

RECRUITMENT FOR COMPETENCIES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

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Abstract

The capacity to attract highly skilled human resources is dependent on the employee recruitment process implemented by organizations, which plays an important role for their competitiveness on the market. As the concern for the success of the recruitment process in public sectors is becoming more salient, the present study compares the use of recruitment practices in public and private sectors through a survey applied to 97 organizations. It also explores the outcomes in terms of quantity and quality of applications received when using various recruitment methods. Common points and differences were identified.

Internal recruitment methods and e-recruitment based on job posting on the website of the organization are favored regardless of the type of organization (private or public). The differences weight mostly against public sector as public institutions use less often the recommendations received from acquaintances and networks, post fewer job adds on specialized online job boards, get fewer direct applications from candidates, and participate less often in job fairs. The largest number of applications is received through the use of online job boards, job posting on the website of the hiring organization and job advertising in written press. On the other hand, internal recruitment is perceived to result in attracting the highest quality applications.

Keywords: employee recruitment, public and private sectors, human resource management.

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1. Achieving competitiveness by attracting competencies

Implementing a hiring process oriented towards competencies represents an important condition for companies to remain competitive on the labor market. Starting with the planning and establishment of the requirements for both jobs and organization (Armstrong, 2011), the entire staffing process is strongly dependent on the success of the recruitment. Given the importance of employee recruitment for attaining highly qualified human capital, the attention around this issue has increased during the last years (Breaugh and Starke, 2000), in terms of number of studies being published and the variety of topics addressed. Early research undertakings explored topics such as the role of realistic job previews, traditional recruitment sources and methods, or recruiters' features and behaviors (Saks, 2005). More recent research address other significant variables (such as recruitment post-hiring outcomes, timing of recruitment, online recruitment, site visits, applicants decision making) in order to offer a better understanding of the complexity of the recruitment process (Breaugh, 2008). Still, a large number of questions remain unresolved and because of frequent methodological weaknesses any conclusions are difficult to be drawn.

Prior to presenting our research work, it is necessary to offer a definition for the recruitment process. Although used for a long time, its content is not entirely agreed upon. By recruitment we understand the process of searching and attracting the pool of persons having the characteristics and skills required by the vacancies and organizational needs. The existence of this group will allow the selection of the applicants who best match the requirements. While some authors perceive the employee recruitment and selection as an integrated process, with flexible and weak borders (Anderson, 1994; Tyson, 2006), it is necessary to specify the distinct elements between the two. Recruitment has a positive sense (Whitehill, 1991; Beardwell, Holden and Claydon, 2003) aiming to attract a pool of potential suited candidates (Rogelberg, 2006; Orlitzki, 2007), while job selection has a negative one, aiming to reduce the number of candidates, and choose the most adequate among these. The final purpose of the hiring process is to correctly predict the future job performance of a candidate.

The concerns for the success of the recruitment process in public sectors are even more salient due to the changes taking place in demographics and labor force demand (Collins, 2008): the aging phenomenon, low wage levels, low employee satisfaction. All these are counterbalanced by the need of public sectors to attract better qualified employees, which should answer the constantly increasing societal expectations towards the services offered by public institutions.

The recruitment is a two way matching process: companies have to search and attract potential employees with the required qualification and the applicants aim to attract the attention of the desired employers (Baroukh and Kleiner, 2002). The characteristics of the labor pools such as qualification, size, applicants' expectations, and work motivation are very important for a successful recruitment. The survey on 621 fresh US college graduates indicates that being member of a minority group, the trust in government and the perception of government as a form of public service pre-

dicted the desire to get a governmental job (Doverspike *et al.*, 2011). The analysis run by Lewis and Frank (2002) on the data of the General Social Survey conducted in US between 1989 and 1998 shows that the persons who stronger valued job security were more likely to want to work for government. Also, persons stronger oriented towards helping others and being useful, members of vulnerable groups such as women, minorities, or veterans declared to be more interested in governmental jobs. The authors conclude that the pool of potential candidates for public sector jobs is shrinking with each generation.

When it comes to the pool of the labor force in the public employment sector in Romania, the recent trends, with layoffs increase and wage cuts, make public organizations less desirable employers for qualified applicants. Compared to 2008, when the number of employees in the state sectors reached a peak of 1,398,757 persons, by the end of 2011 it had a 15% decrease to 1,200,213 persons. This was a level even lower than the total number of state employees in 2005 (Fiscal Council, 2012).

