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yala

Recruitment during Covid and Trends for 2021

November 2020

About This Report

ISBN 978-1-911566-14-4

To cite this report: Fu, N., Nguyen, T., & Prost, B. (2020) 'Recruitment during Covid and Trends for 2021". October 2020. Dublin: Trinity College Dublin Press.

Available at: <http://www.tara.tcd.ie/handle/2262/94006>.

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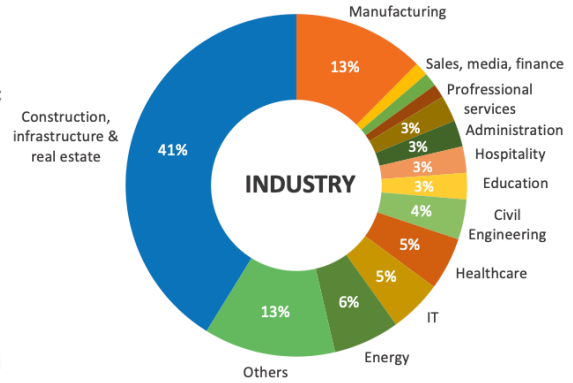
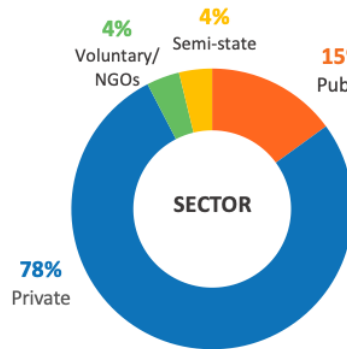
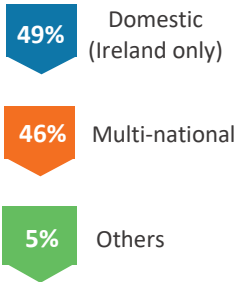
Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express our gratitude to all the professionals and organisations who participated in the survey and provided valuable insights into Ireland's recruitment landscape. Their gratitude is extended also to colleagues from Yala for piloting and promoting the survey and Enterprise Ireland for sponsoring the study. Sincere thanks are also given to Mr Hugh O'Neill at Trinity Research & Innovation for his strong support and effective coordination throughout the project.

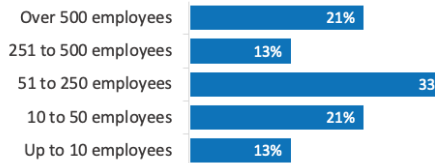
Survey Findings in Numbers

RESPONDENTS' BACKGROUNDS

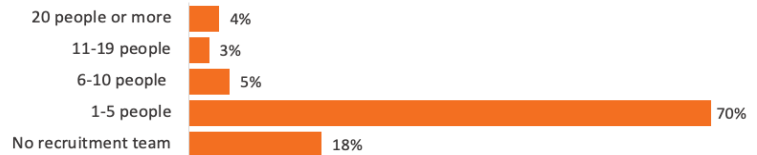
ORGANISATION TYPE



ORGANISATION SIZE

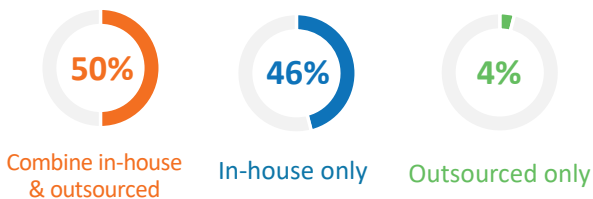


RECRUITMENT TEAM SIZE

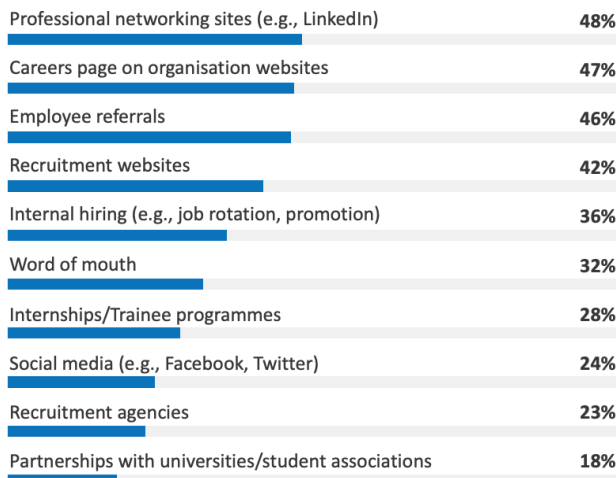


RECRUITMENT METHODS DURING COVID

RECRUITMENT DELIVERY



TOP TEN COMMON RECRUITMENT METHODS



TOP FIVE COMMON RECRUITMENT TECHNOLOGIES

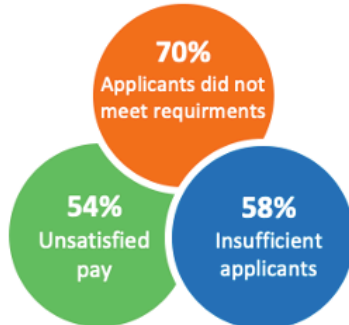
- 1 Virtual interview solutions
- 2 Active candidate sourcing
- 3 Social media recruiting
- 4 Recruitment tracking system
- 5 Email tools/technologies

