected (like everything called Web 2.0 in the language used to speak of the Internet) with the use of material created spontaneously by participants in online communities. The plural in the term 'communities' is important here, as along with the emergence of the possibility of creating social networking sites and other forums where participants can put statements and material they created themselves, the range of such sites is continually growing. By definition, the Web 2.0 model differs from Web 1.0 in its obliteration of the difference between a privileged broadcaster of information and a recipient, and the use of content created by Internet users for the purpose of communicating with one another.

In principle, in the Internet based on the Web 2.0 model, the creator of a website (such as Facebook, Nasza Klasa, or Allegro) where users communicate should be transparent; that is, it should only create its own rules of use and control their observation. The content of the website is created by the Internet users themselves, and their interaction consists both in exchanging communications, and – in particular – in the possibility of making personal information about themselves available to other members of a given society.

In this sense, we speak of Web 2.0 recruitment when a potential employer actively seeks material – other than job-wanted advertisements – placed by other users of the Internet. Characteristic Internet tools used in Web 2.0 recruitment are social networking sites of a private type (Facebook, for instance) or professional type (Linked IN), video platforms such as Youtube.com, virtual worlds of the Second-Life type, and search engines analyzing data in various areas of the Inter-

net. Such an understanding of Web 2.0 recruitment emphasizes the search through recruitment material created – generally without an open connection with seeking employment – by potential job candidates (and other persons), for the purpose of acquiring pre-selection information about them (allowing potentially interesting candidates to be distinguished) and possibly making contact.

Sometimes the marketing nature of the Web 2.0 description is emphasized; it is pointed out that social networking sites make use of instruments that have long been available on the Internet, and the activeness of its users is overrated. Based on data from 2007 it can be said: "According to Hitwise, only 0.2% of visits to YouTube are users uploading a video, 0.05% visits to Google Video include uploaded videos and 0.16% of Flickr visits are people posting photos. Only the social encyclopedia Wikipedia shows a significant amount of participation, with 4.56% of visits to the site resulting in content editing" in: Who's Really Participating in Web 2.0 – TIME, available on http://content.time.com/time/business/article/0,859 9,1614751,00.html access 12.02.2014.

Some research emphasized the stratification of Web 2.0 practices, where the age is the most clear dimension – in US 38% of 18–24 years olds with internet access had ever shared something – created by himself – on line, compared to 15% of 65+ (Brake 2013).

Sometimes Web 2.0 is considered to be every type of multilateral internet communication (Girard, Fallery 2010) and then real change is seen only in the use, in those communities, of crowdsourcing, which, in conjunction with the use of games, allows recruitment departments to be transformed from costs centres to profit centres (or the lowering of recruitment costs to nearly zero and the obtaining of additional value for the organization – for instance, through advertising to a group of recipients acquired thanks to the links among users of community attractions such as games, knowledge centres, etc.).

If Web 2.0 recruitment is understood in a manner that stresses the unilateral nature of the communication (the recruiters search through the communications of various persons for the purpose of finding potential candidates), then an activity consisting in the creation of an Internet community around the communications of potential employers (Jeffrey 2012) naturally becomes the differentiator of Web 3.0 recruitment. Entering into dialogue with Internet users, either for the purpose of directly encouraging them to apply or with the aim of creating groups associated with the company in varying ways in order to use these connections for recruitment purposes, becomes the

characteristic trait of another communications environment, that is, one based on the bilateral (or multilateral) communication sphere of Web 3.0.

Usually, external activities in the sphere of employer branding are based on constructing, in the organization's environment, a group with a positive attitude toward the organization and a greater acquaintance with its problems (brand ambassadors) (Woźniak 2013), but achieving and maintaining rich relations between a company and groups in its environment ordinarily requires bilateral communication, which in large measure takes place online. In particular, the Internet facilitates the use of certain instruments suitable for gamification, the trend of using game mechanisms for various kinds of traditional tasks. The classic example now is the game used in recruitment by the Marriot Corporation. Found on the Marriot's recruitment site, which contains various job offers, the game involves virtually performing various functions related to hotel work.

