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Article

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Navigating change: a qualitative exploration of chatbot adoption in recruitment

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ABSTRACT

The human element in HR is challenging to replace. Although technology integration promises efficiency improvements, it also raises concerns about how it may affect employee engagement, interpersonal connections, and organisational culture. This study aims to shed insight into the complex environment surrounding chatbot adoption by clarifying the experiences of individuals navigating this revolutionary process. The study emphasises the value of efficient communication and integration by examining HR professionals' and recruiters' opinions of chatbots' reliability, privacy issues, organisational culture, and how they handle employee resistance to their adoption in hiring. With a focus on 25 HR professionals and recruiters, this study examines their experiences and challenges of integrating chatbots into the hiring process using a qualitative research design. While participant narratives are analysed by advanced tools like VOSviewer to provide insightful analysis, semi-structured interviews offer insights particular to the setting. This study on chatbots in hiring sheds light on the difficulties HR professionals encounter in the recruitment technology sector. Human resources professionals and recruiters concur that chatbots are transparent, trustworthy, and dependable. Strong data protection rules and open communication help to handle privacy and data security concerns.

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Introduction

The dynamic recruiting and human resource (HR) management environment constantly changes due to technological breakthroughs affecting organizations' functions. Artificial Intelligence's (AI) projected position in the workplace is changing rapidly (Srnicsek, 2017). AI's possible automation and eventual elimination of specific jobs have been the subject of much discussion and conjecture (McKinsey & Company, 2022). Beyond its capacity to execute work-related activities, AI has the potential to significantly alter interpersonal communication (Hancock et al., 2020).

Chatbots are an invention that has recently gained popularity. Conversational agents powered by AI are becoming increasingly common in various industries to improve productivity, revolutionize communication, and streamline procedures. The introduction of chatbots represents a significant change in the recruitment and HR field, necessitating in-depth research and comprehension. With the use of AI-driven chatbots for business communication, communication technology is currently evolving. To promote adoption and acceptability, system engineers are motivated to make technology as realistic and human-like as possible (Carmigniani et al., 2011). Businesses spend nearly \$100 billion on AI communication technologies that mimic human behaviour (Statista, 2022).

Once restricted to conventional methods, HR management is at the forefront of innovation. The advent of chatbots, intended to automate duties and facilitate discussions, offers both a challenge and an opportunity. Companies increasingly use chatbots to handle the complexity of HR tasks and hiring

procedures to remain responsive and competitive. Chatbots can completely transform the HR industry by helping employees with HR-related inquiries and automating preliminary candidate assessments. However, as companies venture into this unknown realm, they encounter various experiences that mould their ideas on using chatbots. In an economic environment of crisis and fierce competition, innovation has become crucial to identifying, assessing, and retaining talented personnel worldwide (Sahay, 2014). However, it has also benefited socially, adding value to the hiring, talent detection, and recruitment processes (Perdana et al., 2020). This has been achieved by making recruitment platforms more transparent and equitable and providing more inclusive training opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender, religion, or other characteristics.

Chatbot use in HR, and their complexity hampers recruitment despite increasing popularity (Rapp et al., 2021). Successful implementation and good organizational outcomes depend on an understanding of these dynamics. To gain insight into the adoption process, recruiters and HR specialists must understand the experiences and perspectives of stakeholders, which is often overlooked in research on chatbot use. The use of chatbots in HR processes has benefits and drawbacks, although in-depth analyses have not been thoroughly studied in the literature (Votto et al., 2021). Comprehending the potential benefits of chatbot adoption and the challenges HR staff faces is essential for a successful deployment. Research on the preparation and culture of organizations and the level of user satisfaction and experience is also seriously lacking.

The human element in HR is challenging to replace. Although technology integration promises efficiency improvements, it also raises concerns about how it may affect employee engagement, interpersonal connections, and organizational culture. The way that businesses interact with applicants and oversee talent acquisition procedures has been entirely transformed by the introduction of chatbots in HR and recruitment. These systems automate feedback gathering, interview scheduling, and candidate screening. Their integration does, however, bring with it exceptional potential and challenges. With an emphasis on how HR professionals navigate these changes to enhance organizational readiness, culture, and innovation, this qualitative study aims to comprehend the dynamics surrounding chatbot adoption in HR practices. This study will close this gap by examining recruiters' experiences and perspectives on chatbot adoption. The section organization of this study is strategic management as this study focuses

