Effect of E-Recruitment on Behavioural Intention of Candidates: Empirical Evidence From Management Undergraduates in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

With the advent of Internet Technology, the way of executing Human Resource Management function has been dramatically changed over the past. Shifting from traditional way of (labour intensive) delivering human resource management function towards more efficient, cost effective means (technology intensive) has now become the key consideration of the human resource management literature. Many firms now use electronic recruitment (e-recruitment) rather than conventional method of employee recruitment. Moreover, potential job candidates are more interested in searching and applying for job openings through internet. For the purpose of generating appropriate applicant pool, firms tend to develop attractive, content rich, easy to use and user-friendly recruitment through their own website or via job portals. However, the effect of the e-recruitment on candidates' intention to apply for the job is under studied in the Sri Lankan context. Thus, the objective of this paper is to explore the impact of e-recruitment on candidates' intention to apply for the job openings. Since management undergraduates are intensively used internet to search for job openings, 150 management undergraduates those who study in final year are surveyed through self-administered questionnaire. Multiple regression reveals that ease of use and perceived usefulness significantly influences on candidates' intention to apply. Further, a significance differences found between male and female candidates in terms of intention to apply. The findings of the study would be important to the firms to effectively carry out e-recruitment to optimize the appropriate pool of applicants.

Keywords: *content usefulness; ease of use; e-recruitment; intention apply; perceived usefulness*

1. Introduction

From the beginning of the 21st century, Information Technology (IT) began to alter the way of people's living, working, communicating, and organizing the activities (Orlikowski & Barley, 2008) and also the industries are being significantly affected because of the computerization (Brynjolfsson & Hitt, 2000). In modern business organizations, IT no longer merely supports the businesses but it becomes an integral part of it (Eriksson & Penker, 2000). Thus, the importance of IT to business is growing rapidly (Thong & Yap, 1995) since it supports to the chosen business strategies and support to shape new business strategies with its' evolving strategic role (Henderson & Venkatraman, 1993). IT has a potential impact on Marketing and Operations function (Karimi, Somers & Gupta, 2011), Human Resource Management (HRM) function which is highlighted as Electronic-Human Resource (e-HR) (Lengnick-Hall & Moritz, 2003; Rawash 2012), and Corporate Financial Reporting and Auditing (Bierstaker, Burnaby, & Thibodeau, 2001) etc.

Human Resources (HR) functions always have being on the front position of technology integration in an organization (Lengnick-Hall & Moritz, 2003). In terms of HR functions, the IT has a great influence on Recruitment (Khan, 2011), Payroll Administration & General Administration (Lengnick-Hall & Moritz,

2003) and Performance Review Management (Howell, 2002). The internet has radically changed the recruitment function from the organizational and job seekers' perspective (Khan, 2011) and the Online recruitment, which is relatively new concept in HRM is growing rapidly because its' cost effectiveness and the efficiency (Pande, 2002; Castillo 2002). Since the conventional methods of recruitment are time-consuming with high costs and limited geographic reach, recruitment through World Wide Web (WWW) is widely accepted. From the job seekers perspective the acceptance to a web page is depending on factors such as navigational ease (Braddy, Thompson, Wuensch, & Grossnickle, 2008), content of the page (Gehrke, & Turban, 1999), web appearance (Kim, & Stoel, 2004) and many more. With this great acceptance, the head hunters and job seekers access companys' own web-sites (Braddy, Thompson, Wuensch, & Grossnickle,2008), job portals/job sites, blogs and emails to meet their requirements (Khan, 2011). Out of these online recruitment methods, the job portals/ job sites are becoming most popular method among the organizations and job seekers (Khan, 2011; Pande, 2002).

The government of Sri Lanka initiated the electronic recruitment in 1978 (Sri Lanka Business Standards, 2009; Weligamage, & Siengthai, 2003). This attempt was successful and currently more than twenty five job portals are functioning in Sri Lanka (videshasewa.com) and every day over ten thousand of job seekers are visiting to a famous job site in Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka Business Standards, 2009).

Every year around 8000 graduate students enter to the competitive labour market by completing their studies and majority represent from the Faculty of Arts –oriental studies and Faculty of Management-commerce. Among these graduates below 25 years, 58 percent are unemployed, while 35 percent are in between 25-30 years (Weligamage, & Siengthai, 2003). Active job search behaviour can be identified among the fresh graduates (Saks, & Ashforth, 1999) & unemployed graduates and their active acceptance to a system/job site may determined by several factors.

