[1]Dr. Hassen
Altalhi

Online vs Traditional Recruitment Approaches: Preferences of Saudi Employers and Employees

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Abstract: - Purpose: This study analyses and compares traditional and e-recruitment methods for job applications from the perspectives of employees and employers. Research Design: The study collected data from employees and employers in business organizations located in Yanbu Industrial City, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. An internet-mediated approach was used, and a survey questionnaire was designed. The sample size was determined to be 328 using an unknown population sample size formula. Data were gathered from 103 employees and 53 employers. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted, and Chi-square was used to analyze the approaches of Traditional and e-recruitment for the job application process. Findings: The findings indicate that a high percentage of employees and employers' preference for online methods in job applications. However, the chi-square test reveals a discrepancy between the perspectives of employees and employers. Employees support the use of online methods, while employers reject the hypothesis that online application methods are effective. Implications: One of the implications of online recruitment systems is that managers who use e-recruitment systems may have concerns about the accuracy and accountability of applicant data. Additionally, the lack of in-person interactions during the online application process can lead to frustration for job seekers and missed opportunities for employers to obtain or share more information. Originality: This study is arguably one of the leading studies that investigates the perceptions of employers and employees regarding the e-recruitment process in Saudi Arabia. Its findings would be of great help to employers in improving the e-recruitment system.

Keywords: Traditional and Online Recruitment Systems, Employee and Employers preference.

I. INTRODUCTION

Traditional recruitment methods have been used worldwide for many years before the widespread use of the internet. Despite being effective, this approach was time-consuming. However, with the advancements in information technology, all aspects of life have been transformed, including the recruitment process. Web-based recruitment, also known as online recruitment, has become a trend in the digital age. Employers now have the ability to review resumes as soon as they are uploaded to the system. This digital approach allows for faster shortlisting of applicants, as their information can be easily sorted based on criteria such as GPA, years of experience, level of education, and other credentials. Web-based recruitment is seen as the easiest method for corporations to save time and minimize costs (Hart, Doherty, & Ellis-Chadwick, 2000).

According to Torres-Coronas and Arias-Olivia (2005), the labor market has seen the introduction of various e-recruiting methods, such as job boards, corporate career websites, and e-recruiting consortia. Among these methods, corporate career websites have been recognized as both efficient and cost-effective. However, it has been observed that organizations using corporate career websites do not fully maximize their benefits due to the absence of e-recruiting options. In order to investigate this further, an analysis was conducted on the corporate career websites of Fortune 100 companies. This analysis identified six categories of e-recruiting sources, from which four major categories were derived. These categories include recruiting methods, job search tools, job application tools, and information on organizational attributes.

Moreover, Lee (2005) emphasized the significance of talent acquisition and retention in a competitive economy. The study focused on system development and website evaluation in Fortune 100 firms. Thirty-three attributes were identified and classified as recruiting strategies, hiring tools, career application tools, and business data. Despite the implementation of e-recruitment, the analysis revealed a need for improvement in these companies' recruitment performance.

The successful transition from traditional recruitment to e-recruiting methods has been associated with cost savings, efficiency, and convenience for both parties involved in the recruitment and hiring process (Tomlinson, 2002; Miller, 2001; Gale, 2001). Furthermore, Kiselicki et al. (2018) conducted a study on Macedonian enterprises and identified the three major benefits of e-recruitment as reduced expenses (90%), a faster recruiting process (67%), and a decrease in time spent collecting resumes (44%). The report suggested that mobile job advertisements might be a more cost-effective alternative to other e-recruitment strategies or traditional approaches, considering that younger candidates check their smartphones between eighteen and twenty-five times a day.

[1] *Corresponding author: Author 1 Yanbu Industrial College, Management Sciences Department, Yanbu, KSA,
altalhih@rcjy.edu.sa

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizations rely heavily on the expertise of their management and human resources to thrive. Therefore, it is crucial for businesses to prioritize the hiring of competent human resources, as they serve as the gateway to engaging with and ultimately onboarding qualified job applicants.

Recruiting, as defined by DeNisi and Griffin (2001), is the process that enables a company to logically select the most suitable candidate or candidates for a position. According to Rosoiu & Popescu (2016), the selection procedure for human resources in a business must be meticulously planned and well-organized. With the increasing prevalence of technology, particularly the internet, hiring practices have gradually evolved. Lawani (2019) suggests that web-enabled techniques have given recruiters and job seekers more influence in the process. Harrison (2018) further argues that while traditional recruiting methods still attract candidates, new technology has transformed how businesses interact with potential hires.