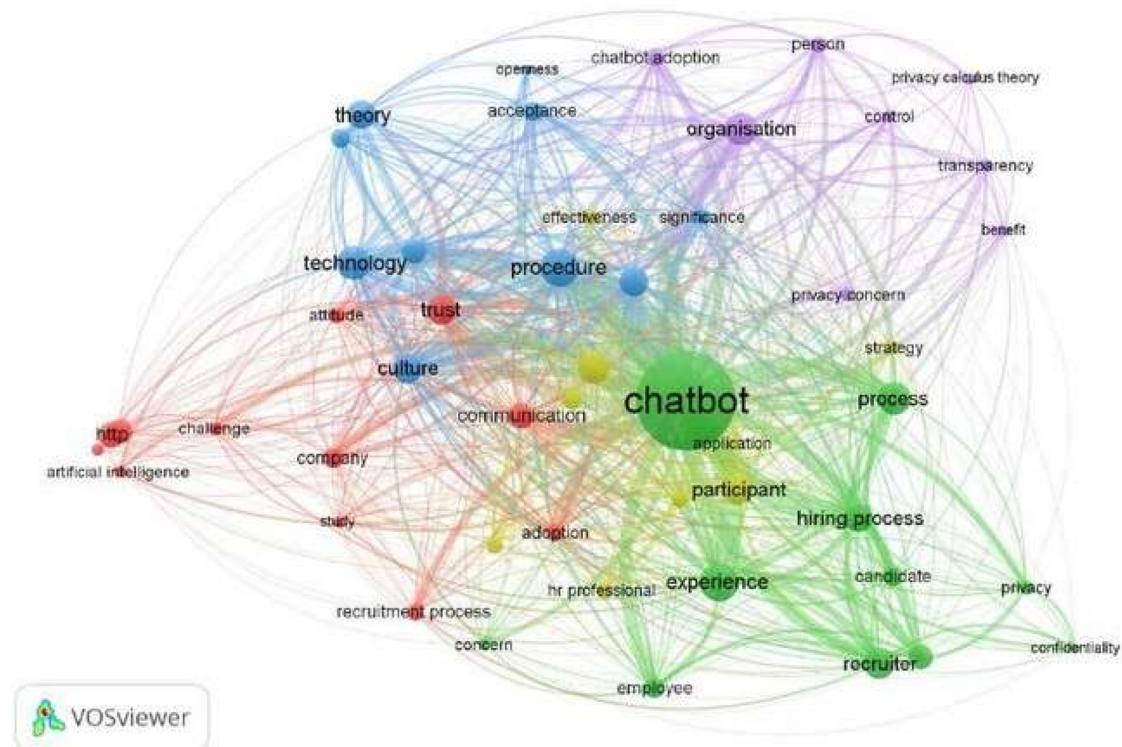


Figure 1. Network visualization of clusters.

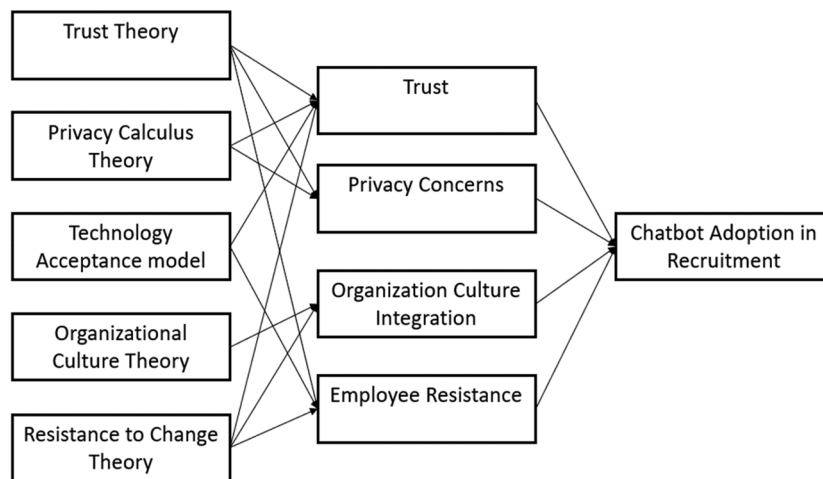


Figure 2. Proposed conceptual model.

on perceptions about technology adoption in recruitment process. The success of chatbot adoption depends on the quality of user experience and satisfaction (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Literature review

According to Edwin B. Flippo, searching for and finding possible workers, then encouraging them to apply for positions within the organizations, is the definition of recruitment. Ensuring that the right applicant is hired and positively impacts the organization is one of the most essential HR functions (Oswal et al., 2020). The processes and initiatives a company uses to find, draw in, and shape the employment decisions of qualified applicants are collectively referred to as personnel recruitment (Ployhart, 2006).

An effective recruiting and selection process is critical to a company's success because it allows for a thorough and impartial assessment of candidates to determine whether they meet their employer's requirements and ultimately result in employment. The primary goal of the personnel selection team is to select candidates who fit the job requirements and meet all requirements rather than go through the process itself (Sołek-Borowska & Wilczewska, 2018). All recruiters followed standard procedures during the hiring process. The following are typical actions used in conventional hiring: a) Determining the position, b) Creating the job description and the list of required abilities, c) Finding the sources of eligible candidates and narrowing the applicant pool, d. Making a shortlist and setting up interviews, and e. Making choices and selecting the best applicant. These drawn-out procedures involve biases, high costs, human error, and repetitive activities (Oswal et al., 2020).

Amidst the growing significance of human capital, the technological framework surrounding the hiring process for businesses has evolved (Black & van Esch, 2020). AI is believed to increase productivity by automating the repetitive sourcing and screening processes. By placing more emphasis on strategy, the time saved can increase recruiter effectiveness. Recruiters can utilize data analytics to draw more informed conclusions about candidates during recruitment and selection. Using a more strategic approach to hiring could open doors to improving the candidate experience by providing prompt and frequent updates on the status of applications (Ore & Sposato, 2022). Because AI handles monotonous and repetitive chores, recruiters can concentrate more on creative and strategic issues and quickly obtain information about personality and suitability compared to a traditional CV. The employment procedure will proceed more quickly thanks to the use of a more fruitful machine-human interaction (Alam et al., 2020).

Today's business relies heavily on precision and speed, including recruitment and selection. AI is an application that is either a hardware or a software system that can think like a human and make intelligent decisions based on data (Lucci & Kopec, 2015). HR professionals must find strategies to swiftly sort through applications and accurately select the top candidates, as fewer jobs are available to hire and a growing number of skilled applicants are vying. New technology can expedite this procedure (Sołek-Borowska & Wilczewska, 2018). The chatbot provided an interactive Google Map showing

the candidates' residential areas in addition to their profiles if they satisfied the requirements. It also made planning and organizing synchronous, live Q&A sessions regarding the programme more accessible, negating the requirement for independent scheduling software dependent on human oversight. For prospective candidates, this new technology supplements the conventional recruitment process (Yi et al., 2023).

