CHALLENGING TRADITIONAL RECRUITMENT METHODS IN MALAYSIA

Elijah Noor Azmi[1]

Adrian Budiman[2]

Che Su Mustafa[3]

[1, 2&3]School of Multimedia Communication and Technology, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok 06010, Kedah, Malaysia

_____

Abstract: Whilst there has been many research on the use of traditional method, as well as an increasing amount of interest in the use of job portals in Malaysian recruitment, few studies however have yielded detailed insights of how social networking sites are getting evolved to become one of the highly used method in recruitment. The qualitative study described in this paper aims to explore the views of recruitment methods in Malaysia and to inform the current views on social networking sites as effective recruitment methods. This study uses the Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) to enable the researcher to further examine the effectiveness of the U&G theory towards social networking sites, and to relate on how widely people understand their methods of choice as a recruitment tool.

Keywords: Social Networking Site, Recruitment, Employer.

Introduction

The process of recruitment has continued for decades in which the process involves attracting candidates, screening them, and a successful one will be selected for a job by employer. It is vital for every organization to have an effective recruitment method because it is a necessary step that employers have to deal with before they are able to hire competent employees. Methods chosen by employers varies, from conventional to more sophisticated methods. Conventional methods or traditional as people refers to, are methods such as newspaper advertisement, job board, job fair, personal recommendation, employment agency etc., while a more contemporary method are using online job application through companies' website, job portals and social networking sites (hereafter will be referred to as SNS[s]).

Managers especially at the Human Resource Management adopt various methods in hiring employees. Using these methods, employers hope they can pool potential and qualified candidate to recruit. Hence, it is of utmost importance for employers to use the most effective

recruiting methods in their organization. For many years, employers are attached with conventional methods. However, the process that has been carried on for decades has been affected by the development of technology. Since the Internet was introduced and been made known to public in 1990s, many SNSs were also created. As if it took the world by storm, these SNSs such as Friendster, MySpace, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and many others received tremendous response by public. Since then, many businesses were seen taking advantage from these SNSs. It is said that there has been rapid growth of investments in these type of technologies by organizations[1]. To ensure certain technologies are worth to invest and can give maximum impact on organization performance, that technology must be used effectively.

Thus since SNS have been boundlessly used[2] by many people, recruitment is not an exception in getting involved. This is because in order to get the right candidates, it is crucial for employers to have effective recruitment methods. Effective recruitment methods are like windows for people to view before they decided to apply for jobs. For this matter, several studies have been conducted on the usage of SNS towards organizations[3,4], as well as towards employers and recruiters[5,6]. Nevertheless, since many studies are focusing on the Western countries, little is known on the development of recruitment methods in Malaysia. Hence, this paper is to discuss on the current development of recruitment methods in this particular country. In the preliminary findings will reveal the outcomes that researcher gathered from interview with companies.

Research Objective

The research objective is as follow:

i) To investigate the demand factors that may or may not contribute to the existing traditional recruitment method.

Literature Review

Between the end of 1998 to the mid-2000, it has been found that the use of the Internet for job search grew significantly[7]. The Internet has been acknowledged by scholars as a communication channel that holds great value between employers and jobseekers[8]. Organisations are able to reach appropriate job seekers in wider geographical locations at any time with the use of Internet recruitment[9]. In keeping up with the changes and evolvement of recruitment, the one management that will have a direct impact is human resource management (HRM). The challenges on recruitment in the 21th century are said to be enormous, but with effective management of human resources, it can provide organizations with a significant advantage in adapting the challenges[10] .

Human resource management is indeed plays a vital role in every organizations. For example, one of the greatest challenges for organizations in the 21th century is the "war for talent" (Ensher et al., 2002), which is the ability to attract and retain qualified personnel. Thus, every HRMs need to respond fast in order to face these challenges, and at the same time look into every aspects of saving great deal of money for organization.

As like many other countries, Malaysia has gone through many changes in its recruitment methods as well. The conventional methods have been used widely in the government and private sectors in this country. However according to Tong and Sivanand (2005) using conventional methods or traditional recruitment procedures in recruiting is no longer appropriate, practical, and timely in this competitive job market. Thus, many organizations later have turned to a more sophisticated recruitment or combine it with various recruitment methods according to both researchers. For example, many organizations have converted their newspaper advertisements into an e-recruitment method. E-recruitment consist of various formats such as a corporate websites for recruitment, commercial job boards, online recruitment and Internet recruitment.

This kind of method that caught employers' attention is when it can produce many advantage and improves the efficiency of the recruitment process over the conventional strategies[11]. Nevertheless, a study produced by Poorangi, Razavi and Rahmani (2011)[12] who concentrated on the use of e-recruitment practices for SMEs in Malaysia found that the e-recruitment method is still in its progressing. Even large firms are not using such systems for their human resource management procedures. Thus, even this type of method has started for so many years

worldwide, many Malaysian organizations are still take it slow.

