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< EXPLORING THE BENEFITS OF ADOPTING ONLINE RECRUITMENT IN
FAVOUR OF THE USE OF AGENCIES AT HONEYTOPS >

By

<Date>

<Lecturer's Name and Course Number>

ABSTRACT

Recruitment is a fundamental task that all companies must carry out to source new employees particularly in case of inadequacy of human resource. Notably, the ultimate goal of every business manager is to ensure that the employees have the right skills and competence in accordance with the job demands. As such, the method of recruiting the workers should be considered properly to ensure that the process of sourcing the human resource is diligent, effective, and efficient. This study was conducted at Honeytop Speciality Foods Ltd in the United Kingdom. Honeytop is a company that supplies food products founded in 1984, and all over the years it has been committed to maintaining excellence, quality, and producing the most authentic naan, flatbreads, and tortilla. Currently, the company has not implemented an online recruitment system; instead, it still uses the traditional method of hiring recruitment agencies to supply the employees for the company. The main purpose of the study was to explore the advantages of adopting the contemporary online recruitment systems at Honeytop Company. The study was conducted by employing a mixed methodology, which combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches. A purposeful sampling was used to select 54 members in the management positions both at the company and recruitment agencies. Additionally, a random sampling was used to sample 162 employees, particular those with no leadership positions. The results showed that the UK has up to 42 million users of the mobile internet if not to mention the fixed ones. As such, the majority of the population uses the internet and can be better reached through the online channels. Markedly, online recruitment is cost-effective, faster, create a brand image, and enhance effective communication. In conclusion, Honeytop should shun the conventional recruitment process to adopt the internet mediated technique.

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background Study

The ultimate goal of every business manager is to ensure that the employees have the right skills and competence in accordance with the job demands. As such, the recruitment strategy should allow selection of the best candidate to avoid ineptness or spending too much resources and time in training and orientation of the new workers. The essence is that the human resource manager ought to select an approach that promotes efficiency in the choice of the candidate while at the same time considering factors such as the cost, convenience, time, and accessibility amongst others (Sylva and Mol 2009, p. 312). Markedly, this research is in support of online recruitments as opposed to the use of traditional methods such as hiring of recruitment agencies on behalf of a company. The research was conducted at Honeytop Speciality Foods Ltd, which is a company that supplies food products in the United Kingdom. Honeytop was founded in 1984 and all over the years has been committed to maintaining excellence, quality, and producing the most authentic flatbreads, naan, and tortilla (Central Foods 2016, p.1).

Despite the development in technology which has also been adopted in improving the quality and quantity of production at Honeytop, the company still lags behind by preferring to hire the recruitment agencies instead of using an online strategy. Notably, the company pays agencies such as The Gold team Recruitment to supply the employees on their behalf. It does not have an online platform to directly hire employees of their choice; instead, they depend on the agencies, which by themselves depend on face to face interaction with the potential employees. However, there is a prospect due to the advancement in telecommunication, which allow

development of electronic recruitment platforms including websites, social media, emails, and other internet-based means.

1.2. Problem Statement

Recruitment is a crucial role of the employers that should be done diligently and effectively without wastage of time and resources. The aim of hiring new employees is often to fill a gap in the human resource with the ambition of improving the quality and capacity of a particular company. An organization like Honeytop uses “Recruitment Agencies” to provide advisory services and extensive consultation to allow the proper hiring of new employees. While the methodology is working for the company, more can still be done particularly by embracing the new technologies that enhance the recruitment process. As Verhoeven and Williams (2008, p. 364) noted, everyone in this contemporary world is aware of internet particularly in a developed country like the United Kingdom. The author adds that the internet has enhanced the exchange of information because of the global connectivity and the multimedia provisions that it offers. Therefore, the traditional methods are not conforming to the current trend since they result in wastage of time, money, and have limited reach. In essence, the knowledge gap in this study was to explore the benefits of using online or electronic recruitment at Honeytop so as to improve efficiency and effectiveness of hiring new employees.

1.3. Research Questions

1. How can the internet change the efficiency of assessing and selecting new employees?
2. What are the drawbacks that Honeytop face in using the Recruitment Agencies to hire employees on their behalf?

3. How can the online platform be used in advertisement and posting job opportunities for potential recruits have access?

1.4.Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. Main Objective

To investigate the advantages of using online recruitment technique in hiring new employees at Honeytop as opposed to depending on the recruitment agencies

Specific Objective

1. To explore how the internet can change the efficiency of assessing and selecting new employees at Honeytop
2. To evaluate the setbacks of hiring recruitment agencies to supply employees on behalf of Honeytop
3. To examine how the online media can be used in advertisement and posting job vacancies at Honeytop

1.5.Rationale for the Study

The main aim of the study was to conduct a comparative analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of using e-recruitment or employing the recruitment agencies. All along Honeytop has been hiring the agencies to undertake the tasks; however, it was necessary to provide a new understanding of the outcomes of adopting the online recruitment process. The idea was to open a new avenue for the human resource management of the company to reevaluate the operation of recruitment and make a change based on an informed decision. Markedly, this study explored the possible positive outcome of e-recruitment by using the variables of time, cost, reach, flexibility,

and impacts on the business image. Undoubtedly, an effective and efficient recruitment process should be timely, cost-effective, have wide coverage, flexible, and create a brand image for a company. Therefore, this study was essential in conducting the comparison of the two recruitment processes with the purpose of informing the Honeytop managers and stakeholders including researchers, policymakers, and interested individuals about the efficient method of recruitment.