The economic and financial crisis also had a negative impact on the wage levels. The measures implemented to reduce the budget deficit included job and wage cuts, compulsory unpaid leave for employees in the public sector, reduced working hours (Glassner, 2010). The gross average wage for the state sectors was 1937 lei at the end of 2011, lower than the average level of 2132 lei in the private sectors (Fiscal Council, 2012).

Regarding unemployment, during the crisis period, Romanian labor market was characterized by an increase in the number of unemployed persons. While in 2008 the unemployment rate was 5.8%, in 2011 it reached 7.7% (National Institute of Statistics, undated). Still, the unemployment rates are lower compared to the European area EU27 average unemployment levels. Regardless whether we compare the registered unemployment rate in Romania or the unemployment level according to the International Labor Office, the Romanian unemployment levels are below the average level in Europe (EU27), which was 10.6% in September 2012 (Eurostat, 2012). In September 2012, the registered unemployment rate in Romania was 5.0%, with 442.200 registered unemployed persons (National Institute of Statistics, undated), while the unemployment level according to the International Labor Office was 6.9%, with 688.000 unemployed persons. This means that the challenges faced by institutions from the public sector during the recruitment process do not reside in finding applicants to fill in those positions, but in establishing where and how the best matching candidates can be identified, so as to increase the chances to hire employees who will perform highly on their jobs. In light of the above, the employer's capacity to use efficient sources and methods to find and attract the most suitable candidates becomes tremendously important. But in Romanian companies, the recruitment is approached in a rather empirical way and is rarely based on an adequate methodology.

Another factor which strongly impacts upon the success of the recruitment process is related to the number of recruiters and their expertise. The implementation of the recruitment methods is under the responsibility of the human resource department,

particularly in large organizations, while in small ones of the managers of different levels. An analysis conducted on 22 multinational subsidiaries in Romania reveals a very low number of HR employees as compared to the number of the total employees in organizations. The average number of employees served by one HR professional is 105 (Kerekes *et al.* 2012). This is a high value compared to the average of 64 employees served by one HR staff found on a sample of 286 multinational from 11 Central Eastern European countries (Poor, 2012). Besides having small numbers of employees specialized in HR, public organizations are often denounced of lack of flexibility, slowness and incapacity to attract the qualified labor force. Arguing the need for change, studies emphasize the disadvantages of the traditional government-centered public service in comparison to private sectors, by bringing examples from both the USA and European states (Light, 2000; Langan, 2007; Lavigna and Hays, 2004; Common, 2011; Llorens, 2011). The public employment bears the consequences of a bureaucratic system, having an endless hiring process and slow advancement paths, narrow job descriptions, seniority based incentives and low budget allocated to HR function.

It is important for the recruitment process to unfold in a continuous and systematic manner, even in periods with no vacancies. This is the only way for companies to be able to keep contact with the labor market and maintain a network of potential candidates at all times. Contingent recruitment, which becomes intensive only when vacancies occur, is the result of an inefficient human resource planning process, which does not allow early identification of the labor force demand within organization.

Pfeffer (1998) summarizes some of the main strategies in a selective hiring, in order to achieve high performance organizations: get large numbers of applicants per vacancy, focus on the candidate' cultural fit (as it is a less trainable feature in candidates), clearly identify and advertise the needed skills for the job, use a complex screening process to signal that the hiring is a serious process, assess the results of the recruitment process.

A qualitative study on 15 Indian software companies shows that employee referrals and succession planning are the main recruitment methods used (Rao, 2010). Procter & Gamble's succession planning program 'Build from within' is one example of successful internal recruitment strategy, which ensures three replacements for each of the 50 leadership positions in organization and lead to stronger employee commitment and faster adaptation on the new positions (Kimes, 2009).

2. Recruitment sources and methods:

is there a difference between public and private sectors?

