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# The Acceptance Behavior of Online Recruitment Users in Malaysia

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**Abstract**

*In this current economic climate, many people are searching for jobs from Internet-based (online) recruitment service providers.  Online recruitment has become an effective way to reach the majority of candidates globally.  The purpose of this paper is to determine the pattern of acceptance behavior and to test whether the quality of website would influence users' perception. A set of working hypotheses pertaining to the relationship between quality of website and behavior were drawn from configurational acceptance behavior of online recruitment framework emphasizing a linkage between website characteristics, perceptions and behavior. This paper's conceptual model and specific hypotheses were tested using a sample of 73 respondents from the college of business administration and accounting, UNITEN. This study will benefit the recruitment service providers or other business organizations in improving their recruitment website hence the users would have positive perception towards online recruitment system.*

**Keywords:**  Acceptance Behavior Analysis, Online Recruitment, Users Perception

## 1. Introduction

The end of the twentieth century was marked by an astounding increase in the use of technology and the Internet by both individuals and organizations.  Individuals and organizations are to be related with the human behavior.  Human behavior plays a role towards technology and internet acceptance in their life in which may lead to the success of the implementation of online recruitment system in Malaysia.

### 1.1 Online recruitment

One of the ways in which organizations applied the Web-based technology is the implementation of recruitment. Recruitment is a process in which an organization seeks applicants for potential employment.  A critical first step in employee recruitment is to attract individuals to apply for positions in a firm (Barber 1998). Organizations that attract more qualified applicants have a larger pool of applicants to choose from, which results in greater utility for firm selection systems (Boudreau and Rynes 1985).

The internet has become a major force for changes in human resource management especially in recruitment section. In recent years, organizational recruitment efforts have increasingly relied on computer technology (Mottl 1998). Specifically, organizations have turned to the Internet to manage the recruitment process, including placing job advertisements, receiving resumes, and building human resources database with candidates and incumbents (Schreyer and McCarter 1998). Recruitment with internet is known as online recruitment (e recruitment). Online

recruitment as a fundamental business process is the removal of complexity, waste and paperwork, introduction of good sound workflow systems and reliable database applications. The purpose of online recruitment is to add value to the existing process control, incorporating agency & traditional media suppliers, as well as the new media channels, to dramatically improve the workflow, and deliver a substantial saving in cost per hire. The internet has a wealth of information and contacts for both employers and job hunters.

Online recruitment uses company web site as a medium to disseminate information about an organization to prospective applicants, collect information to screen applicants, or both. In this regard company web sites are similar to employment interviews where they may function as recruitment or selection tools (Harris 1989; Rynes 1989). Online recruitment is a process that brings employers and job seekers together and allows them to interact in a fast, efficient, and effective way. One of the potential benefits of Web-based recruiting for organizations is the ability to reduce recruiting costs. A Study conducted by Goodwin (1999) revealed that the use of Internet to advertise a job and attract potential candidates has been shown to be less expensive than traditional recruitment techniques. According to Schreyer and McCarter (1998, pp. 14), ''software for recruiting purposes has become more readily available and cost-effective.''

Web-based recruiting greatly speeds the hiring process (Crispin and Mehler 1997) as job openings can be advertised almost instantly. In turn, resumes and applications maybe received from prospective employees more quickly and employers can respond to the applicants with equal efficiency. An electronic job listing can also remain posted for an indefinite amount of time and can be accessed by interested applicants at any time. In addition, Web-based recruiting provides the possibility of reaching an extremely broad base of individuals (Crispin and Mehler 1997).

An online recruitment website provides a unique opportunity to explore constantly updated employment opportunities through an extensive database of jobs. Job seekers can then post their resumes online and announce their availability to potential employers.

Company web sites are often used to provide individuals with information about the firm in an effort to ''sell'' the benefits of working at that organization and encourage individuals to apply for employment (Cappelli 2001). These may include job description and available job opportunities. Company web sites are also used in the employment process to gather information from individuals (skills, knowledge and abilities) that can be used to help improve the effectiveness of the employee selection process (Cappelli 2001).

Unfortunately, researches in the field of online recruitment in the Malaysian environment are scarce. The online recruitment environment in Malaysia is still in the initial stage. Many Malaysian companies only show their job vacancies in the websites and yet the job seekers can't apply for the vacancies online. Nevertheless, the knowledge in online recruitment is essential for Malaysian companies as they are facing the hyper-competitions in the globalised recruitment. It is important for Malaysian companies to fully be aware of, understand and develop the right tools to configure the efficient online recruitment practice that would enhance their recruitment process ability.