Recommendations as to the manner of creating a company's employer brand go beyond using the new forms of communicating with the social environment – such as through Internet games, competitions, or emotionally charged events. It is sometimes suggested that the content of communications should be fairly specific and that activities intended to establish the veracity of these communications should be included. Moreover, recommendations in the sphere of human resources marketing and in research into Corporate Social Responsibility suggest creating values for employees both through functional (instrumental) traits and through symbolic ones connected with the company's brand.

Management of a company's employer brand means creating values for potential employees by using the facts that a brand has value beyond practical benefits and the value of an employer brand could emerge partially under the influence of the company's consumer brand (Keller 2003; Cable, Turban 2003; Gomez, Neves 2010). The academic literature on recruitment emphasizes that defining the content of the Employee Value Proposition in order to strengthen the company's brand is not the clear answer, if only because of the limited scientific understanding of the question (Lievens, Highhouse 2003). "Given the embryonic state of employer branding theory, however, it is unclear precisely which consumer / corporate brand success characteristics might apply or which other characteristics may be relevant" (Maroko, Uncles 2008). The cited authors emphasize that the difference between consumers and job candidates justifies the belief that these elements may be different.

In transferring considerations from the field of consumer marketing to the 'product' of being an employer requires distinguishing the practical traits of the offered job, such as remuneration, logistics (location, length, flexibility, hours, amenities, and material benefits), and development potential and possibility for advancement, from the symbolic benefits, which include the prestige connected with working for a given employer due to the employer's image prevailing in specific social groups, and the employee's personal sense of the accordance between his own self-image and his employer.

The next stage in the development of e-recruitment instruments is considered to be Web 4.0 recruitment (Jeffrey 2012), which is to supposed to make the searching of social networking sites automatic in the sense that it puts searching for appropriate candidates, and encouraging them to apply, in the hands of a crowdsourcing mechanism consisting in transferring the task to be performed to a group of entities not having precisely defined boundaries. In analogy to seeking recommendations for potential candidates from a company's own employees, Web 4.0 recruitment wants to give this task to Internet users, based on the conviction that giving even a small reward to recommenders whose recommendee is hired results in Internet users undertaking the search and producing thereby a large number of applicants. Thanks to a good mechanism for automatic pre-selection, the excess of applications, which was the bane of earlier e-recruitment methods, does not currently constitute a problem burdening recruiters with additional work. An excess of applications as a drawback to online recruitment is pointed out by, among others, Listwan (2010) and Armstrong (2011). According to data of 2003, 92% of HR managers feel overwhelmed by inappropriate e-applications, and 71% complain that the majority of the applicants sending applications do not meet the requirements for the position (after: Maurer, Cook 2011). Furthermore, research into online recruitment has shown that a company's high degree of attractiveness will encourage the application of persons who are not suitable for the job offered (organizations considered attractive, for instance, on account of their brand recognizability or their good reputation will receive a higher percentage of applications from applicants who do not meet the prerequisites for the job.)

Among the many poor candidates, the automatic online pre-selection tools (including tests filled in on-line and computer programs automatically monitoring the adequacy of formal qualifications) are able to choose, free of cost, a small pool of candidates who will presumably possess a close approximation to the desired qualifications.

It should be clearly emphasized that a prerequisite for successful crowdsourcing of recruitment is that the company should have a positive image in the eyes of the group to which the recruitment information will be addressed (that is, the potential recommenders and recommendees). This entails the increased importance of maintaining contact with the social environment, including in particular the routine work of creating the company's image in the target group – from maintaining blogs, through discussions on online forums, to activity in communities of practitioners. For this reason, facilitation of the work of the personnel department in Web 4.0 recruitment might be only superficial. Furthermore, the fact that a firm needs to have a positive image in the social environment means that recruitment by these methods could be harder for some companies than for others.

