E-Recruitment: Practices, Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

E-Recruitment is a new technological means for selecting one of the companies' most crucial resources, i.e. human resource. Recruitment has become an important process in the highly competitive labour market. The traditional methods of recruitment has been revolutionized by the wave of internet. E-recruitment is the latest trend and it has been adopted by large and small-sized organizations. Many companies use e-recruitment to post jobs and accept resumes on the internet, and correspond with the applicants by e-mail. The main success factors of e-recruitment are the value-added services provided by the job sites cost effectiveness, speed, providing customised solutions, helping to establish relationship with HR managers and facilitates brand building of the companies. Despite the inherent benefits, certain challenges are also associated with the e-recruitment process. The emerging trend in technology and process or globalization suggests that the process will continue to expand, and consequently organizations should key in into the process to enhance the quality of their staff recruitment functions. The main objective of this study is to analyse the overall trends in e-recruitment use and practice and to list the opportunities and challenges faced by job seekers and employers.

Keywords: e-recruitment, opportunities, challenges, e-recruitment practices, e-recruitment trends.

1. Introduction

"The Internet Will Help Achieve 'friction free capitalism' by putting Buyers & Sellers in Direct Contact and Providing more Information to Both Each Other"- Bill Gates.

Today's world is technology based world and we can feel its presence in each sphere of our lives. Conception of internet has changed our lives tremendously and it has also changed the perception of people towards their work (Bhupendra & Swati, 2015). Now whole world is just a click away from us and we can connect with individuals from all over the world. Today acquiring and retaining the employees is the biggest challenge and internet has proved to be a boon to recruitment process. E-recruitment is a new technologic means for selecting one of the companies most crucial resources, i.e human resource. This technological innovation improves the process of recruiting knowledge sources by using the internet. it allows businesses to make cost savings, update job offers and status at any time, to shorten the recruitment cycle time, to identify and select the best knowledge potential out of a wider range of candidates and gives the company an opportunity to improve its image and profile (Anand & Chitra, 2016).

E-recruitment is a process of recruiting candidates for filling vacant position in the companies through the use of internet. E-recruitment is an integration and use of internet technology to improve competence of recruitment process. Furthermore, better and faster recruiting can constitute a competitive advantage against enterprises from the same market. However, web-based recruitment is now sufficiently widespread to represent a disadvantage for companies that delayed its integration in their own corporate information systems and strategies (Anand & Chitra, 2016).

Moreover, passive and active job seekers also tend to prefer online applications to traditional application methods, because it saves time and money and makes it possible to browse through a wider range of job offers. It also allows job hunters to navigate through the corporate websites to build first impressions and opinions on the company (either because jobs offers are being searched directly on the corporate website, or through links, or by personal incentive). The many different opportunities of e-recruitment methods are less widespread among small and medium size businesses.

Electronic recruitment, online recruitment, cyber recruiting or internet recruiting are all synonyms of e-Recruitment. E-Recruitment plays very vital role in the process of recruitment as it provides a suitable number of applicants who fulfilled the criteria set by the companies (Bhupendra & Swati, 2015).

Traditionally, organizations depended on fairly low technology, including newspaper advisements and employee referrals to locate and attract qualified candidates. Other traditional tools used for recruitment include radio, television, hand delivery/dispatch riders, handbills, postal services and courier service. But now a days the traditional recruitment methods has been revolutionized by the wave of internet. E- Recruitment is the latest trend and it has been adopted by large and small-sized organizations. The core objective of this study is to analyse the overall trends in e- Recruitment use and practice and to list the opportunities and challenges faced by job seekers and employers.