Online recruitment process is a part of information system implementation and researchers in Information Systems have begun to rely on the theories of innovation diffusion to study implementation problems (Alexander 1989; Brancheau and Wetherbe 1990; Moore 1987; Johnson and Rice 1987). The success of any information systems development depends on a combination of user acceptance and advancements in technology. In relation to this, Davis (1986; 1989) discovered that technology acceptance model (TAM) is one of the best-known approaches to explain and predict user acceptance of information systems. He revealed that perceived of usefulness and perceived of ease of use are the two most important factors that determine system usage.  He defined that:

*Perceived usefulness*: The degree to which an individual believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance.
*Perceived ease of use*: The degree to which an individual believes that using a particular system would be free of physical and mental effort.

The technology acceptance model approach assumes that perceived of usefulness is influenced by perceived of ease of use which, if systems that are perceived as easier to use are also perceived as being more useful (Vankatesh and Davis 2000).    The more useful and simple a user thinks a new technology is, the stronger his or her intention to use the system will be.

However, there are other factors that influence the system usage such as behavior intention to use and actual usage behavior.

### 1.2 Behavioral intention
Behavioral intentions represent a motivation to engage in particular behavior with respect to the attitude object. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the most important determinant of individual's behavior is behavior intent. It is believed that the stronger intention to engage in a behavior, the more likely its performance will be. Intention to perform a behavior is the direct determinant of actual performance of such behavior. Intention represents a person's conscious plan to exert effort to carry out a behavior (Eagly and Chaiken 1993, pp. 168).  Based on TPB, intentions to perform different kinds of behavior can be predicted with high accuracy from attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control; and these intentions, together with perceptions of behavioral control, account for considerable variance in actual behavior (Ajzen 1991). The theory is found to be well supported by empirical evidence (Taylor and Todd 1995a, b; Venkatesh et al. 2003; Riemenschneider et al. 2003).

Davis (1989) incorporated features of theory of reasoned action which previously had been used to explain a broad range of behaviors in developing his TAM model. The literature shows that there is strong relationship between perceived of ease of use and behavioral intention. Furthermore, perceived usefulness is a significant predictor of behavioral intention.  Perceived ease of use is thought to have strong influence on perceived of usefulness where both influence an individual's behavioral intention to use a new system (Fliegel and Kivlin 1966; Ostlund 1974; Szajna 1996; Tornatzky and Klein 1982; Zaltman, Duncan and Holbeck 1973).   Therefore, behavioral intention influences actual usage behavior (Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw 1989; Szajna 1996).

In TAM literature, there are four important concepts that have been discussed. There are perceived of ease of use, perceived of usefulness, behavioral intention and actual behavior usage. The perceived of usefulness of technology increases with perceived of ease of use. The more useful and simple a user thinks a new technology is, the stronger his or her intention to use the system will be; furthermore the stronger the usage intention is, the greater the actual usage behavior will be (Wang, Fang and Hsu 2005).

The acceptance behavior of online recruitment users is the primary focus of this study. However, the attractiveness characteristics of online recruitment website are also used to measure the efficiency of online recruitment.

### *1.3 Website characteristics*

Website characteristics are the main element in influencing the effectiveness of online recruitment. A number of characteristics have been identified that may distinguish attractive Web pages from the less attractive ones. These characteristics are related to technical format, textual format, layout, and coloring. For instance, an attractive (or high quality) Web page is highly interactive, drawing the visitor in and maintaining his/ her interest (Hannon 1998). Attractive pages generally provide a clear structure or outline of the site's contents on the first visible screen. Additionally, providing tools for easy navigation of the site and of the individual Web pages allows for direct access to the information that the viewer desires to see (Hannon 1998). The format of the text also has an impact on the perceived attractiveness of the page. Less attractive pages tend to consist of paragraph writing, similar to what is found in a typical print copy. Attractive Web pages are also characterized by wording that is simple and concise. Related research on the use of the internet for collecting research data (Simsek and Veiga 2001) also suggests the importance of text material clarity. Colors, graphics, and fonts also enhance the attractiveness of a Web page. Metz and Junion-Metz (1996) argued that the use of contrasting colors (i.e. dark and light) creates visual excitement that encourages the visitor to explore the site further. Additionally, Metz and Junion-Metz pointed out that pictures might invite a visitor to look at a page when plain text would not. Appropriate colors, fonts, and graphics not only make a site more interesting, but also make it easier to use (Hannon 1998). Stanton and Rogelberg (2001) have also pointed out that attractive Web pages have diverse designs, are intriguing to visitors, and provide an interactive experience.