There are two theories that attempt to explain why some recruitment strategies are more effective than others. Wanous (1980) focused on factual information, while Griffith, Hom, Fink, & Cohen (1997), Schwab (1982), and Taylor & Schmidt (1983) discovered individual differences. Cardiello (2002) noted that the study's findings did not show a significant correlation between recruitment strategy and job satisfaction or retention level.

Abdul et al. (2020) conducted a study that demonstrated a significant shift in current personnel and recruitment practices. The study revealed major changes in the labor market structure, the integration of technology in the recruitment process, the impact of social media on hiring practices, and the advantages and disadvantages of e-recruitment.

Sołek-Borowska et al. (2018) found that combining e-recruitment technology with human resource management infrastructure reduced costs while increasing hiring effectiveness. Modern recruiting and selection technology improved productivity while saving time and money. The findings showed that e-recruitment strategies and technology have a significant impact on the recruitment process, including attracting applicants, processing applications, and communicating with candidates.

According to Kathiravan et al. (2023), online interview platforms provide virtual environments for remote interviews, reducing travel costs and time for in-person sessions. This is especially beneficial in situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. The global trend is shifting towards web-based interview tools. However, virtual video conferencing technologies have functional limitations.

Dokey et al. (2021) conducted a study on the effectiveness of e-recruitment, focusing on Saudi Arabia's labor shortage. The study surveyed 82 HR managers in Jeddah who emphasized e-recruitment due to its low cost and high response rate. Employers considered e-recruitment as a viable method for finding talented Saudi workers.

Alateyah (2018) emphasized the significance of HRM competencies in his analysis of the relationship between corporate success and electronic recruitment components. The study considered various internal and external factors that influence e-recruitment, including implementation plans, government objectives, decentralized decision-making in selection, job seeker trust, organizational reputation, and empowered managers and team members. The study also investigated the impact of e-recruitment on corporate success and HR competency.

In a subsequent study, Alateyah (2019) developed a model to examine the connection between HRM competencies, e-recruitment, and the performance of Saudi companies. The study aimed to clarify the relationship between e-recruitment and the success of Saudi Arabian companies, as it was not clear which factors influenced an organization's performance in e-recruitment.

Khillare and Shirsale (2017) argued that job recruitment has undergone a revolution, with industries adopting new tools and techniques for talent acquisition and management. Recognizing the millennial generation's reliance on smartphones and computers, recruiters have tapped into these mediums to find new talent. Consequently, many organizations have transitioned from traditional recruitment methods to digital domains. E-recruitment, which emerged in the 1990s, offers two types of job advertisements: corporate websites and commercial job portals. Companies and hiring agents have improved the speed of the recruitment process by utilizing technology such as e-recruitment, allowing applicants to build personal profiles, efficiently sort through them, and find applicants with the desired skills. Recruitment agencies also use cloud-based software-as-a-service (SaaS) to reach larger applicant pools and increase the diversity of potential employees. Unlike traditional recruitment methods, which were expensive and time-consuming, the streamlined and efficient job-seeking process in the digital era has expanded the geographic reach of companies worldwide. Social media has also made it easier for companies to find suitable candidates for their positions. The study therefore assesses the hiring process of employees through traditional and online methods, focusing on both employees and employers. It also aims at determining the preferred medium for job seekers and employers when it comes to applying for jobs and recruiting employees. The following hypotheses are therefore posed.

Hypothesis 1: Employees exhibit a preference for utilizing online platforms when applying for job opportunities due to factors such as convenience, accessibility, and the widespread availability of digital resources.

Hypothesis 2: Employers demonstrate a predilection for online recruitment methods owing to their efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and ability to reach a broader pool of prospective candidates in a timely manner.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Design: The data collection targeted employees working in Yanbu Industrial City (YIC) and the employers operating in the same area using both traditional and online recruitment systems. Instrument: A survey questionnaire was designed to gather data from both employees and employers sending them via email and using social media application. The Participants: The study investigated the involvement of employers and employees in various business organizations located in Yanbu Industrial City (YIC), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A total of 35 employers and 103 employees participated in the survey., which was conducted through a convenience approach. Analysis: The collected data was analyzed by using simple descriptive statistical approach to analyze demographic data. The study also tested the hypothesis using Chi-Square test to see if the hypothesis were accepted or rejected.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section highlights the summary of the demographic information received from the employees and employers. It will also discuss the statistical test applied to different data set received from both the employees and the employers.

