

BRIDGING THE GAP THROUGH E-RECRUITMENT: EVIDENCES FROM PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT SECTOR IN KARACHI

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ABSTRACT

Internet has proved as the most powerful social network that has deep impact on our society and has become catalyst in the process of globalization. Recent trends and data reveal that internet is being used in employment sector globally. Job searching through internet in Pakistan is deemed uncommon. This research measures the usage of internet for job searching in Pakistan which has not been investigated in Pakistan's perspective before. The results assessed the positive trend of online job searching activities which develop considerably. Five motivators of Job seekers were consider in this study, "time saving" is the leading motivator followed by "browsing wide area of employment", "global employment pool", "easiness" and "cost effective" respectively. These motivators motivate job seekers to go for online search for employment.

The study recommends HR managers of Private sectors to focus more on online recruitment in Pakistan to attract large number of potential employees in less time and investing more on developing online recruitment tool to get large return on investment in long term perspective.

Keywords : Business Management: human resource management: e-recruitment: online job searching: job seekers: Pakistan

Analysis of Employment Sector in Pakistan:

Low economic growth has substantially reduced employment pool in Pakistan (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2005-06). This process has been accelerated because of the global economic meltdown, misdirected economic policies and bad governance despite highly productive demographic dividends. Economically active size is the largest in the total population of the country. Human capital is enriched with diverse skills from unskilled labor to high-skilled critical mass. Lack of will, vision and bad economic decisions have blurred the hope of any development that eventually resulted in utter disappointment among educated youth and labor class in Pakistan.

Employment sector is directly related to economic growth in the country. Pakistan's economic growth remained uneven during military and civil rules in its sixty two

years' history. Overall growth strategy could not patronize the inclusive development in Pakistan (Amjad, 1982). In the decade of 1990s, government of Pakistan's 9th plan-1996 though attempted to extend the growth frontiers, ignored the aspect of productive employment generation. Employment policy document has never been produced that synergizes supply and demand in employment market (Ghayur, 1996).

Rural and Urban employment have gone through unique experiences in this country. In the absence of innovative agricultural farming, land reforms and exclusive development zones, urban employment has come under strain. Pakistan's urban growth rate is highest in South Asia. Estimated in 1980s, urban population growth rate was 4.5% per annum and projected to 60% by the turn of the century. That proved true. Karachi's urban economy and its employment pool is the glaring example of this. Its

formal and informal sectors provide greater employment potential and are in a position to use human capital efficiently. However, this study, on the basis of extensive study of hiring procedure in Pakistan, reveals a naïve gap between employers and employees about prospects of each other. Both are unaware about each other and are unaware of employers' requirements and employees' expectations. Government institutions, in this regard, hardly provide guideline and technological support to reduce this gap¹.

Ethnographic survey and study of job advertisements in print media and employers hiring policies reveal that organizations always preferred traditional means for hiring people. Personal contacts, internal hiring, walk-in interviews, and unfair means are used to get employment. The phrase 'equal opportunity employer' is rarely applied in Pakistani organizations. Gradually, organizations learnt that traditional means are affecting the productivity and business growth. Now the present data on the theme clearly indicate increase in internet use for job advertising and job surfing. Internet is bridging the gap between jobs and jobseekers and globalizes the whole process of employment. Seeing the robust results of efficient workforce in industrialized countries the idea has been adopted gradually by Pakistani organizations.

In industrial countries, electronic recruitment presents a major change to the way in which companies traditionally recruiting personnel (Stone, 2005). Online job postings were started in 1990's, when IT companies and universities begin to use the Internet extensively. The first reference to online recruitment appears in articles of the mid-1980s while systematic reference to the online recruitment in the HR Journals begins almost a decade late, in the mid-1990's (Gentner, 1984; Casper, 1985). In the 2 years of its existence, more than 3,000 companies have used (OCC) online career center (Overman, 1995) nowadays known as online job portals.

For the past three years, Individuals have been signing-in on the websites for jobs searching in Pakistan. Thousands of CVs are sent or uploaded daily on Job searching/offering websites. The internet seems the perfect venue for jobseekers & head hunters. The efficient searches for Job or a candidate increase the hits on this unique system.

Internet job searching enhances the efficiency of job seekers. It also saves candidate's process cost and time. Another fact is that job seekers can reach employer at worldwide level, in contrast to any traditional searching method, which would reach a local or national group (CIPD, 1999). Through online job applications, job seeker, also communicate the employer that applicant is computer literate, educated and have some information about the company, especially if they apply through corporate website (Baillie, 1996).

