



ETHICAL ISSUES IN RECRUITMENT - ADDRESSING BIAS AND FAIRNESS IN HIRING

Jayashree R* & Harikrishnan S**

* Assistant Professor, Department of MBA, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science,
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

** Student, Department of MBA, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore,
Tamil Nadu, India

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Abstract:

The study "Ethical Issues in Recruitment - Addressing Bias and Fairness in Hiring" explores the ethical dimensions of recruitment practices, emphasizing the importance of fairness, transparency, and inclusivity in modern hiring systems. The research was conducted at Haqto Technologies Pvt. Ltd., an IT and software development company in Coimbatore, to analyse how ethical principles are applied during the recruitment process. The study highlights those biases both conscious and unconscious can influence hiring decisions, leading to discrimination based on gender, age, background, or appearance. Such unethical practices not only harm candidates but also affect organizational reputation, trust, and diversity.

The research adopts a descriptive and analytical design, utilizing both primary and secondary data collected through questionnaires and interviews from HR professionals and employees. Statistical analysis using SPSS was performed to examine perceptions regarding fairness, confidentiality, and transparency in recruitment. The findings reveal that while Haqto Technologies follows structured and fair hiring procedures, minor challenges such as unconscious bias, communication gaps, and limited diversity training persist. The study concludes that ethical recruitment is vital for building trust, improving employee satisfaction, and ensuring equal opportunities. It recommends implementing bias-awareness training, structured interviews, AI-supported fair screening, and clear communication policies to strengthen ethical hiring practices and promote a more inclusive workplace culture.

Key Words: Ethical Recruitment, Fairness, Bias, Transparency, Diversity, Human Resource Ethics, IT Industry

Introduction:

Recruitment plays a vital role in shaping the workforce and culture of any organization. Ethical recruitment ensures that every candidate is evaluated fairly, transparently, and based solely on merit. However, in many organizations, both conscious and unconscious biases can influence hiring decisions. Factors such as gender, age, background, or personal preferences may unintentionally affect judgment, leading to unfair exclusion of deserving candidates. Such unethical practices not only harm individuals but also damage an organization's credibility, diversity, and overall performance. With the rise of technology and AI-based recruitment systems, new ethical challenges such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and lack of transparency have also emerged, making ethical hiring practices more important than ever.

Ethical recruitment emphasizes fairness, integrity, and equal opportunity for all applicants. It involves honest job communication, unbiased evaluation, and respect for candidate confidentiality throughout the hiring process. Organizations that adopt ethical recruitment practices build stronger trust among employees, enhance diversity, and improve long-term retention. This study focuses on identifying the ethical issues faced during recruitment at Haqto Technologies Pvt. Ltd., Coimbatore, and examines how fairness and transparency can be strengthened in hiring practices. By understanding and addressing these challenges, organizations can create a more inclusive and trustworthy work environment that supports both ethical responsibility and sustainable growth.

Objectives:

- To identify ethical challenges in the recruitment process, such as bias, favouritism, discrimination, and lack of transparency.
- To analyse the recruitment practices followed at Haqto Technologies and assess their alignment with ethical standards.
- To evaluate the perceptions of candidates and employees regarding fairness, transparency, and ethical behaviour during recruitment.

Review of Literature:

- Afeen et al. (2025) emphasized that reducing bias in AI-driven hiring systems is not a onetime task but a continuous and collaborative process. They argued that effective bias mitigation requires constant monitoring and regular evaluation of the algorithms used in recruitment. This involves close cooperation between HR professionals, software developers, and ethics experts to ensure transparency and accountability in every stage of the AI lifecycle.
- Sheard (2025) pointed out that AI-based hiring systems can inadvertently disadvantage candidates who have strong accents, speech disabilities, or non-standard communication patterns. This occurs because many automated screening tools, particularly those using voice and speech analysis, are trained on datasets that fail to represent linguistic and speech diversity.

- As a result, speech recognition algorithms may misinterpret or undervalue such candidates' responses, leading to biased evaluations and reduced employability.
- Soleimani et al. (2025) found that bias can persist in AI hiring systems even when organizations deliberately attempt to design fair and equitable algorithms. Their research showed that biases may emerge at multiple stages of algorithm development, including data selection, model training, and parameter tuning. These biases often stem from underlying human assumptions, historical data imbalances, or the unintended influence of developers' design choices, which can influence how the algorithm interprets candidate attributes and makes predictions.
- ResearchGate (2025) emphasized that fair and ethical hiring practices play a crucial role in promoting organizational trust, legitimacy, and long-term sustainability. The platform's findings suggested that when companies integrate fairness and ethics into their recruitment strategies, they not only mitigate legal and reputational risks but also foster employee commitment and stakeholder confidence.

Analysis:

Chi-Square Test:

Income Distribution of Respondents:

Chi-Square Tests			
	Pearson Chi-Square	Likelihood Ratio	N of Valid Cases
Value	4.935 ^a	4.982	100
df	4	4	
Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	.294	.289	

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.64.

