



Recruitment and Selection Practices in a Selected Slovak Media Organisation

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ABSTRACT

Recruitment and selection influence not only the quality of hire but also organisational reputation, candidate experience, and the long-term stability of human resources. This article reports primary research on recruitment and selection practices in a selected Slovak media and publishing organisation operating in a culturally specific, Hungarian-speaking environment. The aim was to identify how the organisation attracts and selects employees, how current employees evaluate the process they experienced, and which improvements could make the process more efficient and attractive for candidates. A single-case research design was used. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview with an HR assistant and a questionnaire survey completed by 40 employees who had passed through the organisation's recruitment and selection process. The study combines qualitative content analysis with descriptive quantitative analysis. The findings show that the organisation uses a multi-stage selection process, including document screening, interviews, observation, language testing, psychological testing, and practical writing tasks for editorial positions. Employees evaluated the process positively: all respondents considered the job offer clear or very clear, 90% were contacted within 14 days of submitting their documents, 92.5% received information about the further selection steps, and 90% received the interview result within 7 days. The article offers a practical, case-based view of recruitment and selection in a smaller, specialised organisation and proposes proportionate improvements focused on employer branding, candidate communication, and digital application management.

Keywords: Recruitment, Employee selection, Candidate experience, Employer branding, Media organisation.

Introduction

Recruitment and selection are core human resource management activities because they determine who enters the organisation and how candidates perceive the employer before employment begins. Labour markets are increasingly shaped by skills shortages, changing candidate expectations, and digital recruitment channels. The World Economic Forum (2025) emphasises that technological change, demographic shifts, economic uncertainty, and the green transition are reshaping work and skills. At the same time, the CIPD's resourcing research reports continued competition for well-qualified talent and growing use of technology in recruitment and onboarding (CIPD, 2024a). These trends make recruitment and selection important not only for large corporations but also for smaller and specialised organisations that must compete for candidates with limited resources.

The topic is particularly relevant for organisations whose activities depend on specialised knowledge, language competence, cultural understanding, and personal fit. In such organisations, recruitment is not merely an administrative search for labour capacity. It is a process of communicating the work's meaning, presenting the employer brand, and identifying candidates whose competencies and values match the role. Previous research has shown that employer branding, organisational image, and information available through social media can influence

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the intention to apply (Thang & Trang, 2024). Similarly, recruitment messages and employer signals may influence how different candidate groups respond to vacancies (Keppeler & Papenfuss, 2021).

Selection decisions also require scientific and procedural care. Structured interviews, work samples, assessment tasks, and psychometric tests can improve the quality and fairness of decision-making when they are linked to job requirements and administered consistently (Sackett *et al.*, 2022, 2023; CIPD, 2024b). Candidate experience is equally important. A selection process that is clear, timely, and respectful can support employer reputation, while poor communication or delays can weaken perceived fairness (Gilliland, 1993; Barattucci *et al.*, 2025).

This article reports a case study conducted in a selected Slovak media and publishing organisation. The organisation provides publishing, advertising, seminar, photography, and web-related services and is connected with a weekly periodical serving a Hungarian-speaking Catholic readership in Slovakia. The case is useful because it demonstrates how a smaller specialised organisation combines traditional recruitment sources, job portals, personal communication, and multi-stage selection methods. The study focuses on four research questions:

RQ1: How is the recruitment and selection process organised in the selected organisation?

RQ2: Which recruitment sources and selection methods are used?

RQ3: How do current employees evaluate the recruitment and selection process they experienced?

RQ4: Which improvements could increase efficiency, attractiveness, and candidate experience?

Literature Background

Recruitment, Attraction, and Employer Signals

Recruitment is the process by which organisations attract potential applicants and encourage them to enter the selection process. It includes defining job requirements, choosing internal or external sources, communicating the vacancy, and maintaining candidate interest. Acikgoz (2019) conceptualises recruitment and job search as multi-level processes involving both organisational actions and candidate decisions. Uggerslev *et al.* (2012) further show that applicant attraction is influenced by different predictors at different stages of recruitment, indicating that early recruitment communication, job information, and organisational reputation all matter.