Following the establishment of the job description and specifications, as a function of the budget assigned and the recruitment policy, the organization will decide what recruitment sources and methods to use. In Romania, the Government Decision no. 286/23.03.2011 regarding the general employment principles in public sector lay down a minimum set of regulations for the public institutions when recruiting. The main requirement is for public institutions to announce the vacancy. The regulations

only stipulate that the job announcement should be posted at the address of the institution at least 30 days before the candidates' selection contest. In case the institution has a web site, it is suggested to also post the announcement on it. There are no other requirements on how to advertise the job or on what outcomes should be expected. Still, there is a minimum set of compulsory information that should be included in the advertisement: the number and types of jobs to be occupied, the department, name of position, and main job requirements. Information about the application process has to be offered: the candidates' records that are required, deadlines, type of contest methods, dates and places, topics and bibliography for the written test and contact data. The legislation for civil servants is more demanding as regards the manner in which the recruitment should be conducted. The Government Decision no. 611/14.07.2008 stipulates that the recruitment add needs to be published in a widespread newspaper, posted at the address of the institution and posted on the website (if any exists). Compared to public sector, for private owned organizations the Law no. 76/2002 regarding the unemployment insurance and employment support is one of the few existing regulations. Employers are obliged to inform the local employment agencies about all the vacancies no later than 5 days after they become vacant.

An important step resides in identifying the recruitment sources, which can be internal (from within the organization) or external (from outside the organization). There isn't a best recruitment source and the decisions are made according to the organizational needs, features of the vacancies, the size, image, budget of the company and the supply of labor force.

The organizations that consider internal recruitment sources might use internal advertisement, recommendations from managers or internal employee qualifications databases. The internal advertisement is mostly used in organizations characterized by transparency and invites interested employees to apply for the job position. The main risk encountered with this method is the possibility of having a too large number of applicants, which might lead to conflicts and discontent. The employee qualifications databases, used especially in larger organizations, allow recruiters to identify potential candidates suitable for the vacancy. Recommendations from supervisors, despite bearing the subjectivity risk and the uncertainty that a good employee in a certain position will be as performing in a different one, is a largely used internal recruitment method.

The external recruitment methods available to organizations are advertisements in media, employment agencies and consultants, career fairs, direct applications, referrals, college recruitment, company website, word of mouth and other electronic recruitment, such as job boards or the organization's own website (Noe *et al.*, 2011). Due to the limited space, we will not analyze in detail each of these methods. It is important to mention that public opinion and often even scientific studies (such as Rao, 2010) wrongly consider employee referrals or referrals received from employers' network of acquaintances to be an internal recruitment method. Also, one of the most increasingly used methods is online recruitment. Comparing the usage of e-recruit-

ment websites in 50 public and 30 private American businesses, Mareschal and Rudin (2011) found that the latter ones are more likely to accept online applications, showing the importance that online recruitment has gained in the public sector.

Another notorious classification divides the recruitment sources in two general categories (Kirnan, Farley and Geisinger, 1989): formal sources (such as mass media advertisement, employment agencies, career fairs, college placements) and informal ones (employee referrals, acquaintances' referrals, walk-ins). An important body of research focuses on the relation between recruitment sources and methods on the one hand and post-hire outcomes, such as employee retention, performance on the job, satisfaction or absenteeism (Rogelberg, 2006). The analysis run by Kirnan, Farley and Geisinger (1989) on a database of applicants and hires for a life insurance agent position identified differences favorable to informal recruitment methods with regard the quality of candidates and their retention in the company. The candidates applying via referrals (other agents, managers) and the self-initiated applicants were assessed as having a higher quality. Moreover, referred candidates had higher selection ratios compared to the applicants occurred through formal sources (newspaper advertisement, employment agencies or school placement). Still, further performance evaluation results (the sales performance of the hired candidates) did not support any difference between recruitment sources.

Two major explanations were advanced for the superiority of the informal methods: (a) the pre-screening theory and (b) the realistic job information. In relation to pre-screening theory, Ullman (1966) explained the higher quality of the candidates recruited through informal resources due to the initial screening role played by referrals. They have the benefits of knowing both the organization needs and the individuals' expectations. A complementary argument lies in the referrals' interest to make good recommendations which secure or even enhance their reputation. The realistic job preview theory (Wanous, 1973) states that applicants who get real information about the employer company (either positive or negative) have higher chances to better adapt to the job and get to be more satisfied. Extending this theory to formal recruitment sources, the realistic information can be provided besides the referral individuals, by the recruiters, or through company presentation materials. One of the drawbacks of the informal sources refers to its possible discriminatory effects. Members of disadvantaged groups might have fewer chances to be assigned on certain specific positions (according to age, gender, ethnicity etc.).