Yet, research in to this phenomenon has somewhat lagged behind this rapid change, the understanding about the applicants perception on online recruitment procedures is remaining at a certain point (Sylva, & Mol, 2009; Baure et al 2006) and despite the conducted researches, ample of research have sought to identify the effect of e-recruitment on applicant behavioural intention in Sri Lanka context. Thus aim of this study is to explore the impact of e-recruitment on candidates' behavioural intention and to make a contribution to this developing issue on job seekers' perspective. The outcome of this study can be extremely useful for the existing job site providers and potential web developers to develop their websites in an effective manner and the HR departments to make their recruitment function in a way which gives highest benefit to the organization.

2. Literature Review

E-Recruitment

With the advent of internet and information technology, the way of executing HRM function has been dramatically changed over the past. Shifting from traditional way of (labor intensive) delivering HRM function towards more efficient, cost effective means (technology intensive) has now become the key consideration of the HRM (Ensher, Nielson, & Vallone, 2002). Recruitment function of HRM process has become most exposed to internet and information technology and many firms now use electronic recruitment (e-recruitment) rather than conventional method of employee recruitment. Further, candidates are also interested in seeking information about job openings of their desired employers through internet rather than traditional methods like reading employment columns in the newspapers. When it comes to e-recruitment from company perspective, two methods are mainly applied: (1) job boards & (2) corporate websites career section (Kashi, & Zheng, 2013). Job boards refer to the publishing job openings on the web with limited information about overall company. However, with the second approach company provides candidates with more information about company products and services, company core values, human resource policies, benefits and rewards (Cober, Brown, Blumental, Doverspike, & Levy, 2000). When it comes to Sri Lankan context, several companies have been established to especially for publishing companies' job openings. Job seekers are keen to such

websites since it provides collection of job openings.

Behavioural Intention (BI)

Generally, it is difficult to change the individuals' attitudes and behaviour to adapt in to new initiatives. Since e-recruitment is relatively new phenomenon in the HRM context some of the job seekers are still highly believe on conventional recruitment methods. Thus, from the company point of view, it is important to change the attitudes and behaviours of the potential job seekers and encourage them to use more on e-recruitment method. Once they develop positive attitudes towards e-recruitment, they tend to (1) apply online for the job openings, (2) return to the website to apply for a job in future and (3) recommend others to use it. Thus, behavioural intention of candidates in this study is measured by these three constructs.

Predictors of candidates' Behavioural Intention

The main objective of adapting to e-recruitment is to develop a large pool of appropriate candidates for the vacant positions and select the best candidates among them. Even though, such recruiting websites publish large number of recruitment notice, perhaps companies are unable to motivate most deserved candidates to apply for the job. This may due to the several reasons such as lack of information about company, vacant position, human resource polices and benefits associated with the job and difficulties in navigating information in the web. Thus, it is necessary to develop attractive, content rich, easy to use and user-friendly website to implement the recruitment function. The most widely used and validated model of prediction individuals behaviour to use technology related systems is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989). TAM which is developed by Davis (1989) suggests that individuals' intention use a technology related system determined by two main construct: (1) perceived usefulness (PU) & (2) perceived ease of use (PEOU). Thus, conceptual framework for this study is illustrated in Figure 1 and the variables are described in preceding section.
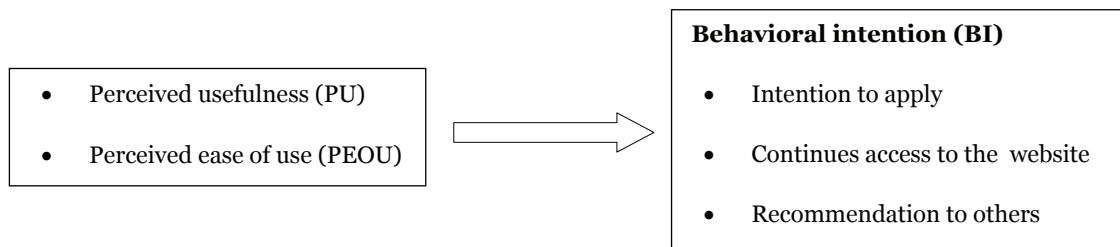

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Perceived Usefulness (PU)

PU denotes the degree to which individual's perceive that the use of technology related system would improve his or her conditions. Job seekers generally would like to gain comprehensive information about salary, benefits, and rewards and other organizational policy and practices to make right judgments of the potential employers (Fountain, 2005). Through e-recruitment company is able to provide job seekers with adequate information like effective resume writing, how to face interview, career development techniques to maximize the usefulness (Tong, & Sivan, 2005; Rosencrantz, 1999). Thus, when e-recruitment provides such additional information, it is more likely to increase candidates' intention to apply for the job, subsequent access to the web and recommendation to others to use the web.