Employer branding is closely related to recruitment. The classical concept of employer branding describes how organisations build and communicate an image of themselves as desirable employers (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Jankalová & Vartiak, 2016). In current labour markets, this image is increasingly shaped by digital information, social media, and candidate-to-candidate communication. Thang and Trang (2024) found that employer branding, organisational image, and reputation are associated with job seekers' intention to apply, and that the availability of organisational information on social media can strengthen this relationship. For smaller organisations, this suggests that employer branding does not necessarily require large budgets; it can start with transparent, authentic communication about work, values, and team culture.

Selection, Fairness, and Candidate Experience

Selection is the process of assessing candidates and deciding who best meets the requirements of the job and organisation. Evidence on personnel selection highlights the value of combining several methods rather than relying on one impression-based decision (Sackett *et al.*, 2022; CIPD, 2024b; Kopac *et al.*, 2025). Structured interviews are generally more defensible than unstructured interviews because they ask candidates comparable questions and use consistent evaluation criteria (Campion *et al.*, 1997). Work samples and job-related tasks are also useful because they connect the assessment directly with future performance demands.

Fairness and candidate experience are central to selection quality. Gilliland's (1993) organisational justice perspective emphasises that applicants evaluate not only outcomes but also procedures, explanations, and interpersonal treatment. Bauer *et al.* (2001) similarly developed measures of procedural selection justice that include job-relatedness, information sharing, consistency, and treatment. Recent work confirms that communication delays and the phase of rejection can influence perceived fairness, satisfaction with the process, and willingness to recommend or reapply to the organisation (Garbarova & Vartiak, 2021, 2022; Barattucci *et al.*, 2025).

Digitalisation and Proportional Technology Use



Digitalisation affects recruitment through online job portals, social media, automated communication, application tracking systems, and, in some organisations, AI-supported screening. The CIPD (2024b) reports that many organisations have increased the use of technology in recruitment and onboarding, although the adoption of advanced technologies remains uneven. Research on AI-enabled recruitment stresses the potential benefits of efficiency and consistency but also warns about ethical risks, bias, transparency, and candidate trust (Hunkenschroer & Luetge, 2022; Ore & Sposato, 2022; Ligeiro *et al.*, 2024; Mori *et al.*, 2025; Ubrežiová, Čarnogurský & Janošková, 2025). OECD research on algorithmic management also highlights both efficiency gains and concerns about trustworthiness (Milanez *et al.*, 2025).

For smaller organisations, the most realistic digital improvement may not be advanced AI. It may be a basic online application form, automatic confirmation messages, a structured database of applicants, and systematic communication templates. A skills-first approach, as discussed by the OECD (2025), also supports the idea that recruitment should focus on demonstrated competencies rather than only formal credentials, while still respecting role-specific requirements.

Materials and Methods

Research Design and Case Organisation

The study used a single-case research design combining qualitative and quantitative elements. The selected organisation is a Slovak media and publishing-oriented company established in 2007. Its activities include publishing, advertising, book and calendar production, seminars, photography, and website creation. The organisation is connected with a weekly newspaper serving a Hungarian-speaking Catholic community. The company was selected because it represents a specialised organisation in which recruitment and selection must consider professional skills, language abilities, cultural context, and interpersonal fit.

For publication purposes, the organisation is described as a selected Slovak media organisation. The empirical data originate from the attached final thesis research and have been transformed into an article. The analysis is descriptive and case-specific; it does not claim statistical generalisation to all Slovak organisations (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Research design and data sources

Component	Description
Research approach	Single-case study combining qualitative interview data and descriptive questionnaire data.
Qualitative data	Semi-structured interview with one HR assistant directly involved in recruitment and selection; 13 core questions.
Quantitative data	Employee questionnaire administered through Google Forms; 13 questions; 40 completed responses.
Respondents	Current employees who have experienced the organisation's recruitment and selection process.
Main variables	Reasons for applying, vacancy information sources, clarity of job advertisement, response times, interview form, punctuality, feedback, information about next steps, and open-ended improvement suggestions.
Analysis	Descriptive frequencies and percentages for survey data; thematic summarisation of the HR interview and open-ended responses.

