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Virtual Recruitment Strategies in the Post-Pandemic Era

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	3
1.1 Research Problem.....	5
1.2 Research Questions.....	5
1.3 Research Objectives.....	6
1.4 Research Hypotheses.....	6
1.5 Significance of Study.....	7
2. Literature Review.....	8
2.1 Human Resource Management.....	8
2.2 Recruitment.....	10
2.2.1 Recruitment in HRM.....	10
2.2.2 Recruitment and Covid 19 Pandemic.....	11
2.3 Recruitment Techniques and Types.....	13
2.3.1 Advertisement.....	13
2.3.2 Contracting Agencies.....	13
2.3.3 Employee Referrals.....	14
2.3.4 Labor and Union Offices.....	14
2.3.5 E-Recruitment.....	15
2.3.6 Electronic Application system.....	16
2.3.7 E-Advertisement.....	17
2.4 Selection.....	19
2.4.1 Interviews.....	21
2.4.2 E- Interviews.....	21
2.4.3 Line Manager Approval.....	22
2.4.4 Reference Checks.....	22
2.4.5 Physical Checks.....	22
2.5 HRM and COVID-19.....	24

2.5.1 Background.....	24
2.5.2 Recruitment and Selections competency bases.....	26
2.5.3 Talent Acquisition.....	27
2.5.4 Digitalization of the recruitment process.....	30
2.5.5 Trends and Challenges of E-recruitment.....	34
3. Methodology.....	37
3.1 Research design.....	37
3.2 Target group.....	37
3.3 Data Collection Methods.....	37
3.4 Data Analysis.....	38
4. Results.....	39
4.1 Questionnaire Survey.....	39
4.1.1 Demographic characteristics of the participants.....	39
4.1.2 Examining the immediate response to the pandemic (Hypothesis 1).....	40
4.1.3 Identifying the Effective Virtual Recruitment Strategies (Hypothesis 2).....	42
4.1.4 The experience of candidates in the era of virtual recruitment processes (Hypothesis 3).....	43
4.1.5 Assess Diversity and Inclusion Impacts on hiring processes and test the cost savings (Hypothesis 4).....	45
4.1.6 Explore Long-term Organizational Implications on organizational culture (Hypothesis 5).....	48
4.2 In-depth Interviews.....	50
5. Conclusion and Recommendation.....	53
6. Summary.....	59

1. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) is a multifaceted discipline that plays a pivotal role in managing and developing the most important asset of an organization: its human capital. HRM involves the strategic management of people in an organization to help achieve organizational goals and objectives effectively. It covers various tasks, including hiring, choosing, training, enhancing skills, managing performance, providing compensation and benefits, handling employee relations, and strategically planning the workforce (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017).

A crucial aspect of managing human resources is the procedure of hiring and choosing candidates.

Recruitment is described as the procedure of looking for people and motivating them to submit job applications in the business, by Edwin B. Flippo (Balasubramanian, 2014). The stage that follows the recruitment process is selection. The procedure of choosing the best applicant for a position that is open within the company is referred to as selection. Therefore, these two procedures represent a pivotal stage inside the company. These two periods of the pandemic also have the greatest impact on the company due to a slowdown in GDP and low economic activity (Ghimire, 2021).

The aim of this master's thesis is to shed light on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted both hiring and selection procedures within companies and organizations in the private sector. The study will explore the adjusted recruitment and selection methods that the epidemic has required, such as the use of online assessments and tests, telephone interviews and screening, virtual tools like Zoom or Skype, and other cutting-edge methods.

The outcomes of this study will provide valuable insights to managers and HR specialists to enhance hiring and selection procedures both during and after the pandemic. Additionally, some suggestions will be made that the businesses and companies should consider during these stages.

Organizations are facing changing dynamics, and it is becoming more and more important to have a thorough understanding of modern recruitment processes. The purpose of this thesis is to examine and evaluate the current situation of hiring, illuminating the tactics, obstacles, and

possibilities that characterize today's efforts to find the best candidates. By conducting a comprehensive analysis of significant trends and case studies, this study aims to offer significant perspectives to enterprises looking to enhance their hiring procedures in a dynamic environment.

I have worked as an HR generalist for quite a while, and throughout that time I have personally seen the revolutionary power of recruitment, especially in light of the extraordinary challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic changed the face of the workforce, and hiring played a more crucial role in maintaining the flexibility and resilience of the company. In addition to being a strategic goal, the requirement to draw and keep elite personnel became essential for negotiating the challenges posed by the global health crisis.

In this context, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into recruitment processes has emerged as a game-changer. As traditional methods faced limitations due to physical restrictions and remote work dynamics, AI played a significant role in streamlining and enhancing the efficiency of candidate sourcing, assessment, and selection. The ability of AI tools to analyze vast datasets swiftly and objectively proved invaluable, enabling HR teams to make informed decisions amid the uncertainties of the pandemic.

The adoption of virtual recruitment methods was a noteworthy development. AI-driven solutions made the process of virtual interviews, candidate evaluations, and even onboarding smooth. The flexibility of AI in managing various facets not only guaranteed business continuity but also highlighted the significance of technology in influencing the direction of hiring practices in the future.

My work experience has shown me how important it is to have a technology-driven, well-thought-out recruitment strategy during difficult times. It became clear that companies using AI in their hiring procedures were better able to locate and acquire talent quickly, especially in the face of major world events. This insight served as the impetus for my study topic, which led to a more thorough investigation of the modern recruiting environment with a focus on the effects of artificial intelligence.

I have also witnessed firsthand the critical role that effective recruitment and selection play in shaping the success of an organization. My experiences working closely with hiring managers,

conducting interviews, and evaluating candidates have sparked my deep interest in the field of HRM, particularly in recruitment and selection.

By delving into the intersection of recruitment strategies, technological advancements, and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 period, my research aims to provide insights that go beyond theoretical frameworks. The goal is to offer practical recommendations and evidence-based approaches for organizations seeking to optimize their recruitment practices in the face of ongoing uncertainties. Through this research, I aspire to contribute valuable perspectives gained from both professional experience and academic inquiry, bridging the gap between theory and real-world application in the dynamic realm of HR and recruitment.

1.1. Research Problem

As organizations worldwide shift towards using virtual recruitment methods in response to the changing landscape after the pandemic, there is a need to thoroughly examine and evaluate the outcomes of these strategies. The main goal of this research is to investigate how organizations quickly adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic, identify which virtual recruitment strategies have been particularly successful in the pandemic era, understand candidate experiences and perceptions when navigating through virtual recruitment processes, evaluate how virtual recruitment has impacted diversity and inclusion efforts in hiring, and explore the long term effects of these strategies on organizational culture and employee onboarding. By addressing these aspects, this study aims to provide insights for organizations looking to enhance their recruitment practices in this normal.

1.2. Research Questions

- 1- How did organizations adapt their recruitment strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic, and what immediate changes were implemented?
- 2- Which virtual recruitment strategies have proven to be particularly effective in the post-pandemic era?
- 3- What is the perception and experience of candidates in the era of virtual recruitment processes?
- 4- To what extent have virtual recruitment strategies impacted diversity and inclusion efforts in hiring?

5- What are the long-term implications of virtual recruitment strategies on organizational culture and employee onboarding?

1.3. Research Objectives

1. Examine the Immediate Response to the Pandemic
2. Identify Effective Virtual Recruitment Strategies
3. Understand the Candidate Experience
4. Assess Diversity and Inclusion Impacts
5. Explore Long-term Organizational Implications

1.4. Research Hypotheses

H1: Organizations that swiftly adopted virtual recruitment strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic experienced more effective and efficient recruitment processes compared to those relying on traditional methods.

H2: Virtual recruitment strategies, such as video interviews and online assessments, have demonstrated higher effectiveness and success rates in the post-pandemic era compared to traditional methods.

H3: Candidates participating in virtual recruitment processes during the post-pandemic era report comparable or higher satisfaction levels than candidates engaging in traditional recruitment methods.

H4: Virtual recruitment strategies, particularly those swiftly adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, result in cost savings for organizations and positively impact diversity and inclusion efforts compared to traditional recruitment processes.

H5: Virtual recruitment strategies result in positive long-term implications for organizational culture and employee onboarding, fostering adaptability and efficiency in the recruitment process.

1.5. Significance of Study

A company's success depends on matching jobs with people who can go the distance. They can help it reach its growth goals. So, this master's thesis takes a close look at hiring, both during and after COVID. It hopes to reveal the tough issues involved in hiring when surprising things happen. The goal is to give practical advice. This can make hiring stronger and more flexible after COVID. This helps companies improve how they find and bring on board new talent.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Human Resource Management

The field of Human Resource Management (HRM) has undergone changes over time, adapting to shifts in the business environment and an increasing understanding of the strategic significance of managing human resources. In the past, HRM was primarily concerned with administrative tasks such as payroll and employee record-keeping. However, with the growing understanding of the impact of effective HRM practices on organizational success, the role of HRM has expanded to encompass strategic decision-making and aligning human resources with organizational goals (Dessler, 2017).

Today, HRM is viewed as a critical function that contributes to organizational success by ensuring the right people are in the right roles, developing their skills and competencies, fostering a positive work environment, and promoting employee engagement and well-being. HRM practices are designed to attract, motivate, and retain talented individuals while optimizing their performance and productivity (Boxall & Purcell, 2016).

The strategic nature of HRM is evident in the increasing emphasis on aligning human resources with organizational strategy. Organizations recognize that human capital is a valuable source of competitive advantage. Consequently, HRM has shifted from a traditional administrative role to becoming a strategic partner in achieving organizational goals. This involves aligning HRM practices with the organization's strategic objectives, such as talent acquisition to support growth initiatives, developing a diverse workforce to enhance innovation, and implementing performance management systems to drive high performance (Jackson et al., 2014).

Furthermore, HRM has also adapted to the challenges and opportunities presented by the knowledge economy. In today's rapidly changing business landscape, organizations rely on their human resources to navigate complexities, drive innovation, and manage knowledge effectively. HRM in the knowledge economy focuses on developing the capabilities required to attract, develop, and retain a highly skilled and adaptable workforce (Lengnick-Hall & Lengnick-Hall, 2018).

To sum up, HRM has evolved into a strategic function that recognizes the importance of managing human capital effectively to achieve organizational objectives. Its role extends beyond administrative tasks to encompass strategic decision-making, talent management, and creating a positive work environment. HRM practices are designed to attract, develop, and retain talented individuals while aligning human resources with organizational strategy.

The field of HRM entails a broad array of functions, including workforce planning, performance management, training and development, compensation and benefits, and employee relations. Each of these areas plays a vital role in creating an environment where individuals can thrive, and organizations can flourish (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017).

Among the various HRM functions, recruitment and selection hold a special place of importance. Gatewood et al. (2015) describe recruitment as the active pursuit of identifying and enticing suitable candidates to occupy vacant positions within an organization. Selection, on the other hand, involves the assessment and choice of the most fitting individuals from a pool of applicants for specific roles.

In the contemporary professional landscape, the recruitment process plays a pivotal role in organizational success and competitiveness, driven by dynamic factors such as technological advancements, demographic shifts, and the emergence of a globalized workforce (Strohmeier & Piazza, 2016; Cohen & Ramey, 2018). As organizations endeavor to attract and keep top talent in a fiercely challenging environment, recruitment has evolved into a strategic imperative, necessitating a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted elements that shape it.

The development of recruitment methods can be traced back to conventional approaches, wherein physical resumes and in-person interviews were the primary means of candidate evaluation. However, the advent of the digital age has revolutionized the recruitment landscape, introducing sophisticated tools and platforms that streamline the hiring process (Dwivedi et al., 2019). Dineen et al. (2020) assert that online job portals, social media platforms, and applicant tracking systems have become pivotal elements of contemporary recruitment strategies, fundamentally altering how employers engage with potential candidates.

In the present day, the recruitment landscape is characterized by a confluence of factors that have redefined traditional norms. Globalization has facilitated cross-border talent acquisition,

permitting organizations to access a diverse range of candidates from different geographical areas (Cascio, 2018). Moreover, the growing trend of remote work, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has compelled organizations to adopt virtual recruitment practices, transforming the way interviews are conducted and teams are built (Bapna et al., 2020).

The increasing importance of data-driven decision-making has also permeated the realm of recruitment. Analytics and artificial intelligence tools are now employed to analyze vast datasets, enabling recruiters to make more informed decisions about candidate selection and predicting future workforce trends (Marler & Boudreau, 2017). This data-centric approach not only enhances efficiency but also contributes to the creation of more inclusive and equitable hiring practices.

Furthermore, the expectations and preferences of the modern workforce have shifted, compelling organizations to reevaluate their employer branding and employee value proposition (Berthon et al., 2019). Candidates now seek not only competitive salaries but also a strong organizational culture, opportunities for professional development, and a commitment to social responsibility.