H$_{1a}$: PU is positively associated with candidates' intention to apply for the job online.

H$_{1b}$: PU is positively associated with candidates' intention to continuously access to website

H$_{1c}$: PU is positively associated with candidates' intention to recommend websites to others

Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)

PEOU refers to the user's perception of the amount of effort that includes committed time and resources to use a system (Davis, 1989). Many job seekers now tend to use e-recruitment compared to other traditional methods (newspaper advertisement) as it is much easier for them to access the required information regarding range of job openings and other job related particulars. However, the likelihood of continuous using of the e-recruitment, applying for the job online and recommendation of the system to others is enhanced when the e-recruitment procedure of the company is relatively easier for job seekers to navigate, clear and understandable and well organized (Teo, 2001). For instance in some cases what job seekers want to do is that only posting their resumes. Further, when job seekers send application continually, they can only click to accept the application to the company of interest without resending the resume´s and personal information (Kashi & Zheng, 2013).

H$_{2a}$: PEOU is positively associated with candidates' intention to apply for the job online.

H$_{2b}$: PEOU is positively associated with candidates' intention to continuously access to website

H$_{2c}$: PEOU is positively associated with candidates' intention to recommend websites to others

3. Method

The main objective of this study was to identifying the Effect of E-Recruitment on Behavioural Intention of the candidates with the empirical evidences from management undergraduates of Sri Lanka. The sample consisted with 150 (n = 150) management undergraduates from University of Ruhuna. The entire sample represented final year management undergraduates who are going to enter to the job market and having high potential to surf the jobsites. Survey method was used to collect the data and the questionnaire comprised with four parts to examine the demographic variables, PEOU, PU and the behavioural intention. Random sampling method is used to distribute the questionnaire among the sample.

Variables of the study were measured using different valid and reliable scales. The PEOU, PU and the Behavioural Intention is measured by using seven point Lickert scale ranging from (7) "Strongly Agree" to (1) "Strongly Disagree". A sample question used to measure the PEOU was "The web site does not require a lot of mental effort to navigate". The Cronbach alpha for the scale was 0.807. "The web site Provides detailed information about employer", was an item used to measure the PU and the scale meets the reliability (0.788) measured using Cronbach alpha. The Behavioural Intention was measured by using three sub variables: Intention to apply, Continues access to the website and Recommendation to others. Reliability of the scale for this study was 0.805. Sample question used to measure the Behavioural Intention was "I would definitely return to this website to apply for a job in future".

4. Results

Initially the frequencies of the demographic variable were analyzed and out of the total respondents 82% were female and remaining 18% were males. The results revealed that most of the respondents (83%) are generally using Top Jobs to surf the vacancies while 13% is using CV.lk and the remaining 4% visits Mega Jobs.

An independent sample T- Test was carried out to identify whether there is a significant different of behavioural intention among the male and female candidates. The results highlighted that there is a significant difference between the Gender (ie: Male & Female) and the Behavioural Intention (t = -2.531, p = 0.012). By lengthening the independent sample T- Test towards to the sub variables of the Behavioural Intention (Intention to apply, Continues access to the website, recommendation to others) following significance differences

were identified. As the table 1 illustrates it was identified that there is significant difference between two gender categories and Intention to apply (t = -2.493, p = 0.016), Continues access to the website (t = -3.176, p = 0.002). But there is no significance different found in between Male & Female and the recommendation to others (t = -1.414, p = 0.331).

