

**EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE
RECRUITMENT PROCESS: A CASE OF HOFOKAM MICRO FINANCE Ltd
HOIMA BRANCH**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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Declaration

I, Murungi Ritah Lilian, declare that this information is truly my effort. However, I give due respect and acknowledgment to the authors and presenters whose work I referred to, as identified in the references.

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Approval

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Date: *26/3/2024*

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, my father, Mr. Nyabwana Jude, my mother, Mrs. Kutusa Eva, my brothers, Simon, David, Lucian, and Martin, my sisters, Ritah, Laura, and Esther, plus friends and relatives.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor for her unwavering support, guidance, and valuable feedback throughout this research. Her expertise and encouragement were crucial in the successful completion of this study.

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ABBREVIATIONS.

ATS: Applicant Tracking System.

HR: Human Resource

HRIS: Human Resource Information System.

SHRM: Society for Human Resource Management.

ICT: Information and Communication Technology.

IT: Information Technology.

TAM: Technology Acceptance Model.

PEOU: Perceived Ease of Use

PU: Perceived Usefulness.

TRA: Theory of Resolved Action.

UMRA: Uganda Microfinance Regulatory Authority.

UNCDF: United Nations Capital Development Fund

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of information technology on recruitment efficiency with specific reference to Hofokam Microfinance Limited, Hoima Branch. The specific objectives of the research were to investigate the influence of e-recruitment platforms and digital applicant databases on recruitment efficiency with specific reference to Hofokam Microfinance Limited, Hoima Branch. The research was cross-sectional and employed both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The research was conducted among 45 respondents consisting of HR personnel, recruitment officers, and recent job applicants.

The Correlation Analysis revealed that Digital databases showed the strongest positive correlation with recruitment efficiency ($r=0.82, p<0.01$), E-recruitment platforms followed ($r=0.78, p<0.01$) and Social media also had a strong correlation ($r=0.74, p<0.01$). Regression Analysis results established that The three IT factors together explained 76% of the variance in recruitment efficiency ($R^2=0.76, F(3,41)=43.6, p<0.001$). Digital databases made the strongest unique contribution ($\beta=0.47, p<0.001$), E-recruitment platforms contributed significantly ($\beta=0.33, p=0.001$) and Social media also had a meaningful impact ($\beta=0.30, p<0.001$).

It was concluded that Information technology has a strong, positive, and significant influence on recruitment efficiency. Digital databases were identified as the most impactful tool.

The following Recommendations were made; strengthen digital infrastructure, Enhance database maintenance practices, Develop a clear social media policy and Provide digital literacy support for applicants.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Recruitment is widely recognized as a core human resource function because it shapes an organization's ability to attract and retain individuals with the skills and competencies required to meet both current operational demands and future strategic goals (Rana & Sharma, 2022). Traditionally, recruitment practices involved the use of manual and labor-intensive techniques such as newspaper advertisements, physical application forms, and interviews. Although such techniques were effective at the time, the use of IT has revolutionized recruitment practices, making them more organized, data-driven, and efficient for different organizations (Aithal & Aithal, 2016; Makhijani & Vohra, 2019).

The development of IT has enabled organizations to use different techniques such as the use of e-recruitment, applicant tracking systems, and human resource information systems, among others. These techniques assist organizations in the recruitment process, making the process more effective, efficient, and transparent, thereby providing the organization with the ability to manage the number of applicants, apply standardized recruitment criteria, and shorten the recruitment process, thereby improving the overall candidate experience. In addition, the use of IT-based recruitment techniques provides organizations with the opportunity to reach a broader talent pool, thereby increasing the possibility of finding the best candidates for the organization (Verma & Sinha, 2022).

In developing countries such as Uganda, the use of IT in the management of human resources is still inconsistent, although there is a gradual recognition of the potential advantages of using IT, especially in the financial sector of the economy (Mugisha & Nkamwesiga, 2021). In the case of microfinance institutions, which are often located in decentralized areas, the challenges of recruitment are likely to be unique, such as the limited availability of skilled labor. In such a situation, the strategic use of IT in the recruitment of employees is considered to be important, as it is likely to reduce the cost of recruitment, access qualified candidates, and facilitate timely recruitment decisions (Kavuma et al., 2019).

Hofokam Microfinance Ltd is one of the leading microfinance institutions in Uganda. The institution has made efforts to adopt the use of digital technologies in order to improve the delivery of its services. The institution primarily operates in the rural areas of Uganda,

covering over 25 districts in the Western Region. The Hoima Branch is one of the key branches of the institution. The region is characterized by rural and peri-urban dynamics. For the institution to sustain its operations, it requires employees who are trustworthy and talented. However, the rural labor market is characterized by difficulties in recruiting employees who meet the required standards; therefore, the institution requires effective recruitment strategies, which is a reason why IT recruitment tools are significant (Namutebi & Nankinga, 2019).

Despite this, empirical research on the impact of information technology on recruitment in microfinance institutions in Uganda remains limited. While previous studies have been general in nature, focusing on information technology adoption and HR performance in general, very few have focused on the recruitment function at the operational and branch levels (Okiria & Lubega, 2018). As a result, there remains a lack of understanding of how information technology tools have been received and utilized by HR practitioners in microfinance institutions in Uganda, including institutions like Hofokam and branches like Hoima. For instance, what remains to be seen is the level of information technology incorporation, its perceived usefulness, ease of use, and the challenges encountered in the process.

Therefore, with this background in mind, this particular study aims to explore and examine the influence of information technology on the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Limited, with specific reference to the Hoima Branch. This study aims to explore the manner in which information technologies have been utilized in the recruitment function at the microfinance institution in question and their overall influence on recruitment efficiency and effectiveness.

1.1 Background of the Study

Recruitment is one of the main activities of human resource management, and it plays an essential role in the ability of an organization to attract and retain the necessary talents, which are essential for the success of the business. Traditionally, the process of recruitment was done manually, whereby an organization advertised its vacancies in the media, and applicants came to present their applications. In addition, the process of recruitment involved interviewing the applicants. However, with the emergence of the rapid development of information technology, such as the development of various applications and programs, the

process of recruitment was transformed into an effective and data-based process (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016).

The development of information technology has revolutionized the process of recruitment, whereby various aspects of the process, such as advertising of vacancies, screening of applicants, and interviewing of applicants, are done electronically. This has helped organizations reach a wider population, which is useful in the success of the business, compared to the traditional process, which was conducted through manual means.

Information technology has significantly impacted and changed the recruitment process by automating and digitizing different stages of recruitment. The use of various recruitment platforms, applicant tracking systems, and social media has enabled organizations to reach a wide number of potential candidates and has resulted in better recruitment outcomes (Meijerink et al., 2020). Information technology has not only impacted and changed the recruitment process in terms of its effectiveness but has also provided organizations with valuable insights in terms of data analytics (Marler & Boudreau, 2017).

Information technology in recruitment is increasingly being applied in developing countries such as Uganda, and financial institutions are making efforts to increase their use of IT in order to enhance their overall business efficiency. Microfinance institutions face a number of challenges in recruitment due to their requirement of efficient and reliable employees. Information technology has been considered an essential tool in recruitment by various microfinance institutions. One of the leading microfinance institutions in Uganda is Hofokam Microfinance Ltd. The company has acknowledged and recognized the importance of using information technology in order to enhance its recruitment process. The company's Hoima branch is located in western Uganda and operates in a competitive and dynamic labor market. However, there is a lack of empirical studies on the impact of the use of such technologies during the recruitment process in microfinance institutions, especially at the branch level.

Thus, the aim of the research is to investigate the impact of the use of information technology during the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd - Hoima Branch. It is possible to acquire additional knowledge on the impact and usefulness of the use of information technology during the recruitment process in the Ugandan microfinance industry.

1.2.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Hofokam Microfinance Ltd was established in the year 2003 through a merger of three diocesan microfinance programmes that were operational in the Catholic Dioceses of Hoima, Fort Portal, and Kasese. In the initial stages of development, Hofokam was a donor-funded project that received financial and technical support from various donors, such as the Catholic Relief Services, Trocaire, the European Union, USAID, and Mercy Works. For a period of eight years, from 2003 to 2011, Hofokam was a company limited by guarantee. In the year 2012, Hofokam changed to a company limited by shares, as registered by the Registrar of Companies under registration number 59088. This change marked a new milestone in the development of Hofokam, becoming a regulated non-deposit-taking microfinance institution that is subject to annual licensing by the Uganda Microfinance Regulatory Authority.

By the year 2024, Hofokam had grown to cover a wide geographical area in western Uganda, with nine physical branches and thirteen field offices spread out to serve more than 25 districts. These branches are located in Fort Portal, Bundibugyo, Kasese, Hoima, Masindi, Kagadi, Bwera, Kyenjojo, and Kamwenge, among others.

One of the major regulatory milestones that have been achieved for microfinance institutions in Uganda is the passing of the Tier 4 Microfinance Institutions and Money Lenders Act in May 2016. This act came into effect on 1st July 2017. This act saw the formation of the Uganda Microfinance Regulatory Authority (UMRA), which is responsible for the licensing, regulating, and supervising of non-bank financial institutions, money lenders, and savings cooperatives. The formation of this authority is based on the principles of transparency, consumer protection, good governance, and financial inclusion. For Hofokam, this means that the institution has to comply with a number of aspects in the process of obtaining its annual license from the regulatory body. These aspects include human resource management.

Even before Hofokam could come up with a concrete digitization strategy, the institution had already adopted information and communication technology (ICT) in its efforts to improve its operations. One of the major partners that Hofokam has in this regard is Banking and Risk Solutions (BRS), which has been partnering with Hofokam in the implementation of ICT in the institution since at least 2009. BRS has been helping Hofokam improve product development, risk management, and connectivity between branches.

However, by 2023-2024, Hofokam began to recognize the importance of integrating digital tools in a more systematic manner. This was in line with the Ugandan government's initiative to launch the National Digital Transformation Roadmap (FY2023/24-2027/28), which aims to improve the country's broadband coverage, enhance household penetration, and facilitate the widespread adoption of digital services. In this context, Hofokam published a Request for Proposal (RFP) in 2024 to formulate a comprehensive digitization plan. The plan focuses on analyzing the current operational processes, assessing the technological infrastructure, pointing out the gaps, recommending suitable digital tools, and developing a step-by-step implementation plan. This is the first time that Hofokam has moved towards a digital transformation strategy, which has far-reaching implications for all core business functions, including human resource management and recruitment.

While it is difficult to ascertain the recruitment methods used in each of the branches through publicly available documents, it is noticeable that over time, there is a shift from completely manual recruitment to a more hybrid or partially digital recruitment strategy, as evidenced by the increasing use of electronic submission of applications in job postings, often through email, and the use of digital formats such as PDFs. There is also a noticeable trend in more recent job postings that places emphasis on digital or ICT skills, thereby emphasizing the importance of digital literacy in the candidate pool of employees.

1.2.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Recruitment, being a key component of human resource management, entails the identification, acquisition, and recruitment of human resources for the organization to fill existing gaps. In recent years, the development of information technology (IT) has profoundly impacted the recruitment process, including the use of electronic recruitment tools, Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS), and online recruitment portals, which have transformed the recruitment process for different industries (Gilsdorf, 2016; Singh & Finn, 2021).

