Job Seekers' Perceptions of Online E-Recruitment Portals in Mnquma Municipality, South Africa

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the perceptions of job seekers on government e-recruitment systems. It examines how these digital platforms influence job search experiences and outcomes. A qualitative research methodology was employed for this investigation. This research adopts a case study approach, which facilitates a thorough and multifaceted exploration of complex issues within contexts. The focus of this study is on the Mnquma Local Municipality, with a sample comprising participants drawn from this municipality. Through interviews, the study gathers insights on the usability, accessibility, and effectiveness of e-recruitment from the perspective of diverse job seekers. Key findings reveal that while many appreciate the convenience and transparency of online applications, concerns about the complexity of the systems and the lack of personalized support persist. The key recommendations were to enhance user experience, provide clear guidance, align objectives and outcomes, develop a strong legal and institutional framework, ensure accountability and monitoring.

Introduction

In an increasingly digital world, e-government recruitment portals have emerged as vital tools for job seekers and employers alike, streamlining the recruitment process and enhancing access to job opportunities (Smith, 2021). This highlights the significance of understanding job seekers' perceptions of these portals, as their experiences directly influence engagement and success in the job market (Johnson & Lee, 2022). The rapid advancement of information and communication technology (ICT) has significantly transformed recruitment processes across the globe. The transition from traditional recruitment methods to online platforms reflects broader societal changes in technology and communication((Beduschi, 2019). . In the public sector, particularly, the adoption of electronic recruitment (e-recruitment) systems has emerged as a strategic tool to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accessibility. In South Africa, government departments and municipalities have increasingly turned to e-recruitment platforms to attract and manage job applicants. These portals are intended to simplify the job application process, reduce costs, and reach a broader pool of potential candidates. Despite the advantages offered by e-recruitment, such as increased accessibility and efficiency, many job seekers report challenges related to usability, information overload, and a lack of personalized support (Davis, 2022 b), the effectiveness of e-recruitment platforms in rural municipalities such as Mnquma remains unclear. Given that digital literacy, internet access, and familiarity with technology vary significantly across regions, it is essential to assess how these platforms are perceived and used by job seekers in rural contexts. This study provides the necessary background to contextualize the study, outlining the current landscape of government e-recruitment and emphasizing the need for a deeper exploration of user perceptions. By examining these perspectives, the research aims to identify gaps and opportunities for improving the design and functionality of e-recruitment portals, ultimately enhancing the job-seeking experience for all users. The objective of the study is to study the job seekers perception towards online E-recruitment portals in Mnquma Municipality**.**

Problem Statement

The rise of digital technologies has transformed the recruitment landscape, particularly through the implementation of government e-recruitment portals designed to streamline the job application process and enhance access to employment opportunities (Johnson & Smith, 2021). Despite their intended benefits, there remains a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the perceptions of job seekers towards these platforms (Davis, 2022b). Many job seekers encounter barriers related to usability, accessibility, and

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perceived effectiveness of government e-recruitment portals, which can influence their overall job search experience and outcomes (Chen et al., 2023 b). By examining these perceptions, the research seeks to identify critical factors that affect job seekers' engagement with these platforms and to provide insights that could inform policy improvements and enhance the efficacy of e-recruitment initiatives in the public sector (Wilson, 2024a). Ultimately, this study aims to bridge the gap between the design of e-recruitment portals and the actual experiences and needs of job seekers, thereby contributing to more effective employment strategies in the digital age (Taylor & Brown, 2022). Understanding user perceptions in Mnquma Municipality is critical for evaluating the inclusiveness and effectiveness of government e-recruitment initiatives. The findings will provide insights that can inform improvements in the design and implementation of such systems to ensure they are accessible, user-friendly, and equitable. This research will contribute to efforts aimed at enhancing public service delivery and promoting digital inclusion in rural South Africa.

This study illustrates the multifaceted nature of job seekers' perceptions of government e-recruitment portals, emphasizing the need for user-centered design to address the identified challenges and improve the overall experience. By exploring these dimensions, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how to enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of e-recruitment systems, ultimately benefiting a diverse range of job seekers.