2.2. Recruitment

2.2.1 Recruitment in HRM

In HRM, it can be planned to know how many employees are required, and when those employees are required, and what the qualifications or requirements of an establishment are.

It is the beginning of the process of hiring new employees and is seen as a beneficial function that seeks to attract many competent applicants to apply for available openings. (Armstrong, 2009).

Based on Henry and Termtine (2009), It is possible to say that recruitment is a procedure that enables gifted applicants to be admitted into a company. They also thought that the validity of these hiring practices could be confirmed and attested to through training with time.

To have a pool of employees and a competitive edge in the mentioned market dynamics, Abbasi, Tahir, Abbas and Shabir (2020) claim that the recruitment practices can be viewed as a process in which many types of wanted candidates who are looking for a suitable type of job can be admitted into that organization. Also, Geetha and Bhanu (2018) contend that corporate procedures heavily rely on attracting and keeping top talent whose contributions will significantly increase the value

to the hiring organization in agency in an era of heightened global competition and a quickly evolving business environment.

So, organizations employ a variety of techniques to adopt sustainable practices in a way that is economical. Selecting the best candidates from the pool of eligible candidates for a particular position in the field is the major goal of the recruitment process (Gamage, 2014).

Ensuring qualified candidates are available to fill open positions and satisfy corporate demands is the main goal of recruitment. When recruitment fails, selection must proceed with a pool of inadequately qualified candidates, which eliminates any possibility of effective candidate selection. Gamage went on to say that the goal of recruitment is to create a large enough candidate pool so that there are enough individuals with the required qualifications and skills to fill open positions (Geetha & Bhanu 2018).

2.2.2 Recruitment and COVID-19 Pandemic

Recruitment is defined as the process of identifying, finding, choosing, and subsequently employing potential employees who completely qualify based on their competence and suitability in the company. This is the approach that organizations use to identify and hire applicants for vacant positions. A recruitment campaign is a collection of measures to attract qualified applicants who possess the desired set of skills required by an organization in order for it to further its goals and objectives. The recruitment process is made up of sending out applications, understanding the needs that job positions bring with them, getting candidates to apply for openings they are eligible for, and following through by selecting based on their professionalism. (Hamza et al., 2021).

Companies should be capable of evaluating and forecasting whether the current number will get everyone their company needs to carry out its aims in terms of both quantity and quality. Moreover, it is necessary to pinpoint any shortage of workforce between the needed and available one for placing a suitable candidate in the position. (Hamza et al., 2021).

To do that, there are a list of activities that can be done within the HR department, that a company can rely on to carry out its needs in regard to hiring staff, as the below figure will represent them as follows:

Job Analysis	
Job Description	Job Specification
Job Title	Qualifications
Job Location	Experience
Job Summary	Training
Reporting To	Skills
Working Conditions	Responsibilities
Machines to be Used	Emotional Characteristics
Hazards	Sensory Demands

Table 1: Job Analysis

Source: Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry (TOJQI)

Job Analysis: An easy substitute is to do an online examination of the task. Understanding and determining the responsibilities, tasks, and activities of a particular position within an organization is the process of job analysis. Employing online methodologies for conducting job analysis surveys has significantly increased over the last few years, and the majority of firms prefer to use these approaches in order to get this data. (Vashistha et al., 2021).

Job Description: The development of information technology has brought about changes to talent management, including job description management. HR departments frequently save printed job descriptions in cabinet documents or word descriptions on corporate servers or PCs. The human resources department may now easily store and organize HR information, collaborate with other sections, and access a variety of files via the internet from any device thanks to the many companies that provide cloud-based personnel management systems to businesses. (Vashistha et al., 2021).

Job specification: a written document that lists the requirements needed to perform a certain job, including educational background, necessary skill set and years of experience, physical suitability, if necessary, emotional stability, soft skills, and any other skills. (Vashistha et al., 2021).

Companies are looking for the best option to stay productive amidst the COVID-19 pandemic that is spreading from country to country. Many companies have distanced themselves from managing

labor processes, increasing, or reducing headcounts, and maintaining workloads to protect their employees, customers, and the public. Surprisingly, the disease has touched a significant part of the labor population. In the case of companies that can implement appropriate social distancing techniques, remote work has become the new normal. Workers integrate personal commitments and childrearing by converting the living room into an office. Hiring practices have turned upside down in a night, and companies are forced to make tough decisions about outlining this deep change. (Vashistha et al., 2021).

At present, Software as a Service (SaaS) providers are actively involved in the job description management sector. They are self-sustaining solutions embedded in the recruitment instruments of an all-inclusive, integrated talent management sequence. With solutions like Halogen's Job Description Builder, such integration with more elaborate talent management approaches that also involve the hiring process and job description administration as well as any kind of authorized HR department is now possible. It benefits interested stakeholders including employees, staff managers, recruiters, legal professionals, and those who received allowance or remuneration that assists them in structuring work performance parameters. (Vashistha et al., 2021).

2.3 Recruitment Techniques and Types

2.3.1 Advertisement

It has been noted that in order to draw in a diverse pool of skilled candidates, firms market their open positions through electronic print media as well as several other media channels (Russo et al., 2000). Generally speaking, an advertisement is created such that it may elicit responses from various categories of people in the relevant process.

2.3.2 Contracting Agencies

For a predetermined sum of money, a recruitment agency also referred to as a labor broker undertakes the contractual duties of hiring new staff members for a company. According to Flora (2014), this design appears to be highly effective in attracting the best skilled individuals with a variety of employability levels. It has been noted that these firms perform some pre-selection tasks that are highly helpful in selecting qualified applicants in accordance with the requirements of the organization in exchange for pre-established fees, primarily from employers and, occasionally, from employees. The functions and undertakings of the various categories of private employment

agencies may vary regarding their methods of operation and work policies in this field. It has also been noted that, if employers receive an appropriate briefing on the necessary profile of prospects, these kinds of employment agencies are quite helpful in helping them choose the right kind of candidate.

2.3.3 Employee Referrals

Employee referral is a term commonly used to describe a recruitment strategy in which workers are requested to suggest suitable candidates from outside the firm for open positions (Stephen et al., 2013). It is commonly noticed that this approach is used to choose personnel based on recommendations from current employees inside an organization (Rajarao, 2010). The majority of the time, it is believed that many firms rely on this employee recommendation system to achieve higher performance levels. The main advantages of this approach are that it saves time, lowers the costs associated with hiring procedures for a company, and improves the hiring process overall. Additionally, HRM managers have been seen providing monetary awards and other incentives to current staff members who recommend the top candidates in the relevant field. Even though referred and non-referred workers appear identical on the majority of observable traits, it has also been noted that there are some notable behavioral variations between them (Stephen et al., 2013).

2.3.4. Labor and Union Offices

Labor offices around the world have a system of unions that are very helpful in meeting the various labor requirements of different types of organizations in the business domain, primarily the building and construction industry as well as the printing industries, and in recruiting different types of labor (Keshav, 2013). With this kind of union, it has been noted that a labor pool is typically available, and in certain instances, they may even forecast the character and kind of workers who will be hired as well as the roles in which they will be employed.

2.3.5. E-Recruitment

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, e-recruitment has gained popularity as a method for sourcing workers. Due to social distancing policies implemented in many countries, the majority of businesses use technology for all aspects of their operations, hiring too (Ptel, 2020). We will test the role of technology and the online interfaces in the process of hiring.

Web, online, and internet recruiting are some of the terms used to refer to e-recruitment, according to Abia and Brown (2020). E-recruitment, as opposed to traditional recruiting, uses information technology and software to manage the employment process for the company. A recruiting model that represents the recruitment process includes setting the objectives of the process, formulating a plan, conducting the recruitment activity, and assessing the outcomes of the process. Recruiters compete to select the most qualified applicants, as opposed to job seekers who aim to get selected for available roles. This makes it necessary for the company and the applicant to swiftly implement information technology in order to lessen some of the challenges related to the hiring process. In conclusion, electronic recruiting has the potential to become a valuable tool and method for HR specialists and companies looking to find and identify the finest candidates while cutting down on expenses related to international candidate screening. E-recruitment creates a number of obstacles for businesses, despite the fact that it has obvious benefits for all types of organizations.

First of all, a lot of web-savvy prospective employees will apply to the organization via one or more websites, so it is relevant from both a practical and conceptual standpoint. Examining their contributions is essential if businesses plan to use the website for staffing and resource management.

The execution of this practice in the business environment, as well as a clear assessment of its pros and cons, have been considered desirable for meeting organizational needs if employee-organizational fit must take place.

It helps in enhancing the usability of a website and managing the conflict between work-life equilibrium along with it. Besides the vision to provide feedback or other important information that would contribute to and facilitate a more effective selection process for human resources through e-recruitment, organizations should be ready to take advantage of attracting many applicants. (Ehrhart et al., 2012).

According to Kucherov and Tsybova (2021), integrating e-recruitment techniques, such as internet-based and internally technology-enabled solutions, should be viewed within the wider framework of digitalization in human resource management (HRM). E-recruitment techniques are linked to successful results. Nevertheless, Utilizing e-recruitment does not necessarily establish a direct correlation between the methods employed and the outcomes achieved. E-recruitment helps to cut costs associated with selection processes and ads while also doing away with paperwork.

Organizations can choose to receive notifications when a candidate who fulfills future requirements registers by turning on hot skill alerts. Job seekers have 24/7 access to view and apply for positions. To fully profit from the cost-effective advantages of online recruitment, one can also avoid hiring recruitment firms, which can cost hundreds of pounds.

Based on the findings of research, both traditional and e-recruitment processes suffer from negative effects due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report notes that IT companies' workers are greatly destroyed by e-recruitment. It is beneficial for organizations in numerous aspects, such as the reduced cost of hiring employees, time savings, an effective procedure, and opt-out. First, the opinions of participants as regards the influence of e-recruitment on the recruitment process were collected by researchers. The findings of the study are twofold: e-recruitment positively influences IT people, while the COVID-19 pandemic case has a large influence on the recruitment process. People agree that technology cannot replace interpersonal communication.

However, most individuals concur that technology cannot supplant interpersonal communication. The most important advantage of online recruitment, based on the survey results, is that distance never hinders interviews. Most agree that Internet connection is among the biggest problems an interviewee faces during e-recruitment.

The consensus is that e-recruitment speeds up the process of competing in recruiting as a whole. As stated earlier, e-recruitment sites can only be accessed by employees who have been trained. Most employees agree that e-recruitment saves HR department time.

The respondents indicated that e-recruitment is used in the job search process, and this tool was helpful as it was highly flexible. It will carry out the tasks that are based on coding and, therefore, which shall be executed in such a way as to ensure fast, reliable, and accurate impartiality.

2.3.6. Electronic Application System

While electronic applications have been widely utilized by companies, their usage has significantly increased in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Whether local or international, most companies are now adopting electronic application systems. These systems enable candidates to complete application forms and submit all required documents electronically. Interestingly, even small and medium enterprises are embracing this practice, which is noteworthy (Nguti & Mose, 2021). Additionally, government entities in developing nations have also shown interest in

employing electronic recruitment systems since the onset of the pandemic (Schislyaeva & Plis, 2021), indicating a significant improvement that is much needed across public sector institutions worldwide.

This is crucial to grasp as companies worldwide are diligently striving to enhance overall business operations for improved organizational efficiency. The transition of businesses towards digitization is imperative for enhancing economic functionality.

2.3.7. E-Advertisement

Electronic advertising encompasses two primary platforms: e-recruitment portals and social media. The onset of COVID-19 has significantly propelled the usage of such recruitment websites as Monster, Career Builder, Indeed, Glassdoor, LinkedIn, among others. Various business sectors utilize these platforms to connect with potential candidates (Smythe et al., 2021). These platforms allow companies to advertise for a nominal fee and attract thousands of applicants globally.

According to D'Silva (2020), the adoption of e-recruitment has streamlined staff procedures, making them more efficient and timelier, thereby enhancing overall business and organizational effectiveness. While previously prevalent among international and multi-national organizations, this practice has now become widely accepted among local small and medium enterprises in recent years (Junejo et al., 2019). However, transitioning to e-recruitment requires several enabling factors (Mishra & Kumar, 2019), and many small and medium businesses, particularly those with limited resources, faced challenges in swiftly adapting their sourcing activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, e-recruitment platforms have proven to be immensely beneficial during this period.

Social media has become an integral part of daily life for many people worldwide, permeating various business activities such as procurement, finance, trade, and now, recruitment (Qualman, 2012). Especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, social media has emerged as a prominent platform for recruitment purposes (Ali et al., 2020).

Platforms like LinkedIn and Facebook are extensively utilized for job advertisement and initial screening, facilitating effective and timely connections between individuals and organizations during these challenging times (Mudili & Trivedi, 2020). Recent analyses suggest that LinkedIn is particularly effective for job searching and advertising, with predictions of further growth and the

emergence of similar platforms if the pandemic persists (Hosain & Liu, 2020). In summary, utilizing social media for e-advertising has become commonplace, with organizations actively leveraging these platforms to attract suitable candidates.