1.6. Research Structure

This paper is divided into five main sections which include the introduction, literature review, research method, results and discussions, and conclusion. The introduction provides the background, the purpose, and objectives to inform the audience of the essentialities of carrying out the study. Second, the literature review supports the study by systematically relating it to other works so as to measure the consistency and help in justifying the knowledge gap. Third, the methodology elaborates on how the study was conducted including the design, sampling, and data collection methods. Fourth, the result and discussion provide the findings of the study and relate it to the theories and known information to show the explicit meaning of the study. Lastly, the conclusion and recommendation wrap up the overall study by giving a critical overview of the whole paper and recommending other researchers on areas that still require more studies.

2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Internet usage in the United Kingdom

The UK is a developed country that has for long exhibited advancement and proliferation of computer and internet usage. It is explicit that the development in the telecommunication industry has encouraged the use of the internet as opposed to paperwork. Markedly, the total population owning or using computers and smartphones have increased remarkably. According to Baum and Kabst (2014, p. 354), the internet has changed the lives of the people of the UK as it enhances access to information anytime and anywhere. That means that the potential employees who often surf the internet can access and apply for the posted or advertised job vacancies. In fact, the young generation especially the youth who are the main target for many companies are fortunately the most users of the internet and take the longest time browsing. Evidently, the connectivity of the internet has been improved both in the urban and rural settings of the UK. As such, it has become indispensable for information, communication, entertainment, and commerce, which are all avenues through which job opportunities are advertised and posted.

According to Parry and Tyson (2008, p. 258), the internet traffic of the UK rose by 37% between 2010 and 2015. The growth has been majorly on the mobile internet due to the increase in ownership of smartphones and androids. Notably, recruitment process should always have a wide coverage so as to attract many potential employees from which the managers can make the best choice. Additionally, the emergence of the internet and telecommunication technology encourages implementation of electronic human resource management (e-HRM). The e-HRM is about automation of systems and development of a database because large volumes of information can be integrated and stored. As such, it is possible to use the internet to coordinate

all the activities in the recruitment process from requisition to selection, interview, verification, and negotiation.

2.2. Online Recruitment Verses Agency Recruitment

Parry and Tyson (2008, p. 258) admitted that recruitment process poses a serious challenge to the managers of organizations because it may be tedious, intricate, and time-consuming. As a result, many companies transfer the risk to the recruitment agencies, which are also purposeful, formed to make profits. Baum and Kabst (2014, p. 356) used a mixed method that integrated both quantitative and qualitative studies to obtain information on discrimination that happens during the recruitment process. The findings showed that the employment agencies often discriminate the applicants based on their payments as they are out to make money instead of selecting the best candidates for the companies. The authors also added that there are cases of discrimination based on gender, particularly when the agencies are headed by gender-chauvinist individuals.

Verhoeven and Williams (2008, p. 364) outlined the advantages of using internet recruitment as opposed to the conventional method, where the writers ascertained that it is more beneficial to use the online system as opposed to the recruitment agencies. Notably, the study that was mainly based on a detailed literature review showed that e-hiring has many advantages. For instance, it has a wide coverage given the proliferation of internet use in the UK. A wider geographical reach means that the experts can be sourced from different parts of the country including in other international country; thus, allowed a better choice from a range of many alternatives. The other benefit is an increased chance of getting the right person for the job. Baum and Kabst (2014, p. 355) admitted that it is quicker to advertise the job vacancies over the internet and can be accessed by the potential workers all around the clock. The timeliness is also

coupled with cost-effectiveness as the authors supplemented that it is relatively cheaper to post a job on the internet rather than the employment agencies.

The culture of the people of the UK also promotes the use of the internet as many are accustomed to receiving information via the multimedia platform offered by the online services. Markedly, there are a number of mechanisms for conveying and receiving messages and advertisement via the internet including but not limited to emails, social networks, instant messaging, and websites. Rakholiya and Gupta (2013, p. 50) noted that despite the widespread use of online recruitment method, some companies in the UK are still lagging behind perhaps because of mixed outcomes from using the method. The Authors used a longitudinal survey to investigate the impact of using corporate and commercial websites in the advertisement of job vacancies and conducting the recruitment. The article revealed that the internet has transformed the way people look for jobs and has gained prominence and preference as compared to the employment bureaus. Because of its effectiveness and efficiency, the internet is now used as the platform for identifying and attracting prospective recruits.