TOP THREE IMPORTANT RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES IN THE FUTURE



RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES

TOP THREE CHALLENGES



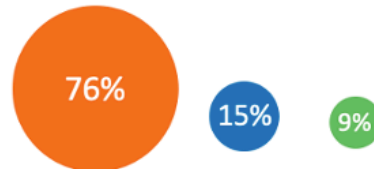
TOP THREE HARD-TO-FILL ROLES



EXPERIENCE WITH RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

Has your organisation used services from recruitment agencies?

- Yes, with one recruitment agency
- Yes, with more than one recruitment agency
- No



Does your organisation plan to use recruitment agencies in the next 12 months?



TOP FIVE REASONS FOR USING RECRUITMENT AGENCIES



RECRUITMENT AGENCIES EFFECTIVENESS



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RECRUITMENT



Have a stronger focus on digital recruitment



Develop a dedicated employer branding strategy and formalise employer value proposition (EVP)

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Executive Summary

This report was based on a survey conducted by a research team based in Trinity College Dublin in conjunction with Yala, funded by Enterprise Ireland. The survey aims to explore the recruitment practices and key challenges organisations are facing, especially in the current challenging climate as a consequence of COVID-19 pandemic.

The report of survey findings seeks to provide insights into current recruitment methods and key recruitment challenges within Ireland's organisations. It also includes information on the organisations' experience with recruitment agencies and their expectations about recruitment services.

Based on an extensive literature review, a series of recruitment practices was identified to capture the participants' experience and perspectives of recruitment within their current organisations. A survey was designed including questions from published articles to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. After being reviewed by staff from Yala, the online survey was distributed to 498 HR professionals and received 102 responses. A detailed analysis of the data was then carried out to identify key recruitment practices, recruitment difficulties and the participants' perspectives of using recruitment services. The main findings of the survey are set out below.

Summary of key findings

Recruitment methods

- 50% of the organisations used a combination of in-house and outsourced recruitment; 46% of the organisations conducted all recruitment activity in-house.
- Top three common recruitment methods are professional networking sites (e.g., LinkedIn) (48%), careers page on organisations' websites (47%) and employee referrals (46%).
- The majority of the organisations have already adopted virtual job interviews (78%), active candidate sourcing tools (62%), social media recruiting (42%) and recruitment tracking system (39%).
- Top three important recruitment initiatives in the future, reported by the participants, are virtual job interview solutions (94%), candidate experience management (77%) and social media recruiting (74%).

Recruitment difficulties

- The most frequently cited recruitment difficulty is the lack of necessary knowledge, skills and experience from the applicants (70%), followed by insufficient applicants (58%) and higher pay expectations than the organisation could offer (54%).
- Senior directors and managers roles have been the most difficult to recruit (29%), followed by professionals or specialists (18%) and middle or junior managers (16%).

Experience with recruitment agencies

- 76% of organisations have used services from more than one recruitment agency.
- 51% of the organisations plan to use recruitment agencies in the next 12 months.

- The top three reasons for using recruitment agencies are to improve candidate quality (68%), to reduce time to hire (66%) and to increase recruitment efficiency (64%).
- Permanent placement and fixed-term/temporary placement were the most frequently used recruitment services.
- Pay per placement was the most common payment method.
- The top three criteria that influence organisations' choice of recruitment agencies are the capability to meet clients' recruitment needs in a timely manner (95%), a reputation for services' quality and client partnership (89%) and specialised expertise (87%). Cost ranked the fifth (72%) in the organisations' considerations of choosing recruitment agencies.

Key recommendations for HR practitioners

Following the analysis of the data, the research highlighted two areas in which interventions might be made to address recruitment challenges and enhance recruitment effectiveness.

Have a stronger focus on digital recruitment

It is recommended that the organisations consider investing in the appropriate technologies and tools to transform the recruitment process. The application of appropriate technologies can be hugely beneficial and cost-effective in improving accessibility and speed of recruitment process, enhancing candidate experience and the quality of hires (CIPD, 2020b). In addition, with the continuity of remote selection, remote onboarding and remote work in response to COVID-19, the use of technology to facilitate the recruitment process is of paramount importance.