Trend in Internet usages in Pakistan:

Internet access has been available in Pakistan since the early 1990s. Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) started offering access via the nationwide local call network in 1995. By early 2006 Internet

penetration remained low. But the numbers keep on growing (Wikipedia, 2009). As the use of internet in Pakistan increases day by day it became a vital tool for hiring process at various employment sectors in Pakistan.

The internet subscriber increases from 0.8 million in 2001 to 3.5 million in 2007, where PTA reports over 22 million internet users in 2008 i.e. 12.9% of the total population using Internet. The yearly growth of internet subscribers in Pakistan is as shown in graph below:

In seven years, 2.7 million internet subscribers have been increased, and 437.5% growth has been observed. The average growth of internet users was 129% from 2001 to 2007, albeit, facts & figures of 2008 are waiting.

According to Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) currently 2419 cities are connected to internet. PTA suggested the internet providers that they have to go to rural areas because of the saturation of urban areas. It is estimated by PTA that there will be 5 million broad band subscribers in Pakistan by 2010.

Since 2005, job seekers in Karachi city focusing extensively on online sources to avail opportunities (Khan, 2010). These job portals get success to build their image as online job market and substitute the traditional newspaper based job market at large (Khan, 2011). The massive job search on internet shows a positive growth in internet users. Internet access in universities and offices also facilitates people to search and apply online. Most of the students and professionals are regularly visiting the corporate website for possible job opening and can submit their credentials for future opportunities.

Literature Review:

The theme of On-line recruitment has not yet attracted academia and independent researchers in Pakistan. This is why the secondary data and research studies on this particular topic are rarely conducted. Organizations have recently started documentation of their online recruitment program. Newspapers are used in this research for examining the partial use of internet like inviting application through email instead of hard copy of prospective employees and encourage them to visit websites for employment form and electronic submissions. Organizational data are largely used in this study and primary data are generated through research instrument for statistical inferences. For the study of electronic recruitment and theoretical development and inductive arguments, this study reviewed number of studies conducted in other parts of the world which mentioned and discussed in forthcoming paragraphs.

Because of internet experiences in the western region have changed the typical mindset of Pakistani employers. Bush et al. (2002) suggests that the adaptation of the web as a medium by organizations has been faster than any other medium in history. The impact of technology on business is further reflected by the continuous rise in amount of literature exploring the effects of new technology development and implementation on the efficiency of business,

including the impacts on human resource practices (Dessler, 2002).

Organizations periodically recruit in order to add to, maintain, or readjust their work forces in accordance with HR requirements (Cascio, 1998). Recruitment is an important part of human resource process. It is a two way process which involved employers (Organizations) and applicants (Job seekers). Cascio (1998) identifies organizations searching for prospective employees through electronic recruitment. In practice, however, prospective employees seek out organizations as well. This view, termed as a mating theory of recruitment, appears more realistic. The assessment of attraction from both parties continues from the initial recruitment process to the final appointment (Breaugh, 1992). The traditional recruitment processes are readily acknowledged as time-consuming with long hiring cycle times, high cost per process and minimal geographic reach (Lee, 2005). On the other hand, indeed, the internet has changed the recruitment, the first and important stage of human resource management process, from an organizational and a job seekers point of view (Warner, 2005).

The debate on the conventional and modern methods of recruitment and job seeking is abiding and cause in rise in amount of literature exploring the pros and cons of both methods. Numbers of articles review the perceived advantages and disadvantages of Internet job searching. Verhoeven & Williams (2008) consider that it create privacy problems, however, due to online recruitment individual may easily search in the larger geographic area. The easiness to apply online is also consider a value added advantage (Kaydo & Cohen, 1999), albeit, lack of personal touch and user un-friendly tools may create ambiguities (Feldman & Klaas 2002). The most significant advantage to be considered by the researchers is quick turnaround time and relatively cheap cost by using inter as tool for recruitment and job searching (Alfus, 2000; Verhoeven & Williams, 2008). Further with the discussion Feldman & Klaas (2002) identifies 'transparency of data' as an advantage for jobseekers. Likewise, Pin et al. (2001) identified discrimination of those who do not have access as a very considerable disadvantage for internet job searching. It is very serious and valid point in case of Pakistan where only 3.5 million people have internet access. In rural areas the condition is most awful where basic infrastructure to install internet service is not present. In developed countries, among jobseekers, it is reported that an estimated one in four utilize the internet to source job opportunities (Smith & Rupp et al., 2004). Moreover, 75% of HR professionals utilize internet recruitment methods within developed countries (Khan, 2011) i.e. online job boards. Unfortunately, the data of Pakistani jobseekers, who applied online, is not available.

