Department of Business

Carlos Baldo

Donald Flynn

Executive Search Firms: A Bibliometrics Study
EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRMS: A BIBLIOMETRICS STUDY

Donald Flynn
Faculty Sponsors: Carlos Baldo Ph.D. and Laureen Cantwell M.L.I.S.
Colorado Mesa University

Introduction

- Headhunters hold a unique place in the labor market, as third-party providers filling positions in various companies efficiently and with confidentiality.
- There has yet to be a study tracking the development over the years. The history of research is scattered throughout the subtopics.
- Starting in the 1970’s in subject area such as their usefulness in business, a conversational topic about the recruitment field, or various aspects of their functions.
- Research Question: Can we explain the current status of the topic Executive Search Recruiters or Headhunters from the academic standpoint?
- We analyze the flow of academic production by focusing on the research topics and keywords used.
- Emphasis is given to the current status of research within the field of Executive Search Recruitment.
- Lastly, we look at where the research has gone over the years from the start (1965) to present.

Methods

A systematic literature review was carried out with data collection between the months of August and November of 2019. EBSCOHost was used to access Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, SocIndex and PsychInfo. JSTOR was also used to ensure theoretical breadth.

Keywords: headhunter(s), executive search firm(s), executive recruiter(s), and executive search consultant(s).

Microsoft Excel was used to organize the needed information from each paper. Data was analyzed using bibliometrics software 'R' with the 'bibliometrix' package.

Bibliometric analysis is one way of scientifically mapping the quantitative aspects of published articles and citations.

Results

Findings

- This topic has gone through a series of ups and downs over the years, with increasing production over the last 2 decades.
- The top producers: Beaverstock, Faulconbridge, and Hall make up the grounds for a large proportion of the research, although their background is in geographic based research.
- The second-tier group: Coverdill, Finlay and Clerkin have a greater emphasis on executive careers.
- Khurana’s 2002 paper has largely been the basis for academic research over the last 2 decades as well.
- Lastly, our findings show that this field is still relevant even following the 2018 crisis that resulted in many people questioning the usefulness of executive recruitment.

Discussion

Summary

- Research about Executive Search Recruiters or Headhunters has been scattered throughout its academic history, starting in the late 1970’s and gaining grounding in the early 1990’s. This subject’s focus peaked in 2014 with 6 articles for the year.
- The most prolific authors within this field are as follows; Beaverstock JV, Faulconbridge JR, Hall S, and Hamori M at 4 or more papers a piece.
- The most cited journals/sources the Academy of Management Journal and the Administrative Science Quarterly both over 75 articles related to or about Executive Search Recruitment.
- The author with the biggest impact in the field, gaining the most citations, is Khurana R. with their paper from 2002.

Implications

- The study creates a timeline for the Executive Search Recruitment field in the academic world.
- These results provide an understanding for practitioners to develop their field into a better understood area of practice.
- There seems to be a lack of collaboration among authors in the field, this study can outline active authors for future research to work with.

Future Research

- Future researchers can further these findings as new publications become published.
- Research questions posed by past research can be identified through this study.

Contact Information

For references or further information please contact:
dflynn@mavs.coloradomesa.edu
cbaldo@coloradomesa.edu