The research conducted by Moser (2005) on 767 engineers focused on the relation between recruitment sources and organizational outcomes it shows that candidates hired through internal recruitment sources experience fewer unfulfilled job expectations.

With regard to the frequency of the use of recruitment methods, the study performed by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2006) on 803 companies from Great Britain shows that: 79% of the companies use advertisements in local press, 76% use recruitment agencies, 75% corporate web pages, 66% field specific journals, 51% job

placements centers, 49% word of mouth/speculative applications, 47% employee referrals, 45% national newspapers, 37% relations with educational institutions.

Based on a study across 160 British and German companies, Windolf (1986) develops a typology of organizational recruitment strategy showing that environmental factors and organizational structures determine what recruitment strategies companies will use and the profile of the applicants who will be recruited. Organizations with high labor market power (meaning a competitive attractiveness advantage compared to the other employers) and high organizational intelligence (meaning high capacity to gain, process and value professional expertise) are found to use innovative and diverse recruitment strategies; organizations with low labor market power but high organizational intelligence use a more flexible recruitment strategy; while companies with both low labor market power and organizational intelligence face a difficult recruitment process (Llorens, 2011).

Given the differences between the public and the private sectors, it is expected that the recruitment process in these two categories faces distinct challenges. The survey conducted by Collins (2008) on 2309 organizations from two USA states demonstrates meaningful recruitment differences between public and private employers. The managers in public sectors organizations are more likely than those in private ones to consider the lack of qualified labor force as a problem they face when recruiting. Also, the size of the pool of potential candidates is more problematic for them. On the other hand, managers in public sectors experience less difficulty in finding employees with adequate work ethic compared to private sectors. As a consequence, public managers have to invest more in retaining and training the labor force they hire.

3. Research methodology

The present study is based on a quantitative survey applied on Romanian public and private employers. The study aims to compare the recruitment methods used by organizations from the public and private sectors and to explore the outcomes of the recruitment methods in terms of both the number of applications received and the quality of applications. The questionnaires were applied in a written form by operators in 2011, from February to July.

3.1. Sample

The first step in establishing the sample resided in delineating the target population. The second step we underwent consisted of establishing the relevant analysis unit (Glasow, 2005). In order to ensure the relevancy of the data obtained for several categories of employer organizations (public or private, of various sizes) and considering that the hiring decision making process, in several instances, belongs to more than one person, we established the entire organization as the unit of analysis. Due to the exploratory nature of this quantitative survey, we opted for a non-probabilistic sampling technique, the non-proportional quota sampling. Although it preserves the limitations of non-probability sampling, it ensures that both public and private units

are represented within the sample. In this way, provided that the relevant characteristics are well identified, each group presenting the respective characteristics will be represented within the surveyed sample.

We aimed for two main groups, namely public and private organizations of various sizes. For the private entities, we used the Pro Business database provided by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania (Camera de Comerț și Industrie a României, 2010), which included over 20000 companies from all fields of activities. Regarding the public institutions we used the list of Romanian public institutions provided on the website www.listaInstitutii.ro. The sample included the following groups: city halls (5), county councils (2), prefectures (2), central institutions (4), cultural institutions (3), and schools (3). For the survey sample, only the following categories of CAEN Rev. 2 (The Classification of Activities in the National Economy, undated) were covered: administrative and support services, cultural activities, professional activities, public administration, services, commerce, IT and communications, financial services, manufacturing, and education.

Only organizations with more than 10 employees were considered. This criterion was set in order to ensure the experience of the organization in conducting a personnel recruitment process. For each organization, the questions were answered by an executive or a representative of the human resources department. A chief condition was related to the respondent's expertise with the recruitment process. The characteristics established for exploring the organizations' recruitment practices only refer to their form of ownership (public/private). Still, the size of organization (number of employees), the field of activity (communications, consultancy, technical-, educational-oriented, etc.) and the year of incorporation were recorded.