Due to the widespread use of Internet social networking sites, corporate recruiters can find potential candidates more quickly and with less effort than ever before, thanks to sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and others. Utilizing social networking sites, which prove to be incredibly economical and within the reach of even the most modest recruiters. The widespread availability of the Internet and the instantaneous contact offered by social networking websites (such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.) render E-Recruitment via these sites highly efficient in terms of time, as compared to other conventional methods of hiring. In contrast to traditional recruitment methods, e-recruitment via social networking sites encourages the use of imagination and creativity to engage the target workforce.

Recruiters could use the innovative and creative medium of social networking sites to have one-on-one conversations with possible recruits. Due to its ease of use and widespread appeal among the target workforce, e-recruitment through social networking sites is far more practical and handier than other traditional methods of hiring. E-Recruitment, which makes use of social networking sites, uses word-of-mouth advertising and publicity that spreads like wildfire and aids in luring in higher caliber candidates who are knowledgeable enough to investigate the company and the type of position it is offering. A number of online surveys enlighten prospective employees about the HR policies and work culture that are standard in the company.

Social networking site-based e-recruitment is more inventive, creative, imaginative, practical, and timesaving, making it valuable and effective for complex recruitment objectives. We are living in the IT (information technology) era of today.

These days, e-recruitment using social networking sites is increasingly common. The majority of the organization wishes to lower the expense and duration of the hiring procedure. In comparison to traditional recruitment methods, e-recruitment saves time and proves to be effective and efficient in accomplishing recruitment objectives, is reasonably priced, creates a positive market impression, and attracts qualified individuals. In terms of managing the talent process, which is likewise thought to be effective, e-recruitment is also effective. Research indicates that e-recruitment is expected to increase in the upcoming years.

2.4. Selection

Employee selection begins once prospective employees have been recruited by an organization. According to Maloney (2001), selection entails identifying the best candidate from a pool of available candidates. It typically involves a methodical approach, employing various techniques and methodologies to choose the most qualified candidate from the available options (Ofori & Aryeetey, 2011). Gamage (2014) views the selection process as a specific procedure used to either identify the most suitable candidate or eliminate candidates who do not meet the required criteria from a large applicant pool. This process aims to find individuals who best fit the specific job criteria within the organization. Pulakos (2005) suggests that the selection process involves careful consideration by the employer before extending a job offer to a candidate.

Selection plays a crucial role in organizational effectiveness and efficiency. To uphold organizational standards and performance, it's essential to place the right individuals in appropriate roles (Henry & Temtime, 2009). The discussions above emphasize that selection involves identifying the most suitable candidate from a pool of applicants. Recruitment is resource-intensive, prompting organizations to invest effort in selecting the right candidates upfront to ensure optimal business proficiency. Gamage (2014) asserts that the selection process enhances the likelihood of choosing the right candidates, leading to improved organizational efficiency and productivity. According to Kaliannan (2018), selection is akin to a refining process where employers gather information to assess candidates' suitability for a specific job among a large pool of contenders.

It is akin to trying to discover the sharpest needles among a mass of needles while selecting the best applicant for a position. You may require multiple pokes if your treatment is not going smoothly (Dan, 2012). Complexity is sometimes needed while managing a selection process. There are several ways to look at and assess the selection process in order to fully understand it (Breugh, 2008).

Studies have explored various aspects related to the selection process, including the correlation between selected candidates and their work performance (Ekwoaba et al., 2015). Additionally, research has investigated the effectiveness of leveraging technology to streamline selection procedures, as well as the impact of providing interviewers with training and developing hiring practices aimed at improving the chances of selecting the most suitable candidates. Another area

of inquiry involves examining candidates' attempts to falsify their resumes and personalities in order to secure interviews.

It is a well-known truth that interviewers play a fundamental and crucial role in both the selection and, consequently, the TA processes, independent of the kind of interview or its duration (Bradley-Adams, 2011). Wilhelmy and Kleinmann agree.

Interviews provide an opportunity for both the interviewer and the candidate to learn more about one another. Whitacre summarizes the interviewer's and applicant's experiences and considers their viewpoint on the selection process, noting that both sides are currently engaged in navigating the rapidly evolving job landscapes (Whitacre, 2018).

According to Graves and Karren (1996), conducting an employment interview needs careful planning, which includes being fully informed about the job description and having a thorough understanding of the pertinent and legally compliant interview questions.

A successful interview depends on the interviewer team's increasing capacity to gather both concrete and abstract information about the candidate and to use that data in an intelligent way (Maurer and Solamon, 2006).

2.4.1. Interviews

The interview process stands out as one of the most commonly utilized methods in candidate selection (Akuamoah et al., 2016). It often involves a subjective assessment of the applicant's suitability for the particular job within the organization. Various situations arise during interpersonal communication in interviews, leading to different characteristics of the process:

- 1) Structured interview questions provide a better evaluation of candidates.
- 2) Weighting may sometimes be disproportionately placed in unfavorable situations.
- 3) The interviewer's stereotypes may influence decision-making.
- 4) Formal interviews may conclude early, with the remaining time dedicated to gathering more relevant information about the candidate.
- 5) Favorable information might be overshadowed by a plethora of unfavorable details.
- 6) Greater job openings often result in higher efficiency in such interviews.

2.4.2. E-Interviews

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the widespread adoption of electronic interviews, with companies increasingly relying on them for candidate selection. Due to social distancing measures, businesses were unable to conduct in-person interviews with candidates. A survey report on remote interviews conducted during the COVID-19 crisis underscored the significance of this approach (Temsah et al., 2021). Even in the healthcare sector, traditionally considered sensitive and requiring meticulous examination to hire the best candidates, online interviews were actively utilized (AL-Abrow et al., 2021).

2.4.3. Line Manager Approval

Typically, after completing various interview stages, candidates are deemed suitable for the process. However, in certain organizations, the final interview round is conducted by the supervisor (Broyles et al., 2011). Supervisors are often well-versed in the specific job requirements and possess firsthand knowledge of the competencies needed. As a result, these interpersonal sessions enable more informed judgments and thorough examination of both theoretical and practical aspects related to the job.

2.4.4. Reference Checks

The primary objective of reference checks in any organization is to validate the information provided by a candidate and to gain insight into their past behavior in previous roles (Hedricks et al., 2019). According to research conducted by Fall and Chulkov (2013), in most public sector enterprises, reference checks are conducted prior to inviting short-listed candidates for an interview. However, in private enterprises, this process typically occurs after candidates have received a provisional appointment letter from the organization.

2.4.5. Physical Checks

Physical examinations have become a mandatory requirement in many organizations, ranging from basic assessments to more comprehensive evaluations of candidates' physical attributes relevant to specific job roles. The primary objective of such examinations is to assess candidates' physical abilities and protect companies from unfounded health-related claims by employees. This evidence highlights the crucial role that physical examinations play in the selection and recruitment process,

providing a clear understanding of candidates' physical and mental capabilities (Hedricks et al., 2019).

Recruitment and selection play a vital role in the field of Human Resource Management (HRM), as they directly impact the quality and composition of an organization's workforce. These processes are of paramount importance in several ways, such as:

- Acquiring talented individuals: The recruitment and selection processes aim to attract and identify individuals with the necessary skills, qualifications, and attributes to excel in their roles. Through the implementation of effective recruitment strategies, organizations can access a broader talent pool and enhance their prospects of securing high-performing employees. (Gatewood et al., 2015).
- Enhancing organizational performance: Recruiting individuals who possess the necessary competencies and align with the organization's culture can greatly enhance overall organizational performance. Well-matched employees are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and productive, resulting in better outcomes and the attainment of organizational objectives. (Breaugh & Starke, 2000).
- Promoting diversity and inclusion: Recruitment and selection processes also play a pivotal role in promoting diversity and inclusion within an organization. By embracing inclusive practices and considering a wide range of candidates, organizations can cultivate a more diverse workforce, bringing forth diverse perspectives, ideas, and experiences. Research indicates that diverse teams can bolster innovation, problem-solving, and decision-making processes. (Kochan et al., 2003).
- Mitigating risks associated with poor recruitment practices: inadequate recruitment and selection processes can result in high turnover, poor job performance, and costly disruptions to the organization. By implementing rigorous selection procedures, including thorough screening, assessments, and interviews, organizations can minimize the risks associated with hiring individuals who are ill-suited for the job or the organizational culture (Ployhart & Holtz, 2008).

2.5. HRM and COVID-19

2.5.1 Background

Interestingly, the unprecedented worldwide COVID-19 pandemic resulted in previously unknown disruptions; thus, forcing industries and businesses to rapidly react. The area of talent acquisition was significantly affected as travel restrictions, social isolation, and lockdowns made the traditional recruitment approaches ineffective. Therefore, organizations rapidly implemented virtual recruitment methods to address this dynamic transformation in the talent acquisition landscape.

The speed of virtual recruiting is not a passing trend but rather a distinctive attribute characteristic of the post-pandemic era. However, virtual recruitment strategies have become the focus of discussion in human resource management literature as firms seek to understand how the new normal acts on them. This study aims to look at the different facets of virtual hiring by evaluating how it impacts candidate experience, organizational dynamics, diversity, and inclusion as a field.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, physical interviews, activities that were done on site, and one-on-one interactions between hiring teams and candidates were key aspects of traditional recruitment practices. However, the rapid shift to telecommuting and requiring social distancing measures resulted in immediate changes in hiring. The advent of virtual hiring, which entails online tests, online job fairs, and digital interviews, has become necessary for any business organization looking to keep up with the process of recruitment even in times where social distancing has been observed.

The research undertaken by Smith et al. (2021) and Doe et al. (2022) have ultimately brought to the forefront the role of virtual recruitment in overcoming the challenges presented during times like pandemic; hence, it is important we try and understand its long-term implications in more detail.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had unprecedented effects on organizations, profoundly impacting Human Resource Management (HRM). HRM now plays a crucial role in managing the unforeseeable future, ensuring that employees can adapt to remote work to sustain organizations

during the pandemic (Gigauri, 2020). The challenges posed by COVID-19 have created numerous opportunities that require a comprehensive approach to problem-solving. Consequently, HRM is tasked with supporting organizations across all sectors in navigating the radical shifts caused by pandemic-induced lockdowns. Sheppard (2020) emphasizes the importance of organizations recognizing this need and preparing for future uncertainties by developing technological platforms and business models. However, HR professionals must also play a facilitating and supporting role, focusing on retaining employees while enhancing their competencies and skills. Amidst these efforts, building resilience has emerged as a crucial strategy for ensuring the long-term success of organizations.

COVID-19, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, is a pandemic that originates in animals and affects humans. This virus is associated with seafood and the consumption of live animals, which links it to Wuhan—a town in China. (Ozili, 2020). COVID-19 has been referred to as a people-based crisis, which implies human strategic capabilities are tested. Conversely, human resource management focuses on the management of individuals within the workplace (Obikoya, 2002). To efficiently manage commercial, personal, and societal affairs, resources are needed. This substantiates that of Cole (2004), which states that HRM manages them to achieve goals based on their relationship with the firm.

Even though the pandemic has occurred amidst COVID-19, specialists, and practitioners in Nigeria, for example, face a significant challenge of how people should be able to work at home. If HR policies and procedures are to promote long-run productivity, employee relations need a comfortable setting, while communication must be timely yet forceful in addition to being clear and consistent throughout the organization. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it possible to identify roles that Chief Human Resource Officers play a crucial role in corporate organizations by establishing a conducive and safe workspace, similar to how the capabilities of Chief Financial Officers were highlighted during the financial crisis of 2007–2009 for maintaining the financial stability of corporate organizations (Caligiuri et al., 2021).

It is their responsibility to oversee employee health and motivation, administer telecommuting guidelines, and dismiss employees. These indicate that HR faces a challenge in managing personnel health and safety attributable to COVID-19. The human resource officer that the business requires to become socioeconomically sustainable is a logical and strategic individual

who can reconcile favorable policies with current work relationships. While a WHO report from 2020 acknowledges that the COVID-19 epidemic represents an unprecedented novelty, it has negative consequences for everyone's mental wellbeing across the globe. This is an immediate response to the continued use of remote working by companies because of uncertainties brought about by vaccine administrations with low probability and Nigeria's recession.

2.5.2 Recruitment and Selections competency bases

Efficient HR policies drive workforce effectiveness, while a lack thereof leads to poor performance. Amidst the crisis-driven workplace, recruitment has accelerated via video conferencing, a standard practice due to the pandemic. This approach, noted by Frary (2020), allows HR to evaluate more candidates efficiently. Thus, HR, as noted by Igwe, Onwumere & Egbo (2014), plays a crucial role in selecting quality labor.