2. Meaning, Origin and Process of E- Recruitment

The term e-Recruitment means the process of finding and hiring the best-qualified candidate (from within or outside of an organization) for a job opening, in a timely and cost effective manner (Bhupendra & Swati, 2015). The recruitment process includes activities like analysing job requirements, attracting candidates, screening applicants, hiring and welcoming the new employee to the organization. E- Recruitment is the practice of using web-based resources for tasks involved with searching, attracting, assessing, interviewing and hiring new employees. Armstrong (2009) defines e- Recruitment as a process that uses the internet to advertise or post vacancies, provide information about the jobs and the organization and enable e-mail communication to take place between employers and candidates. The function of e- Recruitment is to make the processes more productive as well as less expensive. Online recruitment can attract a larger pool of potential employees and smoothens the selection process.

The fundamental of e- Recruitment are as follows:

Tracking: Helpful in tracking the status of candidate with respect to the jobs applied by him/her.

Employer's Website: Provides details of job opportunities and data collection for same.

Job Portals: Like career Age, Indeed, Monster, times job, etc these carry job advertisements from employers and agencies.

Online Testing: Evaluation of candidates over internet based on various job profiles to judge them on various factors.

Social Networking: Sites like google+, twitter, facebook, linked in, etc helps in building networking and finding career opportunities.

E- Recruitment started in the form of autonomous job sites called bulletin board systems in the 1980s. A new global trend was started in U.S. when Jeff Taylor Launched Monster. Com with 20 clients and 200 job openings in 1994. Today more than three-fourth of the fortune 500 companies use online recruiting and also now people use mobile application for uploading resumes and searching jobs on portals. E- Recruitment can be done through company website, social sites and online job portals. There are large number of online job portals like indeed.com, careerjet.com, freshersworld.com,Naukri.com,Timesjob.com, monster.com, jobsahead.com, clickjobs, etc. social networking sites like linkedin, facebook, twitter, google+ also plays a major role in online recruitment. Online portals have played a crucial role in providing companies with the best application with required qualification to be filled at the right place in the organization. E-Recruitment has proved to be a very convenient mode for both company and job seekers as both can upload the necessary details required and can find a suitable opportunity there (Bhupendra & Swati, 2015). The emergence of e- Recruitment as a strategy of cost and time saving mechanism coincide with the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) in the public sector geared toward addressing institutional and structural problems afflicting public bureaucracies in both developing and developed countries (Snell et al, 2002). In 1991, British scientist Time Berne's Lee introduced the world wide web (www) to academic scientist. This is a harbinger to internet recruiting.

In Nigeria, e-Recruitment in the public sector is a relatively new phenomenon introduced around 2005 to hire personnel in the public sector. Agencies like Federal Civil Service Commission, Nigerian Army, Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Customs Service, and corporate Affairs Commission among others adopted the use of internet in their recruitment process. In contrast to some countries like Malaysia that are using organizational website to recruit potential candidates, in Nigeria the reverse is the case because, many organizations, especially those that have potential of drawing a large number of applicants, have latched on to the scratch card business by engaging private recruiting consultants and in the process, extort money from anxiously waiting applicants (Ikechukwu, 2010).

The reason for the shift towards online recruitment activities, and use of web 2.0 technology for more Human Resource Management functions is most due to the inadequacy of the paper-based process. Most hiring managers and line managers indicated that the lack of systematic log of information and improper storage of paper applications lead to inevitable delays in application processing time. This increase the time to hire and thus cost to hire, while compromising the quality of hire due to incompetent practices, human errors and biases (Depardieu & Islam, 2008). Findings in a CIPD survey showed that e-Recruitment sections on employer's sites is now the fourth most popular recruitment method. More than seven in ten employers advertise vacancies on their corporate websites, while jobs boards are used by four in ten with 73% reporting reduced costs through using e-Recruitment in Europe (Omolawal, 2015). A 1996 survey showed that there were more than 1.2 million jobs posted on line, 3,512 websites and 5,800 companies recruiting online (Hoggler, cited in Singh & Finn, 2003). Furthermore, another survey by the internet Business Network puts the number of online job posting in 1998 at about 28 million and this was estimated to climb to at least 30 million in 2004 (Omolawal, 2015).