In order to facilitate this, the study makes use of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This model was initially conceptualized by Fred Davis. However, the model has evolved over the years and is considered one of the most popular models to understand the acceptance of technology by individuals. As such, the model is based on two constructs: Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). Perceived usefulness is the extent to

which an individual perceives that using a particular system will help them to better perform their jobs, while perceived ease of use is the extent to which an individual perceives that using a particular system is effortless to use (Marangunić & Granić, 2017; Rana et al., 2017).

With regard to the recruitment context, the TAM model is applicable in determining the level of acceptance by the human resource personnel at Hofokam with regard to the usage of IT recruitment tools. For example, if the human resource personnel perceive the usefulness of the usage of a database for storing applications received through the internet, then they would be more likely to adopt the usage of the internet for recruitment

Also, the ease of usage of the internet for recruitment is considered a factor with regard to the adoption levels of the internet for recruitment. For example, if the internet is considered easy to use and does not require any technical knowledge on the part of the human resource personnel at Hofokam, then the usage levels would be higher (Dwivedi et al., 2019). Perceived usefulness with regard to the recruitment context may include the screening of resumes received through the internet at a faster pace and the ease of accessing the internet for the recruitment process.

These factors are particularly relevant to institutions like Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, particularly at the branch level. For this reason, the effectiveness of IT-based recruitment depends on whether the systems adopted are intuitive and locally relevant. In situations where technologies adopted are overly sophisticated and do not relate well to the operational environment, the effectiveness of the technologies may be limited, even with their demonstrated benefits (Wamba-Taguimdje et al., 2020). Further, the model continues to find support in various studies in validating its applicability in situations of human resource management. For example, Nguyen et al. (2021) have demonstrated through their findings that "perceived usefulness is a more important predictor than perceived ease of use for HRIS adoption." However, other studies have pointed to the importance of other factors, such as system compatibility and job relevance, in determining the effectiveness of the system. While some have argued that the model may have limitations in fully capturing the essence of technology adoption, this may have been a result of the relative lack of attention to the role of organizations in the model.

1.2.3 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Hofokam Microfinance Ltd is one of the leading microfinance institutions in Uganda. It was formed in 2003 through the merger of diocesan microfinance initiatives. Later, in 2012, the institution was formalized to become a limited company. The main aim of the microfinance institution is to enhance the livelihood of rural and underserved populations. Currently, Hofokam operates in over 25 districts in the Western part of Uganda. Notably, the role of the Hoima Branch of Hofokam is significant in providing loans and training to the population. Since Hofokam is a non-deposit-taking microfinance institution and is supervised by the Uganda Microfinance Regulatory Authority (UMRA), its main aim is to enhance financial inclusion and social empowerment (Namutebi & Nankinga, 2019).

In response to the increasing need to promote efficiency and strategic growth, Hofokam has continued to leverage information technology to support its business processes, including recruitment. For example, the institution has a strategic direction that incorporates innovation, customer convenience, and expeditious service delivery. As such, information technology, and more so in the context of human resource management, has become a focal point of strategic direction, particularly in the context of talent acquisition and retention (Adewale & Oladele, 2021).

In the global context, information technology has revolutionized the recruitment function of various firms through the use of information technology-based recruitment, which incorporates the use of e-recruitment, applicant tracking systems, and other related approaches. These approaches have helped firms to promote efficiency in the recruitment function, reduce the duration of recruitment, and promote the accuracy of the recruitment function. For microfinance institutions such as Hofokam, which are often spread out and operate in geographically dispersed regions such as Hoima, information technology-based recruitment is advantageous in that it allows qualified candidates to participate in the recruitment processes irrespective of their geographical location.

Despite the benefits, there are some challenges associated with the use of digital recruitment. These include the possibility of algorithms being biased, the lack of personal interactions, and the exclusion of individuals who are not technologically savvy. Therefore, the use of IT recruitment can be seen to align with the efficiency and innovation vision of Hofokam, but the use of IT recruitment needs to be implemented carefully to ensure that the benefits of fair

and inclusive recruitment are not lost. In the context of the use of IT recruitment, the importance of the impact of microfinance institutions on developing countries, such as Uganda, needs to be examined. In the context of the use of IT recruitment, the impact of IT use in recruitment processes at the Hofokam Hoima Branch can offer insights on the benefits and challenges of IT use in recruitment processes.

1.3 Problem Statement

Information Technology (IT), for example, has been changing the way recruitment is done by speeding up the process and improving accuracy and accessibility through the use of applicant tracking systems and social media sites (Kumar & Mishra, 2020; Rana et al., 2017). In Uganda, microfinance institutions like Hofokam Microfinance Ltd are slowly adopting Information Technology and other innovations to improve their human resource management and enhance their competitiveness in the labor market.

Despite the advantages of Information Technology in improving the outcomes of the recruitment and selection process, there has been a disconnect between the expected advantages and their implications for both organizations and potential candidates. For example, microfinance institutions like Hofokam Microfinance Ltd are faced with the dilemma of adopting Information Technology to enhance their competitiveness and the lack of appropriate institutional frameworks to support the adoption and implementation of Information Technology innovations. This has created a situation of concern over the unintended consequences of the adoption of Information Technology.

For instance, IT tools such as applicant tracking systems and social networking sites have gained popularity due to their effectiveness in reducing time-to-hire, administrative costs, and increasing access to talent pools (SHRM, 2020; Bogen, 2018). However, new evidence suggests that artificial intelligence-driven applicant screening tools have the potential to perpetuate existing biases against female and ethnic groups (Dastin, 2022). Moreover, over-reliance on recruitment automation tools such as video interviews and limited personalized communication has been linked to higher candidate frustration (Charlie, 2022). Although short-term biases have been documented, the long-term effects of such biases, especially in relation to workforce diversity, remain unknown.

At Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, recruitment challenges have been a significant hindrance at the Hoima Branch, despite the gradual adoption of digitalized recruitment strategies. Some of the challenges include inefficiencies in the recruitment process, which result in time spent in the hiring process, and limited access to talent pools of qualified candidates. Moreover, there is a scarcity of empirical studies on the effects of information technology on recruitment in the microfinance industry of Uganda. Most of the literature reviewed was based on the effects of information technology on recruitment in general, with limited focus on human resource performance and no specific focus on the microfinance institutions of Uganda (Mugisha & Nkamwesiga, 2021; Verma & Sinha, 2022). Therefore, there was limited literature on the effects of specific information technologies on the recruitment efficiency and effectiveness of microfinance institutions in Uganda.

This study was aimed at evaluating the effects of information technologies, such as e-recruitment tools, online applicants' databases, and social media sites, on the recruitment process of Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of information technology on the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, with a specific focus on the Hoima and Kagadi branches.

1.4 General Objective

To examine the influence of information technology on the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the effect of e-recruitment platforms on the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch.
2. To evaluate the impact of digital applicant databases on recruitment efficiency at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch.
3. To determine how social media and online networks influence candidate sourcing and selection at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch.

1.6 Research Questions

1. How do e-recruitment platforms affect the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch?

2. What is the impact of digital applicant databases on recruitment efficiency at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch?
3. How does the use of social media platforms influence candidate sourcing and selection at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch?

1.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

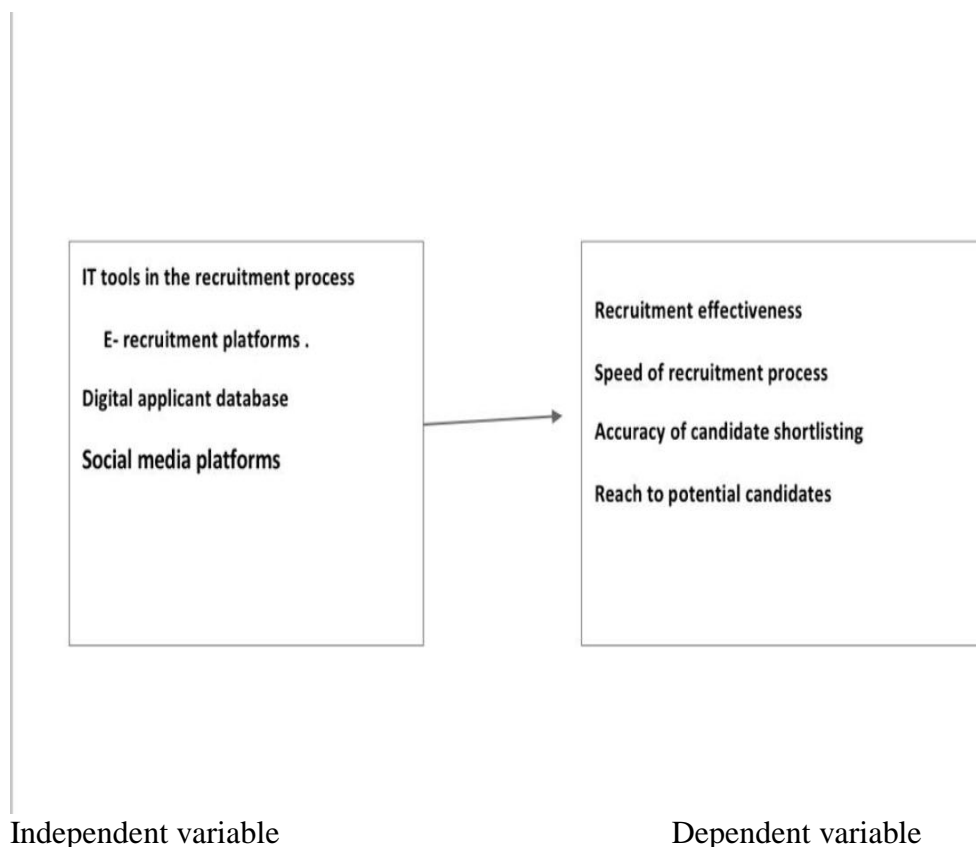


Figure 1: conceptual framework

According to Holm (2012), e-recruitment is the utilization of digital tools and/or platforms to support and/or enhance recruitment activities and/or procedures. In this context, the tools refer to the information technology-based tools utilized to enhance recruitment procedures and/or activities. The tools include the e-recruitment tools utilized for advertising job vacancies, job advertisements created online through the organizational website and/or job advertising websites, and the online application tools utilized by the applicants to upload the curriculum vitae and/or other relevant documents online.

Further, the tools may include the communication tools such as confirmation emails and/or automatic updates on the applications submitted to the organization. Such tools enhance the communication between the organization and the applicants. Additionally, the tools may include the digital database of the applicants utilized to enhance the recording and/or retrieval of applicants for the recruitment procedures. The tools may include the search and/or filtering tools utilized by the human resource personnel to select the applicants based on the qualifications and/or skills possessed by the applicants. Additionally, the tools may include the ability to retrieve information on the previously screened applicants for utilization during the recruitment procedures.

1.8 Justification of the study

For organizations such as microfinance institutions in Uganda, there is a growing need to increase efficiency, transparency, and expediency in human resource management. For instance, conventional recruitment strategies such as the use of print media, face-to-face paper applications, and paper-based shortlisting have been found to be inefficient. However, with the advent of technology, digital recruitment tools, and online application systems, organizations can leverage the potential to increase efficiency in human resource management. Digital human resource practices such as online recruitment, email applications, and the use of applicant tracking systems enable organizations to manage a large number of applications with accuracy while communicating with potential candidates through electronic confirmatory messages.

