GENDER DIFFERENCE IN THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORK SITES PROFILES TO BE ATTRACTIVE FOR PROJECT MANAGER

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Abstract

The paper investigate the use of Social network sites (SNSs) for the employment and project seeking process under consideration of the gender of the user and different kind of SNS. SNSs user creates a profile to present their skills and knowledge to a large audience. SNS profiles can be used by individuals to present themselves to potential employer to identify employment opportunities. This paper identified differences between female and male user of SNSs. The gender influences the use of SNSs for the employment or project seeking process. The kind of SNS provides another variable which influence the use and behaviour of individuals. The research has been done with a questionnaire with 210 participants. The data has been analysed with descriptive statistical methods e.g. median, mean, cross tables and correlation. The employment seeking process is an important part for companies to be competitive and project manager needs superior members to be successful. SNSs are a new channel and substitute historical channels for the employment and project seeking process. Human Resources Management (HRM) need explanations how to use SNSs for the employment seeking process to provide a value to organizations. SNSs are a new tool to identify potential candidates. This tool needs further investigation that HRM can use SNSs for the employment seeking process effective and efficient. The theoretical background for this paper is social capital to explain the use of social networks and advantage of SNSs profiles for individuals as an opportunity to transfer information about individuals to other people.

Key words: *Social network sites profile, human resources management, project management.*
JEL Code: M1, M5, J6, D85

Introduction

SNSs are an important tool to identify project member and that individuals can present their skills to a large international audience e.g. project manager or companies. The profile is anytime for all other SNS members and authorized individual's access able. Especially SNS profiles provide opportunities for organisations to staff projects and to identify employees (Sander, Teh, & Sloka, 2015) (Pfeil, Arjan, & Zaphiris, 2009). The research question is about the thoughts of individuals to use SNSs profiles to find projects or employment. SNSs provide an advantage to their members and one advantage is the use of profiles for their interests. SNS profiles can be used by individuals to present themselves e.g. to potential employer or project manager to identify employment opportunities or that contractors can forward information about them to attract other SNS member to get in touch with them to offer project opportunities. That is one beneficial reason to be member of SNSs.

The labour market is changing and the demographic changes are a large issue for HRM. The difficulties to identify suitable candidates need new tools for example SNSs. The channel to get in touch with candidates changes permanently e.g. new technologies provides new channels. The historical channels are substituted by new channels, the society is changing their behaviour

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e.g. influenced by new social media tools and technological changes provide new opportunities. HRM has to take these changes under consideration to identify potential candidates and candidates use new tools to be more attractive for employer. Individuals who search for projects or project manager who search for suitable project members have similar opportunities as HRM has with SNSs. The potential candidates can collect information about employer or employment opportunities via SNSs. The numbers of channels are increasing and HRM has to know which channel is the best solution to identify the best candidate. The SNSs provide the opportunity to send signals to a specific group (Sander, Teh, Majlath, & Sloka, 2015). The number of suitable candidates is decreasing; well skilled members for projects are rare. The employment seeking process is an important part for companies to be competitive. SNSs are a new channel and substitute historical channels for the employment and project seeking process. HRM need explanations how to use SNSs for the employment seeking process to provide a value to organizations and individuals (Feuls, Fieseler, & Suphan, 2014) (Erickson, 2001). The decreasing number of potential candidates needs an increase of diversity to identify enough qualified candidates. The gender difference in the use of SNSs has to be investigated to design the recruiting process more effective and efficient for employees and project member.

People are aware that their profiles on SNSs are recognised by a large audience. They know that their SNS profile can be used by potential employer, project manager or head-hunter to evaluate skills and knowledge of candidates, to use SNSs profiles for the selection process. The SNSs profile can influence the selection process positive or negative. The social capital research identified advantages and disadvantages to be part of a social network. The discrimination of social network members is explained by the scientific literature with age, race or gender for example (Portes, 2000). That means the membership of a social network could have a negative impact on the member or result of a decision for an individual for example. The SNSs profiles can have a negative effect for the SNSs member and provide undesired information. Discrimination is a typical negative outcome of social network membership (Smith, 2005). HRM and project manager has to be aware about this issue to use SNSs for the recruiting process proper and careful.

