Impact of Informational Characteristics of the Recruitment Website on Graduating Students’ Job Pursuit Intention: A Moderated Mediation Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to examine the dimensionalities, mechanisms, and the conditions under which information characteristics of the corporate employment website influence job seekers’ job pursuit intention and recommendation intention. Drawing on the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) framework, the data collected from 181 active job seekers posit that the effects of information characteristics, such as information relevancy, information accuracy, and information timeliness on organizational attractiveness are mediated by job seekers’ attitudes towards the website, which in turn direct to create job pursuit intention and intention to recommend. Furthermore, it is also postulated that the relationship between the above-said characteristics and attitude towards the website is moderated by the perceived privacy concern of the job seekers. In addition, the article results also supported that the relationship between job seekers’ website attitude and organizational attractiveness is moderated by perceived organizational reputation.

KEYWORDS

E-Recruitment, Intention to Recommend, Job Pursuit Intention, Organizational Attractiveness, Organizational Reputation, Perceived Privacy Concern

INTRODUCTION

During the last two decades, we saw rapid growth in the use of online recruitment, and this mode of recruitment witnessed the sudden transformation as a highly demanded platform for companies to get their workforce (Breaugh & Starke, 2000). It is also reported that e-recruitment has gained popularity amongst human resource managers during the last two decades (Braddy, Thompson, Wuensch, & Grossnickle, 2003; Pfieffermann, Wagner, & Libkuman, 2010; Simon & Esteves, 2015). This surge in demand is due to the benefits it carries with respect to low-cost, shorter recruiting cycle time, better quality of response, and opportunity for global coverage regardless of employers’ physical location (Galanaki, 2002; Ensher, Nielson, & Grant-Vallone, 2003; Sylva & Mol, 2009). In support with this, a survey among 26,874 students and graduates in the North American, European, and Asian countries supported that 74% of job seekers use company-owned websites as a job search platform, and they also supported that this platform is one of the important sources of job-related information (Potentialpark, 2013; Simon & Esteves, 2015). Thus, in order to attract the potential

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job seekers, companies are trying to be creative and innovative not only in terms of the content of employment messages, but also in the way these messages are being transmitted to the potential applicants (Ensher et al., 2002; Van Birgelen, Wetzel, & van Dolen, 2008). Despite the widespread use and understanding that e-recruitment is one of the important areas which need focused attention, research pertaining to characteristics of e-recruitment websites and its impact on job seekers’ job pursuit and recommendation intention are relatively scant (Simon & Esteves, 2015). Moreover, past studies also supported that detailed efforts to address its (e-recruitment websites) effective deployment and performance measurement is needed (Cho, Lee, & Liu, 2011).

Taking into account e-recruitment as an emerging and highly demanded platform to select prospective employees, few researchers examined the implications of the varying mode of e-recruitment across different cultural and institutional contexts (Heikkila & Smale, 2011). Among this stream, great focus was given to e-recruitment through corporate websites (Braddy et al., 2003). In the e-recruitment website setting, majority of the studies focused on designs, contents, and other stylistic features of the corporate website (Cober, Brown, Levy, Cober, & Keeping, 2003; Braddy, Meade, & Kroustalis, 2006; van Birgelen et al., 2008; Breauh, 2008; Yoon Kin Tong 2009; Walker, Feild, Giles, Bernerth, & Short, 2011; Teoh, Tan, & Chong, 2013). However, little is known about the effects of informational characteristics of these company-owned employment websites on job seekers’ job pursuit intention and recommendation intention. More specifically, to the authors’ best knowledge, no studies to date have examined what mechanism through and the conditions under which the informational characteristics of employment websites influence job seekers’ job pursuit intention and recommendation intention. This poses a major decision-making challenge: what are the informational characteristics of employment website that are important to attract potential employees towards the organization? How does the interaction with these informational characteristics influence job seekers’ behavior towards the organization? and What are the conditions that should be taken care of while designing the e-recruitment websites by the web developers and IT professionals? Thus, important research questions this study sets out to answer are:

What are the informational characteristics of the employment website that influence job seekers’ job pursuit intention and recommendation intention and must be focused upon by the IT professionals indulged in web-designing activities for their clients?
What are the psychological mechanisms through which these informational characteristics generate job seekers’ job pursuit intention and recommendation intention which must be considered by the IT professionals assisting in the recruitment process of the organization?
What are the conditions which shape the effect of these informational characteristics to generate the mechanism and in turn, job seekers’ job pursuit intention and recommendation intention that would serve as a guideline for web-developers and IT professionals participating in the recruitment drive?

In the managerial decision-making perspective, answering the above-said questions will help managers and IT professionals to focus on these website related informational characteristics, its intervening mechanism, and the conditions to generate expected employee related outcomes while promoting job-related information through their e-recruitment websites. In theoretical perspective, this study adds value to the current understanding of the role of websites as e-recruitment platform to generate job seeker oriented outcomes. Specifically, this study examines the role of perceived privacy risk amongst job seekers with respect the organizational recruitment websites in shaping their attitude towards the websites. Further, this is one of the first studies to examine the impact of perceived organizational reputation on the website attitude and organizational attractiveness relationship. Hardly any study, to date, has included perceived organizational reputation in the research framework in e-recruitment realm.
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