In the case of Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, particularly in the branches like Hoima and Kagadi, understanding the importance of IT in the recruitment process has strategic implications. The organization has already initiated the process of digital transformation, which includes digitization strategies and office connectivity. Understanding the recruitment processes, analyzing the underutilization of IT tools, and understanding the challenges of infrastructure, IT literacy, and cost factors can provide insights. This can enable Hofokam to formulate strategic plans to become competitive, to reduce recruitment costs, to increase fairness and equity in the recruitment process, and to ensure that the recruitment process aligns with the organization's needs and the regulatory environment. This research is valid in the sense that it attempts to fill the knowledge gap and understand the operational and technological gaps with the aim of maximizing the benefits of IT in the recruitment process for the organization and the job seekers.

1.10 Scope of the Study

1.10.1 Geographical Scope

The geographical scope of this research was limited to Hoima District and, more specifically, to the Hoima Branch of Hofokam Microfinance Ltd. This was based on the assumption that this geographical scope is representative of a rural area in Uganda and that the use of Information Technology tools in this area may differ from that in other areas or in the central offices of microfinance organizations.

1.10.2 Content Scope

The content scope of this research focused solely on the impact of IT on recruitment processes and activities, including job advertisements, recruitment sourcing, application tracking, and applicant communication. Other HR activities, such as training, performance management, and payroll administration, will be excluded from this research. The research will also look into HR staff benefits and challenges of IT use in recruitment processes.

1.10.3 Time Scope

The study was based on the time scope from 2025 to 2026, which enables the study to capture the recent trends in the use of IT in recruitment and how the recruitment process in Hofokam's Hoima Branch has evolved in recent times.

1.11 Operational Definitions

Information Technology (IT): Refers to the use and adoption of information technology in the Human Resource Information System (HRIS) in the recruitment process. Examples of these technologies include the use of Applicant Tracking System (ATS), online job posting and sourcing, candidate communication and engagement, and the use of analytics and reporting.

Recruitment: Refers to the overall process involved in the identification, attraction, and selection of qualified and suitable candidates to fill the organization's existing or anticipated gaps.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.1. Introduction

The chapter examines appropriate theoretical frameworks, in particular the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), to shed light on the determinants of user acceptance of IT in recruitment. Lastly, the chapter points out the gaps in empirical studies in the Ugandan microfinance industry and the need for context-specific research to evaluate the actual effect of IT on recruitment outcomes.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This research is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which is one of the most popular models used to explain how users accept and adopt new technology, including e-recruitment systems. The model was first developed by Fred Davis in 1989 and is based on social psychological theories, specifically the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA).

The TAM model argues that two constructs, Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), are the fundamental factors that influence users' attitudes toward adopting technology. Perceived usefulness is the degree to which a system improves users' performance at work, while perceived ease of use is the degree to which a system is free from effort. When users believe that a technology is useful and easy to use, they are more likely to adopt it.

Recent research studies conducted in Uganda and other developing countries have applied the TAM model to digital recruitment systems. The results revealed that HR practitioners and individuals seeking jobs are more likely to adopt the e-recruitment technology if the benefits are evident, such as the efficiency of the process, ease of shortlisting, and the ability to submit applications, along with the ease of using the technology, such as the user interface of the system (Namatovu & Muyinda, 2021; Okello & Ayebazibwe, 2023).

TAM also indicates the likely challenges that might come about. For example, the perceived technological difficulties, such as the unreliability of the internet, the digital skills of the individuals, or the ease of using the technology, might limit the effectiveness of the IT technology in the recruitment process (Kizza et al., 2022).

The application of TAM in the case of Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, specifically the Hoima Branch, offers an insightful perspective on the levels of adoption of the digital recruitment technology. It is apparent that the effectiveness of the IT technology in the recruitment process at the branch level is subject to the infrastructural, HR, and digital skills of the individuals. Hence, TAM not only offers insights into the adoption of the digital recruitment technology, but it also indicates the limitations of the technology.

2.3 Conceptual Review

2.3.1 E-recruitment platforms

An e-recruitment system is a system that makes use of the internet as a tool to enable organizations to advertise job vacancies, as well as obtain electronic applications for the positions advertised. The use of e-recruitment systems in Uganda is becoming more visible. For example, the Education Service Commission adopted an e-recruitment system in the country in a bid to eliminate the use of paper in the recruitment process. The aim of adopting the e-recruitment system was to accelerate the recruitment process in the country, as well as curb the use of fraudulent activities in the recruitment process (UN Capital Development Fund [UNCDF], 2023). E-recruitment systems enable organizations to reach potential candidates who are not in the organization's geographical location. However, the efficiency of the e-recruitment system in Uganda is somehow being hampered by the lack of appropriate ICT infrastructure in the country. For example, the use of old computer equipment in some districts in the country might affect the efficiency of the e-recruitment system in the country (Monitor, 2021). Therefore, the efficiency of the e-recruitment system in institutions such as Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch, highly depends on the ICT skills of both the HR personnel in the organization.

2.3.2 Digital applicant databases

Digital applicant databases are electronic systems that serve as repositories where all the details of the applicants, including their CVs, interview results, and test results, are stored. Digital applicant databases have advanced search and retrieval systems that enable HR managers to track the applicants effectively and make the right recruitment decisions.

Although the use of digital applicant databases is not as widely documented in Uganda as it is in other e-recruitment platforms, the public sector recruitment platforms are increasingly incorporating the principles of digital applicant management to enable faster applicant tracking, eliminate paperwork, and promote transparency (UN Capital Development Fund [UNCDF], 2023). Research conducted in the NGO sector in Uganda also shows that digital management of applicants enhances the reliability and efficiency of recruitment (Muhwezi, 2021).

The effectiveness of digital applicant databases, however, depends on the quality of the underlying infrastructure and the HR staff's ability to use the technology. In most districts, the lack of internet connectivity and power irregularities has been cited as a major cause of delays and challenges in effectively utilizing digital applicant databases (Monitor, 2021).

2.3.3 Social media and online professional networks

Social media platforms and professional online networks have become essential recruitment and selection channels across the globe, including Uganda. Social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp allow for the quick posting of job vacancies, employer branding, and interaction with both active and passive job seekers (Kawuma, 2022). Studies on micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in Uganda show that the adoption and readiness of social media have a positive impact on the growth of organizations, though technical skills limitations, high internet costs, and limited device access may limit its effectiveness (Kawuma, 2022). Likewise, the Education Service Commission's e-recruitment project bridged the digital skills gap of applicants by establishing "digital hubs" to assist candidates in less-advantaged areas (UNCDF, 2023). These observations indicate that social media is an important recruitment tool but is limited by infrastructure and capacity constraints.

Social media recruitment, although beneficial, has its own set of limitations, including digital inequality, privacy issues, potential bias, and issues of candidate information accuracy. Inequality in access to electricity, internet, and technology may exclude candidates from rural

and disadvantaged communities from participating in social media recruitment (Monitor, 2021)

2.4 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.4.1 Impact of Information Technology on Recruitment Efficiency and Speed

E- recruitment platforms have been recognized to have greatly enhanced the efficiency of recruitment through the automation of recruitment processes such as advertising of jobs, candidate screening, and scheduling of interviews, thereby reducing the time to hire and administrative costs (Upwork, 2022). Bissola and Imperatori (2019) argued that e recruitment platforms have simplified workflow processes and allowed HR personnel to access a larger number of candidates within a shorter period of time, thereby recruiting candidates faster and better. Empirical studies in developing countries have validated the assertions made regarding the benefits of using e recruitment platforms. For example, Mtebe and Raisamo (2018) found in their study in Tanzanian public sector organizations that over 80% of HR managers agreed that the use of e recruitment platforms helped in faster and accurate candidate screening.

Likewise, Mehta and Mehta (2020) found that with the use of automation in recruitment through online recruitment platforms, it is possible to reduce the average recruitment time by as much as 50% in small and medium-scale enterprises in India.

Enhancing Transparency and Candidate Satisfaction:

Apart from expediting the recruitment process, online recruitment platforms have also been found to be useful in enhancing transparency and candidate satisfaction. It has been found that online recruitment platforms can increase transparency in the recruitment process through real-time application tracking, formal communication, and frequent status updates. This increases trust in the recruitment process (Kashi & Zheng, 2018). It has also been found that online recruitment platforms have a positive impact on the candidate's experience as well as the employer brand of the organization (Ismail & Gani, 2021). This has been found to be true in the context of the study carried out by Setiawan & Prabowo (2022) in Indonesia. It has been found that online recruitment platforms increase the credibility of the organization, especially for tech-savvy job seekers, which is a reflection of the digital maturity and transparency of the organization.

The filtering process can be used to effectively manage the large number of job applicants received by the organization. The recruitment software can also assist in the automatic ranking of the filtered candidates based on the filters set. This process can assist in eliminating the risk of human error and personal biases in the initial stages of the recruitment process (Wamba-Taguimdje et al., 2020). In addition, the use of online recruitment software was found to result in a reduction of 30-40% in the overall cost of recruitment by firms. The cost reduction was mainly due to the reduction in the use of print media advertising and the manual process of filtering candidates (Mehta & Mehta, 2020). Furthermore, the use of the recruitment software can assist in analyzing data in real-time. The data can be used to assess the efficiency of the recruitment sources used by the organization. The recruitment process can also be improved by targeting the job in the advertisements placed in the media (Upwork, 2022; Wamba-Taguimdje et al., 2020).

.According to Sánchez-Monedero et al. (2020), the application of AI technology in the recruitment process enables the removal of biases through the anonymization of CVs, the application of a standardized score system, and merit-based selection, thus increasing the degree of objectivity in the recruitment process. However, the application of such technology needs to be monitored to avoid the perpetuation of biases embedded in the training data used for such technology.

Despite the advantages of using e-recruitment platforms, several issues have been associated with the application of such platforms in the recruitment process. Lack of transparency in the application of such technology has been cited as a factor that creates doubts in the minds of both job seekers and HR personnel (Papageorgiou et al., 2022). In countries such as Uganda, factors such as lack of internet connectivity, lack of digital literacy, and resistance to change in organizations could potentially act as barriers to the effective application of e-recruitment platforms (Mugisha & Nkamwesiga, 2021).

Applicant Tracking System enables the automation of various processes within the recruitment process, such as resume screening, keyword filtering, and scheduling interviews. This, in turn, has reduced the workload associated with the recruitment process. According to Select Software Reviews (2023), Applicant Tracking System enables organizations to reduce the time required in the recruitment process by 60%, with 86% of the recruiters using the system stating that it has enhanced the speed of the recruitment process. Additionally,

Oorwin (2023) indicates that the Applicant Tracking System enables the filtering and parsing of resumes, which can reduce the time required in the recruitment process by as much as 75%. Applicant Tracking System also enables the improvement of teamwork within the recruitment process, especially through the integration of communication tools. This has been effective in increasing the productivity of teams by 50%, coupled with the reduction of delays in the scheduling of interviews by 40% (Moldstud, 2023a).

Recruitment systems also come with analytics tools that allow for real-time tracking of recruitment metrics such as time-to-fill, source effectiveness, and candidate engagement. According to Moldstud (2023b), organizations that utilize such data-driven recruitment insights have realized a 20% increase in the efficiency of their recruitment process in terms of both speed and accuracy. The mobile-friendly interfaces enable efficiency in processing through the promotion of candidate engagement, especially for younger generations who are more tech-savvy (Moldstud, 2023c). Therefore, with regards to Hofokam Microfinance Ltd's Hoima Branch, which operates in a rural environment characterized by a competitive recruitment market, the use of such recruitment tools would be instrumental in minimizing recruitment delays.