As technology continues to evolve, SNS has become a phenomenal interest throughout the world for more than 10 years since its first launch in 1997[13]. People started to realise how social network plays as a central role and as a medium in spreading information, ideas, and influence in their lives[14]. Many organizations around the globe are increasingly turning to social and professional networking sites, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, to recruit new hires[15]. But, although with the prevalence of SNSs, there are still drawbacks from the Malaysian employers, in which there are still many who are not engaging in the online hiring concept. This occurred according to Parveen (2012) is because organizations in Malaysia are still unsure whether to use SNS or not. It is often said that organizational usage of SNS in Malaysia is still in its growing stage. So what may be the reason that leads towards the slow growth of SNS usage among Malaysian organizations? Ramasamy and Raman (2014)[16] concluded that it is because Malaysian organizations cannot keep up with the pace of changes in recruitment.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative methodology. Qualitative as explained by Creswell (2012)[17] is a method that focuses on a phenomenon by examining the involvements of other people in their own natural environment. Furthermore, the researcher decided to use an in-depth interview in this study. It was chosen because it does proved to be the most suitable to better assess the true motivations in using SNSs when addressing more personal areas[18]. Thus, an in-depth interview is carried out to five employers. The preliminary findings are based on the interviews in which the researcher had so far. In order to determine what type of recruitment methods are still in favoured and popular as well as being the most used in Malaysia, it is suitable to choose the in-depth interview as the methodology. In order to understand the current situation, it is none other than the employers are the most suitable informants that need to be interviewed.

This study is using purposive sampling method. According to Patton (1990)[19] selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study is the logic and power that lies in purposive sampling. This purposive sampling is suitable in the study because according to Mack, Woodsong, McQueen, Guest and Namey (2005)[20] in order to answer to a particular research question, purposive sampling is one of the most common sampling method with groups' participants according to relevant preselected criteria. Therefore, under the purposive sampling technique, this study uses the intensity sampling technique. This technique is used to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data.

Participants

At the time this article was written, the researcher is in the process continue to obtain more answers from upcoming interviews. However, the preliminary data that the researcher has now can be used as the preliminary findings. Thus, in order to answer the researcher question which circling on the use of social networking site as the method in recruitment in Malaysia, the researcher have interviewed five employers so far. The employers were from:
  i) 1 from statutory body (government);
  ii) 3 from government-linked companies (GLCs); and
  iii) 1 from private sector/industry

Background of Organizations

Organization A is a statutory body which was set by the Malaysian government under the Act of 1999. This organization is still using newspaper as its medium in recruitment. The reason behind this is because this organization is bound to the government's rules and regulations of recruitment, where one of it is using newspaper for advertisement, and it is compulsory. However, the organization do have their own Facebook and Twitter account but both SNSs were used as an announcement platform for vacancies.

Organization B is a government-linked companies (GLCs) mainly as a Malaysian sole providing energy services. This organization does not use SNS in particular. In fact they just use it for internal use like an announcement for staffs and so on. They do have Facebook account

but it is only use to spread information among staffs. Now they are slowly looking at the pros and cons of LinkedIn.

Organization C is another GLC which provides postal services throughout Malaysia. This organization have a Facebook and LinkedIn account but very much confined to individual account of its recruiters, meaning they use both SNSs individually instead of having a corporate account. On their own recruitment method however, this organization is depending heavily on job portal like the JobStreet.com and Monster.com.

Organization D is also a GLC which manage pilgrims for hajj and 'umrah. The method of recruitment this organization used is mostly job portals such as the Jobstreet.com. They do not have any official SNS accounts due to the prohibited from the management. However they still use SNS like the Facebook as individual account for announcement or sharing information. Other than that this organization only depended onto third party recruiter.

Organization E is an international private sector which mainly into oil and gas. This organization used LinkedIn as their recruitment method as well as their own internal method which focus on local graduates for entry level.

The three organizations were chosen because of their similar role as government-linked companies (GLC) which equal in size of organizations. One from the private sector is an international company branched in Malaysia. It was chosen to view from their perspective as an international company and to find any different advanced methodology they may use. The other from the government statutory body is to represent the government sector.

Instrument

This study will use in-depth interviews as the primary instrument. The in-depth interview is to seek further understanding of people's behaviour which is later translated into an experience and how they carry it out (Varjoo, 2012). It is a technique where a researcher conducts an intensive individual interview with a small number of respondents. Five interviews were done with the manager of human resource department in each company.