A. Demographic Analysis

1) Employees Version

Out of the 200 randomly selected respondents, 103 responses have been received, resulting in a response rate of 51%. Table 1 presents the demographic data of the respondents. Of the respondents, 79% were male and 21% were female. Additionally, 55% of the respondents belonged to the young age group, which includes individuals up to 35 years old. Regarding employment status, 74% of the respondents were currently employed, while 26% had been previously employed but were not currently. When it came to finding or applying for a job, the majority of respondents (48%) reported using a Friends reference, followed by 34% who used social media, and 24% who applied through the company's website. A smaller percentage of respondents (20%) used job portals, while a minority used newspaper advertisements or contractors (13% and 2% respectively) for job applications.

TABLE I. TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (N=103)

Item	Sub-Group	N=103	%age
Gender (Figure 1)		81	79%
	Male		
	Female	22	21%
	Total	103	
Age Group (Figure 2)	Up to 25 Years	31	30%
	26 to 35 Years	26	25%
	36 to 45 Years	23	22%
	37 to 45 Years	1	1%
	46 Years and Above	22	21%
	Total	103	
Employed (Figure 3)	Yes	76	74%
	No	27	26%
Total		103	
Knowing About Job (Figure 4)	Newspaper	13	13%
	Social Media	35	34%
	Company's Website	25	24%
	Through a Friend	49	48%
	Job Portals	21	20%
	Through Contractor	2	2%
	Employment Agency	15	15%

Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4 graphically represent demographic information. Employees were asked about their feelings when applying for a job, and the overwhelming response was as follows: 46% remained neutral, 26% were satisfied, and 29% were dissatisfied when applying through the newspaper. When using email, 58% were satisfied, 31% remained neutral, and only 12% were dissatisfied. Social media showed high satisfaction, with 64% satisfied, 28% remaining neutral, and 8% dissatisfied. The company's website and job portal received a similar response. Additionally, the reference of a friend was highly satisfactory, with 53% expressing satisfaction. Table 2 provides detailed information on the level of satisfaction among employees when applying for a job, while Figure 5 depicts the same response analysis.
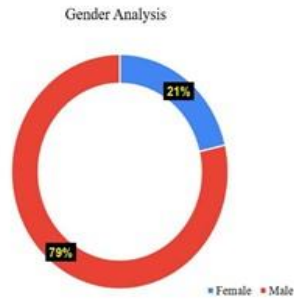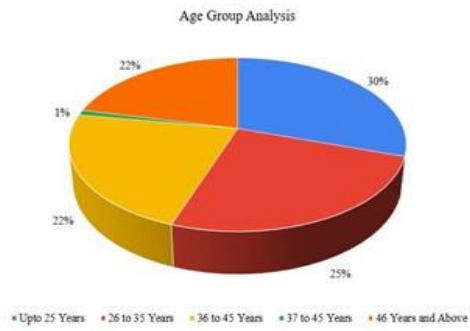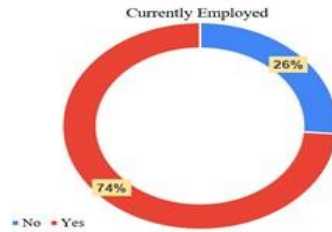
Figure 1: Gender Analysis

Figure 2: Age Group Analysis
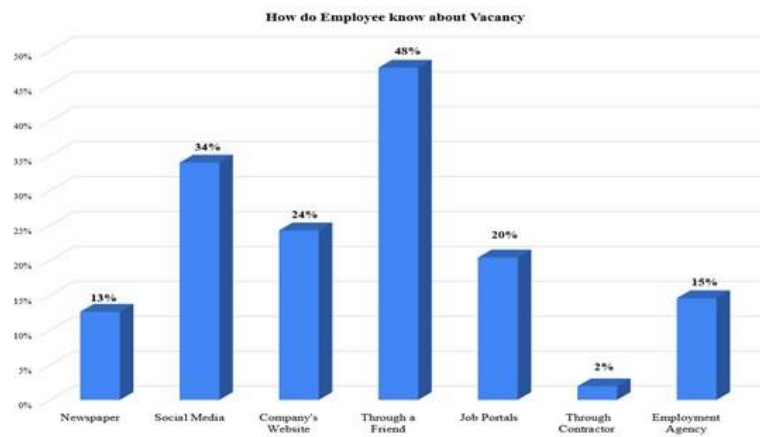

Figure 3: Currently employed status

Figure 4: Analysis of employee knowing about the Job Vacancy

Analysis of the results for various online and traditional methods of applying for a job:

TABLE II.   TABLE 2: ANALYSIS OF LEVEL OF SATISFACTION FOR APPLYING FOR A JOB BY EMPLOYEES THROUGH VARIOUS OPTIONS

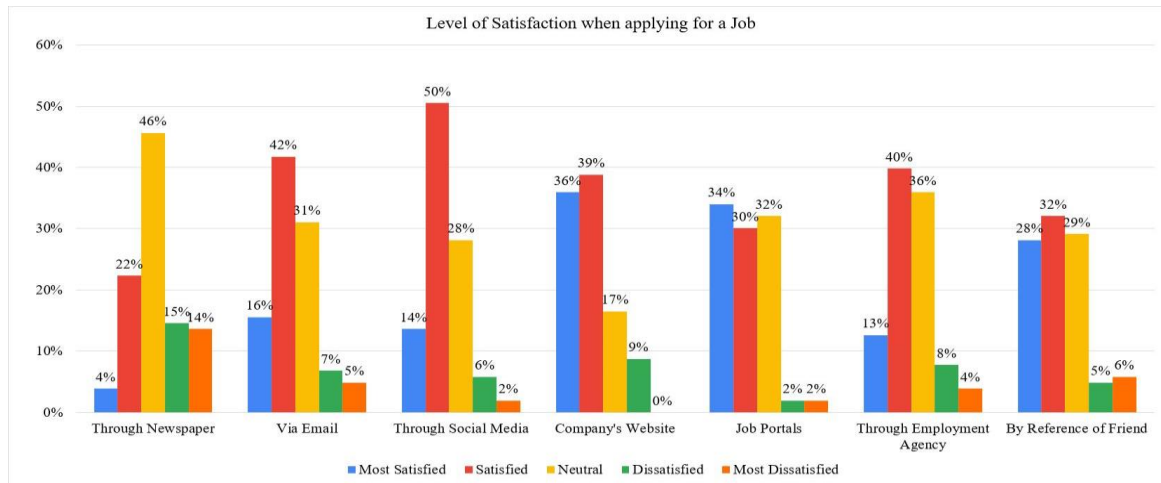| How do you feel when applying for a job?					
Options	Most Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Most Dissatisfied
Through Newspaper	4%	22%	46%	15%	14%
Via Email	16%	42%	31%	7%	5%
Through Social Media	14%	50%	28%	6%	2%
Company's Website	36%	39%	17%	9%	0%
Job Portals	34%	30%	32%	2%	2%
Through Employment Agency	13%	40%	36%	8%	4%
By Reference of Friend	28%	32%	29%	5%	6%

Figure 5: Analysis of response of applying for a job by various option

The respondents were asked about their level of agreement with regards to searching for a job through the traditional method. The results are as follows: 43% agreed that it helps in decision making, while 32% disagreed. Additionally, 42% agreed that it helps in finding related jobs, whereas 26% disagreed. In terms of considering a newspaper advertisement, 34% agreed and 29% disagreed. When it comes to reducing the chances of getting selected for a job, 33% agreed and 23% disagreed. Lastly, 33% agreed that the traditional method is trustworthy, while 29% disagreed. For a more detailed analysis, please refer to Table 3, and for a graphical representation, see Figure 6.

TABLE III.   TABLE 3: ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS' LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE WHILE SEARCHING JOB THROUGH TRADITIONAL METHODS

Q13- Traditional methods of job searching					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Helps in Decision Making	14%	29%	25%	22%	10%
Finding Related Job	10%	32%	32%	20%	6%
Consider Newspaper Ad	8%	26%	38%	21%	7%
Reduces the chance	10%	23%	44%	20%	3%
Is Trustworthy	10%	23%	38%	17%	12%