2.4.2 The Impact of Digital Applicant Databases on Recruitment Efficiency

Digital applicant databases, which are sometimes incorporated into Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) and other recruitment management software, have greatly improved the efficiency of the hiring process across various sectors by automating and organizing candidate management. These systems allow human resource departments to efficiently store, manage, and retrieve applicant information quickly, thus cutting down on the administrative burden and streamlining decision-making (Al-Qudah, Osman, & Al-Qudah, 2022). In microfinance institutions like Hofokam, which cover several rural areas with a small human resource staff, such software would be highly beneficial for optimizing coordination and maintaining organized recruitment processes.

The first benefit of digital databases is their capacity to improve the efficiency of the hiring process by shortening the time-to-hire. According to Mehta and Mehta (2020), Indian firms employing digital tracking systems were able to cut down their hiring time by as much as 40%. This is made possible by automated resume screening, keyword searching, and

communication systems that enable recruitment teams to efficiently shortlist candidates, communicate, and conduct interviews. These features eliminate the need for human intervention and minimize errors in the early stages of the hiring process.

In addition, digital databases improve the scope and transparency of the recruitment process. This is because the data on applicants is stored systematically, which ensures all applicants are assessed uniformly. Furthermore, the data can be used to generate reports, which, according to Rana, Pant, and Chopra (2017), not only makes the process faster but also ensures that the process is compliant with the regulations, either for internal checks or external checks.

Lastly, the analytics from the applicant databases are useful to the HR manager in making strategic decisions. For example, data on the success of the source of applicants, the dropout rate, and the time spent in the process are useful in making decisions to improve the recruitment process, as noted by Yaseen, Dajani, and Hasan (2021). In organizations such as Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, where the branches are independent, such data is useful to the recruitment teams in the respective branches.

In addition, automated filters may end up filtering out qualified applicants, especially those whose resumes are in unconventional formats (Verma & Sinha, 2022).

The success of this system in developing countries depends on the organization's and users' readiness, according to Belete (2018). It is essential to train HR managers on how to use the database system efficiently in order to enjoy its benefits of efficiency. Another challenge is security and privacy, especially in a financial services organization, where applicant information is sensitive in nature.

2.4.3 Influence of Social Media and Online Networks on Candidate Sourcing and Selection

This is because social media is one of the most effective recruitment strategies that have come to be used widely by different organizations to enhance the quality of the recruitment and selection process. For example, through the use of social media such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, the scope of the recruitment pool is widened while at the same time enhancing the employer's brand. According to Nikolaou (2021), the use of social media in the recruitment process not only widens the scope but also helps the recruiter to conduct targeted searches.

The use of online networks in the recruitment process helps to ease the process while at the same time reducing the need to use conventional methods such as job advertisements. For example, the recruiter is in a position to conduct active searches for the right candidates through the use of social media sites such as Twitter, social networks, and even talent communities (Manu & Akotia, 2018). This is particularly important for microfinance institutions such as the Hoima Branch in semi-urban or rural areas.

Social media can also facilitate the process of pre-screening. The screening of the candidates by the recruiters based on the social media activities, professional connections, and the posting done by the candidates is quite common. A study conducted by Rani and Reddy (2020) revealed that more than 70% of the HR managers screen the social media profiles to ensure the competency and appropriateness of the candidates before shortlisting them. Although it helps in avoiding mistakes and ensuring the accuracy of the selection, it can also be considered from the perspective of ethics and unconscious bias.

Another significant advantage is the interactive feature of social media, which helps in the two-way communication between the recruiters and the candidates. The organization can respond to the queries, share the details about the company culture, and perform the screening, which can be beneficial for the candidate experience and the overall process (Yaseen et al., 2021). The recommendations and the endorsements provided in the social media sites, such as LinkedIn, can be helpful in validating the candidate, especially in the trust-sensitive roles, which can be commonly found in the microfinance industry.

2.5 Summary of the Literature Review

This literature review combines the existing literature on the effects of information technology (IT) in recruitment, specifically on the use of e-recruitment systems, online applicant databases, and social media. It will examine both international best practices and local realities in developing countries, specifically focusing on the challenges and opportunities in the microfinance industry in Uganda.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology used to investigate the impact of Information Technology (IT) on the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch. This chapter highlights the research design, population, sampling methods, data collection tools, and procedures for data collection and analysis. This chapter also highlights the level of measurement, ensuring the quality of data, and the ethical considerations. These research methodologies were selected to ensure that the study yields valid, reliable, and objective results that are relevant to the research objectives and research questions.

3.2 Research Design

The research will employ a mixed-methods design, which involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the impact of IT on the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch. The use of a mixed-methods design will allow the researcher to gather numeric data for statistical analysis while also gathering rich qualitative data on the experiences and perceptions of the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Quantitative Component:The research will employ a cross-sectional study design to gather data from the respondents at a single point in time. This will enable the researcher to evaluate the current state of IT adoption in the recruitment process and determine the relationship between IT tools and the efficiency of the recruitment process (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

Qualitative Component: The research will employ a phenomenological study design to gain insight into the experiences of the HR staff and job seekers on the use of IT in the recruitment process. The phenomenological study design will enable the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, challenges, and perceptions of the benefits associated with the use of IT in the recruitment process (Moustakas, 2017).

3.3 Study Population

The study population included all the individuals who are involved in the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch, and these include: Human resource officers. Recruitment managers and Job applicants who have interacted with the recruitment process within the last 12 months

The total population is estimated to be about 100 people. Both recruiters and applicants are included to provide different viewpoints on how IT tools influence the recruitment process, thereby improving the validity and comprehensiveness of the study results (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2018).

3.4 Sample Size and Selection

With the relatively small population size, the research will adopt the following sampling approach:

Quantitative Survey: A sample of 30 participants will be chosen to provide adequate representation and power (Taherdoost, 2017). This is approximately 80% of the total population, which is a fair and acceptable percentage in organizational research (Kumar, 2019).

The formula for calculating the sample size is shown below:

$$N = \frac{n}{p} = \frac{30}{0.80} = 37.5$$

Rounding off to the nearest whole number, the total population (N) is 38, from which 30 participants will be selected to represent at least 80% of the total population.

Qualitative Interviews: A small purposive sample of 10-15 participants (including HR managers and selected applicants) will be chosen for in-depth interviews. This sample size is sufficient for data saturation, where no new information is gained from further interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2016). The qualitative interviews will supplement the survey data by offering in-depth contextual information, especially with respect to the use of IT tools and software in the recruitment process.

3.5 Sampling Technique:

The quantitative sample was selected using simple random sampling, which is a probability sampling technique that gives all individuals in the population an equal chance of being selected (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). This approach to sampling is ideal for this study because of the well-defined and manageable population size, as well as the availability of a list of all individuals involved in recruitment processes at Hofokam Hoima Branch. Purposive sampling will be used to select participants for the qualitative interviews who have direct experience with IT-enabled recruitment processes, allowing for the collection of rich and relevant information (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling is ideal for this study because it allows for the collection of information that is relevant to the study.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

A combination of several methods such as semi-structured interviews, self-administered questionnaires, document analysis, and focus group discussions was employed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. This is in line with the mixed-methods approach of the proposed study and helps to ensure methodological triangulation, which enhances the validity, reliability, and depth of the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Bowen, 2019).

3.6.1 Interviews

In this research, the semi-structured interview method was employed as a major tool for collecting data from the selected participants, especially the HR personnel and some of the applicants who had directly used the IT recruitment systems in their application processes in Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch. This was done to allow the researcher to gain insights into the experiences, perceptions, and challenges that the participants face in using technology in their recruitment processes (Moustakas, 2017). The interviews were semi-structured, which gave a level of consistency but also gave the participants the flexibility to express themselves.

3.6.2 Document Review

Furthermore, in this research, the document review method was employed as a tool to support the data collected using the interview and questionnaire methods in understanding the use of technology in recruitment processes in the organization under study. The internal documents used in the document review method included recruitment reports, IT policy documents,

recruitment ads, and reports from the systems used in recruitment processes, to identify the use of technology in recruitment processes in the organization.

3.6.3 Group Discussions

In addition to interviewing individuals, the research employed the use of FGDs to elicit group opinions and encourage mutual interaction in the sharing of ideas on the application of IT in the recruitment process. FGDs are extremely useful in exploring collective experiences, social processes, and convergent or divergent opinions on crucial issues (Krueger & Casey, 2018).

3.6.4 Questionnaires.

A questionnaire is a structured data collection method that entails the administration of a series of standardized questions to a group of respondents, which enables the researcher to generalize the findings to the wider population. It often entails closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions, such as Likert scales or multiple-choice questions, are useful in the collection of quantitative data.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

These tools included the interview guide, the document checklist, and the FGD guide. These tools were aimed at collecting different types of information on the subject matter of the research. This was mainly influenced by the purpose of the research and the literature on the application of information technology in recruitment.

3.7.1 Interview Guide

The interview guide was developed as a semi-structured tool aimed at conducting in-depth interviews with the HR personnel and the chosen applicants at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch. It was developed as a guide with questions on the subject matter, including the application of IT in the recruitment process, the efficiency of the system, the experience of the applicants, and the challenges associated with the process.

3.7.2 Document Checklist

The document checklist was a systematic approach that was adopted in the evaluation of the internal organizational documents regarding the implementation of IT-based recruitment systems. The organizational documents that were considered in this study were electronic recruitment advertisements, recruitment reports, shortlisting records developed through IT systems, IT policy manuals, and recruitment software audit trails. The document checklist was adopted to ensure that there was consistency in the organizational documents that were

evaluated and the aspects that were considered in the evaluation process, such as completeness, update levels, and compliance with IT protocols (Bowen, 2019). The document analysis also helped in verifying the self-reported data collected from interview and questionnaire respondents through comparison with the actual organizational practices, ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings (Flick, 2020). The document checklist was very useful in identifying the gap between the organizational policies and the implementation of IT systems in the branch organization.

3.7.3 Focus Group Discussion Guide

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide is a semi-structured instrument which is expected to facilitate interactive discussions among HR professionals and job seekers regarding the application of IT in the recruitment process. FGD guides comprise a list of thematic questions focused on key areas. These key areas include the accessibility of IT, equity, recruitment time, and user-friendliness. This instrument is expected to ensure the exploration of all key areas, providing the participants the freedom to discuss whatever they wish and allowing them the liberty to share group thoughts (Krueger & Casey, 2018). FGD guides facilitate a participatory method which allows the expression of differing opinions to be shared, developed, and discussed. Well-structured FGDs, as proposed by Guest, Namey, and McKenna (2017), are capable of identifying group norms, perceptions, and differences. This is not possible through individual interviews.

3.7.4 Questionnaires.

The questionnaire is a structured approach to data collection that uses a set of standardized questions to collect data from respondents in a quantitative manner. According to Oppenheim (1992), the questionnaire is not simply a set of questions; rather, it is "a carefully designed instrument of measurement and data gathering that ensures reliability and validity." A questionnaire usually includes a set of predominantly closed-ended questions, such as multiple-choice questions or a scale, to collect quantitative data in a standardized manner that can be compared systematically and statistically (Bell & Waters, 2018). A good questionnaire also includes open-ended questions to add qualitative dimensions to the research.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Validity, which relates to the accuracy of this research study in measuring what it is meant to measure, was established in this research study by employing content validation and subjecting this research questionnaire to a pilot test among a sample of respondents similar in characteristics to those of the targeted population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Taherdoost, 2018). This approach ensured that this research questionnaire was free from cultural biases and that respondents were able to understand and relate well with this research questionnaire. Reliability, which relates to the stability of this research

questionnaire over a period of time, was established in this research study by employing standardized approaches in collecting research data and ensuring that research assistants were well trained in using structured research questionnaires in collecting research data.