2.3. The Cost of Poor Recruitment

Poor recruitment in this sense means a process that is not effective and contributes to business losses rather than uplifting the operations and development of a company. For example, Honeytop is dedicated to offering quality products to the market and committed to creating a unique brand image particularly to overcome the pressures posed by the competitors. Therefore, the hiring of new employees should be modeled in a way that supports the economic growth of the firm. According to Wuttke (2009, p. 32) a poor selection and recruitment and selection process can result in both financial and non-financial losses, which ultimately affect the operations of a company and in worse case scenarios result in fall outs. The author used a survey design using

questionnaires and in-depth interview of three firms in the UK and 11 recruitment agencies to understand the real impacts of poor selection and recruitment. The findings showed that unorganized and not well-structured process of assessing and selecting employees can result in wastage of time, money, and other resources in an organization. Verhoeven and Williams (2008, p. 365) also added that poor selection can demoralize the current employees because they will be forced to mentor, orient, and train the new employees for long before attaining the expected standards. Such endeavours often involve dedication of a lot of time, effort, and money, which affects other employees assigned to help the recruits.

3.0. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

Markedly, this study employed a mixed research strategy that integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches so as to ensure a comprehensive and detailed collection and analysis of data. The qualitative study was very crucial because it allowed the researcher to conduct an in-depth understanding of the concepts and variables of the study. In a nutshell, the qualitative approach was about collection of the opinions and views of the research participants through asking them open-ended questions. Such questions allowed the participants to provide their subjective notions concerning the subject, which was particularly important for collecting a wide range of views. Additionally, the quantitative approach was necessary to provide a statistical perspective of the concepts and variables (Castro et al. 2010, p. 355). However, it is important to note that the study was majorly pegged on the qualitative study as it was necessary to provide an inductive outlook so as to ensure a better understanding of the concepts concerning recruitment of workers at Honeytop.

The research instruments used were mainly the questionnaires to collect data from the workers and junior members of Honeytop and the recruitment agencies. Additionally, in-depth interviews of focus groups were conducted to collect data from the managers of the company and the recruitment firm. The idea of the in-depth interview was to allow collection of a wide range of information from the members of the human resource manager and other leaders who were involved in the recruitment process. The views of the employees were also collected using the questionnaires which were administered to randomly selected workers. Markedly, the research adopted a cross-sectional study design; thus, allowed the researcher to collect information at a particular point in time without wastage of time and resources as it would be if a longitudinal

study design were used. Additionally, the information was recorded without manipulation and allowed comparison of the variables of recruitment at the single point in time.

3.1. Sampling Method

The study employed a simple random sampling to select the employees of Honeytop, who were given the questionnaires to fill. The random sampling was particularly used because it enhanced representativeness of the study sample, thus increasing the reliability of generalizing the research findings to the overall population. However, a purposeful sampling method was used in selecting the members of the human resource management and other managers meant to provide an expert opinion concerning the research topic. The idea was to ensure that the right key informants were selected to provide accurate and reliable information. According to Castro et al. (2010, p. 357), a purposeful sample allows selection of respondents with the required information because of their knowledge, experience, and understanding of the study subject. The sample size was 216 which included the employees and managers from Honeytop and some staff from the Gold Recruitment agencies.

3.2. Respondents Selection Criteria

Notably, there were specific principles and requisitions followed in the selection of the research participants to ensure that the selected persons provided the right information application to Honeytop. The criteria used considered the variables of age, residence, period of works, and understanding of the research requirement. As hinted, all the respondents must have had the following qualifications

1. Every eligible respondent must have been 18-year-old and above

2. The respondents must have been residing in the United Kingdom for at least the past two years
3. The participants must have worked for the company, Honeytop, for at least two years
4. The eligible respondents had to understand the recruitment system of Honeytop

3.3. Data Collection

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used in the study. First, the primary data collection entailed gathering of first-hand information from the sampled respondents through the survey method. The in-depth interview and administration of the questionnaires allowed the researcher to source information concerning the recruitment process of Honeytop and to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages from the findings. Notably, the primary data was crucial because it showed the originality of the study. Additionally, the research depended on secondary information collected mainly from articles and books. The systematic review of the selected literature assisted in the justification of the knowledge gap and measuring the consistency of the study to others.