AI radically changes the nature of applicant-employer interactions. AI solutions such as chatbots provide candidates with fresh and enhanced employer interaction. The processes of evaluating prospects, setting up interviews, verifying references, and extending job offers to chosen applicants can all be automated by other AI-powered applications (Oswal et al., 2020). AI is a constant disruptor in the recruitment market. The automation of the recruitment process frees up HRs to focus on comprehending the desires and evolving demands of the workforce in order to retain personnel, hence lowering the cost of hiring, selecting, and providing training and development (Raveendra et al., 2020).

Owing to the potential for alienating candidates, Scholz (2017) warned about ethical concerns about fairness and prejudice in AI-based recruitment. AI technologies have become commonplace in nearly every stage of the hiring process, revolutionizing the industry and greatly assisting in choosing the best prospects from a wide range of applicants and profiles (Sekhri & Cheema, 2019). Companies such as IKEA, L'Oreal, Unilever, and Amazon have improved their talent-hiring capacities in unique and specialized ways by utilizing AI-powered recruitment platforms such as Robot Vera, Mya Chatbot, and HireVue Assessments (Javed & Brishti, 2020).

Theories related to Chatbot-assisted recruitment

Using the theories of organizational culture, resistance to change, privacy calculus, technology acceptance model (TAM), and trust theory, the study investigates the use of chatbots in HR and hiring procedures. While TAM looks at attitudes and intentions towards chatbot adoption, Trust Theory concentrates on how HR professionals view chatbots' dependability and trustworthiness. Organisational Culture Theory looks at how HR professionals negotiate organizational culture to encourage chatbot adoption, whereas Privacy Calculus Theory analyses the trade-offs between privacy issues and benefits. Employee resistance is the subject of the Resistance to Change Theory, which emphasizes factors including perceived risks and fear of losing one's job. The study thoroughly examines the experiences, attitudes, and difficulties related to chatbot adoption in HR and recruitment by incorporating these theories.

Trust theory

A socio-cognitive and computational paradigm called 'Trust Theory' describes the significance of trust in interpersonal relationships and autonomous cognitive entities such as autonomous technology. It offers a solid foundation for trust in dispersed and virtual organizations or marketplaces (multi-agent systems) and agent-based systems that facilitate human-computer interactions (Omrani et al., 2022). Although several factors might affect trust, the perceived danger in the human-AI relationship most likely stems from the control given to an AI system and its covert control mechanisms (Hengstler et al., 2016). According to Sullivan and Wamba (2022), unsettled emotions can undermine trust in artificial agents. This finding was based on the theory of trust in interpersonal relationships. Employee acceptance and implementation of innovations that must be integrated into workplace procedures are crucial to their effectiveness (Rizzuto et al., 2014).

Using chatbots in the hiring process is best understood considering the trust theory. It pertains to depending on a system, entity, or procedure and is particularly significant when considering new technologies such as chatbots. When users think chatbots can handle jobs such as preliminary candidate screening or query response, trust is built. Another crucial factor is privacy concerns, which require strong safeguards, open data standards, and unambiguous transparency in using candidate information (Lockey et al., 2021). Furthermore, since chatbots can improve the work of HR experts and give candidates confidence in impartial assessments, interpersonal trust is also crucial. Organizations can also engage in transparent campaigns to inform stakeholders about chatbots' advantages, constraints, and ethical considerations.

TAM

Information systems theory, called the TAM, describes how people accept and utilize new technologies. This implies that individuals' judgements regarding new technology are primarily influenced by perceived utility (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU), focusing on ease of use and job performance enhancement (Phuong Dung et al., 2023). Using system utilization as the dependent variable and PEOU and PU as two independent variables, Davis (1989) conducted several studies to validate the TAM. He discovered a substantial correlation between PU, self-reported present usage, and self-predicted future usage. The PEOU strongly correlates with current and future consumption (Ma & Liu, 2011).

The TAM explains the recruitment industry's acceptance of chatbots. This implies that people's intentions to utilize technology are affected by how easy and beneficial they believe it to be. Regarding chatbots, HR specialists and recruiters assess how simple it is to incorporate them into their processes; user-friendly interfaces and intuitive design play a role in this acceptance (Kong et al., 2021). The perceived usefulness of chatbots is determined by how well they can expedite the hiring process, increase productivity, and support strategic hiring objectives. Other critical external elements are organizational support and social influence. The approach recognizes that people's perceptions can alter over time and that organizations need to put mechanisms in place for ongoing learning and feedback for organizations to stay in step with changing attitudes and beliefs (Lin, 2023).

Privacy calculus theory

According to the privacy calculus theory, people should consider the overall effects of disclosing their personal information before exposing it. Individual users consider both hedonistic and utilitarian factors when interacting with social bots in the setting of human-computer interaction to form an attitudinal belief structure (Xie & Lei, 2022). The perceived risks and benefits are the main elements of privacy calculations. According to privacy calculus theory, human agents behave to maximize advantages and reduce risks (Jiang et al., 2022).

The Privacy Calculus Theory provides a framework for understanding how people decide what personal information to disclose. It advises people to balance the advantages of utilizing chatbots with any possible hazard or loss. Regarding chatbot adoption, job seekers and HR specialists must weigh privacy concerns against the benefits of streamlined hiring procedures and potential hazards, such as data breaches, abuse, or unauthorized access (Koivunen et al., 2022). Organizations need to implement strong security protocols, open data management procedures, and effective communication plans to tackle these issues. As people evaluate an organization's transparency on its data practices and security measures, transparency is essential (Chatterjee et al., 2023). People want to control the information they receive; thus, the idea of control is crucial.

Organisational culture theory

One transdisciplinary theory that significantly influences the workplace is the organizational culture theory. This is a subtle but highly potent theory that affects the work environment. The competing value framework, is used by the theory to distinguish between various forms of organizational culture (Nanayakkara & Wilkinson, 2021).