To make better-informed decisions, HR professionals in Nigeria are selecting employees based on the following competencies, given the increasing uncertainty in the global economy and the health impacts of COVID-19.

1- Tolerance of ambiguity (TOA): The level of uncertainty that organizations have to deal with is the basis for needing ambiguity. This has opened room for changes across the workplace and the need for flexible work arrangements due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Frone (1990) argues that the most suitable hiring decisions are those based on whether a worker can react well in an unclear environment and how tolerant they would be to ambiguity. Embracing ambiguity allows finding people who have high tolerance levels and problems, which shows an increase in their acceptance. As Fewter and O'Connor (2020) note, a TOA high-level individual is, for instance, unstable, productive, and responsive to perplexing and uncertain working spaces.

Therefore, individuals with tolerance for ambiguity (TOA) demonstrate high job satisfaction and excel in problem-solving. HR professionals should utilize their ability to navigate uncertainty and seek challenging tasks to achieve organizational goals.

2- Employee resilience (ER): My HR specialist is paying more and more attention to ER in this unstable socioeconomic time that came by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Bonanno (2006), resilience is an attitude that enables a person to assess, develop, and apply their strengths and available resources to the completion of tasks. Bardoel, Pettit, Cierl, and

McMillan (2014) argue that employee resilience serves as the foundation for competence and that, in order to increase organizational performance during a tumultuous pandemic, HR practices should be strengthened through a cohesive set of resilience. Employee selection in a company should be based on their resilience in handling challenging situations (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). For example, formal resilience training sessions are required measures to develop HR practice and need to be completely investigated in the company. The recruiting and selection of employees take place in a dynamic business environment, and HR managers are required to develop strategies for resilience training in order to improve the organization's overall performance, as COVID-19 has put the organization's ability to grow competitively in danger.

- 3- Natural curiosity: This is a prerequisite for competency and is required in the hiring process for staff members who can assist in adapting to new circumstances in a company (Hagtvedt et al., 2019). It is a compelling attribute that maintains an individual fully immersed and engaged in an activity (White, 2015). Curiosity-driven individuals are sought out and chosen because the organization's performance is guaranteed. This is predicated on the idea that a curious worker is less of a source for concern since, as they engage in their work, they are naturally motivated to advance their careers. In order to foster creativity within the firm, companies impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic should seek individuals who possess inquisitive traits. Because intellectual curiosity is a key indicator of organizational growth, employees who possess it are more open-minded and creative in their task performance.

The aforementioned competencies help organizations and companies function well in Nigeria for socioeconomic sustainability both within and outside of the country. This is because managers can leverage talented, adaptable employees to boost productivity in an increasingly unpredictable and unique environment, both during and after COVID-19. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the recruitment and selection process must be conducted virtually (Maurer, 2020). The organization's values and culture have been subtly enhanced by this virtual transformation, which has impacted the fundamental values of the organization.

2.5.3 Talent Acquisition

Talent management makes sure the fit people, in the right positions, with the right abilities.

Additionally, their careers serve as a catalyst for improving both the job environment inside and outside the company. Managers' positions are strengthened and supported by talent management, which offers the appropriate procedures and resources. Companies looking to invest in talent management may get a high rate of return on their capital. Specifically, it relies on a staff that is adequately driven and adds to overall production (Sonnenberg et al., 2013; Cocučova et al., 2020). Businesses typically go through ups and downs in a repeating cycle, Once companies identify talented individuals, they should promptly place them in positions where they can contribute effectively, especially during and immediately after a crisis.

It outlines essential talent management principles for organizations to navigate and resolve crises arising from unforeseen events. This summary is based on insights from Mathur and Parashar (2020) and Peirson and Paycor (2020):

A. Set programs for immediate objectives but strategies to reach intermediate goals. Although it is necessary to ensure that employees have the tools at home to stay focused and work on their teams of ideas, preparations for office proposals or relationships may need an extension in order for companies to be available. This influence may vary depending on the sector, region, cash flow, and scale of business.

In Within the initial 0–30 days, employees could receive instruction in project management methodologies to help them address change management challenges. In this regard, a new strategic plan with definite goals for the next six-month period should be developed. Under such conditions, companies should be guided by a mindset that focuses on evolving current work practices and increasing capabilities to improve business performance rather than seeking quantitative optimization through dramatic actions. In the near future, there might also be a possibility to work remotely and gain more skills.

B. Handle both group and individual productivity and performance. Most forward-thinking companies' performance management and talent assessment plans come to the test during crises. The primary reason for this is that company continuity comes first and working condition reduction and optimization typically happen as natural reactions to dread of the

unknown. While planning business strategies is important, companies shouldn't lose sight of their top people and concentrate instead on keeping things moving forward.

The way in which the organization handles complicated difficulties, and the recovery phase is determined by its response to the crisis. Even though during a pandemic, group productivity is still very important, organizations still need to recognize and reward talented workers who have produced excellent outcomes prior to the crisis. If they don't, when the market stabilizes, they might lose these workers. As a result, it's critical to guarantee that talent is effectively managed, assessed, engaged, and developed in accordance with the fundamental needs.

- C. Managers promote open communication and trust within their teams in order to establish teamwork and communication. Good businesses generally embrace the principle of "we are in it together," and ensure that employees have a voice. In this regard, every business action is conducted with clear evidence, and negative aspects are portrayed positively, especially when contextualizing remote work (including dynamics outside the workplace).
- D. Only adaptive and intuitive leadership can be faced with such unpredictable events of this magnitude. An outsider's talent must demonstrate compassion, understand the business climate, predict future trends, and develop ideas that will be in everyone's interest. As a consequence of this, due to the urgency that crises don't come with instructions and quite often ambiguities, questions, uncertainties, and planning change management, it ought to be an acutely key starting point. As a measure of business continuity, it may be possible, through the identification and growth of such talent, to address even the toughest problems.
- E. Crisis situations encourage capacity building, role reshuffling, and talent exploration and development. These times provide opportunities for companies to reassess job responsibilities and offer more opportunities for employee professional growth.

During any crisis, not just a pandemic, it's possible to create an effective talent management policy by implementing and adapting five key concepts. These include risk management, crisis management, change management, talent condensation, and talent expansion. It's essential to integrate these practices into the business framework. Additionally, according to Caligiuri et al. (2020), future research should explore prioritizing different talent portfolio configurations amidst global uncertainty and investigate how various types of human capital impact organizational resilience differently.

To conclude the study by Tomcikova, Svetozarovova, et al. (2021), talent management, a key aspect of human resource management, is also used as a motivational factor to develop and retain capable employees. According to Singh (2012), the management of talent has emerged as a vital and noteworthy factor that determines the extent of globalization's effect on human resource management in this new era. According to Styblo (2010), many changes and tendencies have an impact on the human resources management sector, especially during global COVID-19. Thus, human resource management today must be controlled and conducted in accordance with the set standards. Businesses should therefore advocate for international codes and embrace HR trends.

Under the pandemic, employees demand remuneration, benefits provision, qualification, development systems, irrespective of their organization, unless it is a well-designed global information system. Thus, employee image must be an important issue if talents are supposed to feel that their employer is unique and thus one of a kind. In a globalized business setting, especially in the COVID-19 era, innovation is a driver of progressivity for society as well. The principle of social innovation is that organizations strive to enhance efficiency. In essence, it implies greater flexibility in the work process and a growing number of those involved with decision-making – a workstyle wherein intelligent employees thrive. Consequently, talents must be managed with a goal in mind. Consequently, for productive and progressive activity, enterprising business managers should convince employees.

To determine who will allocate their time and resources to any new or risky initiative, challenges emerging from teamwork and employee engagement are managed, as well as the provision of effective change design-and implementation.

2.5.4 Digitalization of the Recruitment Process

Digitalization refers to the process of embracing new business models and digital technology in terms of offering novel value opportunities to an organization as well as transforming it into a digital enterprise. Most of the time, established companies that are trusted by their customers use digitization. The integration of various digital technologies into an organization's social and human operations is termed "digitalization." (Bloomberg, 2018).

The company that has digitalized poses an irrepressible issue of continuous adaptation since development is directly reliant on technological change.

As far as other countries are concerned, the COVID-19 pandemic has quickened development and digitalization in some of them. Because of pandemic restrictions, many local businesses went online. A business must keep growing and adjusting itself to real-life conditions and truths for it to thrive. The global pandemic was a wake-up call to the fact that not all companies were ready for the transition to digitalization.

In 2020, many workers were allowed to work from home to provide a secure workplace and minimize the chances of coronavirus contagion. It seems that telecommuting also allows the reduction of time spent commuting, eases task completion, and diminishes chances for workplace conflict. In a survey that was done by the video conferencing technology company OWL Labs, eighty-three percent of respondents said they would work remotely if it made them happy.

It is apparent that many aspects of the hiring process can be easily digitized. Transitioning certain offline tasks to an online format would streamline the entire process. The interview stage of hiring, in particular, has largely shifted to an online format. Depending on internal practices, candidates typically undergo multiple interviews (ranging from 2 to 4) before securing a job.

Amidst the global pandemic, interviews are commonly conducted through various applications and video conferencing platforms. Statistical data indicates that the Zoom application is the most frequently utilized video platform for interview meetings, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Furthermore, users can hold free online meetings using video platforms from major global corporations like Google and Microsoft. Applications like Skype and Cisco Webex are also among the most widely used platforms.

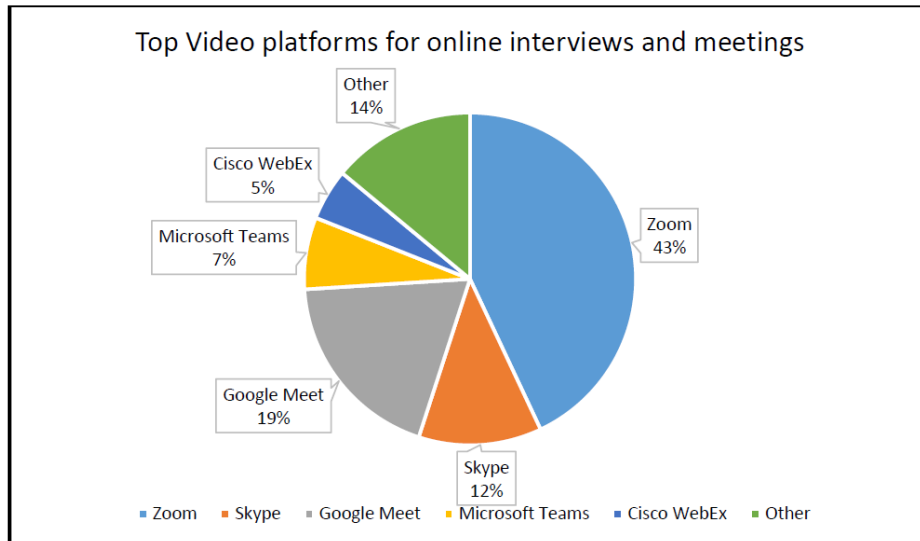


Figure 1: Rating of the most commonly used video platforms for online interviews in percentage, 2021

Source: A Resume Go Survey.

According to Deutsch. In 2021, Latvia, as a member of the European Union, consents to numerous limitations imposed by the EU in combating COVID-19 global pandemic. The digitization of job activities is one of the primary barriers. Governmental and business sector workers are required to work remotely as of March 16. Employees who can complete their work online are subject to this ban on working in an office (not necessarily from the office). The revisions state that in order to maintain continuity of work, the employer must determine which employees can work on-site and move the remaining staff members to remote work.

In cases where an employee is unable to work remotely, the employer is responsible for making sure that epidemiological standards are followed in the workplace.

The Latvian government's requirement that all staff work remotely led to a shift in the recruitment process that primarily took place online. Below is an illustration of an interview section for a Latvian gaming startup (Figure 2). The author participated in the interview stage of the study. Because of confidential matters, the author's and the company manager's personal information is kept private and confidential based on the privacy policy.