3.4. Ethical Consideration

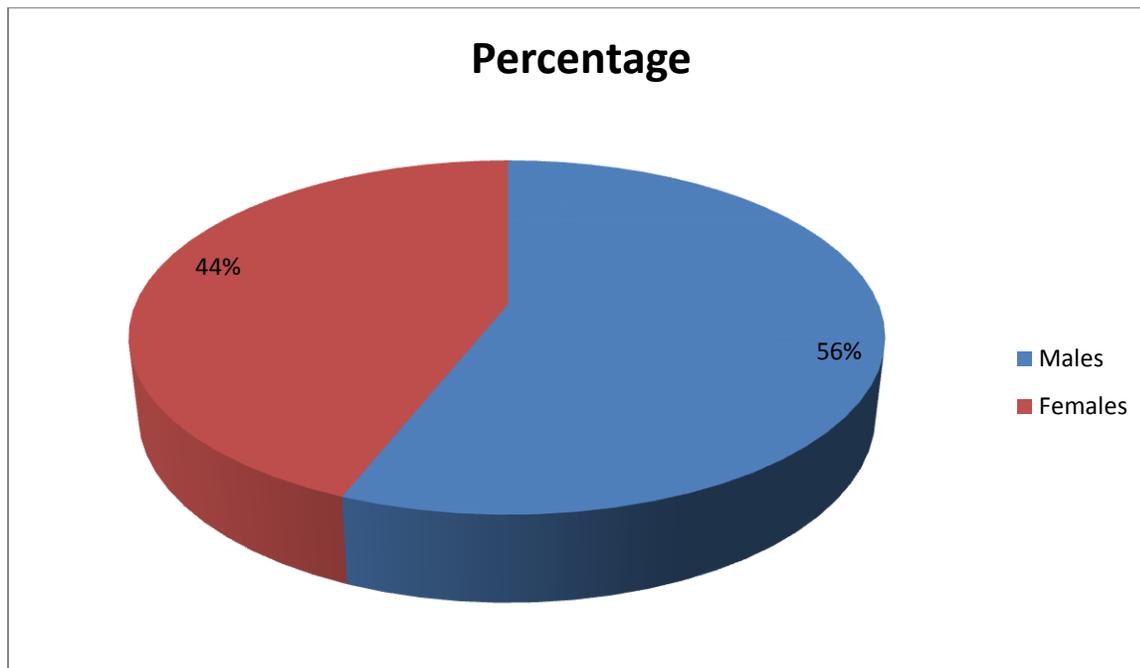
It was very necessary to consider both professional and ethical measures in the study for it to maintain the credibility and reliability. First, in the selection of the respondents, it was considered imperative to comply with the principles of confidentiality and autonomy. All the information received from the respondents was not disclosed to any other unconcerned party, but only for the research purpose. Additionally, the recruitment of the participants was based on informed consent as no respondents were coerced to participate in the study. That is, all the objectives and the purpose of the study were well explained to the eligible respondents including

communicating the expected risks and benefits. Again, in writing the report, it was considered necessary to acknowledge the works of other authors borrowed in the paper to avoid the professional offense called plagiarism.

4.0. RESULTS

4.1. Response Rate

Out of the 216 people 56% were men and the rest were female. The sampling that was conducted using random sampling of the employees produced 162 people and the others, 54, were chosen using a purposeful sampling. The figure 1 below shows the response rate and provides the difference between the male and female respondents. Averagely, the company employs close to 1000 people at a go particularly at the context of the study, which also means that the sample size was around 22% of the overall population of the study.



4.2. Mobile Internet Usage in the United Kingdom

From the qualitative study and the literature review, it was noted that the percentage of mobile internet usage has increased remarkably between 2013 and 2016. By 2013, about 33 million people in the UK owned and used the mobile internet particularly to surf, communicate, exchange information, and for entertainment purposes. The numbers have continued to increase successively since then and in 2016, more than 42 million people use mobile internet. The figure 2 below also shows the average hours spent by the internet user while surfing through the internet. It is notable that the majority of the people use their mobile internet at least once per day followed by those checking at least once a week and lastly once a month. The trend shows that the culture of the people of the UK is unique in a way that the majority frequently use the internet; thus, making it worthwhile to communicate to the job seekers through the internet platforms.