Table 1 : Results of Independent Sample T- Test

Variable	N	Mean	Std. devi:	Sig.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Independent Sample T- test – Gender & Intention to Apply						
Male	27	4.85	0.907	0.031	-	0.016
Female	123	5.38	1.346		-2.493	
Independent Sample T- test – Gender & Continuous Access to the web site						
Male	27	4.85	0.989	0.214	*-3.176*	0.002
Female	123	5.54	1.346			
Independent Sample T- test – Gender & Recommendations to others						
Male	27	5.22	1.188	0.447	-1.414	0.159
Female	123	5.55	1.080			
Independent Sample T- test – Gender & Behavioral Intention						
Male	27	4.975	0.947	0.368	-2.531	0.012
Female	123	5.493	0.966			

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the contribution and the significance level of each independent variables (perceived usefulness and ease of use) to dependent variable. The study tried to identify the contribution and the significance level of each of two independent variables to the dependent variable (Behavioural Intention) as a whole and the three sub depended variables (Intention to Apply, Continuous Access to the web site and Recommendations to others) individually. The results revealed that the PU and the PEOU are positively associated with the candidates' intention to apply. Based on those findings, the null hypothesis can be rejected. Further the hypothesis $H_{1(b)}$ and $H_{2(b)}$ are tested through a regression analysis and the results showed that PU and the PEOU are positively associated with the candidates' continual access to website and thus the null hypothesis can be rejected in this regards. The hypothesis $H_{1(c)}$ and the $H_{2(c)}$ are also tested by using the regression analysis and by supporting to the alternative hypothesis it was found that the PU and the PEOU are positively associated with the intention to recommend the website to others. Finally, the regression analysis done in between independent variables and the dependent variables and it is identified that there is a significant relationship between PEOU and the intention to apply (β = 0.558, p< 0.05), and Continues access to the website (β = 0.570, p< 0.05). Further it revealed that, the dependent variable, recommendation to others is significantly predicted by the PEOU (β = 0.386, p< 0.05) and PU (β = 0.558, p< 0.05). But no significant relationship found in between PU and Intention to Apply (β = 0.063, p>0.05) & Continuous Access to the web site (β = 0.136, p> 0.05). In addition to that the regression analysis was performed in between the independent variables and the Behavioural Intention (dependent variable) as a whole and the results revealed that there is a significant relationship in between the PU and Behavioural Intention (β = 0.217, p< 0.05) and also in between the PEOU and Behavioural Intention (β = 0.541, p< 0.05).

Table 2 : Results of Regression Analysis

Independent Variable	B	Std. Error	t-value	Sig.
Regression Analysis – Intention to Apply & Independent Variables				
PU	0.086	0.094	0.922	0.358
PEOU	0.736	0.090	8.156	0.000
Regression Analysis – Continuous Access to the web site & Independent Variables				
PU	0.153	0.083	*1.843*	0.067
PEOU	0.455	0.080	0.570	0.000
Regression Analysis – Recommendations to others & Independent Variables				
PU	0.440	0.080	5.495	0.000
PEOU	0.435	0.077	5.654	0.000
Regression Analysis – Behavioral Intention & Independent Variables				
PU	0.226	0.069	3.294	0.001
PEOU	0.542	0.066	8.199	0.000

5. Conclusion and Implications

The objective of this paper is to explore the impact of e-recruitment on candidates' behavioural intention. The study flows to identify the relationship and the significance between the PEOU, PU and behavioural intention. The TAM which is developed by Davis (1989), suggest that individuals' intention to use a technology related system determined by two main construct: (1) PU & (2) PEOU. By supporting to the TAM, this study found that the PU and the PEOU are the significant predictors of the behavioural intention. Further the study found a positive relationship in between the PU, PEOU and the behavioural intention.

Although the women were less likely to use the computers during 1980s', it was disappeared (Ono, & Zavodny, 2003) and women are more likely than men to use computers & internet (Panis et al 1995; Ono, & Zavodny, 2003). By sustaining with those findings, this study found that a significance difference exists between male and females with the behavioural intention.

Since the e- recruitment is a key for organizations to maintain competitive efficiency level and high productivity, it is vital to have a ground to identify the jobseekers perspective on e-recruitment. Several previous studies indicate some important features, a web site should carried out which has a high influence on job seekers behavioural intention. In our conclusion, the Behavioural Intention of candidates is significantly affected by the Perceived Usefulness and the Perceived Ease of Use of a job site. A job site or a job portal always should give useful information to the job seekers and it should provide navigation efficiency and simplicity.

There are some limitations of this paper. First, the study only consider a sample out of the final year Management undergraduates of University of Ruhuna. If the scope of the review spread to the other faculties of the University or various Universities, the paper will end up with a finding differ from the present findings. Second, the review is restricted to a minimum sample size which reduces a great volume of responses. Thus, extended researches should be conducted by using various jobseekers without limiting to a certain scope.

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