Results And Discussion

The point here is to answer the research question in which to identify why recruitment through traditional media outlets is still favored when compared to social media recruiting tools in Malaysia? Overall researcher have interviewed five employers in order to understand their recruitment method and to see how much this field has evolved in Malaysia. Apart from that it is also to look on the significant of the uses and gratifications theory towards this study. The themes are established from previous scholars and researchers namely Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979)[21], Papacharissi and Rubin (2000)[22], Quan-Haase and Young (2010)[23] and Whiting and Williams (2013)[24]. After reading, reviewing and detailing the interview transcriptions closely with numerous times, the researcher decided to conclude four themes combining from all the above scholars. The themes are discussed as below:

Communicatory Utility

Communicatory utility is defined as communication facilitation and providing information to share with others (Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1979; Whiting and Williams, 2013). On this theme, one organization agreed on the role of SNS has become which is to facilitate communication. In their statement, organization A mentioned:

"...usually if there is any vacancy, we will publish it. The main condition for Suhakam is to publish it in newspaper. Newspaper is mandatory. Then Suhakam has its own Facebook and Twitter whereby Suhakam will ask the PR (public relations) people to put it (advertisement) into those social media as circulation. Sometimes youngster nowadays doesn't read newspaper anymore".

However Organization D shared a different point of view in their definition of communicatory utility:

"Because before this, in previous years, we used traditional way (to advertise), we also advertise in our website, those who are interested can send their resume to the address stated. So we received tons of resumes…"

"...we brought up this idea to the management that we want to use JobStreet.com."

"...and it saves a lot from our operational cost".

Convenience Utility

According to Whiting and Williams (2013), this category of social media usage is defined as providing convenience or usefulness to individuals. For that matters, all participants agreed that SNS has gave certain level of usefulness towards them individually and to the organization. For example Organization D stated:

"...due to overwhelming response, as you are aware, people now considered WhatsApp is one of social medium of communications, and marketing communication, so once we or our internal advertise (the vacancy), and then we informed through email to all staffs, they have already shared the information through their own Facebook".

Similarly, Organization C stated that:

"We are still relying heavily on recruitment sites, online recruitment sites for instance JobStreet.com. The reliance to LinkedIn or Facebook is solely through the recruiter's personal account".

Organization B also shared similar opinion:

"Actually for our side we don't have official social media account, but for staff yes, they use it as an announcement in their own account. So whenever we have the vacancy, normally we have the internal information to blast the news".

Information Sharing

Information sharing is defined as using social media to share information about you with others. Unlike television and the internet, social media is interactive in nature and allows people to communicate and share information via a two way dialogue. Thus, respondent like Organization D admitted the use of SNS in information sharing as stated below:

"Our advertisement we advertised via JobStreet.com. So that is one part of the system. So once we advertised we can share it through Facebook, since now we can simply do sharing on Facebook, so we share the information and spread the news using this social media".

Similarly, Organization A stated that:

"The main conditions for us is to publish the vacancies to newspaper. Newspapers are compulsory. Then we do have our own Facebook and Twitter account. I will asked people from PR to insert in those two social networks for circulation or like an announcement".

Organization E also has a similar opinion on this:

"We use our Facebook and Twitter to communicate our marketing campaign rather than a recruitment campaign".

Further explanation by Organization E on using SNS in their recruitment method:

"We started to use LinkedIn three years back, three years ago. LinkedIn network is getting stronger and then we see a lot of professionals with various backgrounds depositing their resumes. So we found out that LinkedIn is a good source to get people, to get professional to join our company".

Discussion

Perhaps conventional method like newspaper is still the method of choice for most

companies. However, only one particular organization stated they are still compulsory to use newspaper in their recruitment method. This is due to their own rules and regulations which bound with the government policy. Hence with that restricted rules, it resulted to not using SNS entirely and still depended on traditional method. Although many organizations have turned to a more modern method like job portals, however most companies do not adopt the SNS method in their recruitment. Four out of five employers use SNS as their way of spreading news and information sharing. These organizations acknowledged the usefulness of how SNS can help them to spread news they wanted to announce to people. However, it seems they have largely misinterpret between SNS and job portal. As far as the observations were made, they do think that the use of job portal is as the same as using SNS. They do not realized it was two different methods. This happened perhaps because they think whatever appears on the Internet is the same method whether it is job portal or SNS. Nevertheless, the experience these organizations have before and after the existence of SNS is tremendous. Tremendous in a sense of spreading news and announcements.

One organization even depended on their own website to do the recruitment. This particular organization stated they do not have any problem pulling crowd of candidates, for example up to six thousands per vacancy. Thus, SNS for them is not worth to invest. Here SNS has failed to impress this organization of its role towards recruitment. This organization seems large enough not to depend their recruitment method on SNS. Perhaps their brand name makes people who hunt for jobs have trust on them. For this organization, operational cost is not an issue which they still can absorbed. However they do have the intention to look at this SNS method in the future if requires.

