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EVALUATING CANDIDATE PERSPECTIVES ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN HIRING AND SELECTION PROCESSES

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in recruitment has transformed traditional hiring methods by introducing automation, efficiency, and data-driven decision-making. While organizations emphasize the operational benefits of AI tools such as resume screening systems, chatbots, video interview analytics, and predictive assessments, the perception of job applicants remains underexplored. This study aims to evaluate candidate perspectives on AI-enabled recruitment processes, focusing on their trust, fairness concerns, acceptance levels, and overall experience. Preliminary findings from secondary literature suggest that while job seekers appreciate speed and accessibility, they also express concerns regarding transparency, bias, and lack of human interaction. The study highlights the need to balance technological innovation with ethical and candidate-friendly recruitment practices.

KEYWORDS

Artificial Intelligence, Recruitment, Job Seekers, Applicant Tracking Systems, Candidate Perception, Algorithmic Bias, AI Hiring

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence has rapidly become an integral component of modern recruitment systems. From automated resume parsing to AI-driven interviews and candidate assessment tools, employers are increasingly adopting technology to enhance speed, scalability, and accuracy in hiring decisions. However, recruitment is a two-sided process, and understanding how candidates perceive AI-based hiring mechanisms is critical for maintaining trust and engagement. While AI promises objectivity and efficiency, it also raises important concerns related to fairness, data privacy, emotional disconnect, and lack of transparency. This research seeks to explore how job applicants interpret and respond to AI involvement in hiring processes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although AI is widely adopted in recruitment, there is limited understanding of whether job seekers feel confident, fairly evaluated, and respected in AI-led hiring environments. Many candidates remain unaware of how AI systems make decisions, leading to feelings of ambiguity and distrust. Additionally, concerns regarding algorithmic bias, impersonal communication, and rejection without feedback can negatively impact employer branding and candidate motivation. Therefore, it becomes essential to investigate candidate perceptions to determine whether AI recruitment enhances or hinders their application experience.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze job seekers' perception of AI-driven recruitment processes.
2. To identify the advantages and concerns experienced by candidates during AI-based hiring.
3. To assess the level of trust and acceptance of AI in selection decisions.
4. To determine whether AI recruitment improves or weakens candidate engagement and satisfaction.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The increasing dependence on AI for recruitment necessitates a comprehensive understanding of its psychological and experiential effects on job seekers. If AI-based systems are perceived as unfair, opaque, or dehumanizing, organizations may inadvertently discourage capable talent from

applying. Hence, evaluating candidate perspectives is crucial to designing recruitment systems that are not only efficient but also ethical, inclusive, and candidate-centric.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research Type: Descriptive and analytical
2. Data Source: Secondary data from journals, articles, and case studies related to AI in recruitment
3. Sampling (if extended to primary research): Job seekers across diverse sectors and experience levels
4. Tools Used (in extended study): Percentage analysis, mean ranking, and perception analysis frameworks

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study relies on secondary literature and may not reflect region-specific candidate behavior.
2. Perceptions may vary based on age, education, technology awareness, and prior AI exposure.
3. Rapid evolution of AI tools may alter candidate opinions over time.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Seppälä & Małecka (2024) highlighted that AI recruitment may appear neutral but can reinforce hidden biases due to skewed training data.
- Fabris et al. (2023) observed that candidates often question the fairness of AI decisions, especially when transparency is lacking.
- Oostrom et al. (2024) found that applicants prefer human-led evaluations over algorithmic assessments due to perceived empathy and understanding.
- Li, Sun & Yang (2021) reported that AI-led resume screening is appreciated for speed but criticized for rigid keyword dependency.