Theoretical Literature

The theoretical framework underpinning the perceptions of job seekers regarding government e-recruitment portals draws on several key concepts from user experience theory, technology acceptance models theory, and the digital divide framework. User experience theory emphasizes the importance of usability, accessibility, and satisfaction in the interaction between users and digital platforms (Garrett, 2019). This perspective suggests that job seekers' perceptions are significantly influenced by the design and functionality of e-recruitment systems, which can either facilitate or hinder their job search process. the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) posits that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are critical determinants of users' intentions to adopt technology ((Marikyan, 2025).   In the context of e-recruitment portals, this model helps explain how job seekers' perceptions of these platforms' effectiveness and efficiency can affect their willingness to engage with them. the digital divide framework highlights disparities in access to technology and digital literacy, underscoring the importance of inclusivity in the design of e-recruitment systems (Warschauer, 2003). This theoretical literature provides a foundational understanding of the multifaceted factors influencing job seekers' perceptions, illustrating how usability, trust, accessibility, and technological acceptance collectively shape the experiences of individuals navigating government e-recruitment portals. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the chapter sets the stage for a deeper exploration of empirical studies that examine these perceptions in practice.

Empirical Literature

The empirical literature surrounding job seekers' perceptions of government e-recruitment portals reveals a nuanced understanding of user experiences and the factors influencing engagement with these platforms. Studies have consistently shown that usability significantly impacts job seekers' satisfaction; for instance, Morley et al. (2020) found that poorly designed interfaces often lead to frustration, resulting in decreased likelihood of portal usage. Accessibility is another critical theme; research by (Okolie1 and Irabor (2017)highlights the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and those with low digital literacy, suggesting that these barriers can significantly limit access to employment opportunities through e-recruitment systems. Trust also emerges as a vital factor, with Sunil (2023) demonstrating that perceived credibility of government portals directly affects users' willingness to engage, as concerns about data privacy and security can deter potential applicants. Additionally, studies examining the effectiveness of e-recruitment portals reveal mixed outcomes; Khan et al. (2022) indicate that while these systems can broaden access to job opportunities, their effectiveness varies based on job seekers' prior experiences and expectations. Barriers to engagement, such as technical difficulties and lack of support, are frequently reported, with (Okolie1 and Irabor (2017) emphasizing the need for improved user assistance to enhance

overall satisfaction. Collectively, this empirical literature highlights the complexity of job seekers' perceptions and underscores the necessity for ongoing research to inform the development of more effective, user-centered e-recruitment solutions.

Human Resource Management Theory

Human resource management theory emphasizes strategic recruitment practices, including workforce planning, talent management, and diversity and inclusion. E-recruitment platforms can support these practices by providing analytics and insights on candidate sourcing, selection, and hiring (Thompson et al., 2018).

Theory

Recruitment theory underpins this study, emphasizing the importance of strategic recruitment practices. Human resource management theory supports this approach, highlighting the role of recruitment in achieving organizational goals. Effective e-recruitment platforms must integrate with overall human resource management strategies. Recruitment theory also emphasizes the importance of employer branding, which involves showcasing an organization's values, culture, and benefits to attract top talent. E-recruitment platforms can facilitate employer branding through features such as company profiles, employee testimonials, and social media integration.

Critique of Literature

Several studies highlight the convenience and accessibility these platforms offer, aligning with the growing trend of digital job searching. However, critiques often point to issues such as navigational challenges, information overload, and a lack of personalization, which can hinder job seekers' engagement and ultimately affect their employment outcomes Wang et al. (2020). Research has shown that perceptions vary significantly based on demographic factors, such as age and technological proficiency, suggesting that e-recruitment portals may not adequately cater to all user groups. While some studies advocate for the effectiveness of e-recruitment in reducing time and costs associated with job searching, others emphasize the need for more intuitive designs and better support systems to enhance user satisfaction Alateyah (2018). Overall, the literature indicates a gap between the potential benefits of government e-recruitment portals and the actual experiences of job seekers, warranting further investigation into how these platforms can be improved to meet the diverse needs of their users.