Table 4 and Figure 7 present the findings of the respondents' analysis on job application methods using online platforms. The results demonstrate that the majority of respondents hold a positive attitude towards online job applications. Specifically, 88% agreed that it assists in job searching, 81% agreed that it facilitates decision making, 78% agreed that they consider websites for job searching, 76% believed that it enhances their chances of securing a job, and 69% expressed complete trust in the online job searching approach.
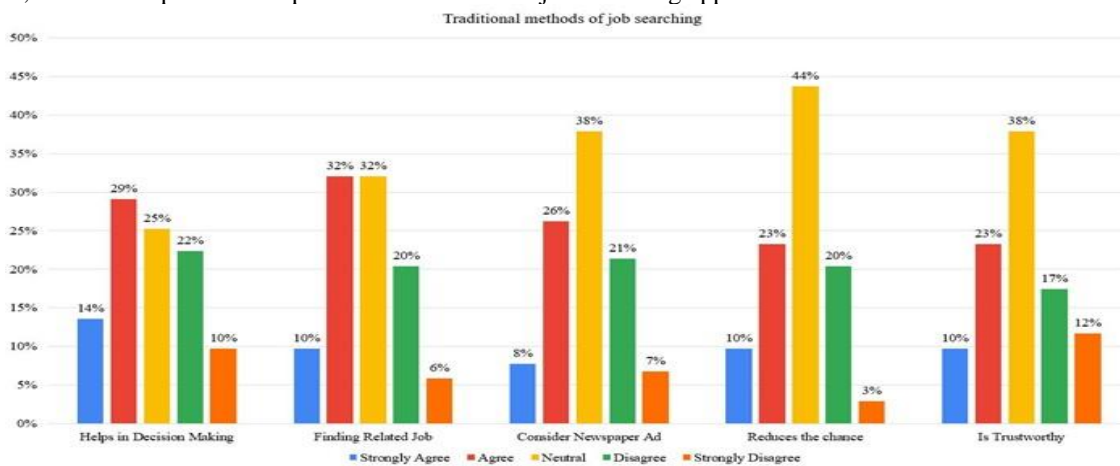

Figure 6: Analysis of respondents' employing traditional methods for job searching

TABLE IV.   TABLE 4: ANALYSIS OF APPLYING FOR JOB USING ONLINE APPROACH

Q14 -Online Methods of Job Searching					
Opinion for	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Help in Job Searching	43%	45%	10%	0%	3%

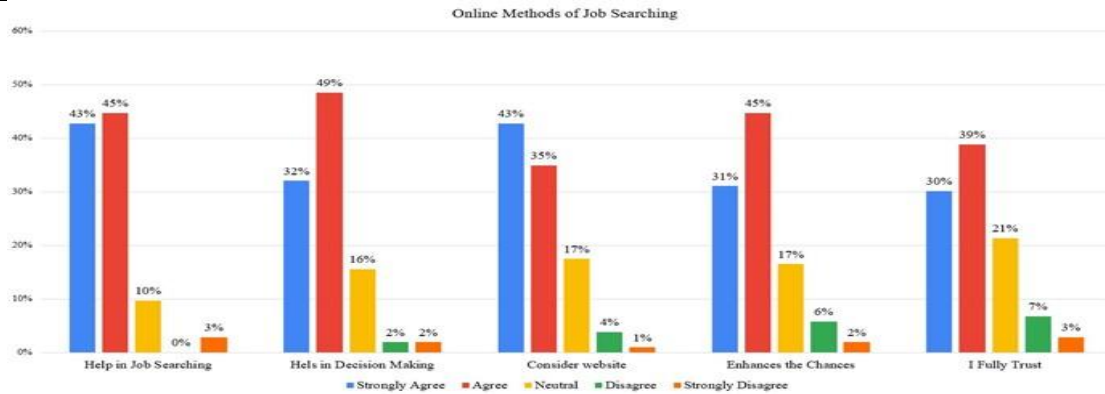|					
Helps in Decision Making	32%	49%	16%	2%	2%
Consider website	43%	35%	17%	4%	1%
Enhances the Chances	31%	45%	17%	6%	2%
I Fully Trust	30%	39%	21%	7%	3%

Figure7: Respondents' analysis for employing Online methods for job searching

During the survey, respondents were also inquired about their preferred methods for online job searching, unveiling interesting findings. Significantly, 35% of the participants expressed a predilection for perusing the company's official website, while 31% favoured utilizing Internet-based job portals. Furthermore, a captivating 22% of respondents indicated a preference for leveraging social media applications in their job search endeavours. These statistics are visually depicted in Figure 8.
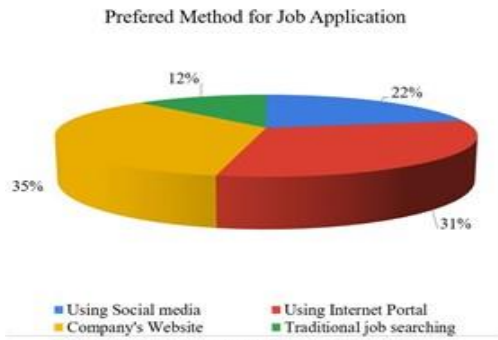