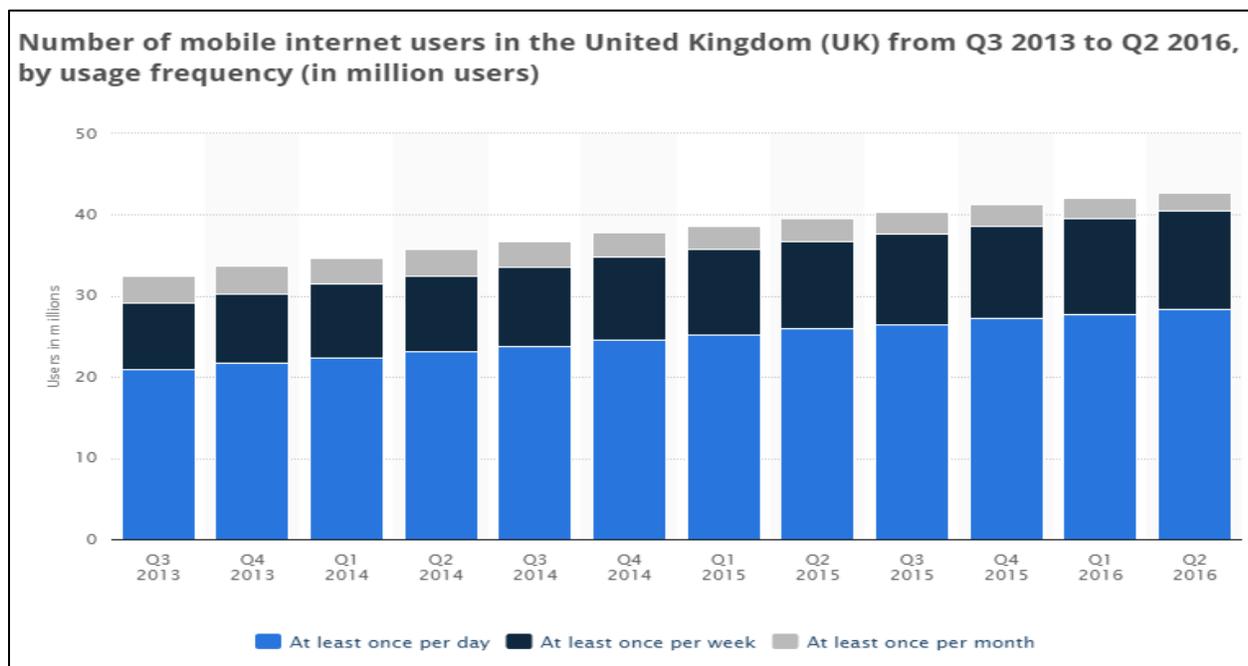


Figure 1: Growth of Mobile internet users in the UK

4.3. Candidate Attraction

Job seekers often look for different avenues to search and apply for the jobs. As such they are often in search of information and tips from various platforms. The respondents were asked to choose from a list of options including referrals, social media, local press and networking, corporate websites, job boards, and the recruitment agencies. As per the figure 3 below, 25% of the employees admitted that they would prefer getting the information from the corporate websites and 22% from the job boards. Only 17% agreed on the use of recruitment agencies, 14% would use the social media while only 5% admitted to consider the local press and the networking sites.

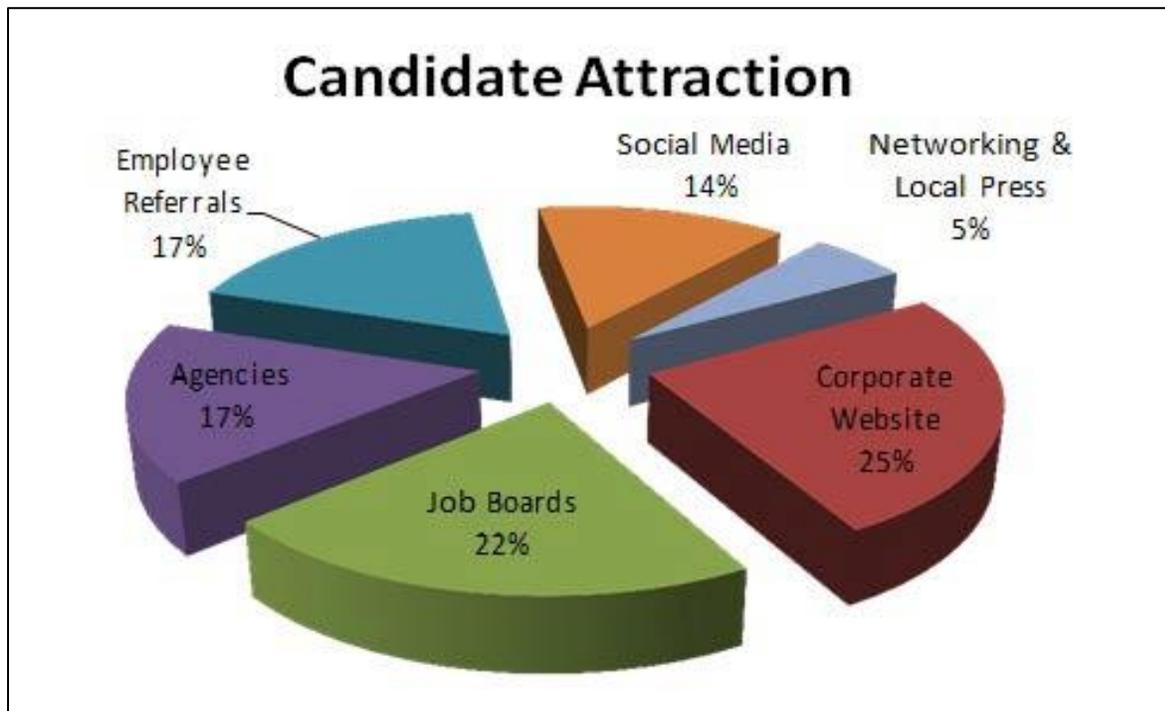


Figure 2: Communication avenues for job seekers

4.4. The Use of Online Recruitment

The managers and the employees admitted the internet offers an avenue for advertising and posting the job vacancies for the potential seekers. However, the respondents admitted that the advertisement has both advantages and challenges are highlighted in figure 4 below.

However, it is explicit that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages given that the communication and information exchange in the country is dominated by internet mediated systems. Markedly, the results in table 1 were also largely supported by the review of the literature and the information collected from the key informants, who were the members of the HRM and the managers of the recruitment agency.