Organizational culture theory is essential for the adoption of chatbots in recruitment. This implies that an organization's acceptance or resistance to change is shaped by its norms and values. A culture that values innovation is more receptive to incorporating chatbots, whereas one that is averse to change can view them as disruptive. Leadership shapes culture through behaviours, communication, and decision-making (Hartnell et al., 2011). Addressing concerns and reaching a consensus on the advantages of chatbot integration requires effective communication. Seamless integration requires practices that align with the culture's values and beliefs (Alhassan, 2022). Additionally, for chatbots to be accepted and integrated into the organizational culture, it is essential to comprehend how they fit into current workflows and routines (Jonas et al., n.d.).

Resistance to change theory

Resistance to change theory explores the behavioural dimension of change reactions, the cognitive dimension of change patterns of thought, and the affective dimension of change experiences (Piderit, 2000). It identifies the organizational, technological, and psychological elements influencing how individuals perceive and respond. People's fear of technology replacing human decision-making, their doubts about the dependability of chatbots, and their feelings that their jobs are in danger are the leading causes of psychological resistance (Dwivedi et al., 2021). The broader effects of chatbot adoption on HR structures, procedures, and cultural norms give rise to organizational opposition. Technological resistance pertains to chatbot technologies' dependability, security, and efficacy (de Andrés-Sánchez & Gené-Albesa, 2023). Organizations should prioritize data security, openness, and adherence to moral and legal requirements to reduce technical resistance (Bani Ahmad, 2024). The Theory also recognizes acceptance phases, such as denial, resistance, exploration, and commitment.

Research objectives

1. To discover how recruiters and HR experts view chatbots during the employment process in terms of reliability and trustworthiness.
2. To investigate how recruiters' and HR professionals' perceptions regarding the use of chatbots in the hiring process are influenced by privacy concerns.
3. To explore how organizational culture affects chatbot adoption and integration during hiring.
4. To investigate HR specialists' strategies to deal with employee resistance to chatbots during recruitment.

Research questions

RQ1: What are the perceptions of the trustworthiness and reliability of chatbots in the hiring process among HR professionals and recruiters?

RQ2 How do privacy concerns shape the attitudes of HR professionals and recruiters towards the adoption of chatbots in the recruitment process?

RQ3: How does organizational culture affect the acceptance and integration of chatbots in the recruitment process?

RQ4 How do HR professionals tackle employee resistance to using chatbots in recruitment?

Methodology

To provide light on the nuances of chatbot adoption in recruitment, this qualitative investigation combines a survey of the literature with in-depth interviews. A literature review provides theoretical frameworks and contextual information that ground qualitative research in the body of current knowledge and guide its conceptual underpinnings. Comprehensive understanding and strong interpretation are made possible by deep, nuanced study of participants' perspectives and life experiences through in-depth interviews combined with content analysis of interview data.

Literature review

To begin to place the research within the current theoretical discussion on chatbot adoption in HR and recruitment, the study begins with a thorough literature analysis. The literature study, which focuses on chatbot technology, HR procedures, hiring procedures, and organizational change, includes research papers and pertinent publications. Finding significant concepts, theoretical frameworks, and empirical

findings that support the study's goals and direct further data collecting and analysis is made easier with the help of this review.

In-depth interviews

The method used to gather data is semi-structured, in-depth interviews, which allow for an in-depth investigation of participants' perspectives and experiences with chatbot adoption in HR and recruitment. Aspects including employee resistance, organizational culture, privacy issues, perceived credibility, and trust in chatbots are covered in the interview guide, which was specifically designed to meet the study's objectives. Participants with experience working with chatbots in recruitment procedures are sought out using purposive sampling. Based on various factors, such as organizational roles, experience levels, and industry backgrounds, the sample consists of 25 IT sector professionals, including recruiters and HR professionals.

Open-ended questions are used in 15- to 30-min video meetings via Zoom and Google Meet. This allows participants to voice their opinions freely. Every participant has a Master's degree, and to ensure demographic variety in the sample, their ages are divided into three groups: under 30, between 30 and 40, and over 40.

Content analysis of interview data

Data analysis starts with transcribing and coding interview recordings to find recurrent themes, patterns, and narratives around chatbot adoption in HR and recruitment. A text mining and visualization application called VOSviewer makes content analysis easier by finding themes and phrase clusters in the transcripts of the interviews. Cluster analysis is made more accessible with VOSviewer, which finds related phrases and themes that indicate underlying patterns (Bukar et al., 2023). This method makes it possible to investigate the complex dynamics underlying the adoption of chatbots, revealing narratives, interpretations, and insights that advance our knowledge of participant perspectives.

Interpretation of interview data

Interview narratives are summarised and analysed to clarify attitudes and emotions related to adjusting to changes in the hiring environment. The structured analysis makes it possible to find emerging themes, inconsistencies, and subtleties in the data. The study intends to offer insightful information about adopting chatbots from the perspective of HR professionals and recruiters through qualitative interpretation. It also intends to offer advice and practical implications for companies looking to incorporate chatbots into their hiring procedures.

Data analysis

'Trust', the dominant cluster, contained conversations about the dependability and credibility of chatbots during the employment process. This cluster demonstrated the complex network of variables that affect the development of trust between chatbot technology, recruiters, and HR experts, illuminating many facets of trust. The 'Hiring Process' cluster offered perspectives on specific facets of the hiring process where chatbots were essential. This cluster clarified the participants' experiences and perspectives on how chatbots impacted and improved the recruitment process at different phases, ranging from preliminary screening to selecting and onboarding the right candidate. The 'Integration' cluster examined how chatbots are integrated into organizational cultures in the context of hiring. This cluster demonstrated a mutually beneficial relationship between the adoption of technology and the dominant organizational culture, highlighting the need for alignment to enable smooth integration.