According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD), more than two thirds of organizations advertised vacancies on their own websites in 2004 in the United Kingdom (McCurry, 2005). The consultancy Empowerment Group estimated in 2009 that the online job seeking had grown by 76% in the previous two years and was being used by 11 million people in the United Kingdom. According to the Internet

Advertising Bureau, Online recruitment represented 22.1% of all online advertising in 2005. The World Advertising Research Centre (WARC) and the Advertising Association estimated that the forecast growth in online recruitment advertising was forecast to increase from £158m in 2005 to some £262m in 2007 (Terazono, 2005; Singh & Finn, 2003). The trend has continued to grow and expand (Omolawal, 2015).

As in so many other aspects of the business world, the Internet has become an integral part of the recruitment process. It started as a tool for the employer to advertise their positions to a wider audience and job posting would be accessible to job seekers for 24 hours per day. Internet allows Human Resource Professionals to post open positions in detail online so applicants can review the information at their own time, thus minimizing the time requirements by the recruiter on this phase of the process. Companies of all sizes typically have, at minimum, a website which allows them to conduct part of their business online. Some include a career section with online recruiting: storing information on open positions, employee benefits to entice potential applicants and an application process. By accepting letters of application and CVs sent via e-mail, applicants now have the opportunity to respond right up until the closure date and time of the job advertisement (Stacey, 2010).

Many companies are now taking the next steps in incorporating the internet into the next steps of their recruitment process: screening suitable candidates can take up a lot of time and resources, even more so when more applicants respond. Software is now available for screening of applications (Omolawal, 2015). Online attitude and aptitude tests are becoming more popular as a means of selecting the right candidates (Yazdani, 2010). Video conference has also emerged thereby allowing interviews to be conducted online, while job offer and acceptance are being conducted online with e-signing allowing applicants to accept and confirm offer online. In many organizations, online processes have been added to the conduct of induction, a process which is called e-on-boarding. A later trend has been the creation of online data bases, where job seekers could store their CVs thereby giving employers the opportunity to search for candidates who fit their required profile. This can speed up the application process and give people who are interested in changing their job the initiative to show their availability, without actively applying for jobs (Elkington, 2005; McCurrey, 2005; Omolawal, 2015). According to Etomi (2002), the entire process of e- Recruitment and ICT utilization for staff recruitment involves automation of the recruitment efforts from the beginning to the end and it is summarized as follows:

- Organziat6ions put job vacancies on the internet (own site or employment agency sites);
- Interested candidates are encouraged to react with their resumes electronically;
- Resumes are electronically screened;
- Intelligent matching system converts summary of experience to a summary of skills;
- Applicants with relevant profile for the job are contacted electronically;
- Interviews are conducted online or using computers at specific locations;
- Discussions are thereafter held through telephone, e-mail or video-conferencing;
- Terms are agreed;
- Offers are made and accepted.

Essentially, e- Recruitment works on software and some common software include web 2.0 Artificial Intelligence (AI), HR software, Application Tracking System (ATS) among others.

Trends of E- Recruitment

There is growing evidence that organizations are using internet technology and the world wideweb as a platform for recruiting and testing candidates. The IES survey of 50 organizations using e- Recruitment reported that the primary drivers behind the decisions to pursue e- Recruitment were to:

- Improve corporate image and profile;
- Reduce recruitment costs;
- Reduce administrative burden;
- Employ better tools for the recruitment team.

The trends in e- Recruitment use suggest a changing landscape whereby in future the candidate is connected to the central system and there is involvement of the line manager in the process (see figure 1). In addition to the reported benefits such as cost efficiencies, the role of HR in this model viewed as more of a facilitative role, in theory allowing time for recruiters to become involved in the strategic issues within resourcing.