Theoretical Background

SNSs are platforms to exchange information and to share knowledge. This platforms are social networks which are virtual and can be used to maintain friendship or relationships to other individuals. SNSs are internet based platforms to connect individuals and organize social relationships. The SNS support to organize social networks or relationships of individuals e.g. to transfer information to other member of the SNS fast and easily (Wasko, 2005) (Teh, Huah, & Si, 2014). The difference between real social networks and SNS is that time and distance between the members is not anymore a barrier to exchange information and resources. It exists different SNSs with different aims and purposes depending on the member of the SNSs. SNSs member has to have an advantage with their membership of SNSs that they stay with the network and use the network. Organizations use SNSs for their advantage and they need knowledge to use SNSs successfully that the organization will use the SNSs (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). One advantage is the improvement of the employment seeking process and that HRM can use SNSs profiles to identify potential candidates or project manager can use the social networks to find project team members with special skills. The search function is fast and easily at SNSs with the technical opportunities to use search engine to scan the SNS member.

The difference between real and virtual networks is that the SNSs provide the opportunity to identify members of the network without a direct tie (Sander, 2012). That means it is possible to identify all member of the SNSs without a direct relationship compared with real social networks is the fast and easy identification only possible if a direct relationship exist. That is a difference of real and virtual networks.

The uses of SNSs supports individuals to identify employment or projects opportunities and support the employment or project seeking process. The profile is an important part of the SNSs and enables individuals to share information about skills, knowledge and personality with other SNSs members (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Headhunter and recruiter use SNSs profiles to identify potential candidates. They use the SNS to evaluate candidates to collect further information. The use of SNS reduce the time and cost to identify potential candidates. The transaction cost to transfer resources or information is reduced by the use of SNSs. Time and costs are important factors for a successful recruiting process. SNSs can support to make the recruiting process more effective and efficient (Weiss & Klein, 2011). That provides a competitive advantage to organizations. SNSs member use their profile to offer their knowledge and skills to potential employer or project manager, to make their personality and interest visible. The profiles are an important part for SNSs and an advantage for SNSs user to identify specialists or to inform other members about actual news e.g. new degrees or certificates which are important for the professional future. Business and private SNSs are different. That means the content of profiles depends on the kind of SNSs. The business SNS profiles have more professional relevant information e.g. education or degrees. Private SNS profiles have more personal relevant information for example hobbies or family related information. Both kinds of profiles have the task to present the SNS member and to share information which is relevant for other SNSs member. The use of SNSs profiles by companies to evaluate individuals can have a negative impact for the companies because individuals avoid their application. They are not interested that other individuals can misuse the information on their SNS profile, that it is possible to use their SNSs profiles to collect information about them (Moore, Daniel, Gauvin, & Dubé, 2009) (Sander, Teh, & Sloka, 2015). This knowledge influences the behaviour of individuals and their use of SNSs profiles.

The behaviour of SNSs members can be explained with social capital theory. Social capital theory is an exchange theory and explains the exchange of information and resources between social network members. That the individuals exchange their resources and information depends on trust and opportunity to penalize social network members for their behaviour (N. Lin, 2001). Further expect the social network member reciprocity and the creation of obligations. These obligations can be used to have an advantage in the future. The assumption is that the mechanism of social networks can be transferred to SNSs (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). The investment of SNSs members can be described with the duration of the membership and use of time per day. The SNS importance for the individual can be explained with the number of contacts, the size of their social network. The size of the social network is increased because SNSs provide the opportunity with their technical opportunities to maintain relationships more easily and to exchange information fast and easily without any barrier.