The final sample included 97 organizations: 19 (19.6%) were public institutions and 78 (80.4%) were private commercial companies. The field of activity is varied, covering both services and manufacturing sectors. The year of incorporation of the respondent organization ranged from more than 90 years to less than 1 year. The average seniority on the job of the respondents is 7.46 years, and the average age is 37.3 years. We only selected the questionnaires filled in by respondents who declared to hold at least 1 year's seniority within the organization. It was important for the respondents to have experience in the company regarding the recruitment process. Thus we screened out the questionnaires filled in by respondents with no experience in recruiting for the respective organization. As regards the respondent's position within the company, 44.3% held a position in the human resources department, whereas the rest occupy executive positions.

3.2. Research instrument: questionnaire design

Starting from the information and instruments provided by the scientific literature, but also from the data generated by a pilot study applied on Romanian employers' hiring practices (Zaharie, Osoian and Opre, 2011) a questionnaire was designed to explore the use of the recruitment methods. The instrument comprised four sections.

The first part listed both internal and external recruitment methods. The respondents rated on a five points Likert scale the intensity with which each of the recruitment methods was used by the organization. The second part of the questionnaire aimed to explore employers' feedback regarding the outcomes obtained as a result of applying each recruitment methods. By the means of a five point Likert scales the respondents had to appreciate the quantity of applications received (from 1 Very few to 5 Very many) and the quality of the applications (from 1 Very bad to 5 Very good). In the third section, the questionnaire compared the usage of recruitment methods for both executive and subordinate positions. In the last part, the socio-demographical variables were included: type of organization (private or public), size, field of activity, financial outcomes (financial turnover and profit), employee volunteer turnover, and the existence of a HR department.

Considering the non-probabilistic nature of the sample, the study does not expect to achieve high external validity (the results cannot be generalized to the entire population). Nevertheless, we endeavored to achieve good construct validity, through the design of the questionnaire. Thus, for the operationalization of the main variables measured by the questionnaire, we attempted to cover a large range of recruitment methods, both by resorting to experts and researching the scholarly literature.

4. Analysis and interpretation of results

4.1. Recruitment methods in public and private sectors

The first part of the questionnaire was designed to identify the main recruitment methods used by the organizations included in the sample. It listed the main recruitment methods (both internal and external sources), whilst the respondents assessed on a 5-step scale the frequency of their use.

Table 1 present the mean values of the frequency of use for each recruitment method and then the scores for public and private sectors. The most frequently used methods are the recommendations received from supervisors (mean 3.79), followed by publishing the advertisement on the website of the organization (mean 3.73) and internal databases recording the skills of the current employees (mean 3.50). The least used methods are the ones that appeal to third parties, external services such as head hunting agencies (mean 1.18) and HR consultancy services (mean 1.51). Regarding the classification as internal and external methods, one can notice a more pronounced usage of the internal recruitment methods.

Comparing the methods used by public and private organizations we identified a series of differences, most weighting against the public sector. Public institutions use less often the recommendations received from acquaintances and networks ($t = -4.33$, $p < 0.00$), the posting of the recruitment add on specialized online job boards ($t = -6.02$, $p < 0.00$), get less direct applications from candidates ($t = -2.43$, $p < 0.05$), and participate less often in job fairs ($t = -2.53$, $p < 0.05$). On the other hand, public companies use more frequently the internal job posting ($t = 2.05$, $p < 0.05$). This shows that the public organizations most frequently advertise their job vacancies to their current employees.

Table 1: Frequency of recruitment methods use in public and private sectors

I. In case of a job vacancy, how often do you use the following recruitment methods?	General mean	Public		Private		t test.	Sig
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<i>External recruitment sources</i>							
Job advertising on the organization's web site	3.73	3.75	1.76	3.73	1.52	0.05	.95
Candidate recommendations from acquaintances	3.44	1.92	1.31	3.67	1.32	-4.33**	.00
Job advertising in the written press	3.40	4.00	1.27	3.38	1.47	1.39	.16
Posting the add on specialized online job boards	3.20	1.20	0.19	3.47	1.71	-6.02**	.00
Applications at candidates' own initiative (walk-ins)	3.02	2.17	1.03	3.13	1.31	-2.43*	.01
Using the services of Employment Local Agencies	2.49	2.90	1.79	2.45	1.50	0.89	.42
Internship programs, practical training, volunteering	1.97	1.91	1.13	2.00	1.25	-0.22	.81
Direct relationship with educational institutions	1.92	1.67	1.23	1.98	1.27	-0.79	.42
Job fair participation	1.88	1.11	0.15	1.99	1.20	-2.53*	.01
Human resources consultancy services	1.51	1.35	1.29	1.57	1.16	-0.47	.93
Professional head hunting agencies	1.18	1.00	0.00	1.23	0.54	-1.33	.18
<i>Internal recruitment sources</i>							
Recommendations received from supervisors	3.79	3.67	1.07	3.82	1.18	-0.42	.68
Database of current employees' skills	3.50	3.17	1.40	3.56	1.43	-0.89	.37
Internal posting of the vacancy	3.37	4.17	1.40	3.19	1.59	2.05*	.05