Table 1: Evaluation of online job advertisement

| Advertising + / - | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Advantages | Disadvantages |
| Wide coverage | Often expensive |
| Control of message | Impersonal |
| Repetition means that the message can be communicated effectively | One way communication |
| Can be used to build brand loyalty | Lacks flexibility |
| | Limited ability to close a sale |

4.5. The Dimensions of Job Advertisement

Since the majority of the people do not prefer the use of the local entities or recruitment agencies because of their hidden motive of taking the job seekers' money, it was necessary to inquire of the other alternatives. The three main mechanisms of job enquiries used in the UK and even other countries that are often trusted include job sites, company websites, and internet banners. When asked their willingness to use the avenues, 65% of the respondents were willing to try the job sites, 20% internet banners, and 5% would use the company websites. Markedly, 10% also noted that they could use print and mail advertisement.

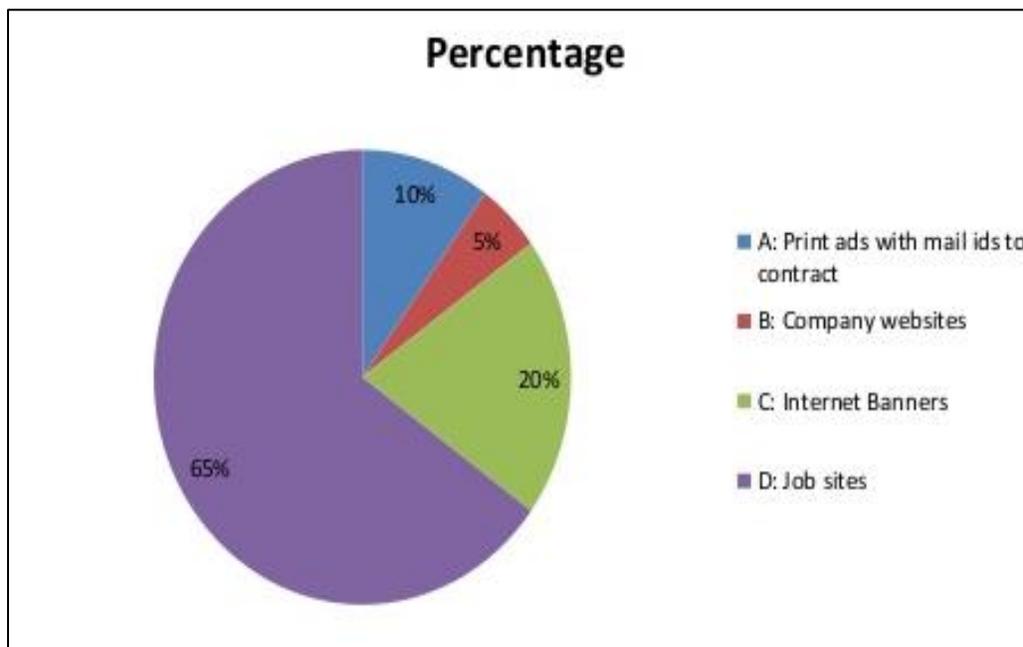


Figure 3: Dimensions of Job Advertisement

5.0.DISCUSSION

5.1.Internet Usage and Online Recruitment

The findings in figure 2 above showed the between 2013 and 2016 there has been a change in the number of mobile internet users from 33 to 42 million people. That is, the use of the mobile internet has increased by up to 27.3% in just 3 years. The point is that for the last 3 years there has been an average increase of internet usage of 9.1% annually, which shows that every year more and more people are seeking information and communicating over the internet. It, therefore, goes without saying that Honeytop should change its recruitment strategy with a purpose of adopting a new system that can reach many people. As Parry and Tyson (2008, p. 257) explained, choosing the right person for a new job vacancy require consideration of qualities of different people so as to select the best candidate out of the many options. Undeniably, there is a higher likelihood of getting an employee with the required skills and competence particularly if the search is broad-based. Additionally, as supported by Verhoeven and Williams (2008, p. 364), many citizens in the UK, especially the youths who are the most job seekers, spend a lot of time surfing the internet. Therefore, Honeytop should focus on exploiting the viable channel of recruiting the employees rather than depending on the recruitment agencies.

5.2.Challenges of the Recruitment Agencies

It is undeniably the recruitment agencies also offer crucial services to companies particularly because they offload the task and intricacies of looking for new employees. The appendix 2 shows the long process that is often followed while recruiting an employee through the employment bureaus. According to Rakholiya and Gupta (2013, p. 51), the agencies also

provide consultative and advisory services to the companies to which they are liable or with which they are in contract. With that, the employment bureaus often work incessantly hard to look for the employees and refer them to the companies. For instance, the Gold team Recruitment agency often goes an extra mile in sourcing and supplying the employees to Honeytop. However, the question is whether their services are satisfactory or efficient if not to mention coherence with the contemporary developments in technology.