Data Collection and Analysis

The semi-structured interview focused on the internal organisation of recruitment and selection, required applicant documents, selection rounds, selection methods, recruitment costs, process difficulties, and the HR assistant's evaluation of the organisation as an employer. The interview format allowed the respondent to describe standard practice while also identifying practical problems, especially in administration and candidate communication.

The questionnaire was designed to capture employees' retrospective evaluation of the recruitment and selection process they had experienced. It contained demographic questions and process-related questions. Most questions were closed and were evaluated by frequencies and percentages. The final question was open-ended and asked respondents



what they would improve in the process. The answers were grouped into common themes. Because the sample consisted of 40 employees from one organisation, the analysis is intentionally descriptive rather than inferential. Triangulation was used by comparing the HR assistant's description of the process with employee responses. For example, the HR assistant identified the absence of an electronic applicant system as a problem, while employee data showed that most communication was timely but not fully standardised. These two perspectives jointly informed the recommendations.

Results and Discussion

Recruitment and Selection Process from the HR Perspective

According to the HR interview, the process begins when a new job need is identified or when the requirements of an existing job change. Job requirements are discussed with management and, where appropriate, with team members. The organisation uses both internal and external recruitment sources. Internal sources include existing employees and career development possibilities. External sources include job portals, newspaper advertising, and public communication channels. Newspaper advertising is particularly relevant because the organisation has its own publishing channel and a specific target readership.

Applicants are expected to submit a written application, a structured curriculum vitae, a motivation letter, and a consent to personal data processing. Successful candidates are subsequently asked to provide documents confirming their education and to make declarations regarding the integrity and truthfulness of the submitted data. The HR assistant described a multi-stage selection process (**Figure 1**). After initial screening, candidates may advance to a first round focused on personal contact, experience, personality, and communication. A second round may include tests, personality questionnaires, language tests, or job-related practical tasks. The final decision is made with management involvement.



Source: processed from the semi-structured HR interview.

Figure 1. The recruitment and selection process was identified from the HR interview

The interview evidence indicates that the organisation combines traditional and digital recruitment sources, requires comparable application documents, uses several selection rounds, and applies job-related methods, such as language tests and written tasks, for editorial positions. The main weakness identified by the HR assistant was manual applicant administration without an electronic application or tracking system.

Respondent Structure

40 employees completed the questionnaire. The gender structure was relatively balanced: 23 respondents were men, and 17 were women. The largest age group was 34 to 41 years, followed by 42 to 49 years. Only one respondent belonged to the youngest age group, 18 to 25 years, which is relevant when interpreting recommendations related to social media recruitment and the attraction of younger candidates (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Respondent structure by age and gender

Age group	Total respondents	Men	Women
18-25	1	1	0

26-33	5	3	2
34-41	15	9	6
42-49	12	8	4
50 and more	7	2	5
Total	40	23	17
Total percentage	100%	57.5%	42.5%

Reasons for Applying and Sources of Vacancy Information

The strongest reason for applying was the attractiveness of the job position, selected by 63% of respondents. Company reputation was the second most frequent reason, selected by 20%. Salary conditions were selected by 12%, and benefits by 5%. This distribution indicates that meaningful work and organisational reputation were more influential than material factors at the application stage (**Figure 2**). However, the low share of benefits as an application motive also indicates an area where the organisation could improve its employee value proposition (Constantin *et al.*, 2022; Mojsak *et al.*, 2022; Frost *et al.*, 2024; Kajanova & Badrov, 2024; Lee & Ferreira, 2024; Rosellini *et al.*, 2024; Umarova *et al.*, 2024).