In order to test the possible effect of other variables on the recruitment methods used by the surveyed organizations we run hierarchical multiple regression analyses. The literature finds differences with regard the HR practices implemented by organizations as a function of their size (McEvoy and Buller, 2013; Zaharie and Osoian, 2013; Tanova, 2003). Thus we controlled the size of organization. The changes in the R² show the predictive power added to the model by the addition of the public/private variable in the second step. Due to the limited space, we do not present all the regression results. In the example in the Table 2 below the dependent variable was recommendations received from acquaintances and network, the independent variable inserted in step 1 was size of organization, the independent variable inserted in step 2 was public/private and the variability accounted increased from .001 to .134. Also, significant effects were obtained for the public/private variable, the number of HR employees being controlled.

Table 2: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,025(a)	,001	-,012	1,406
2	,366(b)	,134	,112	1,317

1. Predictors: (Constant), Total number of employees
2. Predictors: (Constant), Total number of employees, public/private

The most frequent method used by public companies is the job advertising in written press (mean 4.00). These results can be explained by the legislative regulations, which require public institutions to post the advertisement and to publish it on their own web sites (if any).

4.2. Recruitment outcomes:

how numerous and of what quality are the applications received?

The present research carries forward the mere list of the recruitment methods and explores the outcomes organizations get as a result of implementing a certain recruitment method. Despite of the fact that a certain recruitment method cannot be considered to be the best regardless of the organization needs, characteristics of the job, and labor market supply, it is important to explore how the applications vary, in terms of both number and quality. The results show that the largest number of applications is received following posting an advertisement on specialized online job boards (mean 3.94), followed by the online publication of the advertisement on the website of the hiring organization (mean 3.53) and publication of the advertisement in written press (mean 3.50). We notice the high efficiency of online recruitment with regard to the number of applications.

On the other hand, internal recruitment is declared to result in attracting the applications with the highest quality. When it comes to the candidates' quality, respondents' feedback is strongly in favor of internal recruitment methods: databases of current employees' skills (mean 4.05), recommendations received from supervisors (mean 4.15), and internal posting of the vacancy (mean 3.50).

Although HR consulting companies are rarely used by both public and private organizations, they are considered to bring rather high quality candidates (mean 3.47). Next in ranking follow the recommendations received from acquaintances, a networking based recruitment method (mean 3.41). Respondents also consider that the online recruitment attracts rather high quality applications (mean 3.40 for both items measuring online recruitment).

It is important to mention a relatively high number of non-responses to the questions measuring the quantity and quality of applications received (11.3% missing answers). This might be a consequence of the fact that these organizations do not track the results obtained by certain recruitment methods and their lack of knowledge as regards the outcomes of the recruitment methods. Some respondent organizations (3%) declared that they are not aware of the quantity or quality of the applications received as a result of a specific method.

Despite the low frequency in using the direct relationship with educational institutions when recruiting, it is encouraging to find out that the applications received as a result of direct relationships with educational institutions are appreciated as being of rather good quality (mean 3.25). The applications attracted via Employment Agencies are considered to have the lowest quality (mean 2.00). This is not surprising since in Romania, the Employment Agencies manage and mediate job placement for the unemployed labor force, which is often characterized by low qualification level.