Notably, the agencies still depend on physical contacts where the job seekers visit the bureaus, which in turn refer the person to the expected company. However, the services of the agencies only work well if the job seeker pays the fees or the charges. As such, there are cases of choosing the incompetent and unskilled persons provided that the agencies are liable for the charges paid. Honeytop is, therefore, likely to receive incompetent workers. The methodology is also more costly and takes a much longer time than when the company decides to recruit the employees using the efficient, cost-effective, and faster e-recruitment. Appendix I show the stages often followed during online recruitment which requires a much lesser time than the recruitment by the employment bureaus. Simeon (2011, p, 235) also noted that recruitment agencies have a limited coverage due to their market competition. They are so many and money-minded, and most of the job seekers are diverting from them. The doubt about using the agencies has also been enhanced by the growth of con agencies that trick desperate people looking for a job.

5.3. Advantages of Online Recruitment

As aforementioned, internet recruitment has many advantages that surpass the disadvantages and far much outdo the benefits of agency recruitment. First, online assessment and selection of the employees is much faster since the communication is quick and can be done

around the clock. Additionally, e-recruitment has a wider coverage; thus, the employees can be reached from long distances (Parry and Tyson 2008, p. 257). The quality helps in a situation where the company needs to hire many employees with the same or different skills or when it search for a particular expertise that could not be found within a shorter distance. The advertisement can also be done using the developed multimedia programmes provided over the internet, which appeals to many people, and enhance effective communication (Dhamija 2012, p. 30). More often, companies that have implemented the online recruitment programme also use the system to build a brand image, which is the ultimate goal of many managers.

6.0.CONCLUSION

The study was about exploring the benefits of online recruitment as compared to using the recruitments agencies. The context of the study was at Honeytop, a company in the UK that is dedicated to the maintenance of high-quality products and meets the desires of its consumers. As such, the company needs to hire very skilled and competent workers so as to improve the operational and production process. Notably, recruitment of new employees is mandatory for every organization that shows progress and development are the vacancies and limitation of the human resource has to be filled. However, the process is often challenging; hence, many companies including Honeytop divert the task to the recruitment agencies to do the task on their behalf. For example, the company hires the Gold Recruitment agency to supply the workers; however, there are setbacks explored in this study with regard to using the bureaus. The research was conducted using a mixed research methodology that combined both qualitative and quantitative data collection. The research instruments were questionnaires for the employees and interview for the managers of the company and the recruitment bureau. Notably, the results showed that it is high time Honeytop adopt the online recruitment system so as to improve efficiency and effectiveness. In essence, as compared to the recruitment agencies, the online system is cost-effective, faster, has a wider coverage, encourage effective communication, and helps in building the brand image of a company.

7.0.RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the exhaustiveness of this study, there are other research gaps that require future researchers to focus on. The research conducted a comparative analysis to evaluate the benefits and challenges of either using the online or the recruitment agencies. However, future studies should:

- Investigate the willingness of the job seekers to using the online services when searching for the job opportunities. Markedly, the internet has also been used as an avenue for conning innocent job seekers; thus, the studies should look into the considerations that those looking for job opportunities make before deciding on the channel to use.
- Examine the likely impact of the increase of the internet usage on selecting the right candidate as some job seekers take the advantage of the internet to apply for jobs that are beyond their competence and skills.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Online Recruitment process