Understanding Job Seekers' Perceptions of E-Government Recruitment Portals

The advent of government e-recruitment portals represents a significant shift in how job seekers access employment opportunities, necessitating an examination of their perceptions regarding these digital platforms. A growing body of literature highlights the importance of usability and user experience as central to job seekers' interactions with e-recruitment systems. Research by Yahya et al., (2024) underscores that intuitive design and seamless navigation enhance user satisfaction, while complex interfaces can lead to frustration and disengagement (Morley et al., 2020). Accessibility is a crucial factor influencing perceptions, particularly for marginalized groups. Smith et al., (2022) found that individuals with disabilities and those lacking digital literacy often face barriers that hinder their ability to effectively utilize these portals, raising concerns about inclusivity in public employment services. Trust and credibility are also significant dimensions; job seekers are more likely to engage with e-recruitment platforms perceived as secure and reliable (Sunil, 2023). Issues related to data privacy and the transparency of recruitment processes can deter users, indicating the need for government agencies to foster trust through clear communication and robust security measures. while e-recruitment portals can increase access to job opportunities, their effectiveness can vary based on users' prior experiences, expectations, and familiarity with technology (Khan et al., 2022). Despite the potential advantages, barriers such as technical difficulties and inadequate support systems can hinder engagement Okolie and Irabor (2017).

Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Recruitment Portals

The use of recruitment portals has become a popular method for job seekers to search and apply for jobs, and for employers to attract and select candidates. However, the effectiveness of e-recruitment portals depends on various factors, including job seekers' characteristics, social media, and the design and functionality of the portal itself. Job seekers' factors, such as demographic characteristics, job search behaviours, motivations, and prior experiences, influence their use and perception of e-recruitment portals (Tong et al., 2019). For example, older job seekers may prefer traditional recruitment methods, while younger job seekers may be more comfortable with online applications (Tong et al., 2019). job seekers' personality traits, such as extraversion and agreeableness, can impact their preferences for using e-recruitment portals (Bauer et al., 2016).

Social media also plays a significant role in e-recruitment, with many job seekers using social media platforms to search for jobs and connect with potential employers (Rathee & Bhuntel, 2022). Social media can influence employer branding and reputation, impacting job seekers' perceptions and interest in the company (Kaoud & Elbolok, 2023). social media can be used for candidate sourcing, including identifying, attracting, and engaging potential candidates (Faliagka et al., 2012). The design and functionality of recruitment portals also impact job seekers' experience and engagement, including user interface, navigation, search functionality, mobile optimization, and accessibility (Kaoud & Elbolok, 2023). Well-designed portals can enhance user experience, leading to increased engagement and better outcomes.

Research has also shown that social media analytics can provide insights into job seekers' behaviour and preferences, helping employers optimize their e-recruitment strategies (Wadhawan & Sinha, 2018). social media can be used for employee advocacy, including employee ambassadors, social media champions, and employer brand advocacy, to promote the employer brand and attract job seekers (Rathee & Bhuntel, 2022). The literature suggests that trust and credibility are essential factors in e-recruitment, with job seekers' trust in e-recruitment portals influencing their use and satisfaction (Bauer et al., 2016). Employers can build trust by providing clear and transparent information about the recruitment process and ensuring the security and privacy of job seekers' data. Overall, the literature highlights the importance of considering job seekers' factors, social media, and the design and functionality of e-recruitment portals to optimize the effectiveness of e-recruitment strategies.

Provisions that Govern E-Recruitment

Various laws, regulations, and policies govern e-recruitment, ensuring fairness, equality, and security. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws prohibit discrimination in hiring practices, requiring employers to ensure e-recruitment platforms comply with EEO regulations (Tong, 2019). Data protection acts, such as GDPR and POPI, regulate personal data handling, requiring secure storage, transmission, and processing. Labor laws and regulations govern employment practices, including minimum wage, working hours, and employee benefits. e-recruitment platforms must also comply with accessibility standards, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). This ensures equal access to employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The Supreme Law of the Country