Another measurement of the efficiency of recruitment is based on the employee volunteer turnover ratio. Again, for organizations that declare to use more prevalently the services of Employment Agencies and recruitment through job fairs the Pearson correlation coefficients have significant values $r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$, respectively

Table 3: Feedback on the number of applications and quality of applications received

II. How many and of what quality are the applications you receive for each of the recruitment methods?	Quantity of applications		Quality of applications	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<i>External recruitment sources</i>				
a. Job advertising in written press	3.50	1.44	3.23	1.44
b. Job advertising on the organization's web site	3.53	1.54	3.40	1.45
c. Posting the add on specialized online job boards	3.94	1.38	3.40	1.40
d. Candidate recommendations from network of acquaintances	3.09	1.16	3.41	0.85
e. Using the services of Employment Local Agencies	2.47	1.41	2.00	1.00
f. Direct relationship with educational institutions	2.79	1.57	3.25	1.48
g. Applications at candidates' own initiative (walk-ins)	2.90	1.17	2.70	0.65
h. Job fair participation	3.00	1.49	2.75	1.16
i. Professional head hunting agencies	2.00	1.19	2.86	3.47
ī. Human resources consultancy services	2.93	1.66	3.47	3.07
j. Internship programs, practical training, volunteering	2.19	1.16	3.07	1.49
<i>Internal recruitment sources</i>				
k. Database of current employees' skills	3.29	1.38	4.05	0.78
l. Recommendations received from supervisors	3.30	1.18	4.15	0.93
m. Internal posting of the vacancy	3.21	1.27	3.50	1.38

$r = 0.26$, $p < 0.05$, showing that these organizations experience higher employee turnover. This result might be a consequence of the field of activity and qualification level of the labor force employed by these organizations.

4.3. Do recruitment methods vary according to the job position?

A variable which should influence the type of recruitment methods used by an employer refers to the features of the job vacancy. Based on this assumption, the present study aimed to identify whether organizations use different recruitment methods for executive and subordinate positions. In consideration of the differences which may occur between subordinate and executive level positions, this question was addressed separately for each method.

Upon analyzing the results in Table 4, we note that for subordinate-level positions, the organizations resort most frequently to on-line job advertising on its web site (mean 3.95), followed by methods based on internal recruitment such as recommendations received from supervisors (mean 3.86) and databases of employees' competencies (mean 3.51). As expected, we note that recommendations from the network of acquaintances is a method rather frequently employed by companies (mean 3.47).

As for recruitment methods involving educational institutions (direct relationships with educational institutions and internship programs), we note that these are rather rarely used by employers. Starting from these findings not at all favorable to educational institutions, it is necessary for these to lay more emphasis on collaboration relationships with companies from the economic environment, in order to increase the graduates' employment opportunities.

For vacant management positions, organizations in the sample seem to use almost all recruitment methods less frequently. The most frequently used are the recom-

mentations received from supervisors (mean 3.74) and e-recruitment methods (mean 3.62).

Table 4: Frequency of recruitment methods as a function of job level (subordinate vs. executive)

III. In case of a job vacancy, how often do you resort to the following recruitment methods?	Subordinate		Executive		Test value <i>t</i>	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<i>External recruitment sources</i>						
Job advertising in the written press	3.42	1.46	2.95	1.62	3,97**	.00
Job advertising on organization's web site	3.95	1.43	3.62	1.59	2,06*	.05
Posting the add on specialized online job boards	3.50	1.40	3.49	1.41	0.98	.19
Recommendations from network of acquaintances	3.47	1.42	3.12	1.47	3.86**	.00
Using the services of Employment Local Agencies	2.51	1.55	1.82	1.21	5.88**	.00
Direct relationship with educational institutions	1.87	1.14	1.47	0.79	3.84**	.00
Applications at candidates' own initiative (walk-ins)	3.12	1.36	2.33	1.34	6.26**	.00
Job fair participation	1.91	1.13	1.69	1.09	2.71*	.01
Professional head hunting agencies	1.15	0.39	1.65	1.07	-4.04**	.00
Human resources consultancy services	1.38	0.89	1.47	1.04	-1.36	.25
Internship programs, practical training, volunteer	1.95	1.22	1.62	1.05	2.53*	.05
<i>Internal recruitment sources</i>						
Database of current employees' skills	3.51	1.36	3.51	1.41	0.00	1.00
Recommendations received from supervisors	3.86	1.16	3.74	1.21	1.46	.12
Internal posting of the vacancy	3.38	1.59	3.24	1.64	1.52	.13

Comparing the recruitment methods used for subordinate and executive-level positions, contrary to expectations, we note that internal recruitment sources are not used more frequently. Moreover, for subordinate positions companies more frequently publish job adds in written press, on organizational web site, use recommendations from network of acquaintances, services of Local Employment Agencies, direct relationship with educational institutions, applications at candidates' own initiative (walk-ins), job fair participation and internships. On the other hand, in case of management positions, the organizations resort more frequently to head-hunting agencies (the value of the paired sample *t test* indicates the existence of significant differences).