## 2. Research framework

Consistent with the literature of online recruitment and acceptance behavior, this paper proposes a framework for examining linkages between quality of website and acceptance behavioral factors. Figure 1 outlines these relationships.
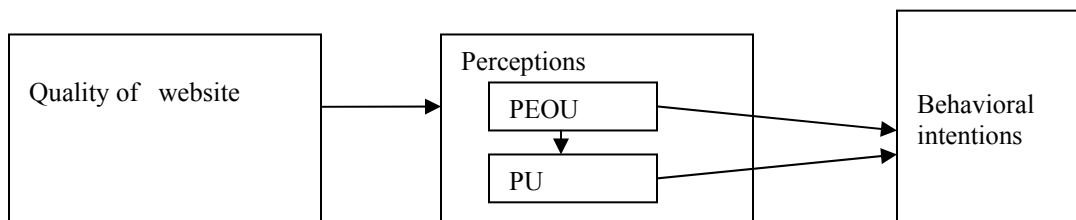


**Figure 1: The relationship between quality of web site factor and acceptance behavioral factor**

### *2.1 Quality of a website*
Relative quality of a website is the primary factor that will lead one to look further, or to move on. Pleasing, crisp, sophisticated design grabs the viewer, luring them in at that precious first moment. Thus, this site is generally endowed with a fine website characteristics. Stanton and Rogelberg (2001) have also pointed out that attractive Web pages have diverse designs, are intriguing to visitors, and provide an interactive experience

### *2.2 Perceptions*
Perceptions are referred to user's perceptions. Users' perceptions are divided into two categories: perceived ease of use and perceived of usefulness in online recruitment. A user with positive perceptions will have positive behavioral intentions and this relation will lead to effective and efficient online recruitment.

### *2.3 Behavioral intentions*
Behavioral intentions represent a motivation to engage in particular behavior with respect to the attitude object. The most important determinant of individual's behavior is behavior intent. It is believed that the stronger the intention to engage in a behavior is, the more likely its performance should be.

## 3. Objectives
In this paper, the researcher begins by drawing a connection between attractiveness characteristics of online website factor and acceptance behavioral factor. From this paper's view, characteristics of online website are the elements that influence the perceived ease of use in the acceptance behavior. In relation to these, perceived ease of use is thought to have strong influence on perceived of usefulness where both influence an individual's behavioral intention to use online recruitment system

Based on these considerations, the following hypotheses were developed;

1. To find the relationship between quality of website and perceived ease of use factor.
2. To find the relationship between quality of website and perceived usefulness factor.
3. To determine the relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived of usefulness in online recruitment
4. To identify the relationship between perceived usefulness and behavioral intentions
5. To identify the relationship between perceived ease of use and behavioral intentions

## 4. Sampling and data collection
A questionnaire survey was administered to students in the final year of College Of Business and Accounting, Universiti Tenaga Nasional. The final year students were chosen because they are highly likely to search for jobs after graduation. Sample students were obtained within classes and across courses. Every effort was made to ensure that the students completed questionnaire only once to avoid double counting, which will affect the outcomes. The questionnaires were sent to the students through various College departments and were distributed randomly. In total, 110 out of 73 completed questionnaires were returned. A questionnaire was used to collect the data required. The questionnaire is divided into four sections: (a) background, (b) User acceptance, and (c) Characteristics of website. These three sections were measured on a five

point Likert scale. The value of measurement was divided into 3 sections; low (min 1.00 –2.99), moderate (min 3.00-3.99) and high (min 4.00 –5.00)

## 5. Findings

### *5.1 Demographic Profile*

Respondents' profiles are based on gender, race, age and level of education as shown in the appendix 1. The respondent's background in the sample is summarized in appendix 1. There are 4 items – gender, race, age and level of education, which are employed to describe the profile of respondents. In term of gender, it shows that 84.9% of respondents are female and 15.1% of respondents are male. This followed by race group, Malay constitutes the bulk, accounting for 79.5% of the total, 17.8% Indian and 2.7% Chinese. Majority of respondents falls within the 20-22 year accounting for 53.4% of the sample. The second largest group is within 23-25 years of age, which makes up for 37% of the total respondents and 1.4% of the respondents are of the age of 25 and above. A study on the level of education shows that the majority of the respondents are from diploma and high school level, which makes up for 56% of the total respondents.