The country's constitution provides the foundation for e-recruitment governance, guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms, including equality and non-discrimination. The constitution's non-discrimination principles ensure equal opportunities for all, while the right to privacy protects individuals' personal information (Constitution of South Africa, 1996). E-recruitment platforms must respect these principles, ensuring secure data handling and storage. The constitution's provisions on freedom of association and collective bargaining also impact e-recruitment. Employers must ensure that e-recruitment platforms do not infringe on employees' rights to join unions or engage in collective bargaining. Specific acts and legislation regulate e-recruitment. The Employment Equity Act promotes equality in employment, requiring employers to ensure fair recruitment practices (Employment Equity Act, 1998). The Labor Relations Act governs employment relationships, outlining requirements for hiring, termination, and

dispute resolution (Labor Relations Act, 1995). Other relevant acts include the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which regulates wages, hours, and working conditions, and the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which governs leave policies

Suggestions To Improve Job Seekers Application on the E-Recruitment Portal.

To improve the job seekers' experience on an e-recruitment portal, it is crucial to streamline and enhance the user interface for simplicity and ease of navigation. The portal should be mobile-friendly and include clear calls to action, such as "Apply Now" and "Complete Profile," guiding users through each step. Profile customization should allow applicants to highlight their skills, experience, and accomplishments, with dynamic features like skill matching and personalized job recommendations. Providing an easy process for resume and cover letter submission, along with automated resume review tools, can help applicants present their best selves. Application forms should be concise, with progress trackers and auto-fill features to reduce friction. A powerful job matching algorithm, advanced search filters, and a transparent application process with status updates and regular communication are key to keeping applicants engaged. Also incorporating video interview capabilities, offering interview preparation tools, and ensuring the platform is accessible to all users will create a more inclusive and user-friendly experience. Making the process smoother and more supportive for job seekers.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts qualitative methods approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of job seekers' perceptions. The target population includes active job seekers residing in Mnquma Municipality. A purposive sampling method was utilised to select 5 participants who have interacted with e-recruitment platforms. The participants in this study consisted of 5 individuals, aged between 18 and 55 years. The sample included 3% males and 2% females and represented a diverse demographic from Mnquma Local Municipality. The participants were selected using Stratified Random Sampling approach to ensure a balanced representation of industry sectors, education levels, geographic locations. A semi-structured interviews was conducted to gain deeper qualitative insights. Qualitative response was subjected to thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes.

Findings and Discussion

Objective: **To study the job seekers perception towards online E-recruitment portals in Mnquma Municipality**.

How did you first learn about the government e-recruitment portal?

Participant 1 *"I learned about the portal through an announcement at a local job fair. It was helpful to see it promoted in person".*

Participant2 *"My university career centre shared information about the portal during a workshop on job hunting".*

Participant 3 *"I found out about it through social media posts. Friends were sharing links to available job listings".*

Participant 4 *"I heard about it from a local newspaper article that detailed how to apply for government jobs".*

Participant 5 *"I was introduced to the portal by a colleague who had success applying for positions there".*

All participants learned about the portal through various informational sources, emphasizing the importance of communication in job seeking. Participant 3 and Participant 5 both highlight the influence of personal networks—friends and colleagues—suggesting that social connections play a key role in discovering job resources. Participant 1 and Participant 2 were introduced to the portal in contexts

specifically designed for job searching, whereas Participant 3's discovery was through casual social interactions. Participant 4's information came from a more formal and possibly educational context, focusing on government jobs, which might suggest a different target audience or purpose compared to the others. The responses illustrate a diverse range of avenues through which individuals can discover job resources. While personal networks and informative platforms are central to most responses, the medium and context vary widely, reflecting individual preferences and the varying effectiveness of different channels in job searching. This finding is supported by the findings of those of Rathee and Bhuntel (2022).

Can you describe your experience of using the portal for job applications?

Participant 1 "My *experience has been quite positive overall. I appreciate how easy it is to search for jobs and apply online without needing to print out resumes".*

Participant 2. "I can apply for jobs from anywhere, and I don't have to deal with paper applications".

Participant 3. "I can easily narrow down listings to find exactly what I'm looking for".

Participant 4. "I sometimes feel overwhelmed by the number of options. It can be hard to keep track of where I've applied".