Fig. 1: The e- Recruitment Landscape
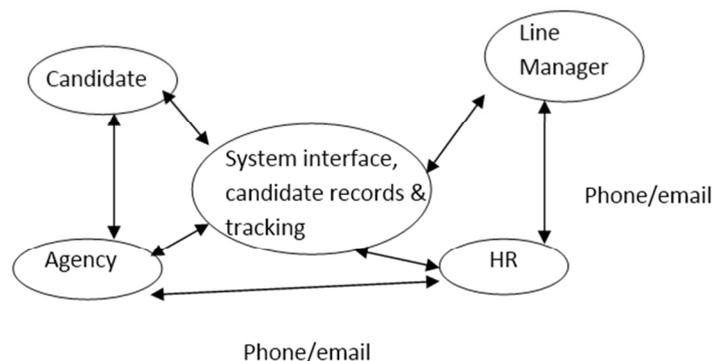
Source: IES

Latest trends in e-recruitment is the use of mobile application for job search. Use of mobile application makes job searching more easy for job seekers. Company websites also plays a major role in searching a potential candidates. Various social networking sites are available to connect with job seekers and attracting them towards organizations. Blogs are also getting popular now a days. Also resume scanner helps companies to screen and shortlist the resumes as per candidates, qualifications and experience, special skills and Salary details and is provided by major portals in Nigeria. There are abundant evidences which prove that organizations are increasingly using internet as a platform for recruiting candidates. Major reasons for e- Recruitment usages: having web presence and using internet improve corporate image, minimizes hiring costs, reduces paper work and administrative burden, ability to arrange advanced web tools for the recruitment team (Bhupendra & Swati, 2015; Anand & Chitra, 2016). The employer must learn to reach job seekers by creating profiles on facebook, Linked in (social networking) along with using job portals for making recruitment more effective. Also they can advertise job vacancies with the numerous online recruitment agencies- to brace the talent hunt process. According to Shahila and Vijayalakshmi (2013), the modern trends of e- Recruitment are as follows:

- **Speedy Communication:** Company and the perspective employee can communicate with each other via the blogs. Thus blogs, podcasts, vodcasts are being considered a tool of e- Recruitment. No more the process can be blamed for being one way communication like mails, faxes only being speedy as done electronically, podcasts are the services of digital media file. Vodcasts are the video podcasts.
- **Candidate's Preference:** history states that employers had the privilege to be selective in hiring process, especially in screening resumes but were not always fair. Because of the time constraint it was not possible to go through all the applications. Today the candidates can choose their employers as not only the financial state is known to them but also the culture is known. Applying for the organization will no more be influenced only by the image.
- **Search Engine Advertisement:** Print ad is phasing out due to the popularity of search engine ads. Pay-per click is not only convenient but also more attractive.
- **RSS Feed:** Job boards are embracing RSS feed. Hotjobs, Google deserves special mention. Google offers one to upload the jobs on Google Base even when one doesn't have their own site. RSS can be read using software "RSS reader". It is a family of web feed formats use to publish frequently updated works. Such as blog entries, news headlines in a standard format.

3. Opportunities of E- Recruitment

E- Recruitment has created a great leap in the history of recruitment since its existence in 1980s. E- Recruitment has been an excellent mode of finding suitable applicants of the companies desirous of filling the empty vacancies in their organizations. A very renowned personality Prof. M.S. Rao who is the managing director at a renowned company has expressed his precious views about e- Recruitment as follows:- "the e- Recruitment saves lot of time for both employers and job seekers. It provides wider scope, choice and opportunities for both company and applicants".

- Wider scope
- Time saving
- Cost saving
- Advertising benefits
- Keywords make search easier
- Better match of candidates

Benefits to employer

- Easy to apply
- Specific search of jobs
- Large number of opportunities   Benefits to jobs seekers
- Wider geographic search
- Quick responses
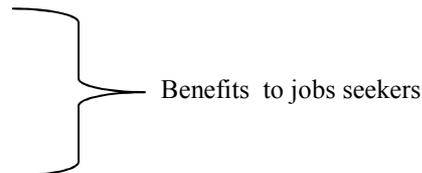
According to Mathis and Jackson (2006), major benefits of the use of the hard core ICT, otherwise known as internet recruitment include cost saving, time saving, generation of expanded pool of applicants, and global catchment opportunity. Other scholars (Newell & Shackleton, 2000; Taylor, 2002; Torrington, Hall & Taylor, 2007) argues that advantages derived include:

- It lowers costs to the organization.
- Posting jobs online is cheaper than advertising in the newspapers.
- It does not involve intermediaries.
- There is reduction in the time for recruitment (over 65% of the hiring time).
- It facilitates the recruitment of right type of people with the required skills.
- It enhances improved efficiency of recruitment process.
- It gives a 24 hours access to an online collection of resumes.
- It helps the organizations to weed out the unqualified candidates in an automated way.