Develop a dedicated employer branding strategy and formalise employer value proposition

Given the increase of recruitment difficulties in the current tight labour market, coupled with impacts of COVID-19, it is recommended that the organisations put a greater emphasis on improving employer branding strategy and employer value proposition (EVP).

Possible interventions to improve employer branding strategy and EVP include:

- Revisit current employer branding strategy and EVP of the organisation to evaluate their effectiveness. Several actions could be implemented such as holding workshops with senior management and relevant stakeholders, running focus groups, conducting employee surveys or interviewing candidates.
- Measure and maintain regularly through recruitment and retention metrics to have timely justifications.
- Use video, pictures and authentic stories from within the business to connect with potential candidates in a more impactful way.
- Engage experts or consultants to support.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This report was based on a survey conducted by a research team based in Trinity College Dublin in conjunction with Yala, funded by Enterprise Ireland. The survey aims to explore the recruitment practices and key challenges organisations are facing, especially in the current challenging climate as a consequence of COVID-19 pandemic.

The report of survey findings seeks to provide insights into current recruitment methods and key recruitment challenges within Ireland's organisations. It also includes information on the organisations' experience with recruitment agencies and their expectations about recruitment services.

1.2 Methodology

Based on the extensive literature review, a set of recruitment practices was identified to capture the participants' experiences and perspectives of recruitment within their current organisations (CIPD, 2020a, 2020b; Taylor, 2019; Great Place to Work, 2019; Maheshwari et al., 2017; Florea, 2014; Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2010). The survey included questions on organisations' backgrounds, recruitment methods, recruitment difficulties, experience with recruitment agencies and expectations about recruitment services. The questions were adopted from published articles to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. Besides, the survey was reviewed by colleagues from Yala. Their comments were incorporated to improve the face validity of the questions.

The survey was distributed in October 2020. An online invitation was sent through email to 498 HR professionals, as listed by Yala. After two reminders from the research team, the survey received 102 responses.

A detailed analysis of the data was then carried out, including descriptive analysis of the quantitative survey data and thematic analysis of the qualitative comments. Descriptive statistics were used to explore the participants' views on different aspects of their organisations' recruitment practices. Thematic analysis was conducted on the reflective, open-comment section at the end of the survey as it permits for precise qualitative analysis of the meaning of the data in a context.

1.3 Structure of the report

The report contains three main sections. Section 2 provides an overview of the respondents' backgrounds who participated in the survey. Section 3 details survey findings on four main aspects, including recruitment methods, recruitment difficulties and experience with recruitment agencies. Section 4 includes key conclusions and recommendations.

2 Survey Participation

2.1 Survey response rate

An online survey was sent out through email to 498 professionals listed by Yala. The survey was also distributed on YALA's company page on LinkedIn. After several reminders, 102 responses were received (21%). After removing incomplete responses, the final sample size was 80.

2.2 Respondents' backgrounds

The respondents represented organisations across multiple backgrounds. Figures 2.1 to 2.4 provide an overview of the respondents' organisation profile.

Here is the breakdown of the sample.

- **Sector:** 78% were the private sector, 15% were the public sector and the rest were split between semi-state (4%) and voluntary or non-profit organisations (NGOs) (4%).
- **Organisation type:** 49% were domestic (Ireland only) organisations; 51% were multinational organisations.
- **Company size:** The majority of the respondents (79%) were from small to medium organisations (less than 500 employees), while 21% were from the organisations with over 500 employees.
- **Industry:** Respondents represent organisations of all industries. Nearly half of the respondents (41%) worked in construction, infrastructure and real estate industry.