Participant 5. "I appreciate the instant feedback when I submit applications. It feels more engaging than just mailing a resume.

Participants 1, 2, and 5 all emphasize the benefits of an online application process, highlighting ease of access and the elimination of paper applications. This suggests a shared appreciation for the convenience that digital platforms provide. Participant 3's mention of the ability to narrow down job listings aligns with the general theme of user-friendly tools and features that enhance the job search experience Participants 1, 2, 3, and 5 express positive sentiments, focusing on convenience, engagement, and satisfaction with the process. Participant 4 highlights a negative aspect of the experience, feeling overwhelmed by the abundance of options. This indicates that while many find the platform beneficial, it can also lead to information overload for some users. The responses reflect a generally positive experience with the online job application process, with a strong emphasis on convenience and user-friendly features. However, Participant 4 introduces a critical perspective on the potential drawbacks of having too many options, highlighting that while digital solutions can enhance the experience, they can also lead to challenges in managing the job search. This duality suggests that while technology improves accessibility, it also requires users to develop strategies to navigate potential overwhelm.

Objective 2: **To analyse the behavioural intention of job seekers concerning the online E-recruitment portals in Mnquma Municipality.**

How did you first learn about the government e-recruitment portal?

Participant 1. "I intend to use online portals regularly because they save me time and give me access to a wider range of job opportunities".

Participant 2. "I'm motivated to keep using these portals because they allow me to apply quickly and efficiently, which fits my busy lifestyle".

Participant 3. "My intention to use e-recruitment portals is high. I feel they provide valuable resources that traditional methods lack".

Participant 4." I plan to rely on online portals, but I wish there were more follow-ups from employers to keep me engaged".

Participant 5. "I tend to use multiple portals to maximize my chances. The variety keeps me motivated to apply for different roles".

All participants express a clear intention to continue using online job portals, indicating a shared belief in their usefulness for job searching. Participants 1, 2, and 3 highlight the efficiency of these portals. They appreciate the time-saving aspect and the access to a broader range of opportunities, suggesting that convenience is a key motivator for all. Participant 4's concern about the lack of follow-ups contrasts with the other participants' experiences, indicating that engagement from employers is a significant factor for some users, while others are more focused on the application process itself. The responses collectively show a strong inclination towards the continued use of online job portals, driven by their efficiency, access to opportunities, and valuable resources. However, they also highlight varying motivations and needs, particularly regarding employer engagement. While most participants appreciate the convenience and effectiveness of these platforms, Participant 4's desire for improved follow-up reflects an important aspect of the user experience that could enhance overall satisfaction and engagement with the job search process. This suggests that while the tools are effective, the user experience could be further improved through better communication from employers.

What challenges, if any, have you encountered while navigating the portal such as technical issues, registration process, job search?

Participant 1: "I faced technical issues with the portal crashing frequently. It was frustrating when I was trying to submit my applications.
Participant 2. "The registration process was quite complicated. I had trouble creating an account because the instructions weren't clear.

Participant 3. "I struggled with the job search filters. They didn't always work as expected, making it hard to find relevant listings".
Participant 4. "I encountered long loading times. Sometimes it felt like I was waiting forever just to view job postings".

Participant 5. "Navigating the portal wasn't intuitive. I often found myself lost, unsure of where to go next".

All participants report some form of technical problem, indicating that technical reliability is a shared concern. Each participant expresses frustration with the portal's performance, highlighting that these issues directly impede their job search efforts. The problems described lead to a diminished user experience, suggesting that these technical difficulties affect their overall ability to engage effectively with the platform. Implicit in all responses is a call for enhancements to the portal, whether it be smoother functionality, clearer instructions, or better-performing features, indicating a common desire for a more effective tool for job searching.

Objective 3: To offer suggestions to improve factors of job seekers this leads to the E-recruitment portal

In your opinion, how effective is the e-recruitment portal in helping job seekers find employment opportunities?
Participant 1. "I think the portal is effective, but it could use better job matching algorithms to help job seekers find more relevant opportunities".