Interpretation:

The sample demonstrates a broad distribution across income bands, with the largest portion of respondents (30%) in the ₹10,000-₹25,000 bracket and a substantial segment (27%) in the ₹25,000-₹50,000 range. Notably, about 23% of participants report earning above ₹50,000, while 20% fall in the lowest income band (₹0-₹10,000), highlighting significant economic diversity within the group. With nearly 80% of respondents earning more than ₹10,000 per month, the data indicates that both mid-level and higher-earners are well represented, making the analysis relevant to compensation systems for these groups. This income spread suggests that the appraisal and compensation evaluation will capture perspectives and insights from contributors across the financial spectrum, adding credibility to findings about motivation, productivity, and reward systems. The presence of high-value contributors also ensures that evaluation results are influenced by individuals with substantial investment in organizational outcomes.

Respondents Based Income Bands and Employee Perceptions:

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.592 ^a	12	.211
Likelihood Ratio	16.783	12	.158
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 9 cells (45.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.64.

Statistical Decision:

p-value (Asymptotic Significance) = 0.211

Significance level (α) = 0.05 (commonly used threshold) Since the p-value (0.211) is greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the Null Hypothesis (H_0) There is no statistically significant association between the variables being tested. This suggests that the observed variables do not have a significant relationship, according to the data in this study.

ANOVA Test:

Relationship between Educational Qualification and Overall Satisfaction:

ANOVA					
Overall satisfaction (1-5)					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13.683	4	3.421	1.719	.152
Within Groups	189.067	95	1.990		
Total	202.750	99			

Interpretation:

Since the p-value (0.152) is greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference in mean satisfaction scores among the five groups. This means any observed differences in average satisfaction are likely due to random variation rather than true group differences. The overall satisfaction ratings across all compared groups are statistically similar. The grouping variable (such as department, qualification, or another category) does not have a meaningful impact on how satisfied respondents are, based on this data.

Relationship between Job Position and Fairness Ratings:

ANOVA					
Fairness rating (1-5)					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.478	3	1.826	.939	.425
Within Groups	186.712	96	1.945		
Total	192.190	99			

Interpretation:

Since the p-value (0.425) is much greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference in mean fairness ratings among the four groups. This means any differences observed are likely due to randomness rather than actual group differences. The fairness ratings (on a 1-5 scale) given by respondents across all groups compared are statistically similar. The grouping factor (e.g., department, qualification, other categories) does not significantly affect how fair respondents perceive the process to be.

Independent t Test:

Relationship between Overall Satisfaction Ratings and Gender:

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
		Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Overall satisfaction (1-5)	Equal variances assumed	.741	-.607	98	.545	-.175	.288	-.745	.396	
	Equal variances not assumed		-.606	95.783	.546	-.175	.288	-.747	.397	

Interpretation:

Since the p-values are much greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference in overall satisfaction scores between the two groups being compared. The observed mean difference (-0.175) is not significant and could easily occur by chance. Both groups have similar average satisfaction levels on the 1-5 scale. Any difference seen in their mean scores is likely due to random variability rather than a true difference in population means.

Relationship between Fairness Ratings and Gender:

Independent Samples Test						
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Fairness rating (1-5)	Equal variances assumed	6.119	.015	-1.113	98	.268
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.129	96.763	.262

t-test for Equality of Means				
Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			Lower	Upper
.268	-.310	.279	-.864	.243
.262	-.310	.275	-.856	.235

Interpretation:

Since the p-value (0.262) is greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference in fairness ratings between the two groups being compared. The observed mean difference (-.310) is not significant. The confidence interval for the difference includes zero, further confirming there is no meaningful difference. Both groups have similar fairness ratings (1-5 scale). Any difference observed in the mean values is likely due to random variation

Findings:

The study revealed that a majority of respondents perceived the presence of ethical challenges in the recruitment process, particularly in terms of bias, favouritism, and lack of transparency. Perceptions of fairness varied among respondents, indicating that recruitment practices were not experienced uniformly by all candidates and employees. While many respondents agreed that job roles and responsibilities were clearly explained during the hiring process, a significant proportion felt that overall recruitment

communication lacked sufficient clarity and transparency. The findings further indicated that respondents who perceived the recruitment process as fair and ethical reported higher levels of satisfaction, whereas those who perceived unethical practices expressed lower satisfaction. Additionally, unethical recruitment perceptions were found to negatively influence employee commitment and retention intentions. The study also showed that ethical and transparent recruitment practices play an important role in enhancing organizational trust and reputation, as most respondents believed that fair hiring practices positively impact the organization's credibility and long-term sustainability.

Suggestions:

To strengthen the fairness, transparency, and ethical integrity of the recruitment process, the organization should place greater emphasis on clear and open communication. By regularly informing candidates about the selection criteria, expected competencies, evaluation methods, and timelines for each stage of the recruitment process, the company can reduce uncertainty and eliminate perceptions of bias or confusion. Transparent communication not only builds trust but also encourages candidates to engage with the process more confidently.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that Haqto Technologies demonstrates a strong adherence to ethical, transparent, and merit-based recruitment practices. The statistical analysis indicates that demographic factors such as gender, qualification, income, or job level do not significantly influence employee perceptions of fairness or satisfaction within the recruitment process. This finding highlights the organization's commitment to equal opportunity and unbiased evaluation of candidates based purely on skills, experience, and performance. Haqto's recruitment framework emphasizes objectivity, integrity, and compliance with ethical human resource principles.

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