The increasing use of the Internet as a job searching tool has arisen via a number of means as identified by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 1999). The first most common mean of job searching via the web is the Career page of the organization's website.

Second, mean is the specialized recruitment websites like job portals, online job boards, job agencies and online recruiters. Lastly the media sites consider as the common mean, which involves placing an advertisement in a more traditional media such as a newspaper which also has its own website and post the same advertisement simultaneously on the website, usually for free (CIPD, 1999).

Online job searching and recruiting also extend to more interactive recruitment tools, creating an avenue to build relationships between job seekers and organizations (Mooney, 2002). E-job searching and e-recruitment tools are acknowledge as being an important aspect of internet job searching and recruiting for jobseekers and organizations, their impact occurs after the initial recruitment stage and during the selection stage.

A review of this literature will provide an indication of future areas of research. The research undertaken in the present study initially explores the trend of online job searching. The study aims to identify the most preferred motivator of jobseekers and the popular source of job advertisements. The sample is restricted to the city of Karachi that provides appropriate results to apply on other big cities of Pakistan.

Research Frame Work:

This study intended to identify and determines the motivating factors of online job seekers in Karachi. The results of this study will provide an insight, to better understand the significance of online job searching in various sectors and also help in designing strategies for effective e-recruitment process.

Research Objectives:

- Analyze the current trend of job seekers using Internet as a Job searching tool in Karachi.
- Identify the most preferred motivator for Job seekers in Karachi.
- Identify the popular source of Job advertisements for employers.

Selection of Respondents:

The total respondents participated in this survey were 385, however only 250 questionnaire were found completely filled and correct and hence selected for analysis though 135 questionnaires were rejected. Respondents were purposely selected i.e. Internet users. Internet user are considered the finest samples for this study. The data sample represents 8 business sectors and 6 major job categories respectively. Hence the sample was divided into Business sectors including, 1) Financial Institution 2) Engineering / Construction 3) Fuel / Energy 4) Chemical / Pharmaceutical / Medical 5) Education / IT / Science 6) Textile / Leather / Sports 7) Food / Restaurants 8) Transport / Communication. Likewise, the major job functions categories including, 1) General Management, 2) Marketing / Sales / Services, 3) Operations / Engineering /

Technical, 4) Accounts / Finance / Banking, 5) Human Resource / Administration, 6) IT / Education / Training / Research.

Questionnaire:

To collect the primary data from the selected group of respondents, a structured and close ended questionnaire was developed. The questions are self-explanatory and cover the information for internet users which are related to the study objectives. Total 30 questions are included for internet job seekers however those who does not use internet for job searching only answer 5 questions out of 30, which covers the demographic information.

Variables:

The variables used in this research study are:

Online job seeking: This is an activity in which individual use internet to apply for jobs on web portals (e.g mustaqbil.com, rozee.pk, etc) and or on company’s website (e.g mobilink.com/career, airblue.com/career etc).

Cost effective: An act of economizing & reduction of prints, photocopy and postal cost to apply for a job by hand.

Time saving: Typically used to refer to economizing the time by apply jobs online.

Easiness: The quality of being easy; simplicity; A feeling of being at ease, feeling relaxed and untroubled.

Browsing wide area of employment: Explore job opportunities in diversify areas and industry.

Global employment pool: Offer job opportunities throughout the world.

Research Model:

Hypotheses:

H₀: Online job seekers in the private sector of Karachi consider “Cost effective” to be the most important motivator.

H₀₂: Online job seekers in the private sector of Karachi consider “Time saving” to be the most important motivator.

H₀₃: Online job seekers in the private sector of Karachi consider “Easiness” to be the most important motivator.

H₀₄: Online job seekers in the private sector of Karachi consider “Browsing wide area of employment” to be the most important motivator.

H₀₅: Online job seekers in the private sector of Karachi consider “Global employment pool” to be the most important motivator.