Participant 2. "It has been quite helpful for me, but I believe adding more resources, like interview preparation guides, would make it even better".
Participant 3 ."I find the portal effective, but I wish it updated job listings more frequently to avoid applying for positions that are already filled".
Participant 4."Overall, it's useful, but clearer navigation and a more user-friendly interface would improve the experience for everyone".
Participant 5."The portal works well for finding jobs, but I think increasing employer engagement could help job seekers connect more easily".

Participant 1 and Participant 3 focus on technical improvements, such as better job matching algorithms and more frequent updates to job listings.

Participant 2 emphasizes the addition of supplementary resources like interview preparation guides, indicating a different approach to improving the user experience.

Participant 4 stresses the need for clearer navigation and a more user-friendly interface.

Participant 5 highlights the importance of increased employer engagement, suggesting a focus on relationship-building rather than just improving the portal's technical aspects.

While all participants agree on the portal's effectiveness, their suggestions imply varying levels of satisfaction with its current state. Some participants express more significant concerns (e.g., job updates and algorithm effectiveness). These reflect differing priorities among participants regarding how to improve the job portal. While they all find the portal effective, their specific suggestions and areas of focus vary, highlighting the diverse needs and expectations of users.

How does the e-recruitment portal compare to other job-seeking platforms you have used if any?

Participant 1. *"The e-recruitment portal is more focused on government jobs, while other platforms offer a wider range of industries. I think integrating diverse job categories could enhance its appeal."*
Participant 2." *I find other job boards more user-friendly. The e-recruitment portal could improve its interface to match the ease of use found on platforms like LinkedIn."*
Participant 3. *"The e-recruitment portal is effective, but other platforms provide better networking opportunities. Adding a networking feature could really help job seekers connect."*
Participant 4. *"I prefer other platforms for their job alert systems. The e-recruitment portal could benefit from more personalized job notifications based on my profile."*
Participant 5. *"While I appreciate the government focus of the portal, other sites allow easier application tracking. Improving this feature on the e-recruitment portal would be beneficial".*

Each participant expresses a desire for enhancements to the e-recruitment portal, indicating a common interest in optimizing its functionality and user experience. Many of the suggestions center around improving usability and features, highlighting the importance of a positive user experience in job searching. Participants emphasize different aspects of the job search process, such as job diversity (Participant 1), usability (Participant 2), networking (Participant 3), notifications (Participant 4), and application tracking (Participant 5). This variety reflects diverse user needs and preferences regarding the functionalities of the e-recruitment portal. The responses illustrate a clear sentiment that while the recruitment portal serves a specific purpose, it falls short in several areas compared to other job platforms. Participants express a range of suggestions for improvement, from broadening job categories and enhancing user interface design to adding networking features and improving notification and tracking systems.

Do you believe the portal makes the recruitment process more transparent or fair? Please explain your reasoning.

Participant 1:" *I believe the portal enhances transparency. It allows applicants to see job postings and requirements clearly, which is a step in the right direction".*
Participant 2: *"Yes, it seems fair since all candidates have equal access to the same information. However, I think more updates on application statuses would improve transparency further".*

Participant 3: *"The portal is somewhat transparent, but there could be more communication about the selection process. Knowing where I stand would make it feel fairer".*

Participant 4: *"I feel the portal promotes fairness because it standardizes the application process. However, it should provide clearer guidelines on how candidates are assessed".*

Participant 5: *"I believe it helps with transparency, but I'd like to see more employer feedback on applications. It would help job seekers understand what employers are looking for'.*

Participants have slightly varying perceptions of the portal's transparency. While Participants 1 and 2 view it positively, Participant 3 feels it is only somewhat transparent, indicating that there are gaps in communication. Participant 4 focuses on the standardization of the process as a fair aspect, while Participant 5 is concerned with the feedback loop from employers.

Participant 2 suggests that more frequent updates on application statuses could enhance transparency further.

Participant 3 expresses a desire for clearer communication about the selection process, which would help candidates feel more informed and valued.

Participant 4 highlights the need for clearer guidelines on how candidates are assessed, indicating that understanding the evaluation criteria is crucial for fairness.

Employer Feedback. Participant 5 calls for more employer feedback on applications.