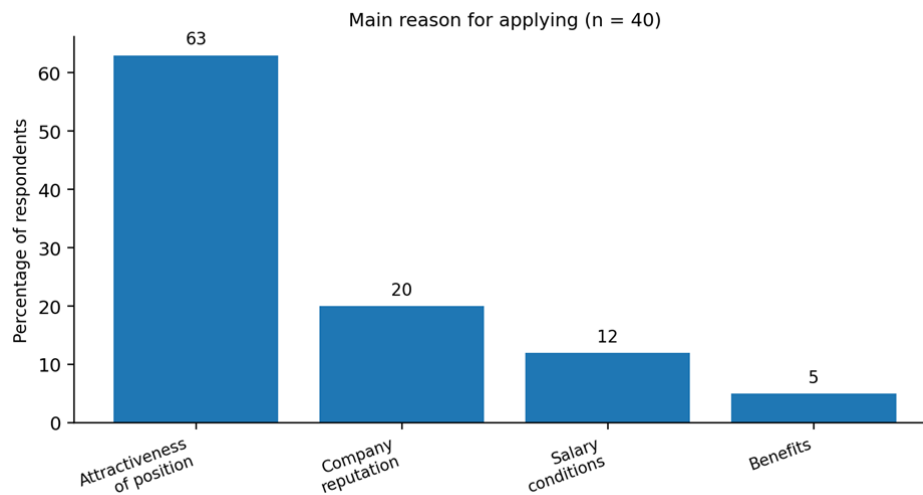


Figure 2. The main reason for applying for the job

The most common source of information about vacancies was Profesia.sk, reported by 19 respondents. Newspaper advertising was reported by 10 respondents, and Facebook by 7 respondents. Three respondents learned about the vacancy through a recommendation, and one through another source. No respondent selected the company website or Instagram. The result is important because it shows that the organisation has functioning traditional and job-portal channels, but it underuses its own digital channels for recruitment communication (**Figure 3**).

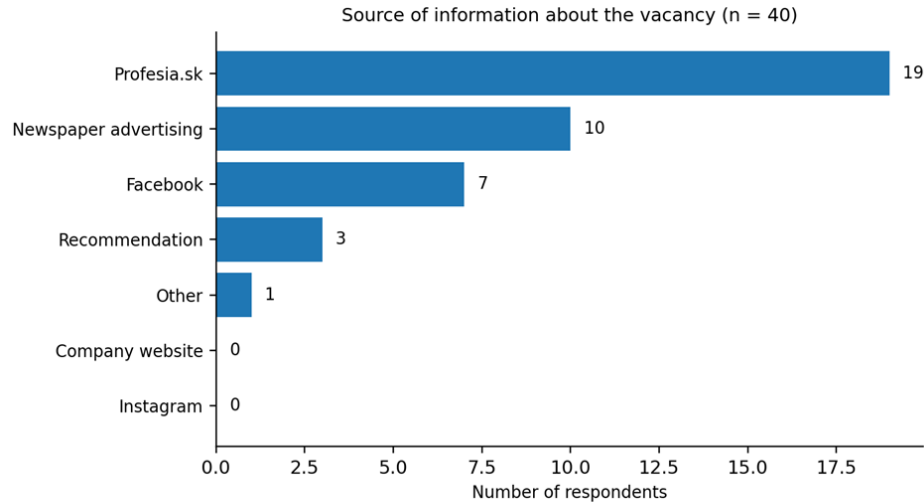


Figure 3. Sources of information about job vacancies

Candidate Experience and Communication

Employee responses suggest that the process is generally clear and timely. Thirty-five respondents stated that the job advertisement was described very well, and five answered "rather yes"; no respondent gave a negative answer. Regarding the time between sending documents and being contacted, 2 respondents were contacted within 2 working days, 14 within 7 days, 20 within 14 days, and 4 after more than 14 days. This means that 90% were contacted within 14 days (Almutairi *et al.*, 2023; Genc *et al.*, 2023; Ku *et al.*, 2023; Simonyan *et al.*, 2023; Tsiganock *et al.*, 2023; Delcea *et al.*, 2024; Essah *et al.*, 2024; Ribeiro *et al.*, 2024; Sanlier & Yasan, 2024; Uneno *et al.*, 2024).

The majority also evaluated the interview organisation positively (**Figure 4**). Twenty-eight respondents reported that the interview started on time; eight experienced a delay of up to 10 minutes, and 4 experienced a delay of more than 10 minutes. Most interviews were conducted in person: approximately 75% of respondents experienced a face-to-face interview, 17% an online interview, and 8% a combined form. After the interview, 57% received the result within three days, 33% within four to seven days, and 10% after more than seven days. Finally, 37 respondents reported being informed about the next selection steps, while 3 were not (Al Abadie *et al.*, 2023; Guzek *et al.*, 2023; Lee *et al.*, 2023; Ncube *et al.*, 2023; Oran & Azer, 2023; Szklener *et al.*, 2023; Tsvetkova *et al.*, 2023; Snodin & McCrossen, 2024).