Another question is the possibility of reaching passive candidates. Research into crowdsourcing shows that tasks suitable for crowdsourcing (that is, those that have a significant probability of being outsourced to indeterminate performers) have the following traits: the problem is easily defined and presented; the knowledge needed for its solution is not very accessible in the decision-makers' environment; the crowd is large and part of it is motivated and possesses the knowledge necessary to resolve the problem; the solution is easy to appraise as to quality; and communications technologies are cheap (Afuah, Tucci 2012).

From the recruitment viewpoint, it can be observed that the search for persons having specialized, but formally defined, qualifications (for instance, the ability to use IT tools, certified by course work or participation in a project of the appropriate type), is easier for crowdsourcing than the search for persons with specific character profiles or competences. It can also be seen that a condition of recruitment crowdsourcing is a company's possession of a 'community of fans', distinguished by their good opinion about a company, (and thus motivated to auto-selection, i.e., ready to perform the task of 'recommending'): that is, the company has a good reputation in a large group having access to various persons in the social environment.

To recapitulate, it should be stated that activity in the employer branding sphere is a condition of effectiveness for e-recruitment of the higher types as well. Without adapting its image to the expectations of its target groups, a company will have difficulty acquiring candidates even using modern recruitment tools.

4. The current state of e-recruitment in Poland and the USA

The empirical data, as far as these instruments' actual use in e-recruitment type practices goes, is very diverse. Some of the US data, which comes from research on large test groups, suggests that e-recruitment methods from Web 1.0 to Web 3.0 are in general use by companies. For example, data recently published by the firm Bullhorn shows that respondents from all Anglophone countries (the United States, Great Britain, Canada, and Australia) declare that they put recruitment advertisements on the LinkedIn site (around 85%, the rest of the world – 75%), on Facebook (around 25%, the rest of the world – 17%) and Twitter (around 50%, the rest of the world – 28%) (Bullhorn 2013). Only 9% of employers in the US stated that they did not use social media for recruitment (Jobvite 2010).

The barriers are gradually disappearing for the use of e-recruitment techniques characteristic of Web 2.0 and Web 3.0. The attitude to the privacy of information available on social networking sites, which was earlier treated as a barrier to the spread of Web 3.0 recruitment, is undergoing continual transformation. In actuality, some such sites are private and egocentric in nature, being oriented to the creation of links between people (acquaintances) rather than to passing on information about facts (Levinson 2010), but the border between social networks and business networks is increasingly disappearing at present (Girard, Fallery 2010). Ever more often, Internet users themselves declare that their online activity is self-promotional in nature, not only in the sense of promoting their contribution to the net but also in promoting themselves on potential labor markets.

For Internet users, social media is a means to maintain contact with acquaintances (49%) but also a means of furthering career development and of entertainment (around 40%) – after: HRK 03.2011, n = 1685 (among users of Gazetapraca.pl.) (HRK 2011).

In Poland, the generality of Internet users declare their use of e-recruitment (as job-seekers). Already in 2010 almost 100% of respondents stated that they had gone to websites and portals with employment offers in looking for work and they ascribed the greatest effectiveness in obtaining it to such sites (at the level of personal recommendations, i.e., more than 2/3 chose them as being effective – report from Agora research on a test sample of 1200 persons, see the description in Woźniak 2013).

There is a lack of data on the scale of companies' using their own sites, but there are estimates that 2/3rds of employers use portals with employment offers (Zając 2012). Even if the estimates are excessive, it should be recognized that large firms in Poland make general use of lower-stage e-recruitment (see the discussion in Woźniak 2013).