Online recruitment has a major benefit as the life of recruitment ad is much longer than paper-based ads. Also, those ads can be changed any time. Companies can post complete detailed descriptions of the jobs and can answer to FAQs. This added information attracts more candidates and saves time of employers. Irrespective of time, candidates can check jobs round the clock which gives them handiness to search and apply for a better career opportunity (Bhupendra & Swati, 2015). Employers can be more creative and innovative while posting a job in social media or in job portals and also gives a chance to be more appealing than others. According to Kettley and Reilly (2003), e-Recruitment has also led to improved internal customer- management relationship. For example, e-recruitment can facilitate the decentralization of many HR operations, with responsibility for many aspects of the recruitment process being given to staff at the business unit, department, or line management level. Scholars such as Elkington (2005) and Torrington et al. (2007) posit that online recruitment is also capable of generating the following opportunities:

- Enhances the applicants' experience;
- Communicates the employer's image and culture better;
- Makes the recruitment process faster, more accountable and standardized;
- Increases the diversity of applicants;
- Provides better management information on applicants;
- Finds the right candidate for the job.

It also provides opportunities for building a pool of talented candidates, retaining speculative and star candidates for the future, and then contacting them when an appropriate vacancy is advertised effectively generating applicants for free. There is also reduced administration as all applicants are held on a single e-recruitment system and they can be contacted individually or collectively with ease at the click of a mouse, reducing the time, effort and cost of the administration staff. The major impact of online recruitment is its transformational role which is owned to the fact that unlike before, recruiters are now able to attract potential candidates from any part of the world and communicate much more closely with them without spending much money.

4. Challenges of E- Recruitment

E- Recruitment since its inception has turn out to be successful but it has faced quite a number of challenges hurdles in the path of success. Some fails to provide correct information online as they are not computer savvy. They tend to commit mistakes like filling their name wrongly, their native place wrongly, their qualifications etc. online resumes easily gets duplicated and hence chances of neglecting the real candidates instead of duplicate increases. As resumes are uploaded online so there is no surety of authenticity and correctness of information provided by personnels. Some challenges are the quality and the quantity of candidates through the web tools. Many organizations have reported getting large number of applicants from unqualified people. In case of absence of internet connection candidates cannot check any portal or site (Bhupendra Swati, 2015).

Fake profile

- High fees for access
- Casual attitude of job seekers
- Lack of personal touch
- Use of internet may not be
  Priority for all job seekers

Challenges to employers

- Impersonal
- Privacy issues
- Outdated job posting
- No response from company
- Not suitable for all types
  Of jobs

Challenges to Job seekers
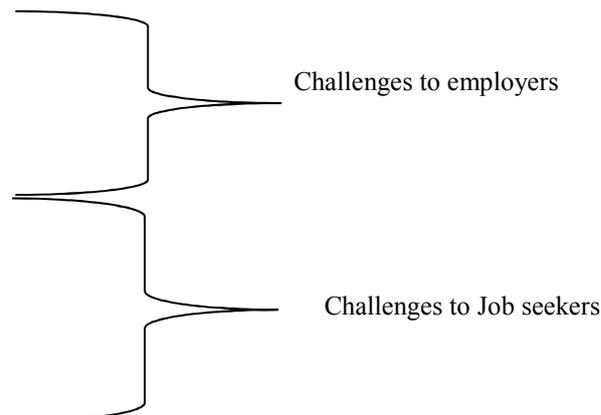
Some company makes their website quite multifaceted due to over engineering which makes it difficult for job seekers to find relevant opportunities and apply for the same as not everyone is computer savvy. Also employers cannot judge the personality of candidates online as there is lack of face to face interaction. In case of candidates comes out to be a total change than what was expected at the time of interview, it leads to complete waste of time for employers as they have to restart the process again. Sometimes it's difficult to find a candidate within budget and stipulated time frame, in that case it's quite challenging for employers to find a talent as per their desire. The job-portals have the challenge of filtering the information they showcase and removing the fake job offers as well as the job seekers (Bhupendra & Swati, 2015).