Analysis of Data:

Demographic Characteristics:

Nine demographic variables are included in this study, presented in the table below:

Test of Hypotheses:

The hypotheses test for Online Job seeking preference of the most important motivator is presented below. On the data bases of data collected, the central of tendency and measure of dispersion are calculated and compared in regards to their degree of importance.

Reliability Test:

To examine the reliability of the data of this study, histogram method with normal distribution curve were used. The normality of curve found standard, hence no errors in the data are found.

Below is the presentation of histogram curve:

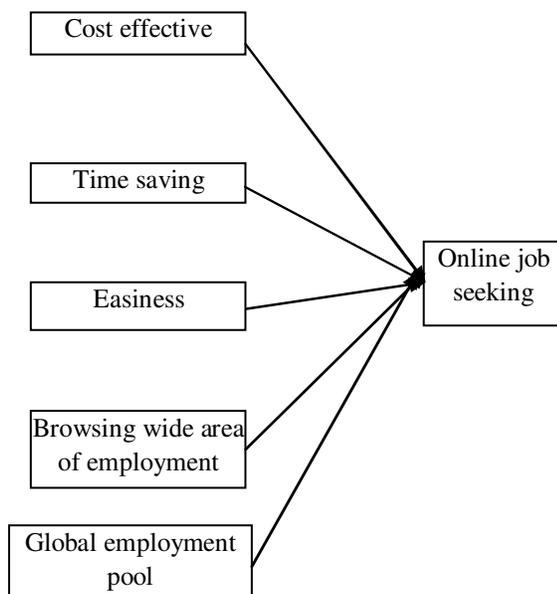
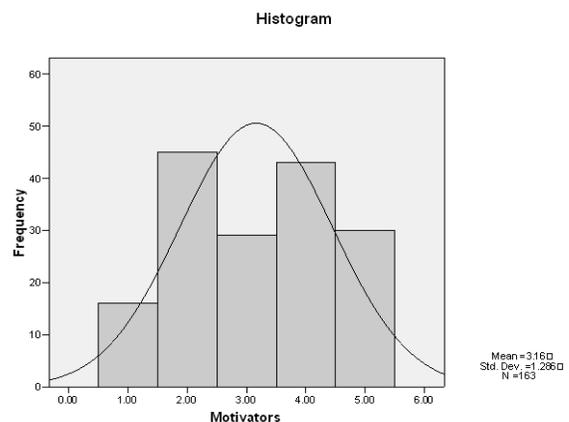


Figure 1: Research Model



One-Sample T test:

The result of T test applied on motivator, in group form, is as follows: Table A.5.

Table A.1: Demographic Characteristic

	Respondents	Percentage		Respondents	Percentage
Gender			Education		
Male	202	80.8	Intermediate	9	3.6
Female	44	17.6	Bachelors	139	55.6
No Response	4	1.6	Masters	81	32.4
Total	250	100.0	M. Phil	4	1.6
Age Group			PhD	8	3.2
20-25 yrs	104	41.6	Others	2	.8
26-30 yrs	76	30.4	No Response	7	2.8
31-35 yrs	31	12.4	Total	250	100.0
36-40 yrs	13	5.2	Current Status		
41-45 yrs	13	5.2	Studying	27	10.8
46-50 yrs	3	1.2	Fresh graduate	4	1.6
Over 50	1	.4	Working	61	24.4
No Response	9	3.6	Working and studying	140	56.0
Total	250	100.0	Unemployed	3	1.2
Marital Status			No Response	15	6.0
Married	68	27.2	Total	250	100.0
Unmarried	166	66.4	Business Sectors		
No Response	16	6.4	Financial Institution	46	18.4
Total	250	100.0	Engineering/Construction	25	10.0
Job Functions			Fuel/Energy	8	3.2
General Management	8	3.2	Chemical/Pharmaceutical/Medical	22	8.8
Marketing / Sales / Services	35	14.0	Education/IT/Science	51	20.4
Operations / Engineering / Technical	28	11.2	Textile/Leather/Sports	21	8.4
Accounts / Finance / Banking	62	24.8	Food/Restaurants	12	4.8
Human Resource / Administration	33	13.2	Transportation/Communication	9	3.6
IT / Education / Training / Research	44	17.6	None of the Above	44	17.6
None of above	27	10.8	No Response	12	4.8
No Response	13	5.2	Total	250	100.0
Total	250	100.0	Work Experience		
Management Level			No experience	16	6.4
Junior	57	22.8	6-12 months	34	13.6
Middle	124	49.6	2 yrs	42	16.8
Top	16	6.4	3 yrs	29	11.6
None of the above	21	8.4	4 yrs	22	8.8
No Response	32	12.8	5 yrs	22	8.8
Total	250	100.0	Over 5 yrs	69	27.6
			No Response	16	6.4
			Total	250	100.0