3.9 Data Sources

The research relied on both primary and secondary sources of information in order to have a well-rounded view of the effects of Information Technology in the recruitment process in Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch. The primary sources of information were obtained directly from the respondents, including HR officers, recruitment officers, and applicants, using questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions.

3.10 Data collection procedure

The researcher requested an introduction letter (Appendix IV) from the Department of Human Resource Management in Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, which was then used to obtain an approval letter (Appendix V) from the Head of Human Resource in the organization. This approval letter was then circulated to different departments within the organization, such as the HR department, recruitment department, and IT department, to obtain preliminary information regarding the extent to which information technology was used in the recruitment process. On the scheduled date, the researcher was able to meet with the department heads, the recruitment manager, and the IT coordinator to gain access to the identified respondents in the organization, such as the recruiters, the hiring managers, and the IT administrators.

3.11 Data processing, presentation, and analysis.

3.11.1 Data Processing

The accuracy and completeness of the quantitative data collected through the use of questionnaires were verified, and then the data was analyzed using SPSS software. In this context, the double data entry method was used to identify any inaccuracies and rectify them to obtain high-quality data. Similarly, the accuracy of the qualitative data collected through interviews and focus group discussions was ensured, and then the data was analyzed using manual coding and Vivo software. In this context, the transcription of the collected data was carried out by listening to the data to ensure accuracy.

The findings obtained through the document analysis process were compiled in matrix format to identify the key information related to the use of IT in the recruitment process. In this context, standardized naming conventions, data logs, and storage were used to ensure the

consistency, security, and accessibility of the collected data. This ensured that the collected data was accurate, reliable, valid, and ready for analysis with a small amount of error.

3.11.2 Data Presentation

The information provided in the research study is quantitative and qualitative in a way that is compatible with a mixed research methodology. Quantitative information is presented in a concise format using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, and is also represented in a visually presentable format using tables, pie charts, and diagrams for better understanding and comparison of variables such as the use of IT tools and the efficiency of the recruitment process.

The qualitative information is represented in a thematic manner, and quotes are provided from interviews and focus group discussions, enabling the voices of research participants to emerge (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, information obtained from document analysis is represented in the form of quotes for a better perspective.

Additionally, the information obtained from the analysis of the documents is used in the form of narrative or quotes to provide further perspectives. The application of different forms of presenting the information helps in enhancing the understanding of the results of the research, providing a complete understanding of the impact of IT on the recruitment process (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

3.11.3 Data Analysis

The strategy employed in the data analysis involved the use of both descriptive and inferential statistics in the analysis of the quantitative data, as well as the use of thematic analysis in the analysis of the qualitative data, as was proposed in the mixed-methods design of the research. In the analysis of the quantitative data using the SPSS software, descriptive statistics were used in the provision of an overview of the main variables in the research, while inferential statistics in the form of correlation and regression analysis were used in testing the relationship that exists between IT adoption and the efficiency of recruitment (Kumar, 2019; Taherdoost, 2018). In the analysis of the qualitative data that was obtained from the interviews and focus group discussions with the employees in the organization, the data was transcribed line by line, where recurring patterns were used in the formation of themes using the thematic analysis techniques as proposed by Braun & Clarke (2021).

3.12 Ethical Considerations

The ethical clearance was a confirmation that the research met the principles of beneficence, justice, and respect for persons, as required by current standards of research ethics (Resnik, 2020; Saunders et al., 2019).

Informed Consent: Prior to participation, all respondents were given comprehensive informed consent forms that included the purpose, procedures, expected duration, potential risks and benefits, and the rights of the respondents as participants. The consent was sought voluntarily, with the respondents given ample time to read the forms, ask questions, and withdraw from the study at any point without penalty (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2019). Written consent was mainly used, with alternative forms available to suit participants who may have literacy challenges.

Confidentiality and privacy; to ensure confidentiality and privacy of the participants, the study adhered to rigorous data management practices. Personal identifiers were deleted or coded with new identifiers during the data entry process, and electronic files were stored on password-protected devices that could only be accessed by the research team. Hard copies of the data were stored in a locked cabinet. The participants' identities were not disclosed in the final report or in any publications, and any information that could potentially disclose their identities, which was discussed during the interviews, was anonymized (Saunders et al., 2019).

Anonymity; Anonymity was maintained by assigning the participants unique identification numbers or pseudonyms, so no responses could be traced back to the participants. Personal identifiers like names, employee numbers, or any other identifier was not used in the data analysis and reporting. The quotes used in the final report, which were from the qualitative data, were coded with generic job titles like "HR Officer 1" or "Applicant A" to prevent re-identification (Bryman, 2021).

Voluntariness; The participation in the study was completely voluntary, and there was no coercion, undue influence, or incentive offered to influence the decision. The participants were clearly informed of their right to refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences (Resnik, 2020). The voluntariness of

participation was particularly emphasized in the workplace setting where the participants may have felt compelled to participate.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION in

4.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights the results of the data collected to investigate the impact of Information Technology (IT) on the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch.

The results of the data analysis are presented in the following manner: response rate, background characteristics of the respondents, inferential statistics, and qualitative findings.

4.1 Response Rate

Questionnaires were distributed to 50 respondents (30 HR/recruitment staff and 20 recent job applicants involved in the recruitment process over the last 12 months). A total of 45 fully completed questionnaires were returned, yielding a 90% response rate.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Instrument	Targeted	Achieved	Response Rate
Questionnaires	50	45	90%
Semi-structured Interviews	15	13	87%
Focus Group Discussions	2 groups (12 participants)	2 groups (11 participants)	92%

Source: primary data 2025

This section details the success of the data collection process. The researchers targeted a total of 50 respondents for the questionnaire, consisting of 30 HR or recruitment staff and 20 recent job applicants. They successfully received 45 fully completed and usable questionnaires back. This results in a response rate of 90%, which is exceptionally high for survey-based research. The table further breaks down the response rates for the qualitative

components of the study. For the semi-structured interviews, 13 out of a targeted 15 individuals participated, yielding an 87% response rate. For the focus group discussions, two groups with a total of 11 participants were achieved out of a targeted 12, representing a 92% response rate. These high response rates across all data collection methods enhance the credibility and representativeness of the findings.

4.2 Background Information from the Respondents

Table 4.2.1: Gender (N=45)

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Female	27	60.0	60.0	60.0
Male	18	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data 2025

Under the demographic category of **Gender**, the study had more female respondents (27, 60.0%) compared to male respondents (18, 40.0%). This gender distribution suggests that the recruitment and HR functions at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd may be predominantly staffed by females, or that female respondents were more willing to participate in the study. The relatively balanced representation of both genders nonetheless ensures that the findings reflect perspectives from both male and female stakeholders in the recruitment process.

4.2.2 ; Age

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 20-30	21	46.7	46.7	46.7
31-40	18	40.0	40.0	86.7
41-50	4	8.9	8.9	95.6
51+	2	4.4	4.4	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data 2025

Regarding **Age**, the majority of respondents were in the 20-30 years bracket (21, 46.7%), followed by those aged 31-40 years (18, 40.0%). This implies that over 86% of the respondents were below the age of 40, indicating a relatively young workforce. This youthful demographic is significant because younger workers are typically more familiar with and adaptable to information technology, which may influence their perceptions of IT tools in

recruitment. The remaining respondents were in the categories of 41-50 years (4, 8.9%) and 51 years and above (2, 4.4%), providing some representation from more experienced workers.

4.2.3 Education level

Education	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Bachelor's	31	68.9	68.9	68.9
Diploma	8	17.8	17.8	86.7
Master's	6	13.3	13.3	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data 2025

In terms of **Highest Education Level**, the majority held a Bachelor's degree (31, 68.9%). The remaining respondents had a Diploma (8, 17.8%) or a Master's degree (6, 13.3%). This highly educated sample is appropriate for a study on technology in recruitment, as educated individuals are more likely to have encountered and formed opinions about various recruitment methods, both as applicants and as HR professionals. The presence of Master's degree holders also adds depth to the qualitative insights, as these individuals may have more strategic perspectives on recruitment processes.

4.2.4 Experience

Experience	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid <1 year	9	20.0	20.0	20.0
1-3 years	14	31.1	31.1	51.1
4-6 years	12	26.7	26.7	77.8
7+ years	10	22.2	22.2	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data 2025

The data on **Years of Experience** in HR/Recruitment shows a fairly distributed range across all categories. The largest group had 1–3 years of experience (14, 31.1%), followed by those with 4–6 years (12, 26.7%), 7 years and above (10, 22.2%), and less than 1 year (9, 20.0%). This distribution is beneficial for the study as it captures perspectives from newcomers who may be more familiar with modern technology-based recruitment, as well as experienced

professionals who can compare technology-enhanced processes with traditional methods. The presence of respondents with over seven years of experience (22.2%) is particularly valuable, as they can provide historical context on how technology has transformed recruitment over time

4.2.5 Role

Role	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Applicant	20	44.4	44.4	44.4
HR Staff	25	55.6	55.6	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data 2025

Finally, the **Role/Position** of the respondents confirms the study's target groups: 25 were HR or Recruitment Staff (55.6%) and 20 were Job Applicants (44.4%). This balanced representation from both sides of the recruitment process is a significant strength of the study. HR staff provide insights into the operational and organizational aspects of technology use in recruitment, while job applicants offer perspectives on their experiences with the application process, including ease of use, communication effectiveness, and overall satisfaction. The combination of these perspectives ensures a comprehensive understanding of how IT impacts the recruitment process from multiple stakeholder viewpoints.

4.3 KEY STUDY FINDINGS

These linear relationships were calculated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients to establish the strength and direction of its relationship. r (Pearson correlation coefficient) takes the value between -1 and +1, where the value of r closer to +1 is an indication of a strong positive relationship, the value of r closer to -1 is an indication of a strong negative relationship and the value of r closer to zero means no linear relationship. The correlation results are as below based on each research objective.

4.3.1 Correlation between E-Recruitment Platforms and Recruitment Process Efficiency

Table 4.4: Correlations for Objective 1

	E-Recruitment Platforms	Recruitment Process Efficiency	
E-Recruitment Platforms	Pearson Correlation	1	.845**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	45	45
Recruitment Process Efficiency	Pearson Correlation	.845**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	45	45
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: primary data 2025

The correlation findings of the first objective that aimed at testing the effects of e-recruitment sites on the recruitment process in Hofokam Microfinance Ltd are presented in Table 4.4. Pearson correlation analysis showed a very strong, positive and statistically significant correlation between E-Recruitment Platforms and Recruitment Process Efficiency where a correlation coefficient, $r = .845$ ($n=45$, $p=.001$). This result shows that the higher the e-recruitment platforms are used and effective, the higher are the perceived efficiency in the recruitment process.