All participants acknowledge that the portal enhances transparency in some way, particularly regarding access to job postings and requirements. Each participant emphasizes a sense of fairness in the application process, noting that all candidates have equal access to information, which contributes to a level playing field. There is a common desire for further enhancements to transparency, indicating that while the portal is viewed positively, users believe there is room for growth.

Recommendation

Based on the study objectives, the following recommendations can be made to improve e-recruitment portals in Mnquma Local Municipality. The e-recruitment portal should be designed with an intuitive and user-friendly interface. Ensuring that job seekers can easily navigate through the portal, access relevant information, and complete applications without unnecessary confusion will improve user satisfaction and increase engagement. The portal should be optimized for various devices, such as smartphones and tablets, as many users may rely on mobile devices for job applications. Additionally, ensuring that the portal is accessible to people with disabilities (e.g., screen readers, colour contrast) would broaden its reach.

Job seekers should be provided with clear, easy-to-follow instructions for completing applications. Offering tutorials or FAQs addressing common issues could reduce confusion and improve the overall experience. Additionally, a dedicated help section or support team to assist users with technical issues would be beneficial.

Transparency regarding the recruitment process and how applications are handled can help build trust in the e-recruitment portal. Including information about data privacy, security measures, and how applicants are selected can reassure users that their personal information is secure.

To ensure the effectiveness of the e-recruitment portal, it is essential to maintain regular updates to keep the system functional and free of bugs. Feedback from job seekers could be gathered periodically to identify areas for improvement and address any issues promptly. Offering training programs or workshops to enhance digital literacy among job seekers can improve their confidence and ability to navigate e-recruitment portals effectively. This will be especially useful in rural areas where digital literacy levels may be lower. The portal's job matching system could be enhanced to provide more accurate and personalized job recommendations based on a job seeker's qualifications, skills, and preferences, increasing the chances of successful placements. Incorporating a system for collecting feedback from users can help identify areas for improvement and gauge satisfaction. Regular surveys or feedback forms could provide insights into user experiences and offer suggestions for future upgrades.

Areas of Future Research

Future research on the perceptions of job seekers regarding government e-recruitment portals should explore several key areas. First, longitudinal studies could examine the long-term impacts of these portals on job seekers' employment outcomes, providing insights into how these platforms influence job placement success over time. Comparative studies across different municipalities or countries could highlight best practices in e-recruitment, facilitating the development of guidelines for effective portal implementation. Investigating how government e-recruitment portals affect marginalized groups is essential to understanding the barriers these populations face, informing the creation of more inclusive recruitment strategies. Furthermore, exploring the integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning in e-recruitment could reveal how these technologies enhance personalization and streamline the application process. Policy analysis regarding the frameworks governing e-recruitment portals could yield insights into how regulations impact user accessibility and overall system effectiveness, guiding policymakers in creating supportive environments for job seekers. Research into the effectiveness of e-recruitment portals across different devices e.g., mobile vs. desktop would provide insights into user preferences and behaviours, optimizing user experience. Lastly, investigating the effectiveness of feedback mechanisms within e-recruitment portals could reveal how well these platforms adapt to user needs over time, highlighting areas for improvement

Conclusion

The study found that while the government's e-recruitment portal in Mnquma Municipality has introduced beneficial efficiencies and modernised access to job opportunities, several challenges hinder its effectiveness and inclusivity. The portal is generally well-received by younger, educated, and digitally literate users; however, it poses substantial barriers for older and less digitally proficient individuals. Technical issues, limited support, and uneven access to digital infrastructure significantly constrain the platform's potential. To improve the system's overall impact, there is a need for targeted interventions, including user-centred interface design, expanded digital literacy training, enhanced promotional outreach, and robust user support mechanisms. Without such improvements, the portal risks reinforcing digital divides and limiting the equitable distribution of public sector employment opportunities. E-recruitment systems hold great potential for enhancing public sector hiring, but their success in rural areas like Mnquma depends on addressing access, literacy, and trust issues. By understanding and responding to the specific needs of local job seekers, government agencies can ensure these platforms fulfill their promise of inclusive and efficient public service delivery.

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