### *5.2 Reliability*

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|---|---|---|
| .931 | .938 | 49 |

Reliability test is an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable. Cronbach's alpha is the most widely used measurement tool with a generally agreed lower limit of 0.7. In Table 1 the alpha coefficients were above the required level of 0.7 as suggested by Nunnally (1978).

### *5.3 Relationship between quality of website and perceived ease of use factor*

Multiple regression analysis is applied using quality website to test against the perceived ease of use factor. Table 2 presents the result of the relationship between quality website and perceived ease of use.

**Table 2: Table of quality of website and perceived ease of use factor**

| Model | R | R Square | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .565(a) | .319 | .000 |
| 2 | .662(b) | .439 | .000 |
| 3 | .703(c) | .494 | .008 |
| 4 | .723(d) | .522 | .050 |

a Predictors: (Constant), w18
b Predictors: (Constant), w18, w7

c  Predictors: (Constant), w18, w7, w13
d  Predictors: (Constant), w18, w7, w13, w8

Table 2 consists of Model 1, Model 2, Model 3 and Model 4. In Model 1, w18 (the site has well known recruiters) is the first variable to enter the equation and w18 explains 32% of perceived ease of use and this is increased by 12% in Model 2 when w7 (the site allows un-subscription of promotional materials) is added and continuous increase to 5.5% when w13 (the site provides high speed of online application) is added in Model 3.  When w8 (the site supports different platform or browser) is added in Model 4, accounts for only 2.8%, thus 52.2% of perceived ease of use is explained.   From the table above, it shows that there is a significant strong positive relationship between quality website and perceived ease of use. The results support the first hypothesis.

### 5.4 The relationship between quality of website and perceived usefulness factor

To determine the relationship between quality of website and perceived usefulness factor, multiple regression analysis is used. Table 3 shows the results of the relationship between these two elements.

**Table 3: Table of quality of website and perceived usefulness factor**

| Model | R | R Square | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .512(a) | .263 | .000 |
| 2 | .599(b) | .358 | .002 |

a  Predictors: (Constant), w2
b  Predictors: (Constant), w2, w12

Table 3 consists of Model 1and Model 2. In Model 1, w2 (the site provides adequate job employment) is the first variable to enter the equation and w2 explains 26% of perceived usefulness and this is increased by 9.5% in Model 2 when w12 (the site provides high speed of maneuvering) is added and 35.8% of perceived usefulness is explained. From the table above, it shows that there is a significant relationship between quality of website and perceived usefulness.  Thus, the second hypothesis is supported.

### 5.5 The relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived of usefulness in online recruitment

Table 4: Correlations analysis

| | | Perceived ease of use | Perceived usefulness |
|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived ease of use | Correlation | | .679(**) |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| Perceived usefulness | Correlation | .679(**) | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the table above, it shows that there is a relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. The correlational patterns among the variables used in this study are shown in the appendix 2. Thus, this result supported the third objective in this study.

### 5.6 The relationship between perceived usefulness and behavioral intentions

Table 5: Relationship between perceived usefulness and behavioral intentions

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .407(a) | .165 | .154 | .67711 |

From the table above, it shows that the relationship between perceived usefulness and behavioral intention is moderate and the only variable that has high significant relationship with behavioral intention is pu4 (I find websites for online recruitment to be useful in my life). Thus, this result supported the forth hypothesis.

### 5.7 The relationship between perceived ease of use and behavioral intentions

Table 6: Relationship between perceived ease of use and behavioral intentions

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .499(a) | .249 | .238 | .63867 |

Poor relationship between perceived ease of use and behavioral intentions is shown in the table above. The result showed that the fifth objective was not supported. There was not enough evidence to show that there is a relationship between these two variables.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

The growth of technology has an in-depth influence on human resource management specifically recruitment. At present, recruitment is mainly based on the website which is known as online recruitment. The success of online recruitment depends on the perception of individual which in turn influences behavior. Thus, its obvious that individual must have a positive perceptions in order to motivate them to use online recruitment in the real world.

The findings above show the relationship between perception factors and website characteristics. Most of the findings support previous literatures. Thus, the website that is endowed with fine characteristics will influence the end users to have positive perception towards online recruitment practice. The findings also show how users perceived the online recruitment system. Perceived ease of use have highly significant relationship with perceived usefulness and this result was supported by Vankatesh and Davis (2000). The simpler and easier the system is handled, the more useful it is perceived by the user.