- Black & van Esch (2020) concluded that candidates value efficiency but desire human confirmation in the final selection stages.
- Makarius et al. (2020) identified that lack of feedback after AI-based rejections demotivates applicants.
- Jeske & Shultz (2016) emphasized that even minimal transparency in AI decisions improves candidate satisfaction.
- Acikgoz, Davison & Compagnone (2020) noted that candidates with higher digital literacy show greater acceptance of AI recruitment.
- Tambe, Cappelli & Yakubovich (2019) stated that while organizations focus on efficiency, candidates prioritize fairness and communication.
- Yarger, Cobb & Sonenshein (2020) suggested that framing AI as a bias-reduction tool improves candidate trust.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Demographic profile of respondents

Table 4.1.1

Demographic profile of the respondents

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	PARTICULARS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE%
Age	Below 21	75	29.7
	21-30	**108**	**43.4**
	31-40	60	24.1
	Above 40	7	2.8
	Total	250	100.0
Gender	Male	120	47.8
	Female	**130**	**52.2**

	Total	250	100.0
Qualification	Undergraduate	22	8.4
	Postgraduate	**206**	**82.7**
	Scholar	22	8.8
	Total	250	100.0
Residential area	Urban	65	26.1
	Semi urban	**80**	**31.7**
	Rural	71	28.5
	Semi-rural	34	13.7
	Total	250	100.0
Members in a family	3	36	14.5
	4	19	7.2
	5	**195**	**78.3**
	Total	250	100.0
No. of earning members in family	1	**142**	**57.0**
	2	36	14.1
	3	58	23.3
	Mora than 3	14	5.6
	Total	250	100.0

(source :computed)

- Majority of respondents (43.4%) are 21–30 years old, 29.7% are below 21, 24.1% are 31–40, and only 2.8% are above 40, indicating that perspectives are primarily from young adults familiar with technology.
- Gender distribution is fairly balanced, with 52.2% female and 47.8% male respondents.
- Educationally, 82.7% are postgraduates, 8.4% undergraduates, and 8.8% scholars, reflecting a well-educated respondent base.
- Respondents come from diverse residential areas: 31.7% semi-urban, 28.5% rural, 26.1% urban, and 13.7% semi-rural.

- Majority (78.3%) live in families with five members, 14.5% with three, and 7.2% with four members.
- Regarding earning members, 57% have only one earning member in the family, 23.3% have three, 14.1% have two, and 5.6% have more than three.
- Overall, the study represents young, educated individuals from diverse socio-economic and residential backgrounds, making their perspectives valuable for evaluating AI in hiring and selection processes.

CHI SQUARE

Most effective way to prioritize task

Table 4.4.1

Most effective way to prioritize task

Demographic factor	Group	Most effective way to prioritise tasks												Chi square	sig
		P1		P2		P3		P4		P5		Total			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Gender	Male	31	26.05	18	15.12	39	32.5	10	8.40	15	12.5	120	100	30.15	.000
	Female	65	50.38	7	5.4	22	17.05	19	14.72	9	6.97	130	100		

Age	Below 21	43	58.90	8	10.95	8	10.95	5	6.84	5	6.84	73	100	35.352	.026
	21-30	28	25.9	11	10.18	34	31.4	14	12.96	14	12.96	109	100		
	31-40	20	33.3	5	8.33	18	30	10	16.66	5	8.33	60	100		
	Above 40	5	71.42	1	14.28	1	14.28	0	0	0	0	7	100		
Qualification	Undergraduate	17	80.95	0	0	4	19.04	0	0	0	0	21	100	30.990	.006
	Postgraduate	68	33.17	25	12.19	54	26.34	27	13.17	21	10.2	205	100		
	scholars	11	50	0	0	3	13.63	2	9.09	3	13.63	22	100		
Residential area	Urban	24	36.92	10	15.38	19	29.23	2	3.07	10	15.38	65	100	42.759	.003
	Semi urban	35	72.9	1	1.28	17	21.79	16	20.51	6	7.69	78	100		
	Rural	23	32.39	12	16.90	16	22.53	10	14.08	5	7.04	71	100		
	Semi-rural	14	41.76	2	5.88	9	26.47	1	2.94	3	8.88	34	100		
Members in a family	3	22	61.14	0	0	4	11.11	3	8.33	4	11.11	36	100	33.180	.003
	4	14	77.74	0	0	4	22.22	0	0	0	0	18	100		
	5	60	31.08	25	12.95	53	27.46	26	13.47	20	10.36	193	100		