Figure 2.1 Respondents by sector

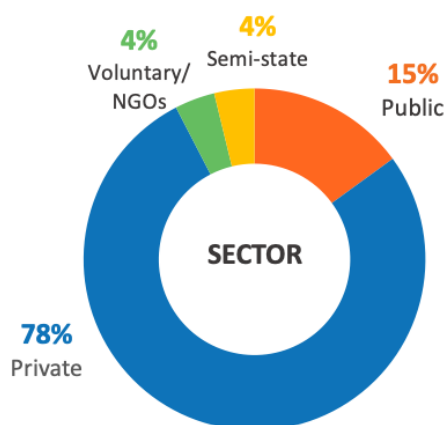


Figure 2.2 Respondents by organisation type



Figure 2.3 Respondents by company size

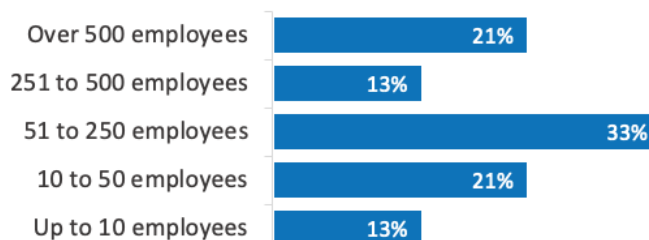
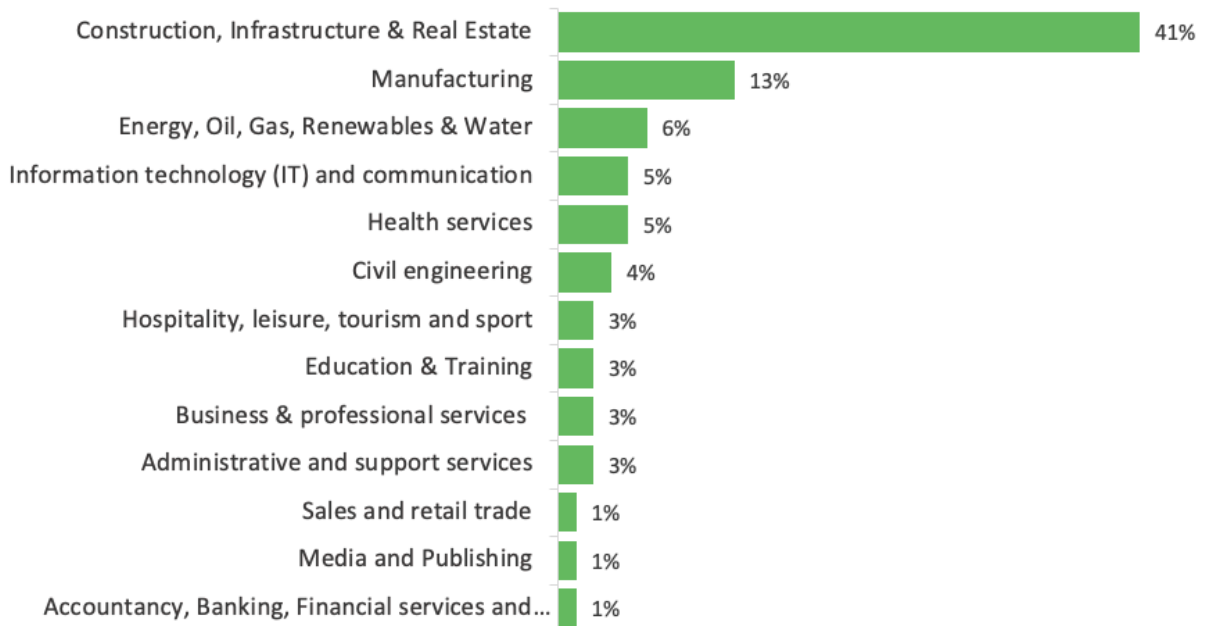
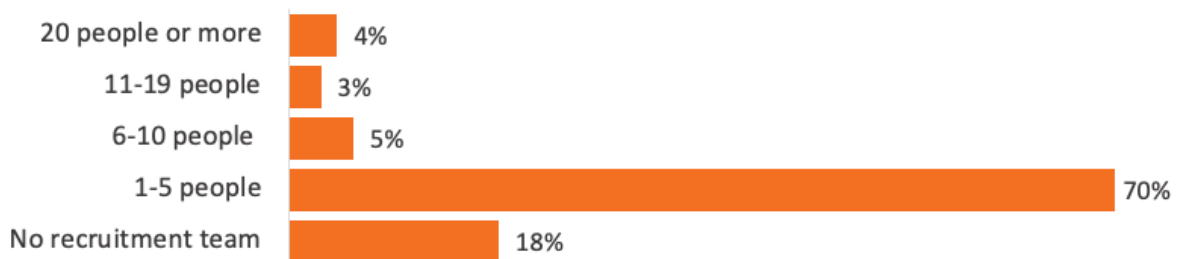


Figure 2.4 Respondents by industry



The respondents were also asked about the size of the recruitment team in their current organisations. As shown in Figure 2.5, the majority of the participants' organisation (70%) had small recruitment teams (1-5 people); 18% of the organisations did not have a dedicated recruitment team and only 4% had a recruitment team of 20 or more people.

Figure 2.5 Respondents by recruitment team size



3 Survey Findings

This section provides an overview of the main findings from the survey. These findings are based on respondents' insights into recruitment practices in their current organisations. The report of the findings will present four aspects as follows: (1) recruitment methods, (2) recruitment difficulties and (3) experience with recruitment agencies.