Table A.2: Online Job Seekers' Motivators

Online Job seeking Motivators		Frequency	Percent(age to Total)	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Cost effective	16	6.4	9.8	9.8
	Time Saving	45	18.0	27.6	37.4
	Easiness	29	11.6	17.8	55.2
	Browsing wide area of employment	43	17.2	26.4	81.6
	Global employment pool	30	12.0	18.4	100.0
	Total	163	65.2	100.0	
Missing	System	87	34.8		
	Total	250	100.0		

Table A.3: Statistical preview of Online Job Seekers' Motivators

N	Valid	163
	Missing	87
Mean		3.1595
Median		3.0000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		1.28585
Variance		1.653
Skewness		-.055
Std. Error of Skewness		.190
Kurtosis		-1.193
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.378

Table A.4: Statistical preview of Online Job Seekers' Motivators' T-Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Motivators	163	3.1595	1.28585	.10072

Table A.5: One-Sample Test

Test Value = 0.05						
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Motivators	30.874	163	.000	3.10951	Lo 2.9106	Up 3.3084

Table A.6: Descriptive Statistics of Online Job Seekers' Motivators

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lo Bound	Up Bound
Cost effective	16	1.0000	.00000	.00000	1.0000	1.0000
Time Saving	45	1.0222	.14907	.02222	.9774	1.0670
Easiness	29	1.0000	.00000	.00000	1.0000	1.0000
Browsing wide area of employment	43	1.0000	.00000	.00000	1.0000	1.0000
Global employment pool	30	1.0000	.00000	.00000	1.0000	1.0000
Total	163	1.0061	.07833	.00613	.9940	1.0182

Above results suggest that the mean values of all motivators are approximately same which is 1, but in term of frequency "time saving" is the preferred motivator, which is 45, for the job seeking. However, all five motivators are important in the process of online job seeking.

Respondents' opinions on their online job searching trend / behavior:

This research explores very interesting findings on the topic. The respondents were enthusiastically participated in the survey. The research reveals that 18.5 % respondents search the online jobs by city, 21.5% respondents search the online jobs by Industry, 35.5% respondents search the online jobs by job title, 10.5% respondents search the online jobs by Function and 6.5% respondents search the online jobs randomly however, 7.5% respondents was not gave any response.

Further it has been noticed that 29% respondents search online jobs at managerial level, 28% respondents search online jobs at non-managerial and 39% respondents search both, however, only 4% was gave no response. Moreover, 64% respondents said that they sign up for an account, while 16% respondents said that they apply directly to the job without having an account of that website, however, 20% respondents was gave no response.

Most of the respondents remember their dates on which they applied for the job. The figure is, 39% respondents who remember the year since they applied online for the jobs, 19% respondents were not remembering their date while 42% respondents were gave no response.

Approximately 19% respondents applied weekly, 37% applied monthly, 18% applied yearly through online however 26% gave no response.

The very interesting fact found through this study is that 59% respondents received response by applying online and only 16% respondents were not received any response by applying online; however, 25% respondents gave no response. Likewise, 47% respondents reported that they received response from the employer whenever they applied online and 29% respondents were not received any response, however, 24% respondents gave no response. This finding is of great significance, since it is generally assumed that organizations post their jobs on portal to gain the visibility and there are very few chances to get response. Conversely, the result of the research is very encouraging for job seekers. Furthermore it is also expose that most of the time employers' contacted the candidate via emails and cell phones.

The internet provides a speedy process for recruitment and save the time. Many respondents record their opinion that they get reply soon as compare to applying in the traditional ways. The research unhidden the fact that respondents are not updated their resume frequently or when there is a need, only 16% respondents updated their resume frequently. Further with the discussion only 17% job applicants follow-up to their applied positions. 57% respondents found the jobs related with their background.

In addition, 33% respondents applied only to a job, related with their credentials.