The fact that the correlation is positive implies that the higher the scores regarding the use of e-recruitment platforms, the higher the scores regarding recruitment efficiency. Practically speaking, the better organizations are at utilizing online job postings, keeping vacancy advertisements posted on their official websites, and asking candidates to submit their applications electronically, the more efficient the recruitment process will be in that organization. Logically, such a relationship is intuitive, with e-recruitment platforms

simplifying the initial steps of the recruitment process, since it allows spreading the information about vacancies quickly and collects applicants in large numbers.

4.3. 2: Correlation between Digital Applicant Databases and Recruitment Process Efficiency

Table 4.5: Correlations for Objective 2

	Digital Applicant Databases	Recruitment Process Efficiency	
Digital Applicant Databases	Pearson Correlation	1	.906**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	45	45
Recruitment Process Efficiency	Pearson Correlation	.906**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	45	45
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: primary data 2025

The correlation findings of the second objective of the study that sought to establish the influence of digital applicant databases on the simplification of the recruiting process are shown in Table 4.5. Pearson correlation revealed an immensely strong, positive, and significant correlation between Digital Applicant Databases and Recruitment Process Efficiency, where the correlation coefficient of $r = .906$ ($n = 45$, $p < .001$) was found. This is the highest correlation of all the three IT factors considered during the study.

The value of the coefficient is 0.906 which denotes a close to perfect positive correlation that the utilization and functionality of digital databases or Applicant Tracking System (ATS) are highly associated with increased recruitment efficiency. This is an interesting discovery given that it comes close to the theoretical maximum of 1.0. Practically, this translates to organizations that utilize electronically the digital databases to store candidate information so that applicants can be readily searched and filtered, previous applicants can be readily

accessed and levels of efficiency in recruiting applicants are significantly higher when compared to organizations that do not.

4.3. 3: Correlation between Social Media and Candidate Sourcing and Recruitment Process Efficiency

Table 4.6: Correlations for Objective 3

	Social Media and Candidate Sourcing	Recruitment Process Efficiency	
Social Media and Candidate Sourcing	Pearson Correlation	1	.878**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	45	45
Recruitment Process Efficiency	Pearson Correlation	.878**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	45	45
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: primary data 2025

The correlation results of the third objective that aimed to determine the impact of social media and online networks on sourcing and selection of the candidates are shown in Table 4.6. The Pearson correlation analysis showed that there was a very strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between the use of Social Media and Recruitment Process Efficiency with the correlation coefficient of $r = .878$ ($n=45$, $p<.001$). Although this value is a bit smaller than the correlation of digital databases, it is still within the very strong range and shows that organizations recruiting active users of social media platforms, have more efficient recruitment procedures.

The r-squared of this equation is $= 0.8782 = 0.771$ which implies that this relationship can be explained by the use of Social Media alone by about 77.1 percent. This remains a very high percentage signifying that social media is a very potent predictor of the effectiveness of the recruitment as well. The value of the correlation is statistically significant at $p <.001$ giving a good evidence that the correlation is an actual one and that it is not caused by chance.

This robust quantitative observation is well-grounded on the qualitative themes identified in the study. As an example, the qualitative theme of Geographic Reach and Applicant Pool directly reflects upon this correlation as shown by the Branch Manager saying that social media brings applicants as far as Kampala and farther. In the past, our adverts used to be restricted to local notice boards, churches, markets. At this point we meet graduates of other districts. In a similar manner, the theme of Time Savings and Process Efficiency is traced in the fact that social media allows communicating with potential applicants more quickly.

4.3.3 Multiple Linear Regression

Although the correlation analysis provides the strength of the relationship and the direction of the relationship between the variables, it does not show the causality and cannot enable the researcher to find the distinct contribution of each predictor when all the variables are used simultaneously. The researchers aimed to overcome these limitations and to get a more in-depth idea of how combination of the three IT factors affects recruitment efficiency, this is why, they performed a multiple linear regression analysis. The multiple regression is a statistical method which enables prediction of a dependent variable by being able to have more than two independent variables, but at the same time balancing the impact of all the other variables in the model. Such an analysis allows the researcher to determine the predictor variables that make the most significant contribution to differences in the outcome variable and to determine the overall explanatory power of the model.

Table 4.7: Variables Entered/Removed

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Social Media, E-Recruitment Platforms, Digital Databases	.	Enter
a. Dependent Variable: Recruitment Process Efficiency			
b. All requested variables entered.			

Source: primary data 2025

Table 4.7 validates the variables used in the regression model, and their entry mode. The regression analysis was the Enter method, also referred to as simultaneous regression where all the three predictor variables- E- Recruitment Platforms, Digital Applicant Databases and Social Media were simultaneously entered into the regression analysis. The approach is suitable where the researcher possesses certain theoretical motions to incorporate all the forecasts and desires to investigate their individual effects under the influence of different forecasts being constant. The dependent variable was made to be Recruitment Process Efficiency to ensure that the model was appropriately designed to predict efficiency using the three IT factors, and not vice versa. There were no variables eliminated in the model, which suggests that all the three predictors were included in the final analysis.

Table 4.8: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.906a	.821	.808	1.55472
a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media, E-Recruitment Platforms, Digital Databases				

Source: primary data 2025

Table 4.8 gives an important insight into the overall goodness of the regression model to the data. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) was .906 that indicates the correlation between the observed values of recruitment efficiency and the values that the model predicted. This is very high and represents a very good relationship between the combination of three IT factors and the dependent variable. Interestingly, this correlation is the same as that of the bivariate correlation between digital databases alone (.906), indicating that most of the predictive information in the model is in the digital databases and inclusion of the other two factors does not significantly upscale the multiple correlation.

The most significant value in model summary was the coefficient of determination (R Square) = .821. This shows that the combination of three IT factors accounts 82.1 percent of the variation in Recruitment Process Efficiency scores. This is to say that 82.1 percent of the variations in the efficiency scores of respondents may be explained by their scores on e-recruitment platforms, digital databases, and social media. It is a very large R² coefficient in the framework of social science study, in which a coefficient exceeding 0.30 is frequently

regarded as interesting. The significance of technology in the contemporary recruitment process cannot be underemphasized by the fact that only three IT factors can help to explain more than four-fifths of the variance in the efficiency of the recruitment process.

Adjusted R Square that is a more conservative estimate because it punishes the inclusion of predictors that fail to improve the model significantly was equal to .808. The adjusted R² considers the predictors in the model and gives a more accurate estimate of the extent to which the model would work in the population. The slight decrease in the value of .821 to .808 (but only 0.013) shows that all three predictors are significant and have a true effect on the explanatory power of the model. This adjustment notwithstanding, the model accounts almost 81 percent of the variance in recruitment efficiency which is very high.

Table 4.9: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	451.287	3	150.429	62.234	.000b
	Residual	98.513	41	2.403		
	Total	549.800	44			
a. Dependent Variable: Recruitment Process Efficiency						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media, E-Recruitment Platforms, Digital Databases						

Source: primary data 2025

The results of ANOVA are provided in Table 4.9, and it is used to test the hypothesis of whether the regression model is statistically significant. The ANOVA table splits the total variance in the dependent variable into the variance that is covered by the model (regression) and the amount that is not covered by the model (residual). The cumulative amount of squares amounted to 549.800 which is the cumulative variance in the scores of recruitment efficiency. Out of this amount, regression sum of squares = 451.287, which represents the amount of variance that the IT factors can explain, and the residual sum of squares = 98.513,

which represents the amount of variance that is not explained by the model. This is supported by the fact that the regression sum of squares is significantly greater than the residual sum of squares, meaning that the model is able to explain a significant percentage of the variances in recruitment efficiency.

Table 4.10: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	0.62	0.31		2.00	0.052
	E-Recruitment Platforms	0.31	0.09	0.33	3.44	0.001
	Digital Databases	0.42	0.08	0.47	5.25	<0.001
	Social Media	0.28	0.07	0.30	4.00	<0.001
a. Dependent Variable: Recruitment Process Efficiency						

Source: primary data 2025

The most valuable output of regression analysis is Table 4.10 because it indicates the distinct contribution of each of the predictor variables to the explanation of the dependent variable while all other predictors remain constant. Such a table not only gives standardized coefficients (Beta), but also gives the unstandardized coefficients (B) which remain in the original scales of measurement and which are used to form the regression equation.

The constant term (intercept) was 0.62 with a p-value of 0.052. This is the value of recruitment efficiency that will be expected given that all predictors take a value of zero. The p-value of 0.052 is a little bit higher than the traditional level of significance of 0.05, which means that the constant is not significant. It is however rare that the constant is of theoretical interest in the regression analysis, researchers are more interested in the contributions of the predictor variables. The predictor variables are not influenced by the fact that the constant is almost significant.

The unstandardized coefficient (B) of E-Recruitment Platforms was 0.31 implying that as the score of the e-recruitment platforms advances by one unit, the efficiency of recruitment improves by 0.31 units, all other factors remaining constant, which is the increase of e-recruitment databases and social media. The best standardized coefficient (Beta) of e-recruitment platform stood at 0.33 which shows that it is the most important of the three IT factors when compared to each other. This predictor had a t-statistic of 3.44 and the p-value of 0.001 which is statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. This result proves that despite eliminating the impact of digital databases and social media, e-recruitment platforms continue to play a distinctive and significant role in estimating the efficiency of the recruitment process. The positive coefficient substantiates that the increased use of e-recruitment platforms is linked to increased recruitment efficiency regardless of whether other IT tools are also used in the organization or not.

Digital Applicant Databases showed the highest unstandardized coefficient (B) 0.42 indicating that it had the largest unstandardized coefficient of the three predictors. It implies that the efficiency of recruitment goes up by 0.42 units with a one-unit change in digital database scores, the rest of the variables held constant. This is a significant effect which means that among the three IT factors, the most significant one is the improvements in the usage of digital database that affect the recruitment efficiency. The standardized coefficient (Beta) of the digital databases was the highest beta weight of all the predictors, meaning that digital databases are the most significant distinct predictor of the efficiency of recruitment. The largest t-value of all three predictors amounted to 5.25, which means that it contributed to the model the most. The p-value was below 0.001, which attested high statistical significance. This result is a solid indication that digital databases are the only ones that explain recruitment efficiency better than both e-recruitment platforms and social media, which also supports the trend in the correlation analysis.

4.5 Qualitative results

Semi-structured interviews with thirteen participants and two Focus Group Discussions with HR staff, Branch Managers, and Job Applicants were done. The participants were asked to share their experiences and observations about the use of technology in recruitment at the Hofokam Hoima Branch.

Theme 1: Time Savings and Process Efficiency

HR staff at the organization highlighted the efficiency of using technology in the recruitment process in saving time. "The database has cut shortlisting time from weeks to days. What used to take us a full week now takes a few hours?" (HR Officer)

"We don't spend hours printing and sorting papers anymore. Everything is in the system. We just log in and start working." (Recruitment Assistant)

"The automated emails save us from constant phone calls asking 'Did you receive my application?' We can focus on actual work." (HR Assistant)

Job applicants have also seen the efficiency in the recruitment process. "I received an invitation for an interview just three days after applying online. At other places, I waited months without any feedback." (Job Applicant)

Theme 2: Geographic Reach and Applicant Pool

Respondents observed that the online recruitment platforms, especially social media sites, helped them reach job applicants from areas other than the local location.