According to random data appearing in branch reports, it may be supposed that the way personnel departments in Poland use social networking communities to gather information about a specific candidate who was earlier identified as potentially interesting (that is, by a Google-type search). In research by the portal pracuj.pl, as many as 46% of the representatives of personnel departments indicated that verifying information contained in a CV on the basis of information that can be found about a candidate on the Internet is the recruitment practice that has the most chance of becoming universal in the next two years. For comparison, according to American data published in the years 2006–2008, around 20–25% of employers surveyed declared that they had used social networking sites to verify information about candidates, while 40% stated that such a use would probably be introduced in the coming year (see the bibliographic references in Woźniak 2013).

The only trend that was more often mentioned by the respondents was the introduction of first-stage e-recruitment (62%): this may be interpreted as announcing job offers online and pre-selection on the basis of tests and automatic methods of appraising applications.

It should be mentioned that activity on social networking sites is rather a spontaneous activity by human resources employees than a routine recruitment procedure for employers. Among Polish employers, 77% state that they had not previously conducted any activities on Facebook, and only 17% had conducted branding activity there, publishing their profiles as employers. Recruitment actions using Facebook were conducted by 5% of employers, although it is not known whether respondents, in choosing such an answer, were thinking of collecting information about candidates or only promoting recruitment or internship offers on the site. Only 2% of respondents stated that they obtained candidates thanks to contextual advertising.

The spread of recruitment with the help of a company's own employees or crowdsourcing is still at an early stage. It should be cleared noted that the use of higher e-recruitment tools depends not only on actual access to technical instruments and personnel departments' competence in their use, but above all on the needs created by the local labor market. India has a difficult labor market in the IT segment, and thus constitutes a good testing ground for new recruitment practices. Apparently as many

as 57% of the employers studied there used recruitment practices based on crowdsourcing.

However, some data gives different estimates of the universality of e-recruitment even in the United States. For instance, CareerXroads SOH 2/2012 notes that only 20% of persons hired in the course of the last year by the companies it studied came from recruitment company websites, and 10% came from the companies' own websites (Crispin, Mehler 2012). Such statistics testify that the spread of e-recruitment is occurring gradually in the United States as well.

5. Critique of the theoretical approach at the basis of e-recruitment research

Scientific research into the influence of branding information in e-recruitment processes is based on a not very refined theoretical model. The entry point for research is a list of factors, created ad hoc, that may have branding significance either through the provision of functional or symbolic benefits. Further analysis is based on the indication that appraising attractiveness results from the specifics of the individual making the evaluation, as explained either by signaling theory or through the theory of cultural fit (see Woźniak 2014b).

As a source of practical knowledge, such a model for explaining how the attractiveness of organizations is appraised under the influence of specific information – where the appraisal is based on the individual's 'understanding' of the information the firm reveals about itself – has at least two limitations. In order to be practically useful, this model of explanation would require separate research into the reliability of the information transmitted by the firm in the eyes of specific interpreters. Furthermore, it does not provide indications as to which information could have significance.

This first question becomes an obvious problem if it is assumed that information is spread not only by Internet sites (and thus by an issuer of uncertain veracity) but also by brand ambassadors, in whom candidates have greater confidence (at least in the case where both parties – ambassador and candidate – are jointly involved in the same network community). It is obvious, after all, that if a firm is a sender lacking credibility the basic impact of the information it sends will be explained by signaling theory – every piece of information suggesting negative attributes will have a dominant strength and will have a negative influence on the company's image, regardless of the candidate's values. The reader can find empirical bases for this statement in my text (Woźniak 2014b). At the same time, since as many as 65% of respondents in Poland declare that they are ready to share negative information about their employers (HRK report 2011, cited after Woźniak 2013), it should be accepted that inquisitive candidates (in 2011 only 45% of Internet users in Poland declared that they look for information about potential employers on social networking sites – ibid) will always be able to access online information that will undermine the credibility of a company and the information about it that reaches candidates through other channels. Furthermore, the expanding anti-capitalist movement and the critical attitude toward the reliability of capitalist promises promotes a greater degree of inquiry by candidates and their search for negative information about a potential employer. This means that candidates continually receive fairly strong negative and positive communications in reference to the job offers from specific companies, and thus theories explaining candidates' decision about their value by reference to information characterized in one manner (positive or negative) are insufficient.