The 'Chatbot Adoption' cluster surfaced, providing insight into the obstacles, achievements, and general attitudes related to choosing whether to integrate chatbots into hiring procedures. This cluster

thoroughly summarises the variables that impact acceptability or resistance to chatbot adoption. The 'Recruitment' cluster provided a comprehensive overview of the broader effects of chatbot adoption on the recruitment scene. This cluster demonstrated how many themes are interconnected and showed how recruiting practices, organizational culture, chatbots, and trust all influence recruiters' and HR professionals' recruitment experiences.

Interpretation of interviews

Trust and perceived credibility

Based on trust theory, a deliberate focus on trust becomes essential for successfully integrating chatbots into the recruitment process as the HR landscape changes with technological improvements (Ferrario et al., 2020). Organizations that successfully negotiate this landscape comprehending and addressing the subtleties of trust, will be in a better position to utilize chatbot technology fully in reframing and streamlining hiring procedures.

Chatbots have streamlined our recruitment processes. They assist in initial screenings, making the entire hiring process more efficient. I approached chatbot interactions with an open mind, and as they consistently delivered accurate information, my trust in their reliability grew. (Recruiter with 7 years of experience)

The participants emphasized the effectiveness and accuracy of chatbot adoption in recruiting and its beneficial effects. They discovered that chatbots improve productivity by streamlining the first screening stage. Their relaxed attitude towards chatbot encounters shows their openness to accepting technological innovation. Over time, trust in the chatbots' dependability increased as they continuously delivered accurate information. This demonstrates the valuable advantages of including chatbots in the hiring procedures. Positive employee perceptions and growing confidence in chatbots indicate that these technologies can assist in navigating recruitment challenges when used appropriately.

Yes, chatbots have been instrumental in our recruitment strategy. They facilitate instant communication, keeping candidates informed and engaged throughout the hiring process. Communication is vital in establishing trust. The chatbot consistently updates candidates on their application status, interview schedules, and any changes, fostering transparency and reliability. (HR professional with 11.5 years of experience)

The participant underlines the importance of chatbots in an open hiring process. Chatbots keep candidates informed and involved in hiring by facilitating quick conversations. These are regarded as valuable instruments for promoting trustworthy and open communication. Good communication and ongoing assistance are crucial. Chatbots improve transparency by regularly updating users' application status, interview dates, and process updates. In addition to improving communication, this integration increases candidates' trust in the organization. This encouraging experience demonstrates how chatbots can be used to solve communication problems during the hiring process.

I have had a positive experience with the adoption of chatbots in recruitment. They help capture candidate information and answer queries, improving overall efficiency. Accuracy in scheduling and managing interviews through the chatbot streamlines the process and showcases its reliability in handling crucial aspects of candidate engagement. (Recruiter with 3 years of experience)

The participants' experience demonstrates how adopting chatbots can positively affect hiring. They believed that chatbots increase productivity by gathering candidate data and answering questions. They handle crucial facets of candidate engagement, such as interview scheduling and management. This demonstrates that chatbots can effectively expedite candidate contacts and improve accuracy and dependability during the hiring process. Organizations can also engage in transparent campaigns to inform stakeholders about chatbots' advantages, constraints, and ethical considerations. The participants' positive experiences highlight the potential of chatbots to optimize and improve critical hiring journey processes, which adds to the ongoing investigation into chatbot adoption in recruitment practices.

Chatbots have been beneficial in optimizing our recruitment workflow. They provide a modern and efficient way for candidates to interact with our organization. Perceived credibility in automated processes stems from their ability to

reduce manual errors. Meanwhile, human-driven processes are recognized for their ability to make subjective judgements and consider individual career trajectories. (HR professional with 17 years of experience)

The participant revealed how crucial chatbots streamlined the hiring process. They contend that chatbots provide a more contemporary and effective means for applicants to communicate with the company, reducing the need for human error and simplifying certain parts of the hiring process. However, they also recognize the need for human-driven procedures to evaluate individual career paths and render subjective judgements. This implies a balanced approach, in which human interaction is essential for personalized considerations and nuanced judgement, while chatbots aid in efficiency and impartiality. The results underscore the intricacy of attitudes concerning chatbot implementation in the hiring process and emphasize the necessity for a well-rounded integration that uses automated and human-driven procedures.

Privacy concerns

According to the Privacy Calculus Theory, companies must negotiate using chatbots in hiring. Strategies to resolve privacy concerns are informed by the realization that stakeholders participate in a complicated evaluation process, balancing the advantages and disadvantages of chatbot-assisted processes. Favourable privacy calculus is primarily attributed to the proactive integration of solid security measures, transparent communication, configurable privacy settings, and user control methods. Privacy Calculus Theory ensures a careful balance between efficiency advantages and privacy protection, providing a framework for organizations seeking to maximize chatbot adoption in recruitment.

Adopting chatbots in recruitment is contingent on their commitment to privacy. We seek solutions that enhance efficiency and prioritize the confidentiality and security of candidate data throughout the hiring process. (Recruiter with 9 years of experience)

A firm's commitment to privacy underpins its use of chatbots in hiring. While the participants think these tools increase productivity, they prioritize applicant data security and confidentiality. They understand how tricky it is to handle private information while hiring. While organizations prioritize privacy protection, they are aware of the benefits of chatbots. This is consistent with the current trend in hiring procedures, which links robust data-protection protocols with technology integration. As more businesses use chatbots, they must adopt a comprehensive approach to address privacy concerns. This means keeping up with technological developments while maintaining a commitment to protect candidate data through the hiring process.