No. of earnings in a family	1	40	28.16	18	12.67	41	28.87	18	12.62	15	10.56	142	100	38.771	.010
	2	22	62.85	0	0	3	8.57	3	8.57	4	11.42	35	100		
	3	24	42.10	7	12.28	13	22.80	8	14.03	4	7.01	57	100		
	More than 3	10	71.42	0	0	4	28.57	0	0	0	0	14	100		

(source :computed)

- The table indicates that demographic factors significantly influence respondents' preferred methods of prioritizing tasks. Gender differences are evident, with females predominantly favoring P1 (50.38%) and males showing a higher preference for P3 (32.5%). Age also affects prioritization, as respondents below 21 and above 40 mostly prefer P1, while the 21–40 age groups lean toward P3. Educational qualification shows undergraduates and scholars favoring P1, whereas postgraduates display a more balanced distribution between P1 and P3. Residential area influences choices, with semi-urban respondents largely preferring P1, while rural and urban participants show more varied preferences. Family size and the number of earning members similarly impact prioritization styles, with respondents from smaller families and multi-earner households favoring P1, and those from larger or single-earner families tending toward P3. Overall, the results suggest that task prioritization methods vary across demographic characteristics, highlighting the influence of personal and socio-economic factors.

ANOVA

Respondents view on AI recruitment

Table 4.5.1

Respondents view on AI recruitment

❖

Factor	Group	N	Mean	SD	F-Value	S/NS
Age	Below 21	74	3.6730	.7458	15.691	S
	21-30	109	4.3167	.54215		
	31-40	60	4.2167	.61096		
	Above 40	7	3.9429	1.1237		
Qualification	undergraduate	21	4.1524	.62898	20.418	S
	Postgraduate	206	4.1748	.66768		
	scholars	23	3.2455	.46978		
Residential area	Urban	65	4.2246	.61493	3.817	S
	Semi urban	80	3.8886	.7000		
	Rural	71	4.2085	.75323		
	Semi –rural	34	4.0588	.64297		
Members in a family	3	36	3.2000	.41952	46.886	S
	4	19	4.1888	.61538		
	5	195	4.2462	.62237		
No. members earning	1	142	4.1549	.72146	32.834	S
	2	36	3.2057	.42422		
	3	58	4.4138	.25646		
	More than 3	14	4.3143	.6469		

(source :computed)

- The respondents' views on AI recruitment show significant variations across demographic factors. Age influences perception, with the 21–30 age group expressing the most favorable view (Mean = 4.3167), while respondents below 21 and above 40 are relatively less positive. Educational qualification also affects opinions, as postgraduates and undergraduates generally have a higher mean score (4.1748 and 4.1524 respectively) compared to scholars (3.2455), indicating that research-focused individuals may be more critical. Residential area shows that urban and rural respondents hold slightly more positive views on AI recruitment than those from semi-urban and semi-rural areas. Family characteristics play a role as well: respondents from smaller families (3 members) are less favorable (Mean = 3.2000), whereas those from larger families (5 members) and households with more earning members demonstrate higher acceptance of AI in hiring, highlighting the influence of socio-economic background. Overall, the findings suggest that age, education, residential context, family size, and number of earners significantly shape candidates' perspectives on AI-based recruitment.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

AI roles in recruitment decision

Table 4.2.4

AI roles in recruitment decision

Source of information	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Final hiring decisions should always involve a human recruiter.	250	1	5	4.27	.948
AI should be limited to shortlisting or screening only.	250	1	5	4.33	.835