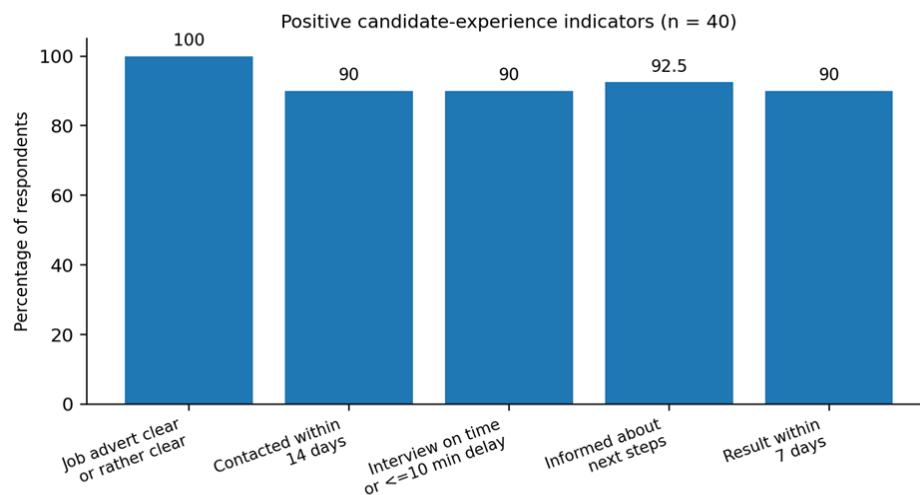


Figure 4. Positive candidate-experience indicators



Open-Ended Feedback

The open-ended question confirmed the generally positive evaluation. Thirty-four employees stated that they were satisfied with the process or would not change anything. Two respondents criticised the selection committee's delays and considered them unprofessional. Four individual comments identified more specific issues: one respondent missed personal contact because conditions were agreed only by telephone, and the HR representative did not have complete information about the position; one respondent perceived the selection committee as very strict; one respondent criticised the strong emphasis on formal education; and one respondent mentioned that refreshments were not offered during selection rounds. These comments do not undermine the overall positive result, but they show that small details of candidate treatment can influence perceptions of professionalism.

The results show that the analysed organisation has a functioning recruitment and selection process with several strengths. First, the company combines multiple recruitment sources. Profesia.sk is the strongest channel, while newspaper advertising remains relevant because of the organisation's own publishing context and readership. Second, the selection process is not based solely on a single interview. It combines document screening, interviews, observation, language testing, and job-related tasks. This is consistent with recommendations to use multiple methods and to link assessment to job requirements (Sackett *et al.*, 2022, 2023; CIPD, 2024b). For editorial roles, the writing task is especially appropriate because it evaluates a direct work sample.

A second strength is candidate communication. Most employees reported timely contact and timely feedback. The result is important because communication is a key part of perceived fairness and candidate experience (Gilliland, 1993; Bauer *et al.*, 2001). Recent evidence further shows that communication delays can reduce perceived fairness and satisfaction with recruitment outcomes (Barattucci *et al.*, 2025). Although the organisation performed well overall, the few negative comments about delays and incomplete information show that candidate communication should be standardised, not left only to individual practice.

A third finding concerns employer branding. The strongest application motive was the position's attractiveness, followed by company reputation. This supports the view that candidates respond not only to pay but also to job content, reputation, and perceived meaning of work (Uggerslev *et al.*, 2012; Acikgoz, 2019). At the same time, the company website and Instagram were not selected by any respondent as sources of vacancy information. This is a clear weakness because social media and accessible organisational information can influence employer image and intention to apply (Keppeler & Papenfuss, 2021; Thang & Trang, 2024). The age structure of respondents reinforces the point: the organisation has very few employees in the 18-25 and 26-33 age groups. Improving digital employer communication could help reach younger candidates without abandoning channels that already work for current applicants.