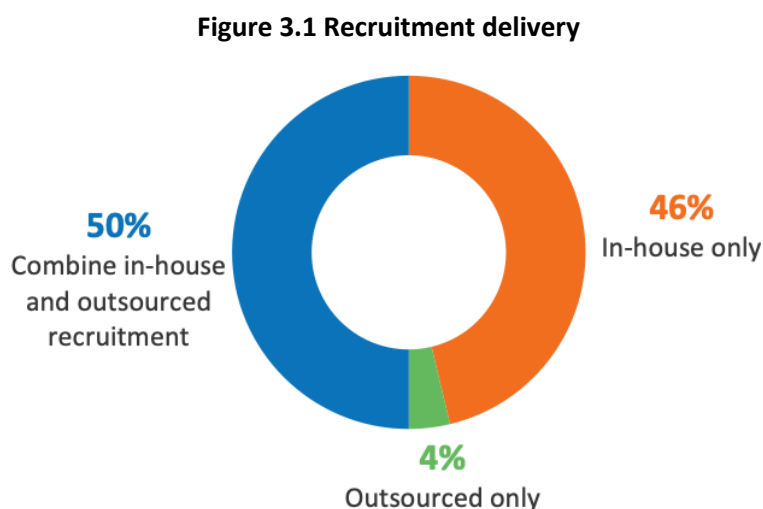
3.1 Recruitment methods

This section explores current recruitment approaches and trends within Ireland's organisations. It provides a snapshot of their recruitment delivery, the use of recruitment methods, recruitment technologies and tools and initiatives to enhance recruitment effectiveness in the future.

3.1.1 Recruitment delivery

- 50% of the organisations used a combination of in-house and outsourced recruitment
- 46% of the organisations conducted all recruitment activity in-house.

As shown in Figure 3.1, half of the respondents indicated that their organisations used a mixture of in-house and outsourced recruitment. 46% of the organisations conducted all recruitment activity in-house, while only 4% fully outsourced their recruitment.



Figures 3.2 and 3.3 present recruitment delivery by sector and organisation size. Organisations across the sectors were more likely to keep their recruitment in-house or combine in-house and outsourced approaches. Only a few in the public and private sectors (1% and 3% respectively) fully outsourced their recruitment activities.

The survey also found that organisations from all sizes conducted recruitment internally only or used a combination of in-house and outsourced approaches. Less than 5% of the organisations with under 50 employees fully outsourced their recruitment.

Figure 3.2 Recruitment delivery by sector

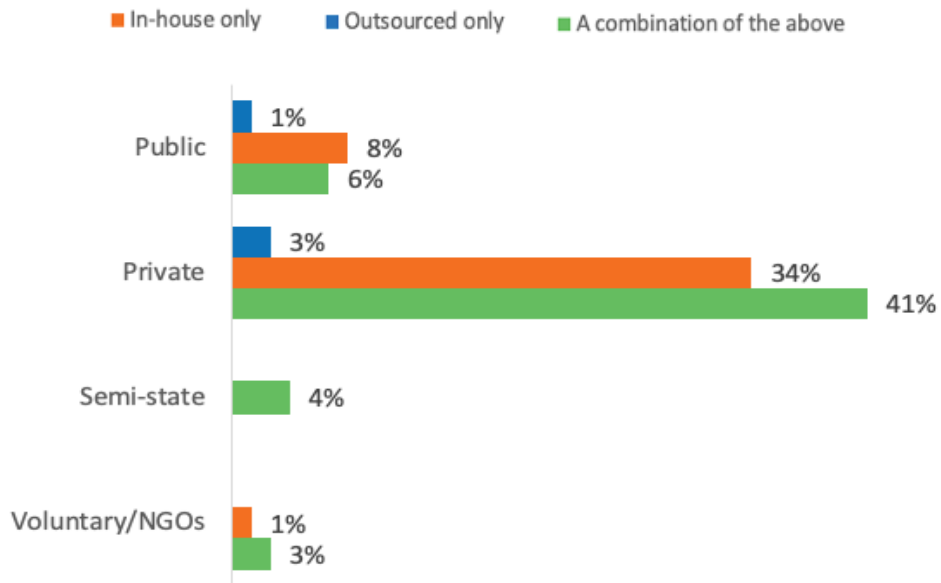
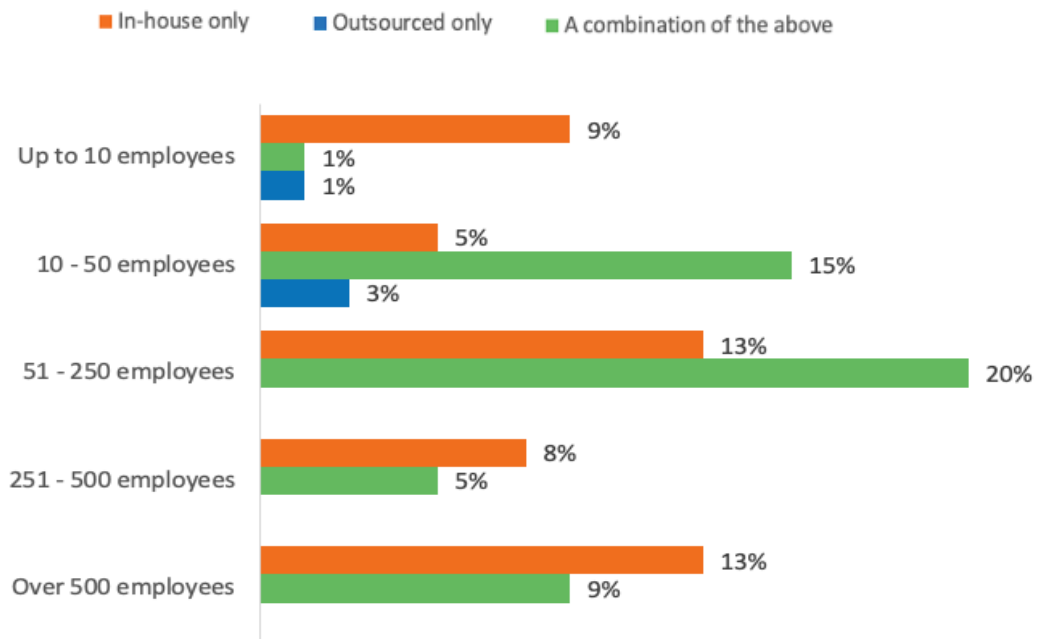


