Chapter 12

The Role of Online Social Networking in the Recruitment Context

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ABSTRACT

The usage of online social networking has increased as more people use digital technology to access and store information. In this chapter, the way recruiting services are being used by online social networks is discussed. This chapter utilizes the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory to understand the factors affecting intentions to adopt online social networking recruiting services. The chapter discusses the role of online behavioral advertising, ethical orientation, social influencers and online privacy concerns to see who they affect behavioral intentions. The results of the study reported in the chapter extend current understanding about online recruitment to see how social networks are an important part of the adoption process. The chapter provides practical and managerial insights into the role of online social networking in the recruitment context.

INTRODUCTION

The advances in internet technology have resulted in a transformation of employee recruitment to electronic recruitment (Kashi and Zheng, 2013). The internet has changed the way job seekers access information about recruiting opportunities (Howard & Behrend, 2014). In the past, most job seekers relied on conventional recruitment practices that utilized traditional print media for advertising new positions (Ratten, 2014a). This has altered so that more recruiters now place information on the internet to advertise potential employment positions (Lievens & Harris, 2003). The emerging technological advances on the internet have resulted in large numbers of job seekers searching for information online. Job seekers who are more internet savvy have a better chance of finding relevant information about employment positions (Capelli, 2001). Given that more information will be obtained by individuals effectively managing their online surfing behavior, it becomes important to understand how individuals...
use their social networks to obtain better information about employment positions. One way individuals incorporate social networks into online searching behavior is by the use of interactive technologies that integrate user information (Villano, 2008).

Online social networks may help individuals engage with potential employers and generate interest in job opportunities. This is based on internet technology serving as a way to link individuals to the recruitment process (Howard & Behrend, 2014). Individuals can influence the attractiveness of their applications by engaging in online social networks as part of the recruitment process. Online social networks can also provide individuals with the ability to use their personal contacts (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Individuals can use self expression on online social networking sites to access beneficial relationships (Pena and Brody, 2014). There are a number of perceptual and linguistic factors that are part of online relationships (Walther, 2004). This means that the key to developing online social networks is self-disclosure, which reduces the uncertainty process in recruiting practices (Ratten, 2013). Online self-disclosure has been found to foster information access by individuals in online networks (Pena & Brody, 2014).

Most job seekers prefer online websites to search and apply for positions (Hooper, 2007). This is due to online recruiting changing the application process in employment positions (Viswesvaran, 2003). A wide range of job information can be found in the online environment (Kashi & Zheng, 2013). Although online recruitment has increased, little is known about how social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and GooglePlus affect individual intention to use online recruiting services. Past research on online recruitment has focused more on website features (e.g. Pfleffelman, Wagner & Libkuman, 2010; Kashi & Zheng, 2013) and less on social networking tools used by individuals. It is useful for organizations to know how individuals use social networking when applying for jobs online.

Previous research by Allen, Mahto and Otondo (2007) found that job information directly affects employment intentions. Including feedback tools on websites affects job applicants perceptions of future employment (Cober et al, 2003). Allen et al (2007) in a study of web-based recruitment found that organizations information in the form of culture and goals affects job applicants attitudes toward the website. This means that it is important that online recruiters provide information about organization attitudes to help job seekers use their website (Kashi & Zheng, 2013). A recruiter’s website that is easier to use is perceived by job seekers to be an indicator of the organizations procedures (Cober et al, 2004).

Recruitment websites can provide signals about the benefits of working for an organization (Sinar, Paquet & Reynolds, 2003). They can highlight aspects of the organizations culture and the nature of the working environment (Kashi & Zheng, 2013). The website design of recruitment agencies is important as it determines the time individuals spend on information reported on the website (De Goede et al, 2010). Recruitment websites should be designed to take into account aesthetic features (e.g. interactive links, audio files, graphic images) that shape job seekers employment decisions (Kashi & Zheng, 2013).

Social networking sites including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn have become very popular in recent years (Lepp et al, 2014). Most people use social networks to maintain existing relationships and to meet people with shared interests (Hew, 2011). Individual usage of social networking sites has changed since the internet was introduced as there are more web applications that enable individuals to share their interests with others on the internet (Kuo & Tang, 2014). Facebook is one of the most popular social networking sites that enable individuals to connect with people of similar interests and share job opportunities. The number of people using social networking sites has increased as more information is shared and communicated online (Smith and Caruso, 2010). Social network sites enable people to find out more about jobs and invite people to apply for positions (Ratten, 2012a).
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