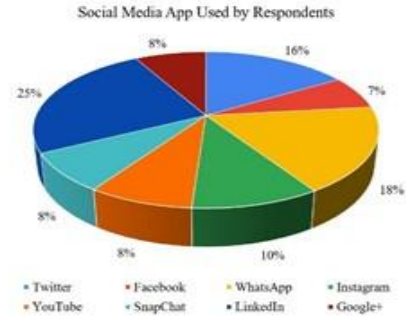Figure 8: Respondents' analysis about preferred method of Job Application

Figure 9: Respondents' analysis about preferred Social Media Application

Among the various social media applications, LinkedIn emerged as the top choice among respondents, with 25% of participants preferring it for job searching purposes.
Following closely behind, WhatsApp garnered an 18% preference rate, while Twitter and Instagram secured 16% and 10% respectively. Other notable social media platforms, such as YouTube, Snapchat, Google+, and Facebook, fell within the range of 7% to 8% preference among participants.

2)   Employers Version
Among the various social media applications, LinkedIn emerged as the top choice among respondents, with 25% of participants preferring it for job searching purposes. Following closely behind, WhatsApp garnered an 18% preference rate, while Twitter and Instagram secured 16% and 10% respectively. Other notable social media platforms, such as YouTube, Snapchat, Google+, and Facebook, fell within the range of 7% to 8% preference among participants.

TABLE V.   TABLE 5: DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE EMPLOYERS (N=35)

Item	Sub-Group	N	%age
Gender	Male	32	91%
	Female	3	9%
	Total	35	
Age Group	Up to 25 Years	10	29%
	26 to 35 Years	7	20%
	36 to 45 Years	8	23%
	46 Years and Above	10	29%
	Total	35	
Job Position	Top Management	8	23%
	Functional Management	12	34%
	Supervisory Staff	15	43%

	Total		
Call Frequency	Monthly	8	23%
	Quarterly	3	9%
	Six Monthly	1	3%
	Yearly	6	17%
	Whenever there is a need	17	49%
	Total	35	

When asked about the frequency of job applications, a significant majority of employees (49%) indicated that they apply whenever there is a need and applications are announced. Additionally, 23% of respondents reported submitting job applications on a monthly basis, while 9% and 3% stated they do so semi-annually and annually, respectively.

In terms of the channels through which potential applicants apply for jobs, the survey revealed diverse preferences. Specifically, 9% of respondents relied on newspapers for job searches, while a significant 54% utilized social media applications. Moreover, a substantial 77% of participants utilized the company's website as their primary application platform. Notably, 26% of individuals learned about job opportunities through friends, while 51% discovered them through online job boards.
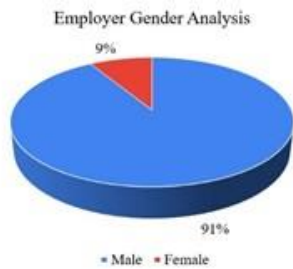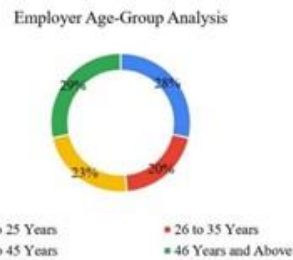

Figure 10: Employers' Gender
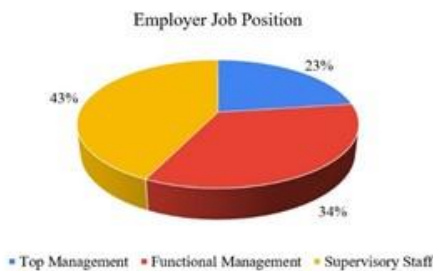

Figure 11: Employers' Age group analysis

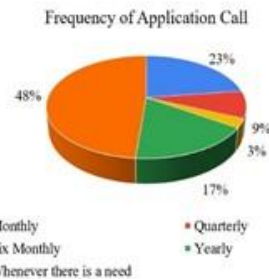Figure 12: Employers' job position analysis

Figure 13: Frequency of job advertisement

Figures 14 and 15 offer valuable insights into how employers view the preferred methods for potential employees to apply for jobs. It is worth noting that a significant majority of 77% expressed a preference for using the company's website as their primary application channel. Moreover, 54% of applicants chose to utilize social media platforms, underscoring their increasing significance in the job search process. Job portals also emerged as a popular choice, with 51% of respondents favouring them as a preferred application method. In contrast, only a mere 9% of applicants relied on traditional newspaper advertisements for job applications. Lastly, 14% of individuals reported applying for jobs through recruitment agencies, highlighting their role in connecting candidates with suitable opportunities.
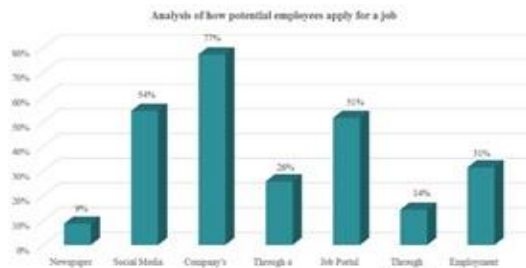