Only one organization uses SNS as its own recruitment method as well using it in their marketing segmentation. This organization likes to keep up with the pace, current method of recruitment. Since the organization is a global brand, they would like to hire people at the international level as well. Thus, the fastest way to achieve this is by using SNS. After three years of adopting SNS in their recruitment, they received well rounded candidates they needed. For now they are satisfied with the SNS method they used and what it can produced for them.

Conclusions

This study has produced various findings that explained on the unwillingness for employers to adopt SNS in their recruitment method. It is not the unwillingness that the organizations favored but the misinterpretation that had fell upon their understandings of the definition of SNS. Some organizations assumed when they used job portal, is as the same as they use SNS, which is untrue. Other organization bound with rules and regulations which restricted them to use SNS as they wanted. While one organization do not rely on SNS at all and put less interest to use it.

Nevertheless, this study demonstrates the importance of the uses and gratifications theory to social networking site research. The theory helps to explain and understand various reasons why organizations choose to use or not to use the SNS in recruitment particularly. The in-depth interviews were an eye-opened how this method is still less acceptable in most organizations in Malaysia.

References

Chivee, L.L, Hamilton, B.A and Cowan, E. (2008). Networking the Way to Success: Online Social Networks for Workplace and Competitive Advantage, People and Strategy, New York, 31(4), 40, 7 pgs.

Vicknair, J., & Elkersh, D. (2010). The use of social networking websites as a recruiting tool for employers. *American Journal of ...*, *3*(11), 2006–2011.

Parveen, F. (2012). Impact of Social Media Usage on Organizations. In *Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems* (p. 12).

Parveen, F., Jaafar, N. I., & Ainin, S. (2015). Social media usage and organizational performance: Reflections of Malaysian social media managers. *Telematics and Informatics*, *32*(1), 67–78.

Harrison, J. (2008). Employer and recruiter use of social networking websites as a candidate screening tool. Gonzaga University.

Hefferan, T. W. (2010). Employers and job seekers pursue mutual excellence through postmodern employment communications stategies. University of Phoenix.

Fountain, C. (2005). Finding a job in the internet age. *Social Forces*, *83*(3), 1235–1262.

Suvankulov, F., Lau, M., & Chau, F. (2012). Job search on the internet and its outcome. *Internet Research*, 21.

Teoh, W. M. Y., Tan, S. C., & Chong, S. C. (2013). Factors influencing perceptions of university students towards internet recruitment. *Asian Academy of Management Journal*, 18(1), 123–142.

Ensher, Ellen A., Nielson, Troy R., & Grant-Vallone, Elisa. (2002). Tales from the hiring line: Effects of the internet and technology on HR processes. *Organizational Dynamics*, 31(3), 224–244.

Tong, D. Y. K., & Sivanand, C. (2005). E-recruitment service providers review: International and Malaysian. *Employee Relations*, 27(1), 103–117.

Poorangi, M. M., Razavi, S., & Rahmani, N. (2011), "An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of E-recruitment Practices for SMEs in Malaysia", 2011 International Conference on Innovation, Management and Service IPEDR.14, 74-78.

Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210–230.

Kempe, D., Kleinberg, J., & Tardos, É. (2003). Maximizing the spread of influence through a social network. *Proceedings of the Ninth ACM SIGKDD International Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining - KDD '03*, 137.

Herbold, B. J., & Douma, B. (2013). Students' Use of Social Media for Job Seeking. *The CPA Journal*, (April), 68–72.

Ramasamy, V., & Raman, A. (2014). Recruitment in the Social Media Age : An Exploratory Study. *Proceedings of Eurasia Business Research Conference*, (June), 1–13.

Creswell, J. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research. Vasa* (4th ed). Pearson.

Pugh, J. (2010). A Qualitative Study of the Facebook Social Network: the desire to influence, associate, and construct a representative and ideal identity, (May), 45.

Patton, M. (1990). Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, 169–186.

Mack, N., Woodsong, C., McQueen, K. M., Guest, G., & Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative Research Methods: A data collector's field guide* (Vol. 36).

Palmgreen, P., & Rayburn, J. (1979). Uses and Gratifications and Exposure to Public Television: A Discrepancy Approach. *Communication Research*.

Papacharissi, Z., & Rubin, A. (2000). Predictors of Internet use. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic*.

Quan-Haase, A., & Young, A. (2010). Uses and gratifications of social media: A comparison of Facebook and instant messaging. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & ...*, *30*, 350–361.

Whiting, A., & Williams, D. (2013). Why people use social media: a uses and gratifications approach. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, *16*(4), 362–