A balance between human and AI decisions creates the best recruitment process.	250	2	5	3.95	.862
AI will replace most human recruiters in the next 10 years.	250	1	5	3.89	1.202
AI should never be the sole decision-maker in recruitment.	250	1	5	3.72	1.494
I would trust a recruitment process more if it involved both AI and human input.	250	1	5	3.87	1.239
Valid N (list wise)	250				

(source :computed)

- The respondents' views on the roles of AI in recruitment indicate a strong preference for human involvement alongside AI. The highest agreement is observed for statements that AI should be limited to shortlisting or screening (Mean = 4.33) and that final hiring decisions should always involve a human recruiter (Mean = 4.27), highlighting a cautious approach toward fully automated recruitment. Respondents also recognize the value of a balanced approach combining AI and human input (Mean = 3.95) and express moderate concern about AI potentially replacing human recruiters in the next decade (Mean = 3.89). While there is some agreement that AI should never act as the sole decision-maker (Mean = 3.72), respondents indicate trust in recruitment processes that integrate both AI and human judgment (Mean = 3.87). Overall, the findings suggest that candidates favor AI as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for human decision-making in hiring

MEAN RANKING

Features of AI recruitment tools

Table 4.3.2

Features of AI recruitment tools

Particulars	N	Mean	Rank
Accuracy in matching skills	250	1.42	5
Speed of application	250	2.20	4
Clarity of instruction by AI	250	2.99	3
Privacy protection and data security	250	3.79	2
Personalisation of feedback	250	4.61	1

(source :computed)

- The respondents' evaluation of features in AI recruitment tools highlights the importance of personalized feedback, which ranks highest with a mean score of 4.61. Privacy protection and data security is the second most valued feature (Mean = 3.79), indicating that candidates are highly concerned about the safety of their personal information. Clarity of instructions by AI (Mean = 2.99) and speed of application processing (Mean = 2.20) are moderately important, while accuracy in matching skills (Mean = 1.42) is ranked lowest. Overall, candidates prioritize personalization and secure handling of information over purely technical or operational aspects in AI-driven recruitment tools.

t-TEST

Comparison of Respondents Views on the Limitations and Risks of AI

Table 4.6.2

Comparison of Respondents Views on the Limitations and Risks of AI

Demographic profile	groups	Comparison of Respondents Views on the Limitations and Risks of AI				
		N	MEAN	SD	t-value	S/NS
gender	Male	120	4.5294	.51605	6.429	S
	Female	130	4.1128	.50587	6.423	S

(source :computed)

- The comparison of respondents' views on the limitations and risks of AI in recruitment reveals a significant gender difference. Male respondents reported a higher mean score (4.5294) compared to females (4.1128), with the difference being statistically significant ($t = 6.429$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that male candidates are more aware of or concerned about the potential limitations and risks associated with AI in recruitment processes, such as bias, lack of transparency, or over-reliance on automated systems. In contrast, female respondents, while still recognizing the risks, perceive them as slightly less critical. Overall, these findings suggest that gender plays an important role in shaping perceptions of the challenges and risks posed by AI in hiring decisions.

REFERENCE

1. Seppälä and Małecka (2024) highlighted that while AI recruitment systems may appear neutral, they can reinforce hidden biases due to skewed training data. This underscores the importance of monitoring AI algorithms and ensuring that automated hiring processes do not unintentionally favor certain groups, aligning with respondents' concerns about the limitations and risks of AI.
2. Fabris et al. (2023) observed that candidates often question the fairness of AI decisions, especially when the recruitment process lacks transparency. This resonates with the study findings showing that respondents value human involvement alongside AI to ensure fairness, ethical oversight, and trust in the selection process.