First and foremost on my list of priorities is privacy. In my profession as a recruiter, I would only accept chatbots if they guaranteed candidate privacy and confidentiality during the hiring process. (Recruiter with 5 years of experience)

The sensitive nature of applicant data causes the recruitment industry to become increasingly worried, raising expectations for chatbots to function within strict privacy guidelines. This is consistent with market trends, highlighting the importance of protecting the candidate data. According to the recruiter, chatbots must follow strict privacy regulations and be efficient enough to be accepted in the recruiting process. This emphasizes the importance of recruiters and candidates prioritizing and upholding expectations about privacy and confidentiality when developing recruitment tactics.

Control over the exchange of data is crucial. Integrating chatbots into the recruitment process seems more comfortable if they have customizable privacy settings that let me manage the information given. (Recruiter with 9 years of experience)

The participant highlighted how crucial control and personalization are when incorporating chatbots into hiring procedures. They contended that comprehending the complex structure of information flow requires control over data interchange. The participant argued that their integration becomes more comfortable when chatbots offer customizable privacy settings. This aligns with the increased emphasis on various technological applications of user agencies and control over personal data. The participants'

demand for a customized approach emphasizes the importance of adaptable and adjustable privacy settings when exchanging confidential candidate data. Customization and control considerations are important variables impacting HR professionals' and recruiters' perceptions of the viability and acceptance of chatbots in recruitment as more organizations use them.

I would only consider implementing chatbots if there are defined procedures for getting candidate consent for data processing throughout the hiring process. (HR Professional with 13 years of experience)

When using chatbots for recruitment, the participant highlighted the significance of having transparent processes for obtaining applicant agreements for data processing. This is consistent with the increasing emphasis on privacy and ethical data handling during hiring procedures. The participant recommended cautiously and morally implementing chatbot technology, ensuring consent is obtained throughout the hiring process. This emphasizes how important it is for businesses to prioritize ethics and openness when using chatbots in hiring processes. The participant's position emphasizes the significance of ethical practices and procedural clarity for the successful and responsible adoption of chatbots, signalling a realization of the righteous requirement to get applicant agreement.

Organisational culture integration

An organization's shared values, attitudes, and behaviours may influence the adoption of chatbots in recruitment. Organizational culture theory offers a thorough framework to understand this relationship. The significance of leadership, communication, conformity to organizational principles, and the assimilation of chatbots into current procedures are crucial elements impacting the success of adoption campaigns. Companies can optimize the integration of chatbots into recruitment processes by leveraging these insights to foster a positive and receptive atmosphere. This is possible when organizations approach chatbot adoption with a thorough understanding of their organizational culture.

Organizational culture plays a pivotal role in chatbot acceptance. As a technology-oriented company, the organizational culture never affected the acceptance of adopting chatbots. A culture that values innovation and efficiency tends to be more open to integrating chatbots into recruitment for streamlining processes. (Recruiter with 11 years of experience)

The participants' experience working for a tech-focused organization showed that a culture prioritizing efficiency and innovation does not hamper chatbot adoption in hiring procedures. This indicates that a culture that upholds these principles encourages people to be open to using cutting-edge technologies such as chatbots in hiring processes. The alignment of technological adoption with organizational culture indicates the impact of broader cultural values and priorities on businesses. This emphasizes how easy it will be to deploy chatbot technology if a culture of support prioritizes efficiency and creativity while embracing technical breakthroughs.

A culture that emphasizes transparency and open communication positively influences chatbot acceptance. When employees are informed about the benefits and purpose, they are more likely to embrace chatbots in recruitment. (HR Professional with 8.6 years of experience)

The insights provided by the participants emphasize the importance of an open and transparent organizational culture in determining whether chatbots are accepted in hiring procedures. Employees who work in environments that value openness and honesty are more inclined to accept chatbot integration. This is consistent with general organizational trends, stressing the need for open communication to reduce doubts and foster confidence. The analysis highlights the significance of communication tactics and available procedures in moulding staff attitudes and cultivating an environment that supports the effective use of chatbot technology in HRs and hiring.

Chatbots are often seen as tools to support recruiters rather than replace them in a collaborative organizational culture. Integration is smoother when the focus is on enhancing teamwork and effectiveness. (HR Professional with 5 years of experience)

The use of chatbots in recruitment influenced the participants' viewpoint on organizational culture. Chatbots are complementary tools that improve teamwork and effectiveness in a collaborative atmosphere. This strategy encourages a positive view of integration and values collaboration between human knowledge and technology. This emphasizes the importance of fostering a culture of collaboration that appreciates the synergy between technology and human expertise, enabling chatbots to be included more seamlessly and pleasantly as helpful tools in the recruitment workflow.

Cultures that prioritize continuous improvement are more likely to embrace chatbots. The understanding that technology evolves to enhance efficiency aligns with the integration of innovative tools in recruitment. (Recruiter with 4 years of experience)

The participant's vantage point emphasizes the significance of corporate cultures that prioritize ongoing development regarding chatbot acceptance and integration into hiring procedures. Innovative tools like chatbots are more likely to be welcomed into recruitment procedures in cultures prioritizing efficiency and ongoing improvements. This progressive methodology acknowledges technology as an ever-changing factor with the potential to improve operational effectiveness. The more general philosophy of appreciating technological breakthroughs for improved procedures is consistent with a continuous improvement culture. Organizations implementing chatbots in recruitment must cultivate a culture that appreciates and promotes continuous improvement to create an atmosphere favourable for effective integration.

