ABSTRACT

Electronic recruitment has developed into a cost and time efficient proposition for the HR departments for searching and hiring potential talents (Maurer and Liu 2007; Tyagi 2012). Despite its advantages, E-recruitment has so far failed to generate appreciable response from job-seekers across the world due to perceptions about lack of credibility of the medium over traditional media such as newspaper advertisements and employment gazettes (Zusman and Landis 2002; Young & Foot 2005; Cable et al. 2006). Studies have also shown that poor design of E-recruitment websites can have negative impression on job seeker’s attitude towards the portals and may lead to their reluctance to apply for the jobs posted in such websites (Maurer and Liu 2007). The objectives of this thesis were to find out whether job seekers perceive job descriptions provided with realistic job previews more credible than positive only testimonials, whether job seekers perceive job ads posted in Web 2.0 channels such as third-party employee testimonial blogs more credible compared to those presented through company owned career websites, whether use of audio visual corporate previews can help in enhancing the credibility and quality of E-recruitment messages compared to text based previews and to test the subsequent influence of above perceptions on applicant attitude towards the ads and intention to apply for the jobs.

To test these propositions, eight prototype websites have been created using online website development tool with different combinations of the three design modifications. A 2x2x2 between-subject factorial design has been developed to test the propositions. 457 final year post-graduate students from three institutes in India and 361 working professionals from different Indian metros participated in two separate experiments. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and univariate analysis of covariance
(ANCOVA) were carried out to check whether students subject to different website conditions develop different perceptions of quality, credibility, organizational attractiveness and intention to apply. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) has been used to test for possible moderating and mediating effect of preview-mode, testimonial-type and testimonial-source on the interrelationships between perceived quality, perceived credibility, organizational attractiveness and intention to apply. Post hoc analysis using Scheffe’s procedure has been conducted to identify the most superior of the eight website designs.

Findings indicate that websites featuring audio-visual corporate preview, positive/realistic employee testimonial and company-neutral testimonial source is perceived to be most favorable by respondents from both studies, indicating such a combination to be best suited to attract talent online. Findings further highlight that preview-mode moderates the relationship between perceived quality and organizational attractiveness, while testimonial-type and testimonial-source have moderating effect on relation between perceived credibility and firm attractiveness. Organizational attractiveness on the other hand exerts partial mediating effect on perceived quality and intention to apply and on perceived credibility and intention to apply.

This study provides insights to the application of interactive web 2.0 technology in online recruitment practices. The study gives empirical evidence of the effect of certain novel design manipulations in E-recruitment websites which can create better impression in the minds of the job-seekers about the website and firm alike. Thus E-recruitment websites can serve as effective tool for employer branding as well as a good talent attraction strategy.

Keywords: E-Recruitment, talent attraction, organizational attractiveness, web 2.0, India