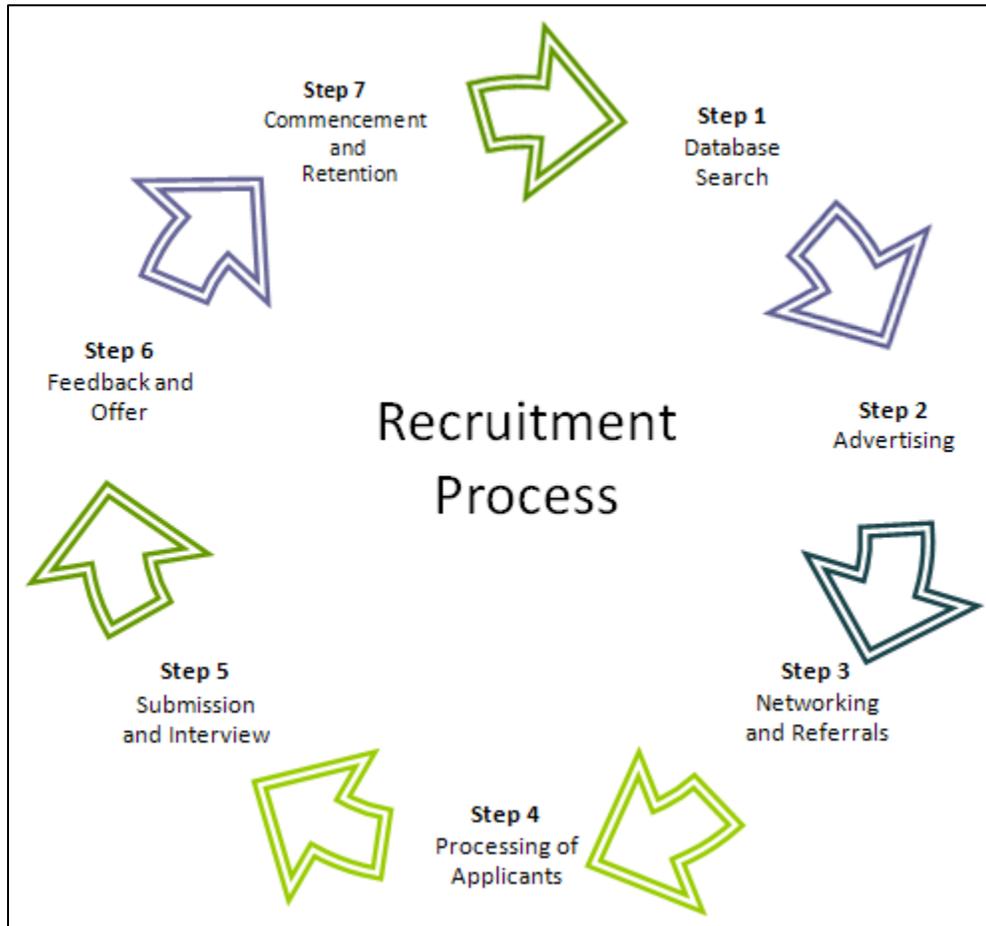


Figure 4: Online recruitment process

Appendix 2: Recruitment through the Recruitment Agencies

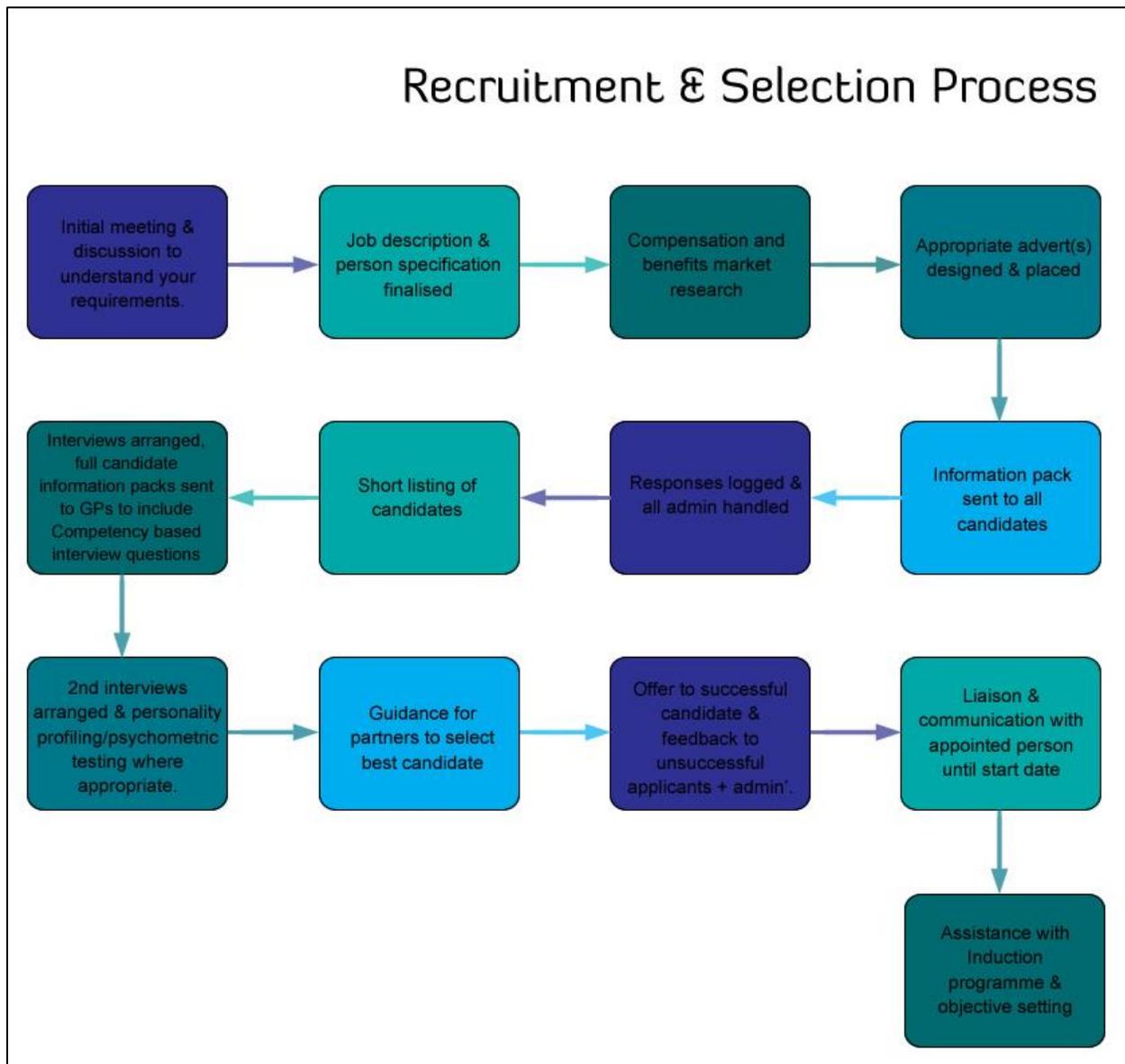


Figure 5: Recruitment through the Agencies