**Method to investigate the use of social network sites profiles**

The questionnaire has been done in October 2015 at University of Ludwigshafen. The questionnaire has been part of a project about behaviour of employment seeking individuals. The questionnaire has 210 participants and all participants are speaking German. The gender distribution is described in the diagram below.
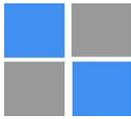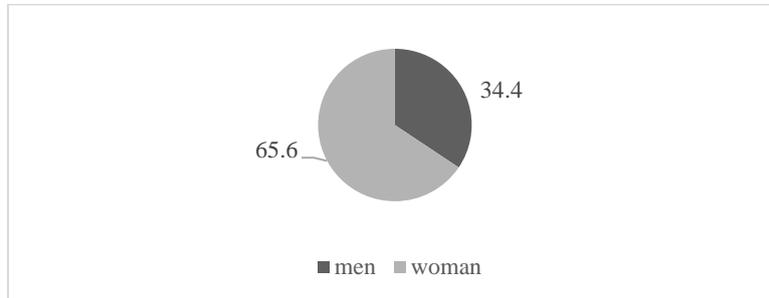
Source conducted by Tom Sander

Fig. 1. **Gender distribution of participants at University of Ludwigshafen in 2015, n = 210, results in %**

The age distribution and social status is described in the diagram below. The participants are mainly young individuals who are searching employment, will search employment in the near future or have had searched employment in the last years. That means the experience and knowledge about employment seeking opportunities is actual. That means the individuals report is with only few biases because the individuals can remember very well their employment seeking process or they are involved in the employment seeking process at the moment. That has a positive impact on the collected data. The paper is about employment and project seeking process and is investigating the behaviour of employment or project seeking individuals.

Source conducted by Tom Sander

Fig. 2. **Age distribution and social status distribution of participants at University of Ludwigshafen in 2015, n = 210, results in %**

The largest group of participants is individuals in education programs. Students and school children are 46.1% of the participants. This group will search for employment opportunities in the near future and currently evaluating different recruiting channels for their employment seeking process. Private SNSs are used by 163 participants and business SNSs are

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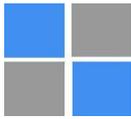
used by 84 participants. The distribution of private SNSs and business SNSs are common. The federal statistical office of Germany and data from other research confirms that kind of distribution (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014). The importance to differentiate between private and business SNSs is explained in the following sections.

Use of social network sites profiles to identify suitable individuals

Member can use their SNSs profiles to present their skills and knowledge. The SNSs member is aware that their profiles are important for the employment seeking process but there are differences between private and business SNSs (Krug & Rebien, 2012). The tendency for private SNSs is to "I agree completely" and the tendency of business SNSs is to "I do not agree". Mean, mode and median is different and the direction of the answer is contraire between business and private SNSs. The results in detail are presented in the table below. That means there is a difference between this two kinds of networks and is an indication for the different use of SNSs. That can be explained with the different purpose of the SNSs and that employment seeking process is different under consideration of the kind of SNSs. That means individuals use SNS profiles from business and private SNSs differently (Sander, Sloka, & Pauzuoliene, 2015). The member are differentiate their profile presentation between the kind of SNSs and the expectation about accepted content of SNSs profiles depend on the kind of SNS. That means the SNSs profiles are different.
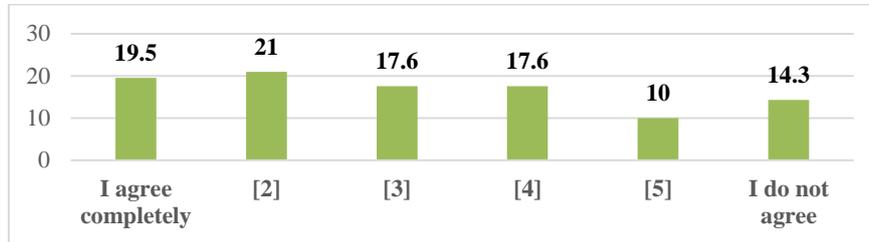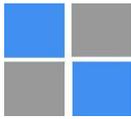
Table 1

Main statistical indicators of evaluations on questions "I try to avoid negative information for employers and to present my profile positive at private SNS e.g. *Facebook*" **and "It is important for me to actualize my profile regularly and to improve the profile at Business SNSs e.g.** *LinkedIn*", **n=210, evaluation scale 1-6, where 1-fully agree, 6-fully disagree**