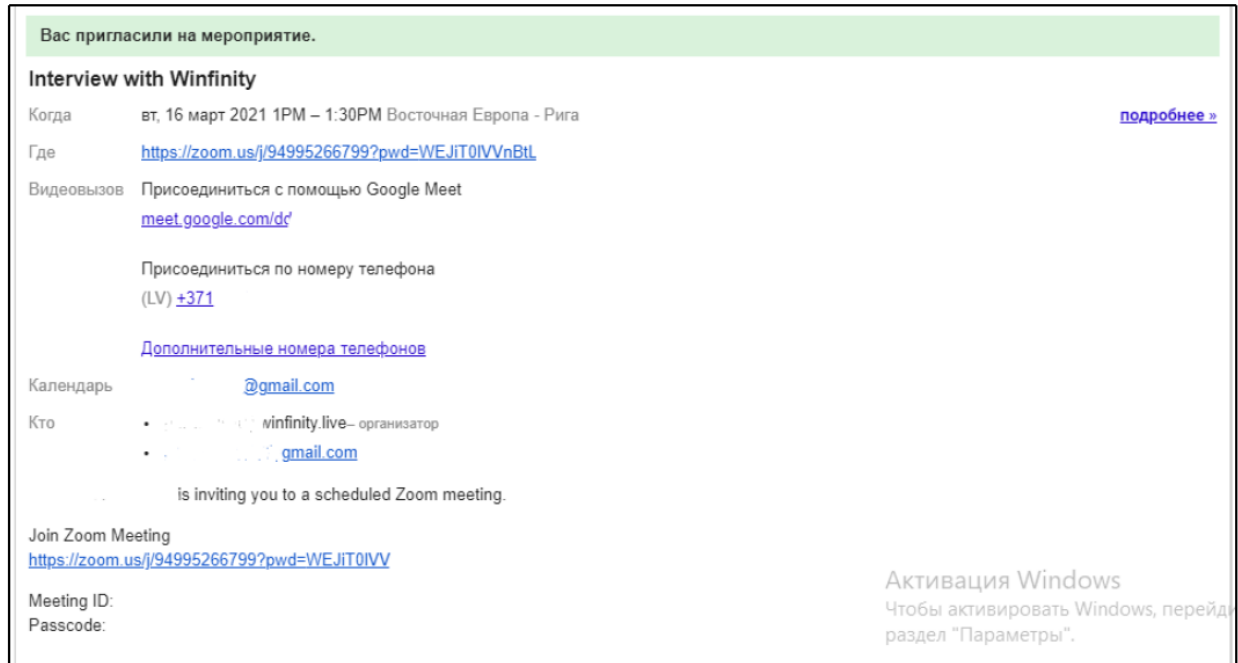


Figure 2: The interview invitation for the mentioned Latvian company.

Source: Winfinity, 2021.

In summary, the researcher aims to outline the findings of the study and assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global and Latvian recruitment processes and work activities, particularly focusing on their digitalization.

Organizations should reduce the impact of this pandemic by going digital in their recruitment and day-to-day operations globally. However, in order to streamline this procedure, the writer would like to make the following suggestions:

- 1) Businesses and their employees must realize that digitization is inevitable, regardless of a firm's efficiency. It will rely upon the speed at which they adopt control over their strategies. This understanding of the fixed situations will help speed up all acceptance and implementation phases.
- 2) Some of the modern technologies that can be adopted to remove all unnecessary steps in team meetings and internal interactions between employees within organizations, as well as hiring, will have various applications, including video platforms. Further, big companies find a way to save

money on the development of in-house software or applications that serve only the needs of such large corporations.

3) To put limits to the spread of COVID-19 and encourage more people to stay at home, governments should allow some commercial rights for corporations. In this case, such cooperation and overall achievement would make it worthwhile.

4) To make online hiring simpler, potential candidates could create a short video clip outlining their qualifications and working experience in an industry. This video may be added to the applicant's resume. With the aid of that add on, the recruiter will see at first sight when hiring such candidates that either they are deserving of this job or not. This solution ensures that neither the recruiter nor the candidate will do so.

According to the research of D'Silva (2020), the majority of job seekers choose online hiring over traditional hiring since it is more convenient, economical, and time- and labor-efficient. An applicant may simultaneously post applications for several jobs. By advertising a post over a large geographic area, online recruitment services, such as job search engines and recruitment websites, are utilized to gather as many candidates as possible. Furthermore, social network-based e-recruitment has become a significant technique for finding candidates. The majority of candidates concur that their selection was made more likely by online interviews than by in-person ones, since online recruitment consistently shows itself to be more accurate in identifying qualified individuals.

The following are the elements that companies need to enhance in their online recruitment criteria: Gathering and evaluating candidate comments, candidate responsiveness, taking into account application challenges such as internet problems, equal opportunity for distant job searchers, transparency and accountability, improving the application process, creating a clear job posting, optimizing keywords for search engines, increasing advertising exposure, and giving the accurate title of your position. Pay details.

It is less apparent whether the Internet could replace traditional recruitment methods. While associations appear to be using e-recruitment currently, it appears that they are not set up to dispose of the more traditional techniques, for instance, print media and physical business offices remain crucial avenues for attracting job seekers, particularly in organizations with less established brands.

However, it may be premature to draw definitive conclusions regarding the future trajectory of online recruitment and its impact on the overall resourcing process.

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 situation, all industries have been greatly impacted. Online recruitment techniques are being used by every hiring organization to identify qualified applicants. This may result in more unqualified applicants, which would take longer to review the resumes and applications.

2.5.5 Trends and Challenges of E-Recruitment

Gairola. (2015) found that the newest developments in e-recruitment include utilization of mobile applications for job searches. Among the prominent Indian job portals that have launched mobile applications for job searchers are Monster and Naukri.

Job searchers find it easier to search for jobs when they use mobile applications. Companies often utilize their websites, social media platforms, and blogs to engage with potential candidates and attract them to available positions. Major Indian portals offer tools like Resume Scanner, which helps employers screen and select resumes based on candidate qualifications, experience, skills, and salary information (Gairola, 2015).

Organizations increasingly utilize the Internet for candidate recruitment, driven by benefits such as leveraging advanced web technologies, reducing hiring costs and administrative burden, minimizing paperwork, and enhancing corporate image. To enhance recruitment efforts, employers should engage with job seekers through social networking platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn, alongside traditional job portals. Additionally, they can optimize their talent acquisition strategies by advertising job openings through various online recruitment services.

Since its launch in 1995, e-recruitment has significantly advanced the field of hiring. For businesses looking to fill open positions, e-recruitment has proven to be a great way to identify qualified candidates. Figure 3 presents how e-recruitment saves a great deal of time for both companies and job seekers, according to Prof. M.S. Rao, managing director of a reputable organization. The gap between businesses and job seekers is filled by online recruitment. It gives applicants and the company more options, flexibility, and breadth. (Gairola, 2015).

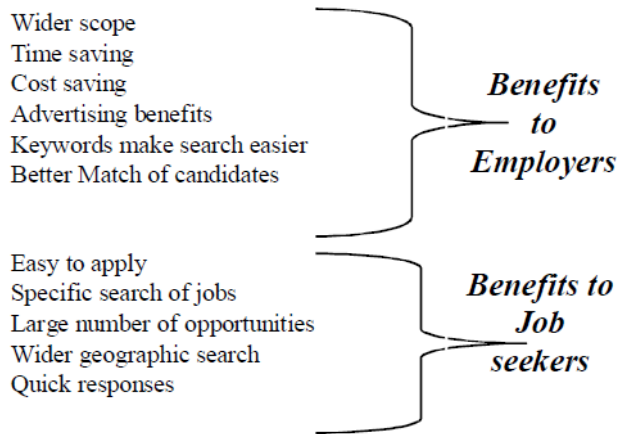


Figure 3: E-recruitment saves a great deal of time for both companies and job seekers.

Source: Winfinity, 2021.

Although there have been many obstacles and difficulties along the way, e-recruitment has proven to be successful since its inception. Some people are not tech-savvy; therefore, they do not always supply accurate information online. They frequently make errors such as misspelling their name, incorrectly entering their hometown, inputting their credentials inaccurately, etc. Additionally, since online resumes can be easily duplicated, there is a higher chance that the genuine candidate will be overlooked in favor of the duplicate. The reliability and precision of the information furnished by personnel cannot be assured because resumes are submitted online. Using online tools to find candidates presents both quality and quantity issues.

A significant number of applications from unqualified individuals have been recorded by numerous organizations. Candidates are unable to access any portal in the event of an internet connection failure. Certain companies overcomplicate their websites, rendering them excessively complex, thereby making it difficult for job seekers to locate suitable positions and submit applications.

Everyone knows how to use a computer. Additionally, due to the absence of face-to-face interaction in online applications, employers often struggle to assess a candidate's personality accurately. This limitation can result in significant time wastage as employers may need to restart the interview process if a candidate's personality differs greatly from what was initially anticipated.

Employers may find it tough to locate the right talent when it's difficult to discover a candidate within the allocated budget and time. The task facing job portals is to weed out job seekers and bogus job offers from the information they display. (Gairola, 2015).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized two approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research thesis. It employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, specifically a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews.

3.2 Target Group

Having a large network on LinkedIn made it accessible to have many employees reached out to, who work firsthand in recruitment and HR processes, such as human resources specialists, recruitment officers, hiring managers, and executive leadership. Who also worked before, during, and after the pandemic era. from several countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. including organizations in the private and public sectors.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

1. Questionnaire Survey

A structured online questionnaire was created and distributed between February and March 2024 on Google Forms, to collect quantitative data from a very diverse sample of participants, informing participants at the beginning that responses would be treated with strict confidentiality as no names were required, and all responses would be gathered and analyzed anonymously. The questionnaire included 20 questions designed to assess the research objectives and hypotheses. 151 respondents were asked to respond to a-multiple choice format and open-ended questions using a weblink to the survey through announcements on LinkedIn, Facebook, and emails.

2. In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were carried out to acquire detailed insights from key stakeholders engaged in the virtual recruitment process in the post-pandemic era. The interviews were structured, allowing for flexibility in exploring emergent themes. The participants were voluntarily chosen with diverse perspectives and experiences who held positions related to the research objectives. Fifteen interviews were conducted via face-to-face, video conferencing, and audio recording, with participants' consent for later transcription and analysis at mutually

agreed-upon times. Participants were encouraged to speak freely and share their experiences and insights.

The study design was selected because of its capacity to answer the goals of the study conveniently in terms of time and resources.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaire survey were analyzed using IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 27 for Microsoft Windows, employing descriptive statistics to summarize participant responses and identify patterns and trends.

Qualitative data from the in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed and subjected to thematic analysis. Themes and patterns were identified via a systematic process of categorization, allowing for in-depth exploration of participant perspectives and experiences. In addition to the general trends, common answers, and striking ones.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Questionnaire Survey

4.1.1 Demographic characteristics of the participants

The sample consisted of a total of 151 participants from many counties. It had a female majority of 80 (53%) while the male counterparts consisted of 71 (47%). Participants met a minimum age requirement of 18 years or older. The data shows that most of the participants are in the 25-34 age range, comprising 64.2 percent of the surveyed participants. The next largest group is the 35-44 age categories, representing (27.8%) of the participants. A smaller proportion (6.6%) falls between the ages of 18-24, while (1.4%) of the participants are 45 years old or older.

The questionnaire results show the diversity of the participants from diverse continents. Notably, the highest percentage was from Europe, at a (42.1 %), mostly from Hungary, Germany, and the Netherlands. Followed by Asia at a (40.7 %) consisting of different countries, such as Syria, United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan. A small portion came from Africa, at (13.8 %) from Egypt. And (3.4%) from America. As shown below in Figure 4, a pie chart was generated from Google Forms.

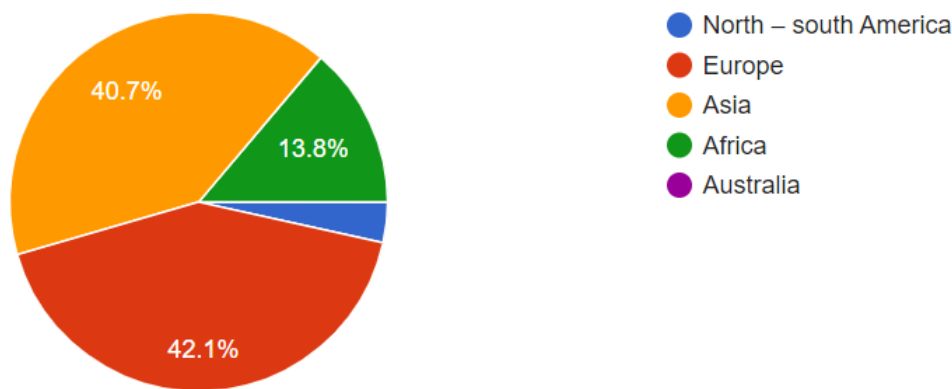


Figure 4: Number of responses in the demographic distribution.

Source: Author's own research, 2024

As regards the current role of participants in their organization, it was found that most of them hold a position in human resources, with 87 respondents (57.6%), followed by 46 respondents

(30.5%) that hold a hiring manager or recruitment position. With a small number of 11 Executive Leadership employees (7.3%). Which is combined with a few other combined positions: recruitment officer (0.7%), HR Unit Manager (0.7%), HR administrative assistant (0.7%), human resources and hiring manager (2.5%). Most of the participants have between 1-5 years of experience in their organizations, with a percentage of (52.3%). The second large group of participants has 6-10 years of experience, with a percentage of (33.1%) whereas (12.0%) have more than ten years of experience, followed by the smallest group (2.6%) who have less than a year of experience.