Figure 3.3 Recruitment delivery by organisation size



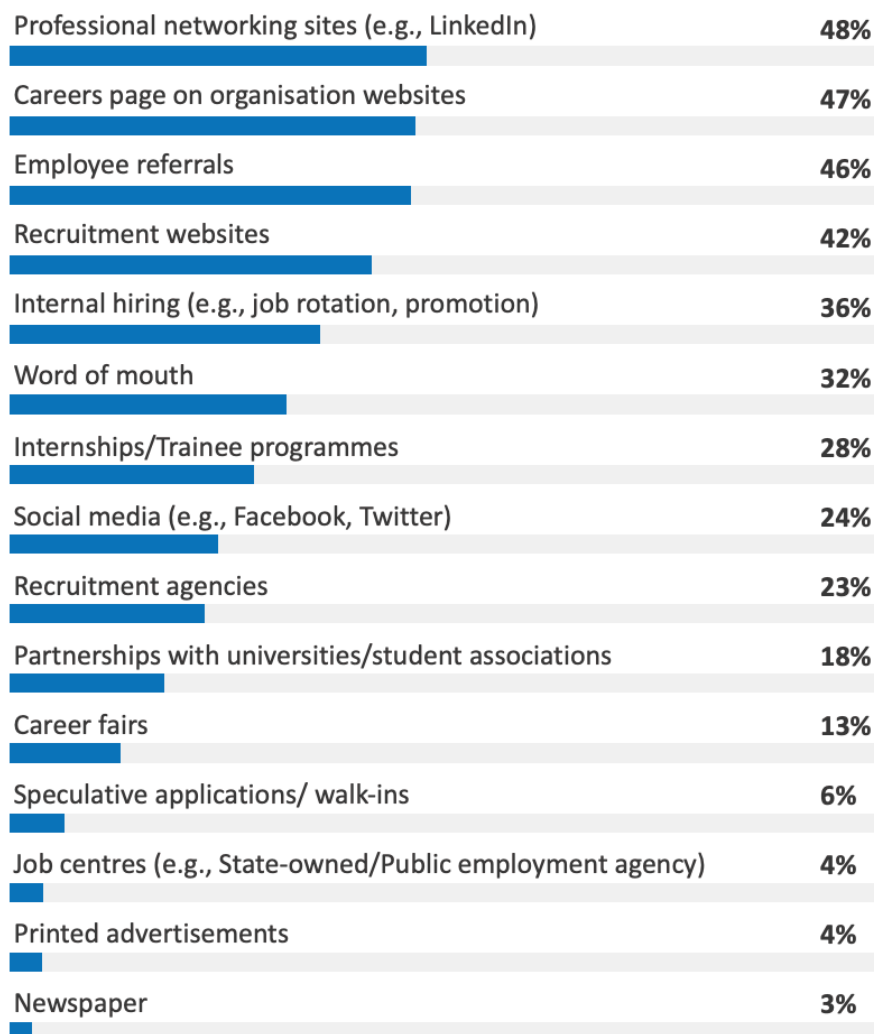
3.1.2 Recruitment methods

The most commonly used recruitment methods are:

- recruitment through professional networking sites (e.g., LinkedIn)
- careers page on organisations' websites
- employee referrals
- recruitment websites/platforms

Figure 3.4 highlights that the top three common recruitment methods are professional networking sites (e.g., LinkedIn) (48%), careers page on organisations' websites (47%) and employee referrals (46%). Recruitment agencies were reported to be used frequently by 23% of the organisations.