An organization's openness to change significantly affects chatbot acceptance. Cultures encouraging experimentation and adaptation are more inclined to integrate chatbots into recruitment strategies. (Recruiter with 6 years of experience)

Frequently, the participant highlighted how crucial an organization's willingness to adapt is in determining whether chatbots are accepted in the hiring process. Chatbot incorporation into recruitment techniques is more likely to occur in cultures that value innovation and adaptation. This demonstrates how organizational culture and technology adoption are dynamically related. A flexible and welcoming culture makes adopting new technologies more accessible, encouraging experimentation and using instruments to improve hiring effectiveness. Developing a culture that embraces change is essential as businesses negotiate using chatbots for hiring.

Employee resistance

The Resistance to Change Theory emphasizes building a resilient organizational culture through gradual implementation, engaging stakeholders, and utilizing change agents. Successful chatbot adoption increased when tactics incorporated this principle.

Because of possible biases, lack of training chances, job redundancies, mistrust of chatbots' abilities, and poor communication, employees may be reluctant to accept them. Additionally, they might believe that their current skill set is out of step with the new technology, which could result in candidates being treated. (Recruiter with 10 years of experience)

Many obstacles stand in the way chatbots are used in recruitment, such as possible biases, a shortage of training opportunities, anxiety over job layoffs, mistrust of chatbot capabilities, and poor communication. Workers are also concerned that the new technology may not work with their existing skill sets, which could result in unfair treatment. These difficulties underline the necessity for thorough training curricula, open communication techniques, and prejudice mitigation approaches. Organizations must involve employees and reassure them about their duties and skill development in changing technological environments to achieve successful integration. Addressing these obstacles effectively and including chatbots in the recruitment process is imperative.

Doubt resulted from ignorance about chatbot capabilities. A few employees were not sure how chatbots would fit into their current work processes. Continual help is essential. By implementing a framework for ongoing support, education, and resolution of new issues, we foster a culture where employees feel encouraged to embrace chatbot technology. (Recruiter with 5.10 years of experience)

The participant emphasized concerns about using chatbots in hiring procedures, primarily due to ignorance of the potential of these tools. A few employees voiced concerns about how chatbots might integrate into their work procedures. To address these issues, participants advocated continuing assistance and education. Establishing a structure for continuing support, training, and swift handling of new problems can help to create a culture in which employees are motivated to use chatbots. This emphasizes the importance of adopting new technology and creating a welcoming atmosphere that places high value on continuing support and education.

Human perception of chatbots as impersonal was the source of resistance. Employees were concerned that their interaction with candidates would become less personal. It is important to highlight efficiency advantages. We highlighted how chatbots automate tedious work so employees can concentrate on more strategic recruiting, which benefits the team and the company. (HR professional with 13 years of experience)

The use of chatbots in hiring is hampered by the belief that they are impersonal and will reduce in-person interactions with applicants. The participant highlighted chatbots' efficiency benefits in the hiring process as a solution. Chatbots can be seen as a tool that frees employees from repetitive work by automating tedious chores, freeing them to concentrate on strategic recruiting factors. This strategy enhances the team's effectiveness and advances the business's general success. Promoting the adoption and smooth integration of chatbots requires communicating their benefits and presenting them as instruments that augment human interactions in hiring. Encouraging the successful deployment of chatbots in recruitment requires addressing impersonality.

Doubt was bred by unfavourable prior experiences with the adoption of technology. Employees were hesitant to adopt chatbots because they remembered times when technological advancements caused disruptions. It works well to present scenarios. Giving examples of how chatbots have dramatically enhanced the hiring process reduces employee doubt and fosters confidence. (Recruiter with 4.9 years of experience)

A significant obstacle to the widespread use of chatbots in recruitment is employee worries stemming from past unpleasant experiences with technology. Organizations can combat this by showcasing examples of how chatbots have enhanced the employment process. This can support employee confidence in new technology and assist in dispelling any misgivings. The results highlight the importance of presenting chatbot adoption positively by highlighting observable advantages and fruitful results. Sharing success stories with staff members can increase their trust and confidence, which will help them accept technological advancements in hiring more favourably.

Discussion

Qualitative analysis of the use of chatbots in hiring has illuminated the complex experiences, viewpoints, and difficulties experienced by HR professionals in this ever-evolving industry. The results show that recruiters and HRs professionals generally agree on how trustworthy and dependable chatbots are during the hiring process. The increase in trust that has been noticed highlights the significance of transparency in the decision-making process of chatbots, underscoring an essential element that facilitates seamless integration.

The adoption of chatbots is influenced by recruiters' and HR professionals' views of privacy concerns. The participants voiced concerns over confidentiality, data security, and exploitation of private information. The paper suggests strong data protection policies and open communication techniques to alleviate privacy concerns and foster trust to address these issues.

A key component of successful chatbot integration has been overcoming employee resistance, a hurdle HR experts have overcome using strategic methods. Organizational change agents greatly aided the establishment of a positive environment, emphasizing that chatbots are supplementary tools rather than replacements for human roles (Zhang et al., 2023). Practical tactics to overcome opposition and support a smoother adoption process include educational initiatives, open communication, and employee participation in decision-making processes (Kafi & Adnan, 2022).

This study examines the results in the larger context of recruitment technology. Organizational culture, privacy, and trust are the main pillars of chatbot adoption (Yang et al., 2024). The disparity in opinions

emphasizes the significance of customized approaches that consider organizational cultures' particular traits. The role of change agents is crucial in creating a favourable atmosphere for incorporating chatbots. The range of perspectives expressed by participants emphasizes the necessity of specialized and customized techniques that consider the distinctive characteristics of organizational cultures (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Understanding that there is no one-size-fits-all approach, effective chatbot integration tactics must be flexible enough to accommodate the unique features of any workplace to meet the many attitudes and issues that emerge within various organizational contexts; this customization is essential (Abulibdeh et al., 2024).