Statistical indicators	I try to avoid negative information for employers and to present my profile positive at private SNSs e.g. *Facebook*	It is important for me to actualize my profile regularly and to improve the profile at Business SNSs e.g. *LinkedIn*
N	210	210
Mean	3.2	3.81
Median	3	4
Mode	2	6
Standard Deviation	1.68	1.683

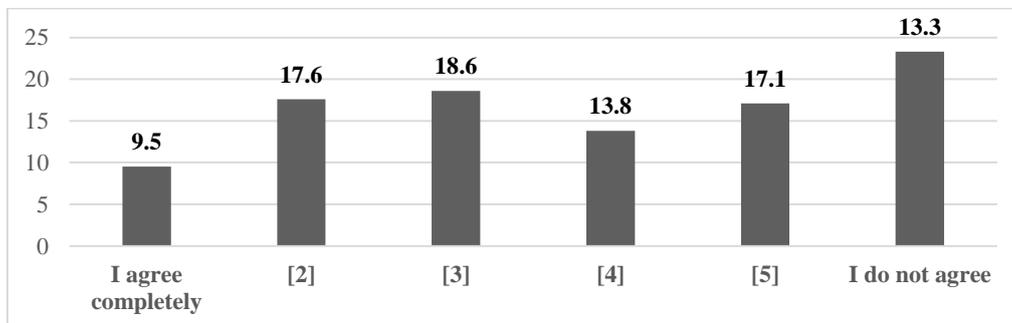*Source: Survey conducted by Tom Sander at University of Ludwigshafen, 2015*

The frequency of the responses for the question "I tried to avoid negative information for employers and to present my profile positive at private SNSs e.g. *Facebook* is described in the diagram below. The diagram confirms the statistical results and there is a clear tendency to "I agree completely". On the scale one, two and three is the summarized result 58.1% which is a clear result that the private SNSs are an important part of the social live and that individuals do not provide all information about individuals (Hampton & Wellman, 2003). The user is hiding information because they know that other individuals can use the profile to evaluate each other. The evaluation leads to a decision and the decision can be positive and negative for the SNSs member. The influence of the decision can be controlled by the presentation of the SNS profile and can lead to pretended profiles or more negative to faked profiles.

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Source: Survey conducted by Tom Sander at University of Ludwigshafen, 2015

Fig. 3. **Distribution of evaluations "I try to avoid negative information for employers and to present my profile positive at private SNSs e.g. *Facebook*", n=210, results in %, evaluation scale 1-6, where 1-fully agree, 6-fully disagree**

The business SNSs are contraire to private SNS. The summarized result of the scale four, five and six is 55.2%. The tendency for business SNSs is more to "I do not agree" than for private SNSs. That means the business SNSs is less important for the participants to present their skills to other SNSs member under consideration of the employment seeking process. The actualization of business SNS profiles is not so important for individuals to share their skills. That is surprising because business SNSs are mainly used for business reasons or it could be an explanation that individuals have more fears that their private SNSs profile can be misused by companies to reject potential candidates for example. The results in detail are presented in the diagram below.

Source: Survey conducted by Tom Sander at University of Ludwigshafen, 2015

Fig. 4. **Distribution of evaluations "It is important for me to actualize my profile regularly and to improve the profile at Business SNSs e.g. *LinkedIn*", n=210, evaluation scale 1-6, where 1-fully agree, 6-fully disagree**

The use of SNSs profiles at private or business SNSs cannot be explained with the duration of membership in years, number of contacts or daily use of SNS in minutes. Only the use of SNS in minutes per day is on a significant relevant level correlated with two questions. All correlations are negative but the correlation coefficient is between -0.96 and -0.381 which is statistical not on a relevant level and cannot be used to explain the behaviour. That result is similar to other research projects and needs further explanation (Tartakovskaia, 2006). The use of SNS is mainly independent from the behaviour of SNSs member under consideration of the

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employment seeking process as there does not exist any correlation between the use and behaviour indicators.