Figure 3.4 Ranking of recruitment methods by the highest frequency of use



3.1.3 Recruitment technologies and tools

The mostly used recruitment technologies and tools by organisations are:

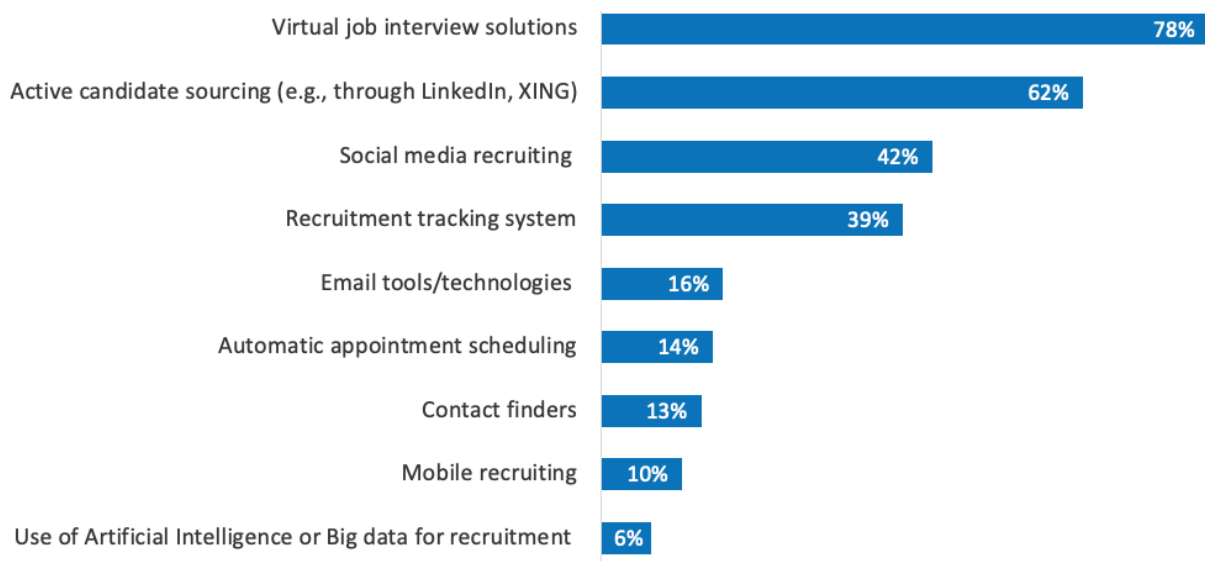
- virtual job interview solutions
- active candidate sourcing tools
- social media recruiting
- recruitment tracking system

There is a growing emphasis on using recruitment technology as a key priority for professionals in Ireland (CIPD, 2020b). In this regard, the respondents were asked about the use of recruitment technologies and tools in their organisations. Results are illustrated in Figure 3.5 and 3.6.

The survey found that a high percentage of the organisations already adopted the four following technologies and tools in their recruitment process where 78% use virtual job interview solutions (e.g., video interview), 62% use active candidate sourcing tools (e.g., LinkedIn, XING), 42% use social media recruiting and 39% use recruitment tracking system (e.g. Applicant Tracking System, candidate relationship management software).

Other technologies and tools, including (1) the use of AI or Big Data for recruitment (e.g., AI-powered recruiting software, robot recruiting, data-driven recruiting), (2) automatic appointment scheduling, (3) contact finders, (4) mobile recruiting and (5) email tools (e.g., tracking e-mail opening or reply rates), have not been used widely (6% - 16%). Also, a high percentage of the respondents (68% - 85%) stated that their organisations are not planning to use those technology solutions in recruitment.

Figure 3.5 Ranking of the recruitment technologies and tools already used



3.1.4 Future of recruitment

The top three important recruitment initiatives in the future are:

- Virtual job interview solutions
- candidate experience management
- social media recruiting

The participants were asked to indicate the degree of importance of nine recruitment initiatives in the upcoming years. Figure 3.6 presents the ranking of the surveyed recruitment initiatives by the highest degree of importance (“*very/extremely important*”). Top three important recruitment initiatives in the future, reported by the participants, are virtual job interview solutions (94%), candidate experience management (77%) and social media recruiting (74%).

Figure 3.6 Ranking of the recruitment initiatives by the highest degree of importance



3.2 Recruitment difficulties

- The most frequently cited recruitment difficulty is a lack of required knowledge, skills and experience from the applicants.
- Senior directors and managers are the roles that have been the most difficult to recruit.

Figure 3.7 shows that the most frequently cited recruitment difficulty is a lack of required knowledge, skills and experience from the applicants (70%), followed by insufficient applicants (58%) and higher pay expectations than the organisation could offer (54%).