Change agents are crucial in fostering an atmosphere favourable to integrating chatbots (de Andrés-Sánchez & Gené-Albesa, 2023). HR directors, innovators, and influential characters in the company are essential in influencing attitudes and creating an environment conducive to adopting new technologies. Their impact is crucial for negotiating the challenges of incorporating chatbots into current processes and reducing opposition.

To develop a comprehensive conceptual model, this study aims to determine the complex dynamics underlying the adoption of chatbots in recruitment processes. The framework that developed, which is based on five influential theories—Trust theory, TAM, Privacy Calculus Theory, Organisational Culture Theory, and Resistance to Change Theory—explains the complex interactions arising between these theoretical constructs and four key factors: employee resistance, organizational culture integration, privacy concerns, and trust. We outline how the elements present in each theory precisely shape these variables based on a thorough synthesis of interview data and a thorough analysis of relevant literature.

Trust, a fundamental element in promoting the adoption of chatbot technology, is explained by combining elements of the Resistance to Change Theory, Privacy Calculus Theory, TAM, and Trust Theory. Privacy concerns are crucial to the recruitment environment, clarified by the complementary interactions between the Privacy Calculus Theory and Trust Theory components. Additionally, the combination of TAM, Organisational Culture Theory, and Resistance to Change Theory components explains the characteristics of employee resistance, while integrating these theories offers key insights into the mechanisms supporting organizational culture integration. Demonstrating this conceptual model intends to offer an extensive understanding of the fundamental factors that influence chatbot adoption in recruiting processes, thereby facilitating well-informed decision-making and strategic interventions in organizational settings. This fundamental model can be used as a base for future qualitative and quantitative researches in academia and organization setup.

The results have implications beyond specific companies; they provide insightful information for HR professionals, companies, and the recruitment technology space. The results call for reviewing present procedures and creating tactics that respect corporate culture, deal with privacy issues, and foster confidence. The study's conclusions offer a roadmap for managing changes in recruitment procedures as technology develops further, guaranteeing a smoother integration of chatbots and encouraging innovation in the recruitment technology industry.

Ethical considerations in Chatbot adoption in the recruitment process

Fairness, privacy, data protection, openness, informed consent, equity, accessibility, and algorithmic responsibility must all be carefully considered when using chatbots in the hiring process. Chatbots use algorithms to communicate with applicants and make judgements, but biased algorithms can support inequality and discrimination (Votto et al., 2021). The HR departments are responsible for safely handling applicant data and ensuring it is only used for that purpose. Candidates must be given a choice to opt out and be informed about how their data will be utilized. Maintaining transparency is essential to retaining applicants' confidence and credibility, and companies should be held responsible for any mistakes or prejudices introduced by chatbots (Omrani et al., 2022). Prospective candidates ought to be given the option to agree to communicate with a chatbot and comprehend the consequences of adopting a chatbot in the recruitment process.

To provide equitable opportunities, organizations should offer different ways for people to apply and contact recruiters. Algorithmic accountability for chatbots requires routine audits and evaluations (Hakimi,

2022). Organizations can utilize chatbots to improve their recruitment process while adhering to ethical norms and protecting the rights of candidates by prioritizing fairness, openness, and accountability.

Conclusion

The introduction of chatbots in HR and recruitment has significantly impacted how businesses interact with applicants and manage talent acquisition processes. These systems automate tasks like feedback gathering, interview scheduling, candidate screening, and presenting opportunities and challenges for organizations. A qualitative exploration of the dynamics surrounding chatbot adoption in HR practices revealed vital themes such as trust, perceived credibility, privacy concerns, organizational culture integrations, and employee resistance.

Trust is crucial for successfully adopting chatbots, emphasizing reliability, transparency, and accuracy. Privacy concerns underscore the need for robust data protection protocols and open communication channels. Organizational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping attitudes towards chatbot adoption, with cultures emphasizing innovation and openness being more receptive to integrating chatbots into recruitment practices. However, resistance to change remains challenging, reflecting apprehensions about job roles, skills, and perceived impersonality of chatbot interactions. Resistance to change, which results from concerns about work titles, skill sets, and the apparent impersonality of chatbot interactions, is still a problem.

HR professionals and organizations need to take proactive measures to solve these problems with techniques like education, open communication, and employee involvement to ensure the successful adoption and integration of chatbots in recruitment processes. The effectiveness of chatbot adoption is contingent upon user pleasure and experience. In the digital age, promoting good change and improving recruitment procedures will require understanding the factors around chatbot adoption.

Limitations and future scope

The use of chatbots in HR procedures is examined in this qualitative study, subject to several limitations, including sample size, qualitative character, and lack of generalizability. Because the study is centred on stakeholders' experiences, it may ignore other contextual elements, including market trends, technology infrastructure, and regulatory compliance. The duration and extent of the study may restrict the breadth of understanding of the durability and long-term effects of chatbot adoption in HR and hiring.

Nevertheless, it offers a starting point for future research, indicating the necessity of long-term studies, the need to improve best practices, and the possibility of using chatbot technology to solve challenges related to diversity and inclusion. While advanced chatbot functions like sentiment analysis and predictive analytics can optimize talent acquisition efforts, comparative studies can shed light on the benefits and drawbacks of chatbot adoption. A more thorough understanding of the integration of chatbots into HR procedures can be obtained by broadening the research's focus to include a variety of industry sectors.

Authors contribution

All the authors (A.R. and K.K.) were involved in the conception and design, analysis and interpretation of the data; the drafting of the paper, revising it critically for intellectual content; and the final approval of the version to be published; also, all authors (A.R. and K.K.) agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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No potential competing interest was reported by the author(s).

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Data availability

The data supporting this study's findings are available from the corresponding author, K.K., upon reasonable request.

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