Gender differences of the use of profiles for the employment seeking process

This paper investigates the differences between the gender and how different SNSs are influenced by the gender regarding the use of SNSs profiles. The following section present the results and compares the answer of men and woman to explain the different use of SNS profiles.
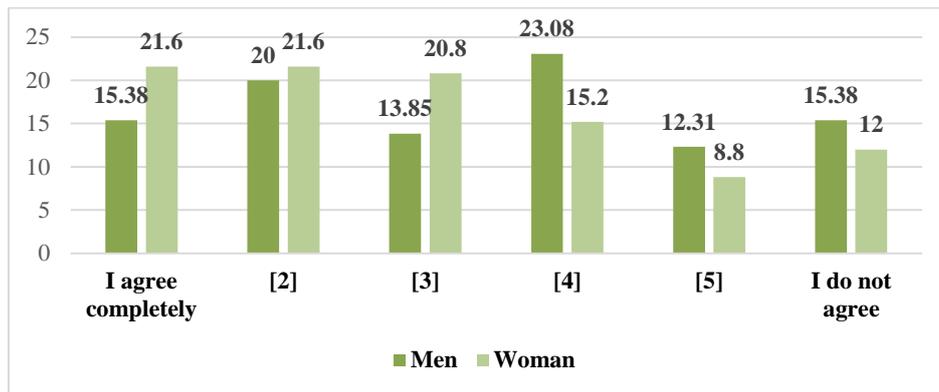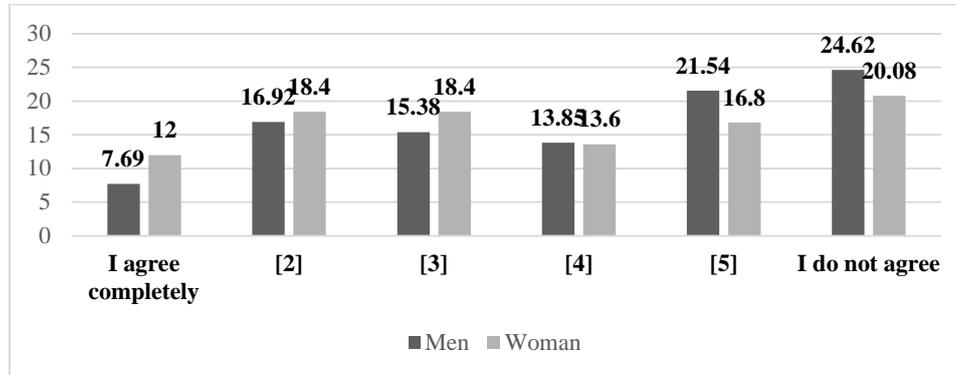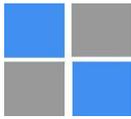

Source: Survey conducted by Tom Sander at University of Ludwigshafen, 2015

Fig. 5. **Distribution of evaluations by gender "I try to avoid negative information for employers and to present my profile positive at private SNSs e.g. *Facebook*", evaluation scale 1-6, where 1-fully agree, 6-fully disagree n (male) = 65, n (female) = 125, results in %**

The results for private SNSs are very interesting and describe the gender differences very clearly. The woman participant's main answer with 21.6% is on scale one and two. The tendency is for woman to "I agree completely" with 64% for the first three scales. The number of respondents of women participants is on the first three scales above the men. Male participants most choice is stage four with 23.08%. The answers from the male participants are cumulated 50.77% at the last three stages. That is a tendency that male participants do not agree with the statement about negative information at private SNSs. The number of respondents of men participants on the last three stages is above the woman (McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009). That means men and women compared for this question are different and they present a different behaviour. That explains the importance of SNSs profiles. Women attach more importance to private SNSs than male user of private SNSs under consideration of the employment seeking process. That means the chance to find unfiltered information on private SNSs could be higher than on woman private SNSs profile. Men are not prepared that employer can use their private SNS to evaluate them or they do not take care about their private profile at SNSs compared with women.