The academic qualifications of the respondents vary, the results show that participants who hold a master’s degree are (46.3%), the holders of a bachelor’s degree are (43.5%), whereas (6.1%) is the percentage of the high school diploma, and (3.4%) for the holders of doctorate or professional degrees in addition to (0.7%) to a holder of bachelor’s degree with two professional certificates, as shown in figure 5 that was generated from google forms:

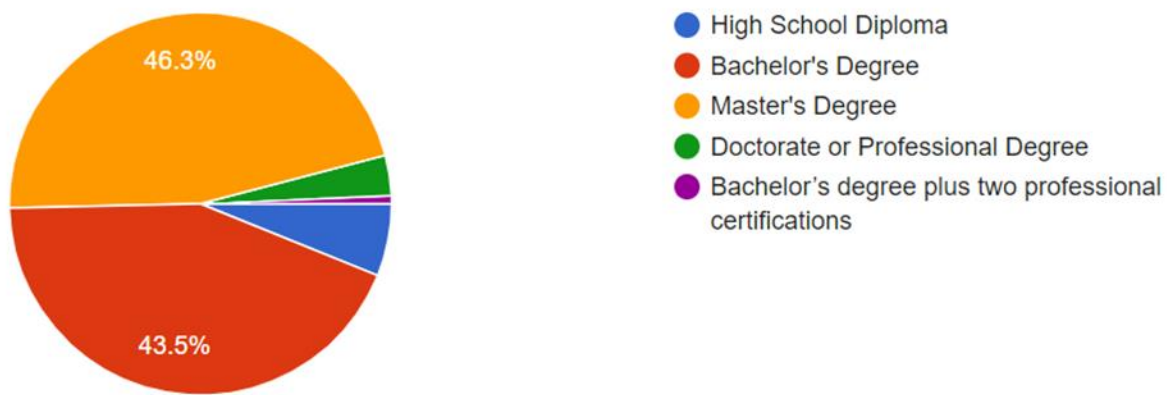


Figure 5: The academic qualification of the participants

Source: Author's own research, 2024

4.1.2 Examining the immediate response to the pandemic (Hypothesis 1)

To examine the immediate response to the pandemic, descriptive statistics were employed on questions 7 and 8 of the survey. As shown in figure 6, there has been an immediate response to the pandemic by organizations, regarding hypothesis 1 and generating the answers to the question that was how did the organization adapt their recruitment strategies when the pandemic started, where an implementation of virtual interviews option was chosen 114 times by participants at (77.6%) to be the highest percentage, followed by utilizing online assessments option that was chosen 88 times by participants with a percentage of (59.9%), in addition to 71 times to have used changing communication methods with a percentage of (48.3%).

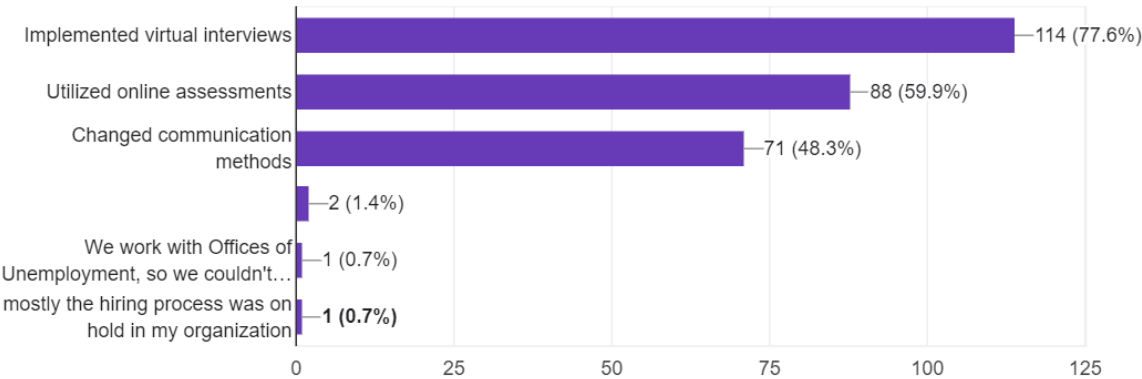


Figure 6: The use of adopted virtual recruitment strategies during the initial phase of COVID-19

Source: Author's own research, 2024

To also examine the speed of implementing these strategies regarding hypothesis 1, participants were asked if they implemented them swiftly in the initial phase of the pandemic, as the below table 2 shows that 125 answers were yes (82.8%) while only 24 answers were no (15.9%).

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	1.3	1.3	1.3
No	24	15.9	15.9	17.2
Yes	125	82.8	82.8	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

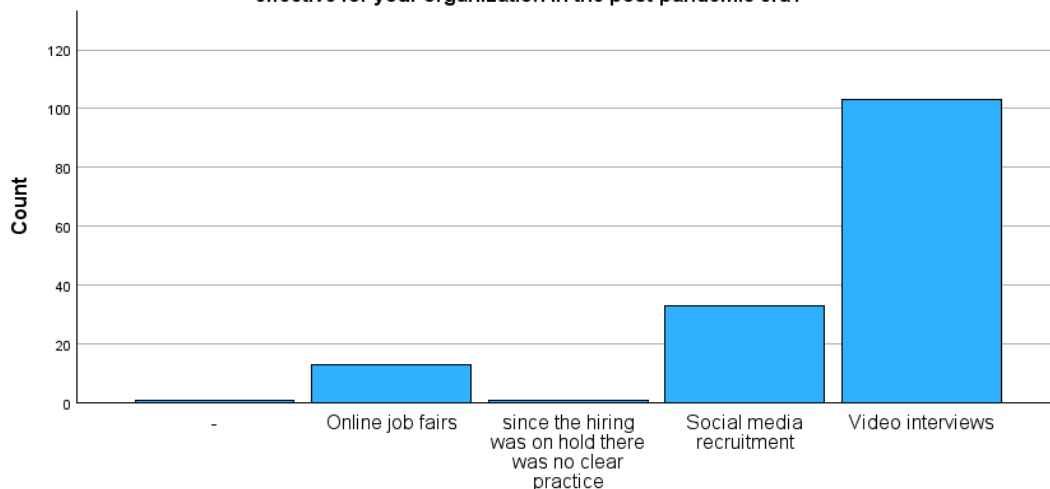
Table 2: The number of swift changes in the start of COVID-19

Source: Author's own research, 2024

4.1.3 Identifying the Effective Virtual Recruitment Strategies (Hypothesis 2)

To discover what were the most effective virtual recruitment methods that were employed after the pandemic started, the participants were asked in question 9 of the survey to choose among the most common strategies that were used then. As shown in figure 7 in the below charts, the highest percentage was (68.2%) with 103 responses for video interview strategies, where the social media recruitment method was chosen by 33 respondents at a percentage of (21.9%), followed by a small percentage (8.6%) for online job fairs with 13 respondents.

Simple Bar Count of Based on your experience, which virtual recruitment strategies have proven to be most effective for your organization in the post-pandemic era?



Based on your experience, which virtual recruitment strategies have proven to be most effective for your organization in the post-pandemic era?

Figure 7: Most effective recruitment strategies in the post-pandemic era.

Source: Author's own research, 2024.

The impact of these strategies was also to be asked about in question 10 of the survey, to examine to what extent these virtual recruitment strategies were effective. As shown in Table 3 below, 78 participants with a percentage of (51.7%) answered “moderately,” while 39 participants answered “significantly” with a percentage of (25.8%).

The answer “slightly” was at (17.9%) with 27 respondents, followed by the smallest portion of (4.6%) for the answer “not at all.” The latest shows that the largest two groups of answers were “moderately” and “significantly,” which proves that these virtual recruitment methods were effective and had an impact on the overall hiring processes.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Moderately	78	51.7	51.7	51.7
	Not at all	7	4.6	4.6	56.3
	Significantly	39	25.8	25.8	82.1
	Slightly	27	17.9	17.9	100.0
	Total	151	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: The efficiency of the recruitment process examination

Source: Author's own research, 2024

4.1.4 The experience of candidates in the era of virtual recruitment processes (Hypothesis 3)

To understand the candidate experience in comparison to the traditional methods, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, and percentages were conducted on question 11 in the questionnaire, as shown in below table 4, there were 74 respondents answered more positive with a percentage of (49.0%), followed by 61 respondents to answer similar with a percentage of (40.4%), where only 16 respondents answer more negative at (10.6%). These results reveal a more positive experience to the candidates; however, a second large group of answers revealed a similar experience as well.

The satisfaction of candidates was also to be examined in question 11 of the questionnaire. As figure 8 shows below, 86 responses were satisfied, with a percentage of (57.0%) as the largest group of answers, followed by 38 responses as neutral with a percentage of (25.2%). The very satisfied option was chosen 15 times with a percentage of (9.9%) and the smallest groups of answers were 9 answers (6.0%) for dissatisfied and 3 answers (2.0%) for very dissatisfied.

The results show that the majority of participants thought that satisfaction took place with the virtual recruitment strategies compared to the traditional methods. A small portion also thought that there were some candidates who were dissatisfied with them.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	More negative	16	10.6	10.6	10.6
	More positive	74	49.0	49.0	59.6
	Similar	61	40.4	40.4	100.0
	Total	151	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Description of candidate experience compared to traditional methods.

Source: Author's own research, 2024.

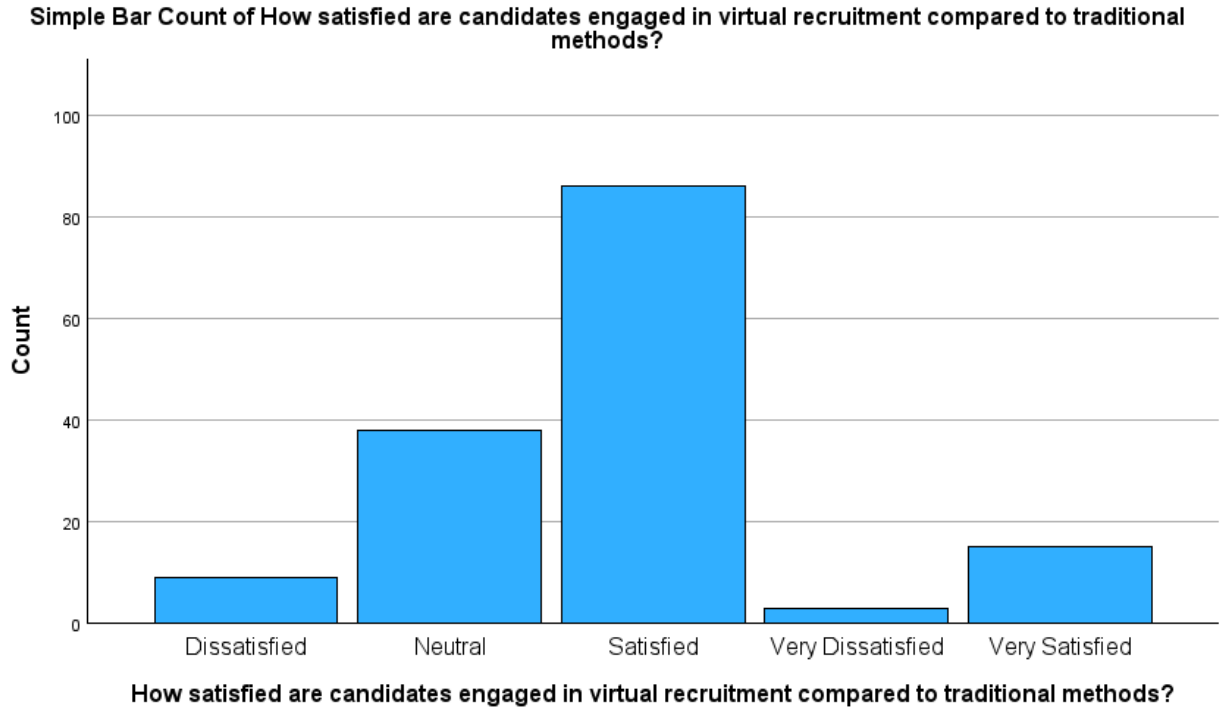


Figure 8: A count on how satisfied candidates in virtual recruitment are compared to traditional.

Source: Author's own research, 2024

4.1.5 Assess Diversity and Inclusion Impacts on Hiring Processes and Test the Cost Savings (Hypothesis 4)

To analyze the questions that assess the impacts of virtual recruitment strategies on diversity and inclusion efforts, using the analysis techniques, which are descriptive statistics that were conducted for survey question 13. In the below table 5, it's shown that 82 respondents (54.3%) chose the option: positively, to the question related to the impact on diversity, while 66 respondents (43.7%) chose the option: no impact, and only 3 respondents (2.0%) chose the option: negatively. That means that virtual recruitment strategies mostly have a positive impact on diversity and inclusion in the hiring process or don't have any impact at all.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Negatively	3	2.0	2.0	2.0
	No impact	66	43.7	43.7	45.7
	Positively	82	54.3	54.3	100.0
	Total	151	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Assessing the diversity and inclusion of virtual recruitment strategies.