5. Discussions and concluding remarks

It is of great interest to identify the variables that influence the use of recruitment methods. We analyzed whether there is a relation between the financial outcomes of an organization and the type of recruitment used. We measured the financial performance as financial turnover value and profit value. Expecting a relation between the financial outcomes and more complex (and in the same time more costly recruitment methods) no significant Pearson correlation coefficients between the financial performance and the recruitment methods were found (insignificant *r* values, $p > 0.05$).

The size of the organization also seems not to be associated with more frequent use of recruitment methods. The only significant differences relate to the use of head hunting agencies. Larger companies resort more often to the head hunting services than companies with lower numbers of employees ($r = 0.44$, $p < 0.05$).

Next, by applying the *t test* on independent samples, we conducted a comparative analysis between recruitment methods used by services or manufacturing companies. Results show that manufacturing companies, use more frequently job advertising in the written press ($t = 2.70, p < 0.05$), as well as Local Labor Force Employment Agency services ($t = 3.15, p < 0.05$), while, as expected, online job advertising is more frequently used by services providers ($t = -2.14, p < 0.05$). This result is explainable considering the diminished chances of an on-line advert to reach candidates for blue color positions (most often these are low skilled positions).

The HR expertise of the organization is another variable expected to determine the use of recruitment methods. We measured this variable according to three items: the existence of an HR department, the number of HR staff and the HR qualification of the specialized staff. The analysis shows that the companies holding a HR department declare to use more each of the recruitment methods, but the differences are not statistically significant. Only for the usage of e-recruitment (organization web page and online job boards), participation in job fairs, and internal posting of the job add, the *t test* on independent samples show significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between organizations having and not having an HR department. The number of HR staff associated with: relationship with educational institutions ($r = 0.47, p < 0.05$), job fairs ($r = 0.63, p < 0.05$), direct applications ($r = 0.55, p < 0.05$), and organizing internships and volunteer activities ($r = 0.60, p < 0.01$). Having more employees working in the HR department allow organizations to focus more on recruitment methods based on organizing presentations at educational institutions and internships, participating to job fairs, and encouraging direct applications.

In order to control the possible effect of the size of organization on the recruitment process, we run regression analysis for each of the recruitment methods. No statistical significant effect of the size of organization was identified. Also, no significant effect was identified of the qualification of the HR staff on the recruitment methods used by the organization. This might also be explained by the rather large percentage of HR staff having qualification on HR (84.5%).

Discussing the methods used by public and private organizations, the differences identified highlight the difficulties faced by organizations in public sector. Public organizations use less often the recommendations received from acquaintances and networking, the posting of the recruitment add on specialized online job boards, get less direct applications from candidates, and participate less often in job fairs. On the other hand, public companies prefer the internal job posting and job advertising in the written press.

The results regarding the outcomes of using certain recruitment methods are of great importance. A large part of the respondent companies admit to not being precisely aware about the efficiency of the methods applied. Tracking the applications in order to identify from what recruitment methods they derive is not a common practice. Specialized online job boards facilitate the largest number of applications, followed by the online publication of the job add on the website of the hiring orga-

nization and written press job advertisement. The data reveals a high efficiency of the online recruitment with regard to the number of applications. On the other hand, internal recruitment is perceived to bring the applications with the highest quality.

The limits of the survey reside in the lack of representativeness of the results obtained for the entire population of organizations from public and private sectors. For measuring the outcomes of the recruitment methods only the quantity and the quality of applications was used.

Further research should focus on other long term oriented measurement criteria, such as retention of the employees recruited and their performance in the organization. Starting from these results, it is important to continue the analysis, by exploring the reasons which prevent organizations from using the most effective recruitment methods and to bring results which may contribute to the acknowledgment of their utility.

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