Research records that 63% respondents are used to check the companies' website where they applied for a job for information. And 60% respondents check the company website even when job advertisement published in newspapers. Likewise, 51% respondents are preferred to apply through company's website. The main reason of visiting the web is to observe the company's image, management and work place environment along with job description and job specification.

Discussion & Interpretation of Data:

This research study has contributed in the field of human resource in general and recruitment in particular by investigating the recent trend of e-recruitment with a particular focus on web based job seeking behaviors of applicants.

The present study develop a theoretical model on the bases of available literature to investigate the preferred motivator for electronic job searching in comparison to more traditional job seeking i.e. newspapers. The current study has contributed to research on online job searching motivators from the job seekers' viewpoint to the recruitment source. The model explores the relationship between motivators and its impact on job seeking activities. The key outcome of the research is that among five motivators "Time saving" is the most preferred motivator selected by the respondents for job seeking activities. This outcome evaluates after computing of results, as eighteen percent of job seekers strongly agreed with the statement (N=45). Moreover, "Browsing wide area of employment" is second motivator for job seeking, as the result demonstrate that seventeen percent of respondents select this statement (N=43). However study cannot find a significant difference in between these two motivators in term of response and percentage i.e. (N=2; 1%).

The hypotheses test results confirm the rejection of the all null hypotheses as stated in the research frame work, except H_02 .

The findings of the test statistics of H_01 , 3, 4 & 5 point out the rejection of hypotheses because of test statistics results. The proportion of respondents who identified "Time saving" as their prime motivators is significantly higher than the respondents who preferred "Cost effective".

The overall results identified that among five motivators, the top preferred motivator is time saving. This result negates the perception of job seekers of private sector in Karachi that cost saving is the prime motivator of Karachi's job seekers.

The five motivators for job seekers of Private sector in Karachi, in order of importance are, Time saving (N=45), Browsing wide area of employment (N=42), Global employment pool (N=30), Easiness (N=29) and Cost effective (N=16).

The current trend of job seeking activities by using Internet is increasing rapidly. The internet has emerged as a popular and powerful job seeking tool, moreover, internet recruitment is viewed as an important additional tool & traditional methods are continued to be used in recruitment process (Othman et al., 2006). This study shows that the respondents with an age group of 20-25 years, have Bachelor's degree with experience are generally searching online jobs under the objective of finding better opportunity in terms of exposure and diversity. Study also reveals that majority of respondents, at present, are working at middle management level and most of the respondents are belong to the Education, IT and Science sector. Moreover, most of the respondents' job functions are related with Accounts and Finance.

Pakistan, a developing country, where internet is widely used and accessed but still there are some areas where internet facility is not available. Hence it is assume that "Internet Discrimination" (Pin et al., 2001) may restrict the adaptability as a recruitment tools as well as the medium of searching employment opportunities. As online job searching activities discriminates against those who do not have internet access (Pin et al., 2001; Raymond et al., 1998). Beside possible access to vacant position, discrimination can also occur during the job seeking process e.g. job applicant may ask to submit his / her credentials through email or by filling or downloading online form present at companies' website. In this context the internet is widely accessible in Karachi city but again discrimination occurs when job seeker is Internet illiterate.

Conclusion:

The research findings estimate a very favorable environment and the response for online job seeking as an emerging tool. Hence, e-recruitment is a key for organizations to maintain competitive efficiency level and high productivity in Pakistan (Khan, 2011). However in a country like Pakistan there are many constraints in which cultural constraint' is the most significant, says Dr. Asma Hyder, a professor of human resource at NUST. Dr. Shakeel Ahmed Khoja, professor of learning technologies at IBA, further added that e-Recruitment is the easiest, safest and the smartest model as compared to traditional ones. Many organizations in Pakistan will soon realize the potential of this hi-tech marvel.

As a result of paradigm shift from traditional means of marketing to cyber marketing, e-recruitment offers better paper-less management in organizations and can go global in less time and less money. E-recruitment is surely a field which is having a world-wide recourse which is emerging as an effective tool in HR.

However, there is a need to take measures and develop a legal frame work for online job activities to avoid job scams. Further government agencies should equip themselves to closely monitor the open job portals, before it is going to be misused and build a protection filter in the best interest of job-seekers (Khan, 2011).

Pakistani organizations still have untapped potential for internet usage which could transforms the way companies recruit employees and the way individuals search for jobs, in general. It will also change the scope of HR, in particular.

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