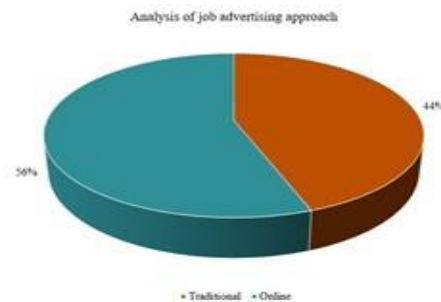Figure 14: Analysis of how potential employee prefer to apply for a job

Figure 15: Analysis of preference to advertise for a job

Overall, the survey revealed that 56% of respondents preferred online job application methods, while 44% still preferred traditional approaches. Figure 16 provides insights into why employees favoured online job applications. Notably, a significant 80% of employers believed that online methods facilitated the selection of the most suitable candidates, highlighting the benefits of digital platforms in the recruitment process. Similarly, 80% of employers expressed the opinion that the Internet played a crucial role in employee recruitment. Additionally, 83% of respondents found company websites to be a valuable resource, while an equal percentage found internet job portals to be useful. Overall, a notable 74% of participants fully trusted the online job application method.
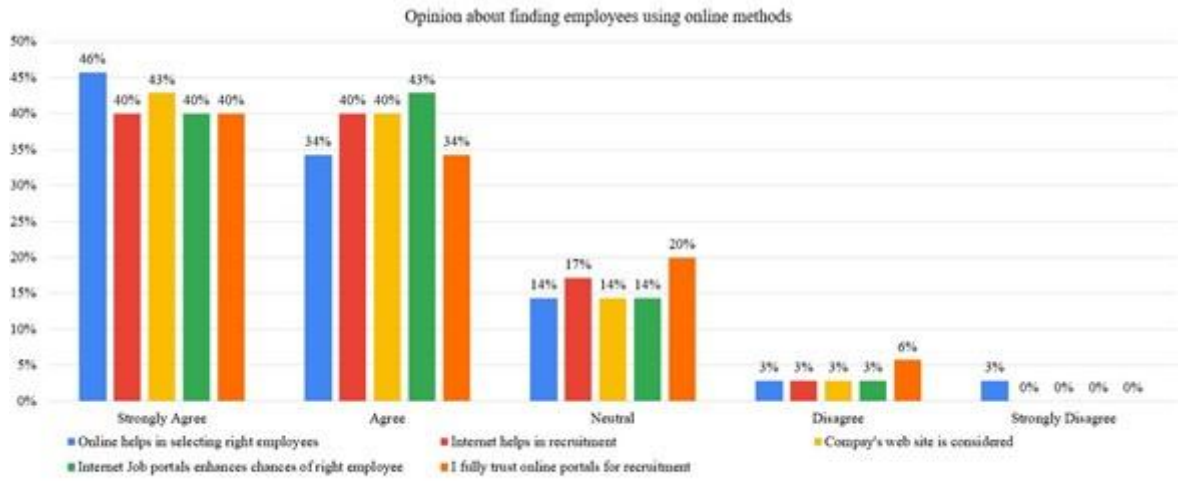

Figure 16: Employers' opinion about using online methods for recruitment
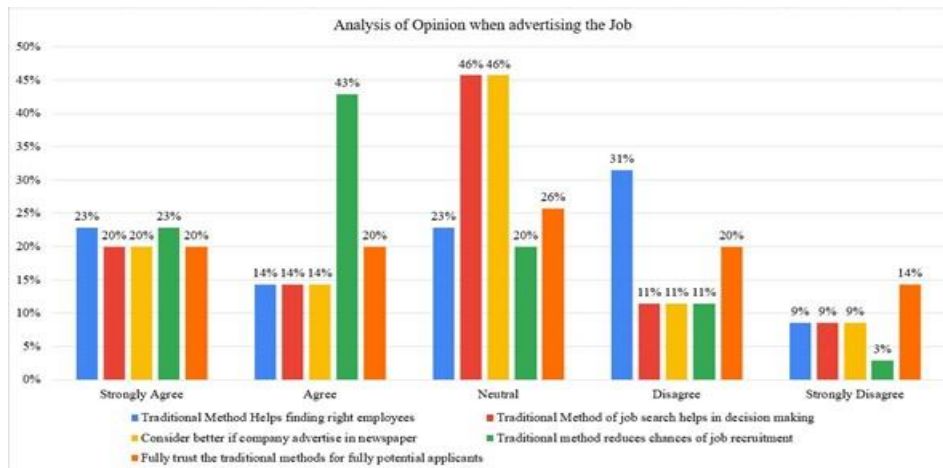