The findings also raise a balanced point about digitalisation. The HR assistant identified the absence of an electronic applicant administration system as a practical problem. In a small organisation, digitalisation should be proportionate. The most useful first step would be an online application form and applicant database, not advanced algorithmic screening. The literature on AI recruitment warns that digital tools must be transparent, fair, and trustworthy (Hunkenschroer & Luetge, 2022; Ore & Sposato, 2022; Ligeiro *et al.*, 2024; Mori *et al.*, 2025). Therefore, the organisation should use technology to reduce administrative burden and improve communication, while keeping human judgement central in assessment.

Finally, the low motivational role of benefits suggests that the employee value proposition could be made more explicit and more competitive. Benefits were not a main reason for applying, but this does not mean they are unimportant. Benefits, development opportunities, and flexibility can support attraction and retention, particularly for younger candidates and candidates comparing several employers (Taylor, 2024). In a smaller organisation, low-cost benefits such as development opportunities, flexible arrangements where possible, travel support, or sick days may be more realistic than extensive financial packages.

Managerial Implications and Recommendations

The research findings lead to several practical recommendations. They are designed to be proportionate to the resources of a smaller, specialised organisation and to be directly connected to empirical evidence (**Table 3**).



Table 3. Recommendations linked to empirical evidence

Recommendation	Evidence from the study	Expected benefit
Introduce an online application form and basic applicant database.	The HR assistant reported time-consuming manual administration and document sorting.	Faster screening, clearer records, easier GDPR consent collection, and automatic confirmation for applicants.
Standardise candidate communication templates.	Most employees received timely information, but 3 respondents did not receive information about the next steps, and one reported incomplete information by phone.	More consistent candidate experience and lower risk of perceived unfairness.
Strengthen employer branding on the website and social media.	No respondent learned about the job through the company website or Instagram; only 7 used Facebook.	Greater visibility, especially among younger candidates and passive job seekers.
Use short videos or live streams to present workplace culture.	The organisation has media capabilities and a positive internal culture, as identified in the HR interview.	Authentic communication of team atmosphere, values, and work content.
Improve interview punctuality.	4 respondents experienced delays of more than 10 minutes, and 2 respondents criticised delays in their open-ended answers.	More professional candidate experience and a stronger employer reputation.
Review benefits and communicate the employee value proposition.	Only 5% applied because of the benefits, and 12% because of salary conditions.	Improved attraction and retention, especially for younger applicants.
Clarify when formal education is essential and when skills can substitute for credentials.	One respondent criticised the strong emphasis on education.	Broader talent pool and better alignment with skills-first recruitment where appropriate.



Limitations and Future Research

The study has several limitations. First, it is based on a single organisation, so the findings are not statistically generalisable. Second, the questionnaire included 40 current employees, not rejected candidates or applicants who declined an offer. As a result, the study captures the experience of successful candidates who became employees, which may be more positive than the experience of all applicants. Third, the research relies on retrospective self-report and does not include objective hiring outcomes such as cost per hire, time to fill, turnover of new employees, or later performance. Fourth, the qualitative data were obtained from one HR assistant so that future research could include managers, selection committee members, and candidates.

Future research could compare several small and medium-sized organisations in Slovakia, examine differences between sectors, or test whether employer branding activities on social media increase applications from younger candidates. Another useful direction would be to evaluate whether introducing an online application system reduces administrative workload and improves response times.

Conclusion

The study analysed recruitment and selection practices in a selected Slovak media organisation using semi-structured HR interviews and a questionnaire survey of 40 employees. The organisation has a generally effective process. Its main strengths are clear job advertisements, a multi-stage selection procedure, job-related testing for specific roles, and mostly timely communication with candidates. Employee evaluations were positive: all respondents considered the job advertisement clear or very clear, 90% were contacted within 14 days, 92.5% were informed about further steps, and 90% received the interview result within 7 days.

At the same time, the research identified areas for practical improvement. The organisation should digitalise applicant administration, standardise candidate communication, improve interview punctuality, strengthen employer branding through its website and social media, and review benefits as part of its employee value proposition. The case demonstrates that even a smaller specialised organisation can improve recruitment and selection without adopting complex technologies. The most valuable improvements are likely to be simple, transparent, and human-centred: clearer digital access for applicants, timely communication, authentic employer branding, and selection methods that remain closely connected to actual job requirements.


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