According to Armstrong (2009), the positives associated with internet recruitment come with a number of challenges. In getting broader exposure, employers also may get more unqualified applicants. Internet recruitment creates additional work for HR staff members who now need to review more resumes, more e-mail and the need to install expensive software to track the numerous applications. A related concern is that many of the individuals who access job sites are just browsers who are not actively looking for jobs. Another major concern is that some applicants may have limited internet access, especially the individuals from lower socio-economic groups and from certain regions of the world. Also privacy is another potential disadvantage of this new process: sharing information gleaned from people who apply to job boards or even company websites has become common, but information sharing is being done in ways that raise ethical issues and violate discrimination (Omolawal, 2015). The challenges identified by other scholars (Anderson, 2003; McCurry, 2005, Mathis & Jackson, 2006) include:

- Screening and checking the skill mapping and authenticity of million of resumes is a problem and time consuming exercise for organizations.
- There is low internet penetration and no access and lack of awareness of internet in many locations across the world.
- Organizations cannot be dependent solely and totally on the online recruitment methods. In countries like India and Nigeria, the employers and the employees still prefer a face-to-face interaction rather than sending emails.

Other major challenges with e-Recruitment centre on the quantity and quality of candidates using web-based tools, the lack of knowledge of e- Recruitment within the HR community, and limited commitment to e-Recruitment by senior managers. For example, many applications from unqualified candidates have been received by organizations using e- Recruitment systems, at the same time, the lack of knowledge of e-recruitment among HR professionals and the limited commitment of senior managers have hindered the effective implementation of e- Recruitment in some organizations. Furthermore, recruiting through the internet has raised concerns among potential applicants about keeping their personal information secure and confidential, many organizations' recruitment sites display privacy statements that detail how the information applicants provide will be stored and used. However, data security remains a major concern, particularly when it comes to online testing and making hiring decisions (Omolawal, 2015).

Shrivastava and Shaw (2004) noted that the accuracy, verifiability, and accountability of applicants' data are also major issues for managers whose organizations use e- Recruitment system. In addition, Robertson (2001) also noted that the lack of personal interactions during the process of applying for employment online limits the flow of communication between potential employees and the employer, leading to frustration on the part of the job candidates and missed opportunities to share or gather additional information by employers. Storey (2007) also noted that online testing raises issues related to applicants' reactions to the testing, the equivalence of online and pencil-and-paper tests, adverse impact, and protecting candidates identities. Therefore, before adopting any kind of online selection methods, organizations should carefully study the impact of these methods and the strengths and weakness of the methods.

5. Conclusion

From what has been discussed so far, it can be seen that e- Recruitment has created a great leap in the history of recruitment since its existence in 1980s. Online recruitment has many advantages to companies like low cost, less time, quick, wider area and better match. It has been correctly said that the adoption of e- Recruitment is about more than just technology. It is about the recruitment system being able to attract the right candidate, the selection process being based on sound and credible criteria, and the tracking process being able to integrate with existing systems. Perhaps most significantly, e-Recruitment is about cultural and behavioural change, both within HR and at line management level. E-Recruitment has proved to be important part of the recruitment strategy. It can be used to keep track and maintain candidate applications, mostly among larger organizations. In addition to the above discussion, a continuous improvement in considering the technological issues related to e-Recruitment is highly recommended.

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