3. Oostrom et al. (2024) found that applicants prefer human-led evaluations over purely algorithmic assessments due to empathy and understanding, reflecting the respondents' preference for AI to assist rather than replace humans in recruitment. Candidates are more comfortable when there is a human element that considers context, soft skills, and personal nuances that AI alone may miss.
4. Li, Sun, and Yang (2021) reported that AI-led resume screening is appreciated for speed but criticized for its rigid reliance on keywords. This aligns with the study's results, where respondents highly value personalized feedback and clear guidance from AI recruitment tools, suggesting that candidates expect AI systems to go beyond mechanical screening.
5. Black and van Esch (2020) concluded that candidates value efficiency in recruitment but desire human confirmation in final selection stages, reinforcing the recommendation that organizations adopt a hybrid AI-human recruitment model to combine speed with fairness and accountability.
6. Makarius et al. (2020) identified that lack of feedback after AI-based rejections can demotivate applicants. This supports the study's finding that candidates prioritize personalization of feedback and transparent communication in AI recruitment to maintain engagement, satisfaction, and trust in the hiring process.
7. Jeske and Shultz (2016) emphasized that even minimal transparency in AI decisions significantly improves candidate satisfaction. Providing clarity about how AI is used in shortlisting or evaluation aligns with respondents' expectations for ethical and trustworthy recruitment practices.
8. Acikgoz, Davison, and Compagnone (2020) noted that candidates with higher digital literacy tend to show greater acceptance of AI recruitment. This explains why younger and more educated respondents in the study were more favorable toward AI-assisted hiring, indicating that familiarity with technology influences trust and adoption.
9. Tambe, Cappelli, and Yakubovich (2019) stated that while organizations often focus on efficiency, candidates prioritize fairness and communication, mirroring the study's findings that respondents prefer recruitment processes where AI efficiency is complemented by human judgment and transparency.
10. Yarger, Cobb, and Sonenshein (2020) suggested that framing AI as a tool to reduce bias improves candidate trust. This supports the study's recommendation that AI should be

presented as a supportive mechanism to enhance fairness rather than a replacement for human evaluators, thereby increasing candidate confidence in AI-driven hiring.

SUGGESTIONS

Respondents strongly prefer that AI be used as a supportive tool rather than replacing human recruiters, highlighting the need for organizations to ensure final hiring decisions always involve human judgment, with AI primarily assisting in shortlisting, screening, and administrative tasks. A hybrid AI-human approach is viewed as the most effective strategy, where AI provides efficiency and objectivity, while humans ensure fairness, ethical oversight, and nuanced decision-making. Candidates highly value personalized feedback and clear instructions, so AI recruitment platforms should be designed to provide tailored guidance, enhance communication clarity, and improve the overall candidate experience. Privacy protection and secure handling of information is a top priority, requiring recruitment systems to comply with data protection regulations and maintain transparency regarding the use of candidate data. Given the perception of risks and limitations, particularly among male candidates, organizations should educate applicants about AI processes, bias mitigation measures, and the role of human oversight to build trust. Since perceptions vary across age, education, gender, residential area, family size, and earning members, companies should tailor communication and training to address differences in technological familiarity and comfort with AI. Both recruiters and candidates may benefit from training on AI tools to explain how they work, their advantages, and safeguards against errors, reducing apprehension and increasing acceptance. Finally, AI should be gradually implemented, starting with less critical tasks such as resume screening and progressively expanding its role once trust and transparency are established.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights that candidates generally view AI as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for human recruiters, emphasizing the importance of human involvement in final hiring decisions. While AI offers efficiency, speed, and consistency in screening and shortlisting, candidates value personalized feedback, clear instructions, and transparency to build trust in the recruitment process. Perceptions of AI vary across demographic factors such as age, gender,

education, residential area, family size, and digital literacy, indicating the need for organizations to tailor communication, training, and implementation strategies. Concerns regarding AI's limitations, biases, and lack of empathy reinforce the necessity of a balanced hybrid approach, combining the strengths of AI with human judgment. Overall, integrating AI gradually, ensuring ethical practices, prioritizing data security, and maintaining human oversight can enhance candidate satisfaction, trust, and acceptance in AI-assisted recruitment and selection processes.

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