"Social media brings applicants from Kampala and beyond. Previously, our adverts were only local notice boards, churches, markets. Now we reach graduates from different districts." (Branch Manager)

"We have just employed a person from Fort Portal who saw our job advert on Facebook. She has experience from a bigger organization. We would have never seen her if they had only advertised in Hoima." (HR Manager)

"I reside in Kampala and saw the job advert on a micro-finance job website. I would have never been aware of the job if they had only advertised in Hoima." (Job Applicant)

Theme 3: Volume and Workload

Some participants mentioned that they were receiving a number of applications that could not be handled appropriately.

"Due to the ease of application, we are receiving hundreds of applications for each job advertised. The volume is a problem." (HR Manager)

"Quantity has been a problem; however, we still have to read most of the applications manually. The database is helpful; however, it is not magic." (Recruitment Officer)

Theme 4: Infrastructure and Technical Problems

The participants mentioned that they were having problems with internet connectivity and system reliability.

"Internet downtime is our biggest problem. When our internet is down, our system slows down. We cannot even access our emails." (IT Support Officer)

Theme 5: Applicant Digital Literacy

The staff realized that not all applicants were comfortable using digital applications.

"Some rural applicants have difficulties using online applications. They need to come to the branch for assistance. It is an extra burden on us."

"Recruitment Officer"

"We had an elderly applicant who came all the way from the other side of the country to submit a paper application because he did not trust the online application. We accepted it, and it was fine. But it was a gap."

"HR Assistant"

"Young applicants are comfortable using online applications. Older applicants or those from rural areas need help."

"Branch Manager"

Theme 6: Data Security Concerns

Some HR staff members were concerned about the security of the data collected through the digital application.

"I sometimes get worried about the security of the data collected through the digital application. What if the system is hacked? What if we lose all the data collected through the digital application?"

"FGD Participant"

"We have not been hacked yet. But the threat is always there. It is easier to keep documents on paper."

"HR Officer"

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the findings, conclusions based on the evidence presented in Chapter Four, and recommendations for practice and policy.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The Pearson correlation analysis found out that each IT factor was very strongly, positively and statistically significantly related with Recruitment Process Efficiency: Digital Applicant Databases was the most, and then Social Media, and E-Recruitment Platforms were associated. The multiple regression analysis showed that the three ITs factors jointly predicted 82.1 percent of the variability on recruitment efficiency ($R^2 = .821$, $F(3,41) = 62.23$, $p = .001$), with Digital Applicant Databases being the best univariate predictor ($r = .47$, $p = .001$), then E-Recruitment Platforms ($r = .33$, $p = 0.001$), and Social Media ($r = .30$, $p = .001$). The qualitative results of interviews and focus group discussion showed that there were six key themes that included time savings and process efficiency, geographic reach and applicant pool, volume and workload challenges, infrastructure and technical issues, applicant digital literacy issues, and data security issues.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

5.2.1 E-Recruitment Sites and Recruitment Productivity.

The Pearson correlation analysis showed that E-Recruitment Platforms with Recruitment Process Efficiency was very strong, positive and statistically significant ($r = .845$, $n=45$, $p=.001$). Coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.714$) revealed that e-recruitment platforms were sufficient to explain 71.4 percent of the variance in e-recruitment efficiency. The standardized coefficient of E-Recruitment Platforms in the multiple regression analysis was $= 0.33$ ($p = 0.001$), which implies that it contributed to the prediction of the efficient recruitment significantly even after the remaining IT factors are included. This observation is in line with the studies conducted by Parry and Tyson (2008) who established that e-recruitment saves a lot of time and money used in the recruitment process through traditional methods. The analysis of UK organizations they conducted showed that online recruitment sites allow spreading information about a vacancy and gathering applications more

effectively. On the same note, Holm (2012) opined that online recruitment systems can help an organization access more people within a shorter time, and hence, online recruitment is more effective. This interpretation can be supported by the qualitative events of this study where the HR staff claimed that automated systems decrease the necessity of follow-up that can be done manually. According to one of the HR Assistants, the automated emails help in avoiding frequent phone calls, where someone wants to know whether his/her application was received. We can focus on actual work." This quote explains why e-recruitment websites simplify the communication process, which is one of the components of efficiency in recruitment.

Nevertheless, the fact that 28.6 percent of variance was not explained implies that e-recruitment platforms, although significant, cannot be used on their own to ensure the efficiency of the recruiting process. This is because Barber (2006) had observed that technology should be supported by efficient processes and talented HR professionals in order to deliver the best results. This finding can be explained in terms of the qualitative theme of Volume and Workload Challenges since the convenience of online applications can entail a large number of applications to be dealt with.

5.2.2 Applicant Data Bases Digitalization and recruiting efficiency.

The correlation analysis showed that there was very strong, positive and statistically significant correlation between Digital Applicant Databases and Recruitment Process Efficiency ($r = .906$, $n = 45$, $p < .001$). This was the highest of all the three IT factors with $r^2 = 0.821$ showing that only the digital databases could explain 82.1 percent of the variance in efficiency in recruitment. Digital Applicant Databases was the highest standardized coefficient in the multiple regression analysis (0.47 , $p < .001$), which proved the claim that it was the most significant unique predictor of recruitment efficiency. This observation is in line with Breaugh (2008) who noted that applicant tracking systems have been the focus of recruitment in the contemporary world as they facilitate effective storage, retrieval and management of information about candidates. Breaugh asserted that the administrative costs associated with the recruitment process, including sorting and tracking of applications and keeping in touch with them, can cripple HR departments without technological assistance. In a parallel manner, Stone, Deadrick, Lukaszewski, and Johnson (2015) maintained that digital databases cause the administrative load on HR personnel to be decreased, and staff is now

able to concentrate on more strategic elements of the recruitment process, namely the assessment of people and the development of relations with them.

5.2.3 Recruitment Efficiency and Social Media.

The correlation analysis has shown that there is a very high positive and significant correlation between Social Media use and Recruitment Process Efficiency ($r = .878$, $n = 45$, $p < .001$). The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.771$) showed that the social media alone could explain a proportion of recruitment efficiency of 77.1 percent. The standardized coefficient of Social Media, $\beta = 0.30$ ($p < .001$), in the multiple regression analysis signified that it contributed significantly to predicting efficiency in the recruitment. This observation is in line with the research conducted by Doherty (2010) which established the fact that social media websites can help organizations to tap into passive candidates who might not be seeking jobs but can be tempted into taking the right opportunities. Doherty believed that this opens up the talent pool to more than active job seekers which would enhance the quality of recruitments. On the same note, Davison, Maraist, and Bing (2011) posited that social media magnifies the geographical scope of the recruitment activity, therefore organizations can tap into talent pools outside their geographical locations. They have observed that traditional means of recruitment are usually geographically constrained whilst the social media does not have such constraints.

5.3 Conclusions

5.3.1 Conclusion for objective one;

The findings of the correlation and regression analysis will lead to the conclusion that the e-recruitment platforms have meaningful positive effect on recruitment process in Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch. The high positive correlation of e-recruitment platform with e-recruitment efficiency ($r = .845$, $p < .001$) and the fact that the proportion of the variability of recruitment efficiency that e-recruitment platforms accounted is very high (71.4 percent) prove that the latter is inherently significant to the recruitment efficiency. The large distinct value of e-recruitment platforms in the regression model (0.33 , $p = 0.001$) is another confirmation that the effect of the e-recruitment platform is still present even with the consideration of other IT factors.

5.3.2 Conclusion for Objective 2: Digital Applicant Databases

The study finds that the best positive effect on the recruitment process in Hofokam micro-finance Ltd, Hoima Branch, is done by the merger of digital applicant databases. Digital applicant databases and recruitment efficiency are strongly correlated with each other ($r = .906$, $p = \text{less than}.001$), as well as the fact that 82.1 percent of the variance in recruitment efficiency is attributed to the use of digital databases alone, confirms that digital databases are the most significant IT tool in improving efficiency in the recruitment process. The greatest significance of the beta weight of the regression model ($= 0.47$, $p < .001$) also proves that the contribution of digital databases to the three IT factors has the greatest unique significance.

5.3.3 Objective 3 Conclusion Social Media and Online Networks.

According to the correlation and regression outcome, the study finds that the role of social media and online networks in sourcing and selection of candidates in Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch is positive significantly. The fact that the positive correlation between the use of social media and recruitment efficiency is very strong ($r = .878$, $p < .001$) and that 77.1 percent of the variation in recruitment efficiency can be attributed to social media alone proves the relevance of the latter to the contemporary recruitment processes. The strong but not significant contribution of social media to the regression model ($= -0.3$, $p = .001$) is also an indication of the fact that the effect of social media does not depend on the influence of other IT factors.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Objective 1 E-Recruitment Platforms Recommendation.

Maximize E-Recruitment Platform Performance, Since e-recruitment platforms are identified to explain 71.4 percent of the variation in recruitment efficiency, and have a significant unique contribution ($= 0.33$), it is suggested that Hofokam Microfinance Ltd should seek to maximize the functionality of its e-recruitment platforms. Particularly, the organization needs to make sure that all openings are regularly made available on various online job portal that are specific to the micro-finance sector, the vacancy page on the official site is maintained and accessible and the e-submission systems are simple and straightforward.

Combine E-Recruitment and Digital Databases, In order to fulfill the maximum advantage of e-recruitment platforms, it is advisable that Hofokam Microfinance Ltd should integrate its e-

recruitment platforms with digital databases. This would help in automatic transfer of applicant information in the database through online applications to eliminate the manual entry of data and the chances of accuracy being compromised.

5.4.2 Objective 2 Digital Applicant Databases Recommendations.

Further Investment in Digital Database Systems, Since the prediction of recruitment efficiency can best be achieved by investing in digital applicant database ($r = .906, 0.47$), we should recommend that Hofokam Microfinance Ltd should invest in digital database and Applicant Tracking System. This investment would comprise the purchasing of strong database systems that have high searching, filtering, and tracking features. The organization ought to provide adequate budget not only to make the first purchase but also to maintain, update, and provide technical support in order to have optimum performance of the system.

5.4.3 Objective 3: Social Media and Online Networks Recommendations.

Establish a Strategic Social Media Recruitment Plan, since the social media elucidates 77.1 percent of variance in recruitment efficiency and contributes considerably to a unique contribution ($r = 0.30$), it is suggested that Hofokam Microfinance Ltd should establish a strategic social media recruitment plan. This plan must determine the most successful social media outlets to use depending on the type of position, develop best practices in regularly and professionally advertising vacancies and develop the plan to meet the potential candidates. The effectiveness of the social media recruitment should also be monitored by having measures in the plan.

5.5 Areas for Future Research

Further studies can be conducted whereby a more specific cost-benefit analysis of the use of technology in recruitment will be conducted by looking at the cost of adopting technology and savings achieved.

Further studies may provide a more thorough examination of the change of view of job seekers regarding the shift to online recruitment, the difficulties encountered during it.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that the research had certain limitations which can be as follows:

To begin with, the study had been carried out in only one branch of Hofokam Microfinance Limited in Hoima. Findings of the study are not necessarily applicable to other branches and other microfinance organizations under different conditions.

Secondly, 45 respondents were involved in the research. This was a small sample size in the research, but it was sufficient in the tests conducted by the researcher.

Thirdly, the study relied on the perceptions of the respondents on the efficiency of the recruitment processes instead of the objective measures such as time to hire and cost. Perceptions are not necessarily valid tools to measure anything, but they are excellent indicators of user experience.