The second question – the choice of information that could have importance for the candidate's appraisal – also requires a new theoretical impulse. Reference to total rewards theory (Armstrong 2010) as a classification of all the benefits that accrue to an employee from a contract with a given employer could provide an adequate theoretical language. In particular, with the help of this theory it is relatively easy to explain why even small benefits, in forms easily imitated by other companies, such as sponsoring sports events or athletes in connection with tickets to such events for employees, or sports events involving both celebrity athletes and employees (Woźniak 2014c), have importance in an appraisal of an employer's attractiveness.

A company's search to stand out, beyond offering a salary higher than the market rate or a better opportunity to develop professional skills, is one of the basic practical problems in the area of employer branding. In seeking atypical benefits to be offered by potential employers, it is not sufficient anymore to create an ad-hoc list of possible benefits. What is needed is a theoretical language drawing benefit from the employee-company relationship, and such a language is supplied by the total rewards theory and the analyses that have been conducted for years in the sphere of employee-motivation systems.

6. Summary and conclusions

Online recruitment is the fastest developing area in the application of Internet technology to managing human resources. The continual variability of the instruments used in this field hinders a theory-

based understanding of its specifics. Clarification is also not facilitated by understanding based on analogies and theses from the sphere of consumer marketing, instead of on theories derived from analysing the details of the employee-company relationship.

This text has proposed a classification of online recruitment methods by distinguishing four stages of e-recruitment development, together with an indication of the conditions that produce success in the use of a given type. In particular, it was shown that branding activity, which creates brand ambassadors in a company's social environment, is a condition for the success of recruitment efforts of the third and fourth type.

It has also been shown that increasingly often at present what is meant by the term 'e-recruitment' is all four types presented above. Succeeding stages in using the potential created by the Internet will probably result in new ideas for its use in recruitment.

The proposed classification allows us to show that although access to the Internet – both among entrepreneurs, as people searching for jobs – is similar in Poland to the US, higher level recruitment is decidedly less widespread in Poland. Our analysis is based on data from chosen Polish and American reports of research conducted on large samples of Internet users, as there is no scientific data available in this field.

The choice of information that should have the largest impact on a company's target group is the subject of scientific discussion. It has been shown that research into employer branding is based on theories from the field of consumer marketing (brand equity) and is understood by analogy. Two medium-range scientific theories analyzing the effects of the information reaching potential candidates supply contrary predictions about the reactions of candidates in certain situations and do not explain the results of the influence of certain groups of branding information.

It was shown that these theories are of limited usefulness for e-recruitment research and therefore, the text proposes basing research on total rewards theory, as it is the most general theory describing the relation between the company and the employee and classifying the factors that are important in that relationship.

From the perspective of this article's contribution to the development of knowledge, three factors should be stressed.

First, the above text provides information concerning e-recruitment in the non-Atlantic sphere, whose omission has been emphasized in the literature (Baum, Kabst 2012).

Second, in regard to succeeding phases of the use of e-recruitment, the importance has been shown of employer branding (understood not only as the creation of an employer's image as the supplier of a set of practical and symbolic benefits to its employees, but also as a tool for creating various communities of company friends). The use of brand ambassadors (as former interns, participants in competitions organized by the company, or persons interested in a given branch or its products are called), is a prerequisite for doing e-recruitment by crowdsourcing.

Third, the essential weakness has been shown of the present research paradigm for appraising the attractiveness of employers within the framework of e-recruitment and a different, more useful, theoretical model has been proposed.

It should be made plain that the conclusions presented in this article are subject to question in regard to the empirical data on which they are based. The author used consulting firms' reports on Polish Internet users and the reports of American firms collecting information in a similar manner. The test samples were thus comprised of persons who function well in the virtual world and it should be clear that this restricts the conclusions.

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