The next diagram is about business SNSs. Research evaluated that differences between SNS exist and member of different SNSs use their SNS for their advantage. SNSs have a purpose and identity, the kind of network explains the behaviour of members and provides explanation about the use of the SNSs. That is the reason to investigate business and private SNSs.

Source: Survey conducted by Tom Sander at University of Ludwigshafen, 2015

Fig. 6. **Distribution of evaluations by gender "It is important for me to actualize my profile regularly and to improve the profile at Business SNSs e.g. *LinkedIn*", n (male) = 65, n (female) = 125, results in %, evaluation scale 1-6, where 1-fully agree, 6-fully disagree**

The highest frequency is on scale six for woman with 20.08% and men 24.62%. That means there are differences between men and woman in the use of profiles of business SNSs. The tendency is clear to "I do not agree for men" with 60.01% for the scale four to six. Compared to women with 51.2% cumulated scale four to six is a clear difference visible. In addition is the frequency of answers on scale one to three women more than men and on the scale four to six is the frequency of men more than woman. That means men are less critical with their profile on business SNSs than woman. Woman takes more care for their business SNSs than men. Woman does more often agree that they actualize and improve their profile than men participants under consideration of the employment seeking process.

Conclusions

This paper explains the differences between private and business SNSs under consideration of the employment seeking process. The paper concentrates the use of SNSs profiles to present the profile owner to other individuals e.g. to potential employer or project manager. The member of private SNSs hide part of their profiles or do not mention information about them at SNS profiles to avoid negative outcomes for them. They are aware that their SNS can be used to evaluate them and they do not provide all information at their private SNSs profiles. That means companies and other member have to be aware that they cannot use private SNSs to evaluate individuals deeply.

A contraire situation has been with business SNSs profiles. Members do not actualize their profiles regularly and they do not agree that business SNSs profiles have to be improved. That means business SNSs profiles are not as important as private SNSs profiles for the individuals.

The difference between the genders is clearly described in the diagrams with the contraire trend of the answers. The women do more agree and the men do more disagree with their answers regarding the business and private SNSs profiles. The woman is on the scale from one to three above the men and the men are above the woman on the scale from four to six. That means woman take more care about their profiles than men. That is a difference between the gender which should be investigated deeper in future research.

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Organizations and other individuals has to be aware that men and women behave different on SNS under consideration of the use of SNSs profiles. Further has to be under consideration that the behaviour and use of SNSs profiles depend on the purpose and kind of the SNSs. That has to be under consideration if the SNSs profiles are used to evaluate individuals and to make a decision about the skills and ability of SNS member evaluated with their profiles.

Especially HRM and project manager has to be aware that the evaluation of SNS profiles has to be carefully used to evaluate candidates and to collect information about potential candidates as the results of research explain that individuals use their profile differently and the information of SNS profiles is not complete or actualize (Pfeil et al., 2009). More worse can be that the profile is faked to appear more attractive for the recipient. The member of SNSs is aware that their profile can be used to evaluate them. The member of SNSs knows that they can use their profile to influence their reputation and to spread positive information about them to a large audience. They know that they can use their profile to influence other people to make a decision about them. That means the privacy and data protection is an anticipated issue of SNSs and people react with their behaviour on this issue e.g. hide or omit information. The member doing that to avoid disadvantages and present themselves positive to the SNSs audience.

That means they use their profile to increase their advantage with their network. That is a reason to be a member of the network and explain the use of SNSs. The disadvantage of SNSs profiles is given with the explanation that people are actualize and improve their profiles that other SNSs member cannot use the SNSs profiles of other member to evaluate them. This has to be under consideration if SNSs profiles are used to find a decision e.g. to employ somebody or to take somebody in the project team.

The use of SNSs, duration of membership, number of contacts and use of minutes per day do not have any relevant correlation regarding the use of SNS profiles. That means there does not exist any significant correlation between the creation, actualization and improvement of SNS profiles and the use of SNS profiles is on a weak level and statistically not relevant. That means the behaviour do not explain the use of SNSs.

The research needs further investigations with more participants and qualitative research is useful to get a deeper insight in the topic to identify further reasons.

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