Many researchers of recruitment and Human resource management fields have predicted that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness have strong relationship with behavioral

intentions. However, the findings of this study show that there is no evidence to support such premise. The first variable namely perceived ease of use has only moderate relationship with behavioral intentions and perceived usefulness on the other hand, has weak relationship with behavioral intentions.

There are several limitations observed in this study. First, the study focuses only on UNITEN students. Second, the respondents were merely from Business Administration and Accounting College where results limit the generalization for the study. Further testing of the model would be needed to confirm the findings.

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**Appendix 1: Demographic profile**

| Item | No of respondents | Respondents % |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | | |
| Female | 62 | 84.9% |
| Male | 11 | 15.15 |
| Race | | |
| Malay | 58 | 79.5 |
| Indian | 13 | 17.8 |
| Chinese | 2 | 2.7 |
| Age | | |
| Below 19 | 6 | 8.2 |
| 20-22 | 39 | 53.4 |
| 23-25 | 27 | 36.9 |
| Above 25 | 1 | 1.4 |
| Level of education | | |
| SPM and below | 4 | 5.5 |
| Diploma and High school | 41 | 56.2 |
| Degree | 28 | 38.4 |

**Appendix 2 : Correlations analysis**

|        |                   | pu1 | pu2 | pu3 | pu4 | pu5 | pu6 | peou1 | peou2 | peou3 | peou4 |
|--------|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| pu1    | Correlation       |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |       |       |
|        | Sig. (2-tailed)   |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |       |       |
|        | N                 |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |       |       |
| pu2    | Correlation       | .863(**) |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |       |       |
|        | Sig. (2-tailed)   | .000 |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |       |       |
|        | N                 | 73 |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |       |       |
| pu3    | Correlation       | .628(**) | .679(**) |     |     |     |     |       |       |       |       |
|        | Sig. (2-tailed)   | .000 | .000 |     |     |     |     |       |       |       |       |
|        | N                 | 73 | 73 |     |     |     |     |       |       |       |       |
| pu4    | Correlation       | .620(**) | .742(**) | .673(**) |     |     |     |       |       |       |       |
|        | Sig. (2-tailed)   | .000 | .000 | .000 |     |     |     |       |       |       |       |
|        | N                 | 73 | 73 | 73 |     |     |     |       |       |       |       |
| pu5    | Correlation       | .377(**) | .493(**) | .389(**) | .491(**) |     |     |       |       |       |       |
|        | Sig. (2-tailed)   | .001 | .000 | .001 | .000 |     |     |       |       |       |       |
|        | N                 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 |     |     |       |       |       |       |
| pu6    | Correlation       | .457(**) | .517(**) | .424(**) | .552(**) | .422(**) |     |       |       |       |       |
|        | Sig. (2-tailed)   | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |     |       |       |       |       |
|        | N                 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 |     |       |       |       |       |
| peou1  | Correlation       | .327(**) | .335(**) | .293(*) | .468(**) | .323(**) | .657(**) |       |       |       |       |
|        | Sig. (2-tailed)   | .005 | .004 | .012 | .000 | .005 | .000 |       |       |       |       |
|        | N                 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 |       |       |       |       |
| peou2  | Correlation       | .431(**) | .481(**) | .528(**) | .591(**) | .392(**) | .564(**) | .670(**) |       |       |       |
|        | Sig. (2-tailed)   | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .001 | .000 | .000 |       |       |       |
|        | N                 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 |       |       |       |
| peou3  | Correlation       | .011 | .140 | .236(*) | .316(**) | .209 | .233(*) | .162 | .349(**) |       |       |
|        | Sig. (2-tailed)   | .925 | .238 | .044 | .006 | .076 | .047 | .170 | .002 |       |       |
|        | N                 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 |       |       |
| peou4  | Correlation       | .402(**) | .453(**) | .502(**) | .553(**) | .457(**) | .479(**) | .512(**) | .622(**) | .394(**) |       |
|        | Sig. (2-tailed)   | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .001 |       |
|        | N                 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 | 73 |       |
| peou5  | Correlation       | .559(**) | .453(**) | .482(**) | .396(**) | .227 | .556(**) | .593(**) | .563(**) | .163 | .543(**) |
|        | Sig. (2-tailed)   | .000 | .000 | .000 | .001 | .056 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .171 | .000 |
|        | N                 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 72 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).   PU = Perceived usefulness
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).   PEOU = Perceived ease of use