Source: Author's own research, 2024

Additionally, to gain more insight into how the organizations adapted their virtual recruitment strategies, an open-ended question was asked (question 14) of the survey, and after conducting thematic analysis based on the provided 70 responses for this question, we found that the utilization of technology was mostly in common with all respondents, starting with the first trend of Utilization of Technology for Virtual Recruitment, including online interviews, updating technology means and training employees to use it well, and increasing the number of interviewed candidates to ensure equal opportunity. The second trend was about training and development initiatives, such as training interviewers on inclusivity, disability-friendly assessments, and being culturally neutral. The third trend is Emphasis on Diversity-Focused Recruitment Practices, quoting some answers: answer A, “Every interview is different, suited for every candidate,” and answer B, “Define the number of male and female candidates equally to each position.” The third pattern of answer was Policy Adaptations for Inclusivity, where answer C was “We adapted our virtual recruitment methods to make sure everyone feels included” and answer D was “Our organization has adapted virtual recruitment strategies to ensure inclusivity by: using accessible platforms, providing clear communication, and offering flexible interview options.” In addition to the fourth trend, Strategies for Reducing Bias, by avoiding gender questions, bias questions, and such.

The last common trend was Fostering a Culture of Inclusivity, where answer E was “online communication platforms facilitated the involvement of a wider range of candidates in the selection process” and answer F was “through policies that ensure inclusion.”

Below is a summary, in Table 6, that presents the frequency of each theme identified in the responses to Question 14. It provides a clear overview of the main themes discussed and their prevalence among the respondents.

Theme	Frequency
Utilization of Technology for Virtual Recruitment	6
Training and Development Initiatives	4
Emphasis on Diversity-Focused Recruitment Practices	4
Policy Adaptations for Inclusivity	3
Accessibility Accommodations	2
Strategies for Reducing Bias	3
Fostering a Culture of Inclusivity	4

Table 6: The frequency of each theme identified in the responses to question 14 (open-ended).

Source: Author's own research, 2024.

It’s important to also examine how these virtual recruitment strategies have helped to save some costs for both employers and candidates, as employers could save some logistics costs and such, while the applicants could save time and money by not having to travel to do neither the interviews nor the assessments where applicable.

Therefore, a question was listed in the questionnaire addressing this matter, and as it’s shown in the below table 7, a descriptive analysis to the question, we can see that 66 respondents (43.7%) thought that there were moderate savings, and 33 respondents (21.9%) chose significant savings, while 40 respondents (26.5%) went with minimal savings, and only 11 respondents (7.3%) chose no savings. Which clearly states that the post-pandemic virtual recruitment strategies have proven to save costs and times, for both organizations and candidates.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	.7	.7	.7
Minimal Savings	40	26.5	26.5	27.2
Moderate Savings	66	43.7	43.7	70.9
No Savings	11	7.3	7.3	78.1
Significant Savings	33	21.9	21.9	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: The frequencies of saving costs and times for organizations.

Source: Author's own research, 2024

4.1.6 Explore Long-term Organizational Implications on Organizational Culture (Hypothesis 5)

To understand what the thoughts are on how organizations foresee the impact of the implemented recruitment strategies on their culture in the long term, a question was conducted in descriptive statistics, as shown in below figure 9, the respondents numbers that chose positive were 95 (62.9%), and the neutral answer was chosen by 50 respondents (33.1%), while only 5 respondents chose the answer negative (0.7%).

This result provides insight into the general sentiment among respondents regarding the potential impact of virtual recruitment strategies on organizational culture in the long term. The majority of respondents seem to view the impact positively, while a smaller proportion remains neutral or expresses concerns.



Figure 9: Bar count on the long-term implications on org. culture.

Source: Author's own research, 2024.

To gain a deeper understanding of whether organizations will continue prioritizing virtual recruitment strategies in the long-term, we conducted analysis on the related question from the survey. As it's shown in the below table 8, 54 participants (35.8%) chose to say yes, probably. To be followed by the second largest group of 46 participants (30.5%), who chose yes, definitely. 31 participants (20.5%) were unsure, while 17 participants (11.3%) thought probably not, and only 1 participant (0.7%) chose definitely not.

These results offer insight into the likelihood of organizations continuing to prioritize virtual recruitment strategies in the long term, with a significant portion leaning towards continued prioritization, while others remain uncertain or skeptical.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	1.3	1.3	1.3
No, Definitely Not	1	.7	.7	2.0
No, Probably Not	17	11.3	11.3	13.2
Unsure	31	20.5	20.5	33.8
Yes, Definitely	46	30.5	30.5	64.2
Yes, Probably	54	35.8	35.8	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

Table 8: Anticipating numbers prioritizing the virtual recruitment strategies in the future.

Source: Author's own research, 2024

4.2 In-Depth Interviews

Several interviews (15) were conducted with employees who work in recruitment and human resources from different organizations. They were asked 12 questions in which they covered all research questions, objectives, and hypotheses.

In response to the unexpected disruptions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations swiftly adapted their recruitment strategies, embracing virtual methodologies as a means of navigating unprecedented challenges. This marked a significant departure from traditional practices, ushering in a new era of remote hiring. “Since then, 80% of our interviews are done virtually. We started recruiting people to work virtually online from their home country,” remarked one interviewee (Interviewee 1).

This sentiment was echoed by another interviewee who highlighted the adoption of online assessment tools, as a direct response to the pandemic-induced paradigm shift the COVID-19 period opened our eye on the online assessment tools and based on the successful outcome we got from their usage; we added it as a service to our offerings,” Interviewee 2).

However, alongside the opportunities presented by virtual recruitment, organizations encountered a myriad of challenges. Notably, the need to monitor and control productivity in a remote setting emerged as a key concern (“Some challenges: how to control and monitor people working from home,” Interviewee 3). Technical hurdles, such as the adaptation to new collaboration platforms

like Microsoft Teams, also posed significant obstacles. Yet, through concerted efforts to provide comprehensive training and support, organizations were able to surmount these challenges, fostering a culture of adaptability and resilience.

Amidst the challenges, virtual recruitment practices yielded notable successes. Virtual hiring events emerged as a standout practice, facilitating efficient interactions with a diverse pool of candidates (“In the post-pandemic era, successful virtual recruitment practices were crucial for our organization. We found that virtual hiring events were particularly effective,” Interviewee 4). The flexibility afforded by virtual interviews also garnered praise, with candidates appreciating the elimination of geographical constraints and the convenience of scheduling (“Candidates appreciate the convenience and flexibility offered by virtual interviews,” Interviewee 5).

Moreover, the shift to virtual recruitment significantly accelerated the hiring process, eliminating geographical barriers and streamlining decision-making. The efficiency gains achieved through virtual recruitment were underscored by interviewees who highlighted the expedited access to global talent pools and streamlined processes (“Virtual recruitment has significantly accelerated our hiring processes,” Interviewee 6).

However, amidst the efficiencies, concerns regarding the maintenance of personal connections in a remote environment surfaced. While virtual recruitment offered convenience and flexibility, some candidates expressed a preference for in-person interactions, emphasizing the enduring value of personal connections in the recruitment process (“Feedback and observations regarding virtual recruitment processes compared to traditional methods have been largely positive,” Interviewee 7).

In navigating the transition to virtual recruitment, organizations placed a premium on diversity and inclusion. Blind recruitment techniques and expanded outreach efforts were employed to mitigate unconscious bias and ensure equitable access to opportunities (“Our organization has taken deliberate steps to ensure diversity and inclusion in virtual recruitment,” Interviewee 8).

Looking ahead, the long-term implications of virtual recruitment on organizational culture and employee onboarding are profound. The digitalization of recruitment processes necessitates a reevaluation of organizational norms, emphasizing adaptability and digital fluency (“From my perspective, the long-term implications of virtual recruitment strategies on organizational culture

and employee onboarding are significant,” Interviewee 9). Investment in robust training programs and digital platforms will be paramount in facilitating seamless onboarding experiences and nurturing a cohesive organizational culture in a remote environment.

In reflecting on the insights and lessons learned from the virtual recruitment experience, organizations underscored the importance of investing in training and maintaining transparent communication channels. These foundational principles will guide organizations as they navigate the evolving recruitment landscape, leveraging technology to drive innovation and resilience in the post-pandemic era.

In conclusion, the transition to virtual recruitment strategies represents a pivotal moment in the evolution of organizational hiring practices. As organizations grappled with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, they embraced digital solutions, fundamentally reshaping the recruitment landscape. Through innovative approaches and strategic investments in technology and training, organizations have demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability.

In light of the insights gleaned from interview responses, it is evident that virtual recruitment has ushered in a new era of efficiency, accessibility, and inclusivity. While challenges remain, particularly in maintaining personal connections and mitigating bias, organizations have risen to the occasion, leveraging virtual tools to forge new pathways to talent acquisition.

Looking ahead, the long-term implications of virtual recruitment on organizational culture and employee onboarding are profound. By prioritizing digital connectivity, fostering transparent communication, and embracing adaptability, organizations can navigate the complexities of the virtual recruitment landscape with confidence.

Ultimately, this research underscores the transformative power of virtual recruitment strategies and their enduring impact on organizational practices. As organizations continue to navigate the uncertainties of the post-pandemic world, the lessons learned from the virtual recruitment experience will serve as guiding principles, inform future strategies, and shape the recruitment landscape for years to come.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the analysis of the interview responses provides valuable insights into the effectiveness and impact of virtual recruitment strategies, addressing key research questions and objectives outlined in the study.

Hypothesis 1: Organizations that swiftly adopted virtual recruitment strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic experienced more effective and efficient recruitment processes compared to those relying on traditional methods.

Questionnaire Results: The questionnaire findings revealed that a majority of organizations swiftly adapted virtual approaches to recruitment during the pandemic, with respondents perceiving virtual recruitment strategies as moderately to significantly impacting the efficiency of the recruitment process.

Interview Insights: The majority of interviewees, such as (A2, A3, and A5) highlighted the swift transition to virtual recruitment methods during the pandemic. Interviewee A2 noted, "During the COVID-19 pandemic, our organization swiftly adapted recruitment by going fully virtual, using online interviews, assessments, and video conferencing." This supports the hypothesis, indicating that organizations that embraced virtual recruitment methods experienced enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in their hiring processes.

Hypothesis 2: Virtual recruitment strategies, such as video interviews and online assessments, have demonstrated higher effectiveness and success rates in the post-pandemic era compared to traditional methods.

Questionnaire Results: Question 9 and other questions highlighted that virtual recruitment practices, particularly video interviews and online assessments, were perceived as highly successful in the post-pandemic era.

Interview Insights: Interviewees (A2, A5) emphasized the success of virtual recruitment practices, particularly video interviews and online assessments. Interviewee A5 mentioned, "Mainly video interviewing was most successful implemented in terms of how quick the process was and flexible because logging in from any place for both recruiters and candidates." This corroborates the hypothesis, suggesting that virtual strategies have indeed proven to be more effective than traditional methods in the post-pandemic era.

Hypothesis 3: Candidates participating in virtual recruitment processes during the post-pandemic era report comparable or higher satisfaction levels than candidates engaging in traditional recruitment methods.

Questionnaire Results: Question 12 indicated that candidates generally reported high satisfaction levels with virtual recruitment processes, with many perceiving them as more flexible and efficient compared to traditional methods.

Interview Insights: The interviewees (A6, A9, and A12) generally expressed positive feedback regarding virtual recruitment experiences. Interviewee A12 stated, "Feedback from candidates showed high satisfaction with the convenience of virtual interviews." This supports the hypothesis, indicating that candidates find virtual recruitment processes satisfactory or even preferable compared to traditional methods.

Hypothesis 4: Virtual recruitment strategies, particularly those swiftly adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, result in cost savings for organizations and positively impact diversity and inclusion efforts compared to traditional recruitment processes.

Questionnaire Results: Question 19 revealed that virtual recruitment strategies resulted in significant cost savings for organizations, particularly in terms of reduced travel and logistics expenses.

Interview Insights: While interviewees did not explicitly address cost savings, they highlighted the positive impact of virtual recruitment on diversity and inclusion efforts. Interviewee A2 mentioned, "Implementing blind recruitment techniques and expanding outreach to diverse platforms broadens the talent pool." This partially supports the hypothesis, indicating that virtual recruitment strategies contribute to diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Hypothesis 5: Virtual recruitment strategies result in positive long-term implications for organizational culture and employee onboarding, fostering adaptability and efficiency in the recruitment process.

Questionnaire Results: Question 15 indicated that a majority of respondents perceived virtual recruitment strategies as positively impacting organizational culture in the long term, fostering adaptability and efficiency.