Figure 17: Employers' opinion about advertising the

Figure 17 provides a summary of the employers' opinions regarding job advertisement methods. The findings indicate that 37% of respondents agreed that traditional methods are effective in finding the right employees. Additionally, 34% expressed agreement with the notion that traditional methods aid in decision-making during the job research process. Conversely, a significant 66% of employers believed that traditional methods actually decrease the chances of successful job recruitment. Overall, the prevailing opinion suggests that relying solely on traditional methods for advertising job openings does not yield substantial benefits.

B.   Chi-Square Test

TABLE VI.   ANALYSIS OF CHI-SQUARE TEST FOR EMPLOYEES' VERSION OF CHOOSING JOB APPLYING METHOD

Employees Version							
		Observed				Expected	
		Traditional	Online	Total			
Application method	Traditional	51	75	126		12.58	18.49
	Online	52	28	80		50.09	26.97
		103	103	206			
					Chi-Square =	3.841	108.14

Table 6 presents the statistical analysis conducted, which resulted in a χ^2 value of 108.14 at a significance level of $\alpha = 95\%$. In comparison, the critical χ^2 value obtained from the table was found to be 3.841. Therefore, based on these findings, we accept the hypothesis that employees prefer the online method for job applications.

TABLE VII.   TABLE 7: ANALYSIS OF CHI-SQUARE TEST FOR EMPLOYERS' VERSION OF CHOOSING JOB APPLYING METHOD

Employers Version							
		Observed				Expected	
		Traditional	Online	Total			
Application method	Traditional	20	25	45		0.31	0.25
	Online	15	10	25		0.42	0.63
		35	35	70			
					Chi-Square =	3.841	1.60

Furthermore, a Chi-square test was conducted to examine the employer's perspective, and the results indicated a χ^2 statistical value of 1.60 at a significance level of $\alpha = 95\%$. Comparatively, the critical χ^2 value obtained from the table was found to be 3.841. As a result, based on these findings, the hypothesis that employers prefer the online method for job applications is rejected. Table 7 provides a detailed overview of these results. Sills (2014) expressed that 80% of the participants have found a job through traditional means whereas only 32% of the participants have applied through an online channel. Jobvite (2013) revealed that Facebook was 65% of recruiters' first choice using social media applications and 15% and 55% was for YouTube and Twitter respectively (Sills, 2014).

V. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to explore the preferences of employees and employers regarding job application and recruitment methods, specifically traditional and online approaches. The findings of the study proved to be intriguing and shed light on several key observations.

First, it was discovered that traditional hiring methods still hold significance in e-recruitment, with approaches like job fairs proving to be effective in the recruitment process. While newspaper ads may be losing their effectiveness, word-of-mouth and referrals continue to play a vital role and are growing in importance.

On the other hand, social media platforms have notably expedited the application process, allowing candidates to respond quickly to job advertisements. Candidates are increasingly familiar with the technology employed by employment websites, which instills confidence in their application process. Additionally, recruiters can engage with potential employees more efficiently, establishing trust and conveying the company's values.

Descriptive statistical analysis indicates that online job application methods are popular and serve various advantageous purposes for both employees and employers. However, when applying a Chi-square test to examine the results, it became evident that employees are more satisfied with online methods of job application, supporting hypothesis 1 with the finding that employees exhibit a preference for utilizing online platforms when applying for job opportunities due to factors such as convenience, accessibility, and the widespread availability of digital resources. Conversely, the data from employers suggest a preference for traditional methods, thereby not supporting hypothesis 2, which suggests that employers demonstrate a predilection for online recruitment methods owing to their efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and ability to reach a broader pool of prospective candidates in a timely manner. The implications of online recruitment systems are that managers utilizing e-recruitment systems express concerns about the accuracy, reliability, and accountability of applicant data. Another challenge posed by online recruitment is the potential frustration experienced by job seekers, as well as missed opportunities for employers to gather or provide additional information due to the absence of in-person interactions during the online application process.

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