5.6 Contribution of the Study

Although the study has the above limitations, it makes the following contributions to the literature: The study is relevant to the narrow field of literature in the IT adoption in recruitment because the study provides empirical evidence in the context of microfinance in Uganda. The researchers prove the Technology Acceptance Model that the perceived usefulness is associated with favorable results as the mean scores of perceived usefulness are high.

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DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions:

Please tick (✓) or fill in the appropriate response. All information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender:

Male []

Female []

2. Age bracket:

20-30 years []

31-40 years []

41-50 years []

51 years and above []

3. Highest level of education:

Diploma []

Bachelor's Degree []

Master's Degree []

Other (specify): _____

4. Years of experience in HR/recruitment:

Less than 1 year []

1-3 years []

4-6 years []

7 years and above []

5. Position/role:

HR Officer []

Recruitment Manager []

HR Assistant []

Branch Manager []

Other (specify): _____

Section B: E-Recruitment Platforms and the Recruitment Process

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale:
1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
B1	The organization uses online job portals (e.g., LinkedIn, BrighterMonday) to advertise vacancies					
B2	Job vacancies are posted on the organization's official website					
B3	Applicants are required to submit applications electronically via email or online forms					
B4	E-recruitment platforms have reduced the time taken to advertise job vacancies					
B5	The use of e-recruitment platforms has increased the number of applicants for vacant positions					

B6	Automated confirmation emails are sent to applicants upon submission of applications					
----	--	--	--	--	--	--

B7 E-recruitment platforms have improved the quality of candidates applying for positions

B8 The e-recruitment system is easy to navigate and use

Section C: Digital Applicant Databases and Recruitment Efficiency

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
C1	The organization uses a digital database (e.g., Applicant Tracking System) to store applicant information					
C2	Candidate information (CVs, cover letters, certificates) is stored electronically					
C3	The digital database allows for easy searching and filtering of applicants based on qualifications					
C4	I can quickly retrieve information of previous applicants from the database for future vacancies					
C5	The use of digital databases has reduced the time spent on manual shortlisting of candidates					
C6	Digital databases have improved the accuracy of candidate screening and selection					
C7	The database enables tracking of applicants throughout the recruitment stages					
C8	The digital applicant database is regularly updated with new candidate information					

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Section D: Social Media and Candidate Sourcing/Selection

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale:
1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
D1	The organization uses social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn) to advertise job vacancies					
D2	Social media has expanded our reach to potential candidates beyond the local area					
D3	We use professional networks (e.g., LinkedIn) to identify and approach potential candidates					
D4	Job vacancies shared on social media receive more applications compared to traditional methods					
D5	I sometimes review candidates' social media profiles to assess their suitability					
D6	Social media platforms enable faster communication with potential applicants					
D7	Employee referrals shared via social media have helped identify qualified candidates					
D8	The use of social media in recruitment has improved the diversity of applicants					

Section e; RECRUITMENT PROCESS EFFICIENCY

Dimension	No.	Question	1	2	3	4	5
Time	RPE1	The time taken from job	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly

Efficiency		advertisement to filling a vacant position has reduced	Disagree				Agree
Cost Efficiency	RPE2	The overall cost of recruitment has decreased compared to traditional methods	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Quality Efficiency	RPE3	The quality of candidates hired has improved through the current recruitment process	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Process Efficiency	RPE4	The recruitment process requires less manual effort and paperwork than before	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall Efficiency	RPE5	Overall, the recruitment process is more efficient now than it was previously	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

APPENDIX C:

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MANAGERS

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for taking time to participate in this interview. My name is Murungi Ritah Lilian , a student/researcher from Uganda Christian university . I am conducting a study on the influence of information technology on the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch. The information you provide will be used solely for academic purposes and will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose not to answer any question or withdraw at any time. With your permission, I would like to audio-record this interview to ensure accurate capture of your responses. Do I have your consent to proceed?

Section 1: E-Recruitment Platforms

3. What information technology tools does Hofokam currently use for recruitment?
4. How has the adoption of e-recruitment platforms changed the way you advertise vacancies and receive applications?
5. In your experience, what are the main advantages of using e-recruitment platforms compared to traditional methods?
6. What challenges have you encountered when using e-recruitment platforms?
7. How would you rate the ease of use of the current e-recruitment systems?

Section 2 : Digital Applicant Databases

8. Does Hofokam use a digital database or applicant tracking system to manage candidate information?
9. How has the digital database affected the efficiency of shortlisting and selecting candidates?
10. Can you describe how you use search and filtering functions to identify suitable candidates?
11. What challenges do you face in maintaining or using the digital applicant database?
12. How do you ensure the security and confidentiality of applicant data stored in digital systems?

Section 3: Social Media and Online Networks

13. Does Hofokam use social media platforms for recruitment purposes?
14. How effective have social media platforms been in sourcing candidates for the Hoima branch?
15. Do you or your team ever review candidates' social media profiles as part of the selection process?
16. What advantages does social media offer over traditional recruitment channels in your context?
17. Are there any drawbacks or challenges associated with using social media for recruitment?

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Title of Study: Influence of Information Technology on the Recruitment Process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you all for agreeing to participate in this focus group discussion. My name is Murungi Ritah Lilian, and I will be facilitating today's discussion. I am here to discuss the influence of information technology on the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch. Your experiences and opinions are valuable in helping us understand how technology affects recruitment practices and outcomes.

Section B: E-Recruitment Platforms

1. How do you currently use e-recruitment platforms in your work?
2. How has e-recruitment changed the way you find or apply for jobs compared to traditional methods?
3. What challenges have you faced with online job applications or recruitment platforms?

Section C: Digital Applicant Databases

- 1 How do you use digital databases to manage applicant information?
- 2 How has digital storage of applications affected the efficiency of recruitment?
3. What improvements would you suggest for managing applicant information digitally?

Section D: Social Media and Recruitment

1. How is social media used in recruitment at Hohokam or in your job search?
2. Which platforms are most useful? (Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn)
3. How do you use them? (Advertising, searching, communicating)
4. What are the advantages of using social media for recruitment?
5. Are there any concerns about using social media in recruitment

Thank You

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR JOB APPLICANTS

SECTION 1 : E-RECRUITMENT PLATFORM EXPERIENCE

1. Walk me through your experience of submitting the application. How did you find the overall process?
2. How would you describe the ease or difficulty of the online application process?
- 3 . Did you experience any technical difficulties during the application process?
4. What happened after you submitted your application?
5. Were you able to track the status of your application? If yes, how? If no, would you have liked to?
6. . Did Hofokam use any other digital methods in your recruitment, such as video interviews or online assessments?

SECTION 3: DIGITAL APPLICANT DATABASES

1. Were you informed about how your application information would be stored and used after you applied?
2. Have you been contacted by Hofokam for any other positions since your initial application?
- 3 . How concerned are you about the privacy and security of your personal information when applying for jobs online?
- 4 . In your opinion, what should organizations do to protect applicants' personal information?

SECTION 4: SOCIAL MEDIA AND JOB SEEKING

1. How do you use social media in your job search?
2. Did you see the Hofokam job advertisement on social media? If yes, tell me about that experience.
- 3 . How effective do you think social media is for finding job opportunities in your area?

APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Introduction

You are being invited to participate in a research study examining the influence of information technology on the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to examine how information technology tools, including e-recruitment platforms, digital applicant databases, and social media, influence the recruitment process at Hofokam Microfinance Ltd, Hoima Branch. The findings will contribute to understanding the role of technology in human resource management within micro-finance institutions in Uganda.

Consent Statement

I have read and understood the information provided above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and all my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. I consent to participate in this study.

Participant:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

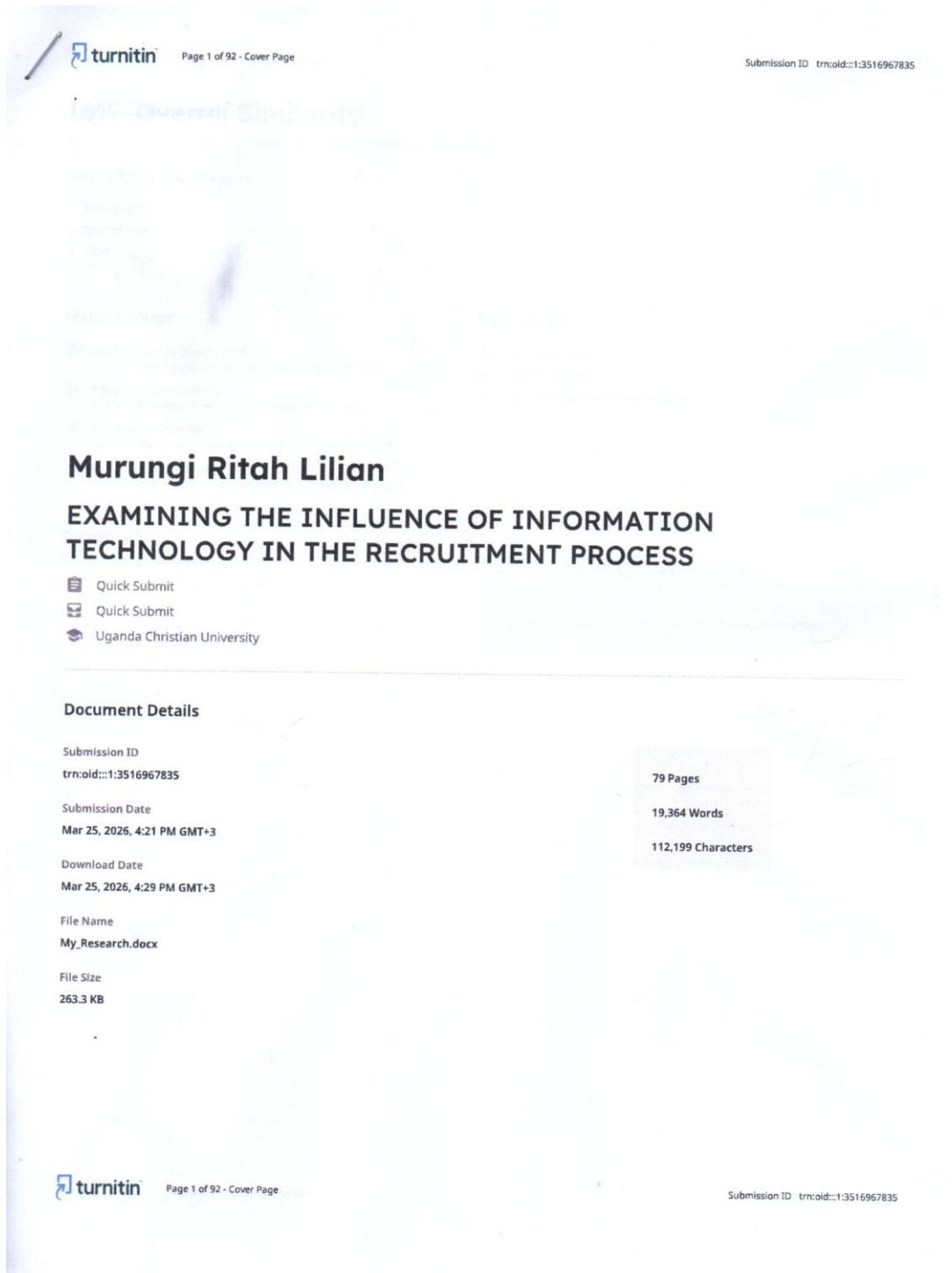
Researcher:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E: PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATE



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