Interview Insights: Interviewees (A2, A3, A5, A7, A8, A14, and A15) discussed the long-term implications of virtual recruitment, emphasizing adaptability and efficiency. Interviewee A2 noted, "Virtual recruitment has necessitated a reevaluation of organizational culture, emphasizing digital connectivity, remote collaboration, and adaptability." This supports the hypothesis, suggesting that virtual strategies indeed foster positive long-term implications for organizational culture and employee onboarding.

In conclusion, the findings from both the questionnaire and interview data provide robust support for the hypotheses, offering comprehensive insights into the effectiveness and implications of virtual recruitment strategies in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Future research could delve into the perspectives of these additional stakeholders to offer a more comprehensive understanding of virtual recruitment practices. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could examine the long-term impacts of virtual recruitment strategies on organizational outcomes, such as employee retention and performance. Furthermore, comparative studies could assess the effectiveness of different virtual recruitment tools and techniques in various organizational contexts. Overall, while this study offers valuable insights, further research is needed to deepen our understanding of virtual recruitment strategies and their impact on organizational practices and outcomes.

While this study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness and implications of virtual recruitment strategies, several limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample size of the questionnaire respondents and interviewees may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, depending on self-reported data from questionnaire responses introduces the potential for response bias. Furthermore, the study primarily concentrates on the perceptions and experiences of organizations and candidates, without considering the perspectives of recruitment professionals or other stakeholders.

Table 9 presents the interrelatedness of the objectives, research questions and hypotheses and whether they were accepted or rejected based on what.

Objective	Research Question	Hypothesis	Acceptance/Rejection	Basis (Questionnaire)	Basis (In-depth Interviews)
Objective 1: Examine the Immediate Response to the Pandemic	RQ1: How did organizations adapt their recruitment strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic, and what immediate changes were implemented?	H1: Organizations that swiftly adopted virtual recruitment strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic experienced more effective and efficient recruitment processes compared to those relying on traditional methods.	Accepted	Supported by widespread adoption of virtual recruitment tools reported in the questionnaire responses.	Further corroborated by interviewees' testimonies emphasizing the efficiency gains achieved through virtual recruitment strategies.
Objective 2: Identify Effective Virtual Recruitment Strategies	RQ2: Which virtual recruitment strategies have proven to be particularly effective in the post-pandemic era?	H2: Virtual recruitment strategies, such as video interviews and online assessments, have demonstrated higher effectiveness and success rates in the post-pandemic era compared to traditional methods.	Accepted	Supported by questionnaire responses highlighting the success of video interviews and online assessments in identifying qualified candidates.	Reinforced by interviewees' accounts citing the effectiveness of video interviews and online assessments in the candidate selection process.

Objective	Research Question	Hypothesis	Acceptance/Rejection	Basis (Questionnaire)	Basis (In-depth Interviews)
Objective 3: Understand the Candidate Experience	RQ3: What is the perception and experience of candidates in the era of virtual recruitment processes?	H3: Candidates participating in virtual recruitment processes during the post-pandemic era report comparable or higher satisfaction levels than candidates engaging in traditional recruitment methods.	Accepted	Supported by questionnaire responses indicating positive candidate perceptions of virtual recruitment experiences.	Echoed by interviewees' feedback expressing satisfaction with the convenience and flexibility offered by virtual recruitment processes.
Objective 4: Assess Diversity and Inclusion Impacts	RQ4: To what extent have virtual recruitment strategies impacted diversity and inclusion efforts in hiring?	H4: Virtual recruitment strategies, particularly those swiftly adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, result in cost savings for organizations and positively impact diversity and inclusion efforts compared to traditional recruitment processes.	Accepted	Supported by questionnaire responses highlighting the perceived positive impact of virtual recruitment on diversity and inclusion efforts.	Reinforced by interviewees' observations indicating enhanced diversity and inclusion through virtual recruitment practices.

Objective	Research Question	Hypothesis	Acceptance/Rejection	Basis (Questionnaire)	Basis (In-depth Interviews)
Objective 5: Explore Long-term Organizational Implications	RQ5: What are the long-term implications of virtual recruitment strategies on organizational culture and employee onboarding?	H5: Virtual recruitment strategies result in positive long-term implications for organizational culture and employee onboarding, fostering adaptability and efficiency in the recruitment process.	Accepted	Supported by both questionnaire responses and interview feedback indicating the perceived long-term benefits of virtual recruitment on organizational culture and employee onboarding.	Further supported by interviewees' insights highlighting the transformative effects of virtual recruitment on organizational culture and employee integration.

Table 9: The interrelatedness of the objectives, research questions, hypotheses.

Source: Author's own research, 2024

6. SUMMARY

The transition to virtual recruitment strategies amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of organizational hiring practices. This research endeavor set out to explore the immediate responses, effectiveness, candidate experiences, diversity impacts, and long-term implications of virtual recruitment strategies deployed by organizations worldwide. Through a comprehensive analysis of questionnaire survey data and in-depth interviews with recruitment and human resources professionals, valuable insights were gleaned, shedding light on the transformative power of virtual recruitment strategies and their enduring impact on organizational practices.

The findings from the questionnaire survey revealed a diverse pool of participants primarily representing Europe and Asia, with a majority holding positions in human resources or hiring management roles. Notably, a significant proportion of respondents exhibited a preference for virtual recruitment strategies, citing advantages such as increased flexibility, efficiency gains, and broader access to talent pools. Furthermore, the majority of participants expressed satisfaction with virtual recruitment experiences, highlighting the convenience and accessibility afforded by digital platforms.

In examining the immediate responses to the pandemic, it became evident that organizations swiftly adapted their recruitment strategies, embracing virtual methodologies to navigate unprecedented challenges. Notably, the implementation of virtual interviews and online assessment tools emerged as common practices, facilitating seamless transitions to remote hiring processes. While technical hurdles and productivity monitoring concerns surfaced as challenges, organizations demonstrated resilience by providing comprehensive training and support to employees.

The effectiveness of virtual recruitment strategies was underscored by the accelerated hiring processes and the positive feedback received from candidates. Virtual hiring events and interviews were particularly lauded for their efficiency and flexibility, enabling organizations to access global talent pools and streamline decision-making processes. Moreover, efforts to prioritize diversity

and inclusion in virtual recruitment practices were evident, with organizations leveraging blind recruitment techniques and expanded outreach efforts to mitigate unconscious bias.

Looking ahead, the long-term implications of virtual recruitment on organizational culture and employee onboarding are profound. The digitalization of recruitment processes necessitates a reevaluation of organizational norms, emphasizing adaptability and digital fluency. Investment in robust training programs and digital platforms will be paramount in facilitating seamless onboarding experiences and nurturing a cohesive organizational culture in a remote environment.

In conclusion, this research underscores the transformative power of virtual recruitment strategies and their enduring impact on organizational practices. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, organizations have demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability in embracing digital solutions. By prioritizing digital connectivity, fostering transparent communication, and embracing adaptability, organizations can navigate the complexities of the virtual recruitment landscape with confidence. As organizations continue to navigate the uncertainties of the post-pandemic world, the lessons learned from the virtual recruitment experience will serve as guiding principles, informing future strategies, and shaping the recruitment landscape for years to come.

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DEDICATION

To my beloved family, your steadfast love and support have been my guiding light throughout this journey. Dad, Mom, my sisters Juliana and Rawaa, and brothers George and Rashad, your encouragement and unwavering belief in me have fueled my determination to reach this milestone. This thesis is dedicated to you with heartfelt gratitude for your constant presence and endless love.

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ANNEXES

The questionnaire:

Virtual Recruitment Strategies in the Post-Pandemic Era.

Welcome to my survey on "Virtual Recruitment Strategies in the Post-Pandemic Era."

This study aims to explore the evolving landscape of recruitment practices following the COVID-19 pandemic, with a specific focus on the adoption and impact of virtual recruitment strategies.

Your responses will be managed confidentially and strictly for research purposes.

Thank you for taking the time to contribute your insights to this important study.

- 1- What is your age?
 - 18-24
 - 25-34
 - 35-44
 - 45-54+
- 2- What is your gender?
 - a) Male
 - b) Female
 - c) Other
- 3- What is your highest level of qualification?
 - High School Diploma
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Master's Degree
 - Doctorate or Professional Degree
 - Other
- 4- Where do you currently reside?
 - North – south America
 - Europe

- Asia
 - Africa
 - Australia
- 5- What is your role within the organization?
- a) Executive Leadership
 - b) Human Resources
 - c) Hiring Manager/Recruitment
 - Other
- 6- How many years of experience do you have in your current role?
- a) Less than 1 year
 - b) 1-5 years
 - c) 6-10 years
 - d) More than 10 years
- 7- How did your organization adapt its recruitment strategies during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Implemented virtual interviews
 - Utilized online assessments
 - Changed communication methods
 - Other
- 8- Were these changes implemented swiftly in response to the pandemic?
- Yes
 - No
- 9- Based on your experience, which virtual recruitment strategies have proven to be most effective for your organization in the post-pandemic era?
- Video interviews
 - Online job fairs
 - Social media recruitment
 - Other

- 10- To what extent do you believe these strategies have positively impacted the efficiency of the recruitment process?
- Not at all
 - Slightly
 - Moderately
 - Significantly
- 11- As a participant in virtual recruitment, how would you describe your experience in comparison to traditional recruitment methods?
- More positive
 - Similar
 - More negative
- 12- How satisfied are candidates engaged in virtual recruitment compared to traditional methods?
- Very Dissatisfied
 - Dissatisfied
 - Neutral
 - Satisfied
 - Very Satisfied
- 13- In your opinion, how have virtual recruitment strategies influenced the diversity and inclusion efforts in your organization's hiring processes?
- Negatively
 - No impact
 - Positively
- 14- How has your organization adapted its virtual recruitment strategies to ensure inclusivity?
- 15- How do you foresee the long-term implications of virtual recruitment strategies on your organization's culture?
- Positive
 - Neutral
 - Negative
- 16- To what extent did your organization swiftly adopt virtual recruitment strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Implemented virtual interviews
- Utilized online assessments
- Changed communication methods
- Other

17- Has your organization integrated advanced virtual tools, such as video interviews and online assessments, into the recruitment process?

- Not Integrated
- Partially Integrated
- Moderately Integrated
- Fully Integrated

18- To what extent have virtual recruitment strategies resulted in cost savings for the organization, specifically in terms of reduced travel and logistics expenses?

- No Savings
- Minimal Savings
- Moderate Savings
- Significant Savings

19- Do you anticipate your organization continuing to prioritize virtual recruitment strategies in the long term?

- Yes, Definitely
- Yes, Probably
- Unsure
- No, Probably Not
- No, Definitely Not

20- If you are open to participating in a follow-up interview, please provide your contact information.

Interview Guide questions:

This study aims to explore the evolving landscape of recruitment practices following the COVID-19 pandemic, with a specific focus on the adoption and impact of virtual recruitment strategies.

1. Can you describe the immediate changes your organization made in its recruitment strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What were the primary challenges your organization faced in adapting to virtual recruitment, and how were these challenges addressed?
3. In your experience, what were the most successful virtual recruitment practices implemented during the post-pandemic era?
4. How did the adoption of virtual recruitment strategies impact the speed and efficiency of the hiring process in your organization?
5. Can you share any specific examples of how your organization utilized advanced virtual tools, such as video interviews or online assessments, in the recruitment process?
6. In terms of candidate experience, what feedback or observations have you gathered regarding virtual recruitment processes compared to traditional methods?
7. How has the organization adapted its virtual recruitment strategies to ensure diversity and inclusion in the hiring process?
8. From your perspective, what are the long-term implications of virtual recruitment strategies on organizational culture and employee onboarding?
9. Were there any unexpected benefits or drawbacks associated with the adoption of virtual recruitment strategies that your organization experienced?
10. How have cost considerations, such as travel and logistics expenses, been influenced by the shift to virtual recruitment?
11. Do you anticipate your organization continuing to prioritize virtual recruitment strategies in the long term? Why or why not?
12. Can you share any insights or lessons learned from the organization's experience with virtual recruitment that could be beneficial for other companies navigating similar challenges?

DECLARATION

the public access and authenticity of the thesis/dissertation/portfolio¹

Student's name: Rabee Alhoms
Student's Neptun code: BIR6JG
Title of thesis: Virtual Recruitment Strategies in the Post-Pandemic Era
Year of publication: 2024
Name of the consultant's institute: Institute of Rural Development and Sustainable Economy
Name of consultant's department: Department of Foreign Languages

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Student's signature

DECLARATION


As a supervisor of Rabee Alhomsy (student Neptun code: BIR6JG)

I declare that I have reviewed the final thesis and that I have informed the student of the requirements, legal and ethical rules for the correct handling of literary sources.

I recommend / do not recommend¹ the final thesis / dissertation / portfolio to be defended in the final examination.

The thesis contains a state or official secret: yes no^{*2}

Date: 02-04-2024



insider consultant

¹ The appropriate one should be underlined.

² The appropriate one should be underlined.