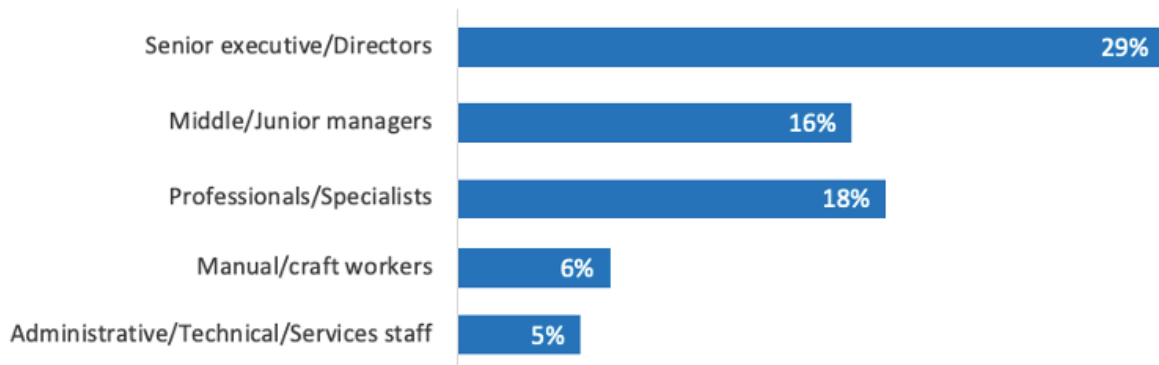
Figure 3.7 Recruitment difficulties



The respondents were also asked to indicate the vacancies their organisations are having the most difficulty recruiting for. As demonstrated in Figure 3.8, over a quarter (29%) of the respondents

pointed that senior executives and directors are hardest to recruit, followed by professionals or specialists (18%) and middle or junior managers (16%). The respondents also specified other hard-to-fill positions (11%) such as niche IT roles, estimators or cleaning staff.

Figure 3.8 Hard-to-fill roles



3.3 Experience with recruitment agencies

This section explores the organisations’ experience of using recruitment agencies. Five aspects are analysed in the section, including (1) the use recruitment agencies in the past and future, (2) reasons for using recruitment agencies, (3) recruitment agencies effectiveness, (4) recruitment services and payment methods, and (5) criteria for choosing recruitment agencies.

3.3.1 The use of recruitment agencies

- 76% of organisations have used services from more than one recruitment agency.
- 51% of organisations are planning to use recruitment agencies in the future.

As shown in Figure 3.9, 76% of the respondents reported that their organisations have used services from more than one recruitment agency. 15% have experienced with only one recruitment agency. 9% have not used a recruitment agency in the past.

Figure 3.9 Using services from recruitment agencies in the past

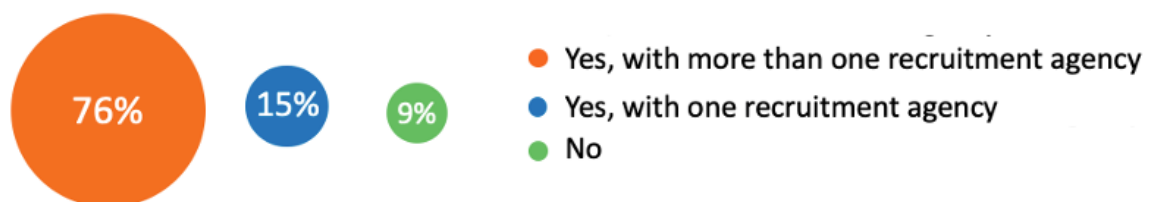
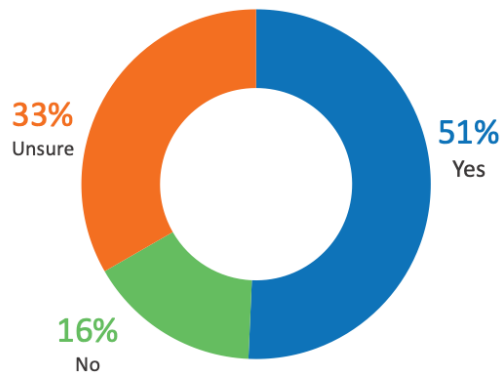


Figure 3.10 presents the organisations’ intention of using recruitment agencies in the next 12 months. Over half of the organisations (51%) will use recruitment agencies; 33% are unsure and 16% are not planning to use.

Figure 3.10 Plan to use recruitment agencies in the future



3.3.2 Reasons for using recruitment agencies

The top three drivers for using recruitment agencies are improving candidate quality, reducing time to hire and increasing recruitment efficiency.

Figure 3.11 shows the reasons for using recruitment agencies listed by the respondents. The top three drivers for using recruitment agencies are to improve candidate quality (68%), to reduce time to hire (66%) and to increase recruitment efficiency (64%).

Figure 3.11 Reasons for using recruitment agencies



Respondents further specified other reasons for using recruitment agencies, including:

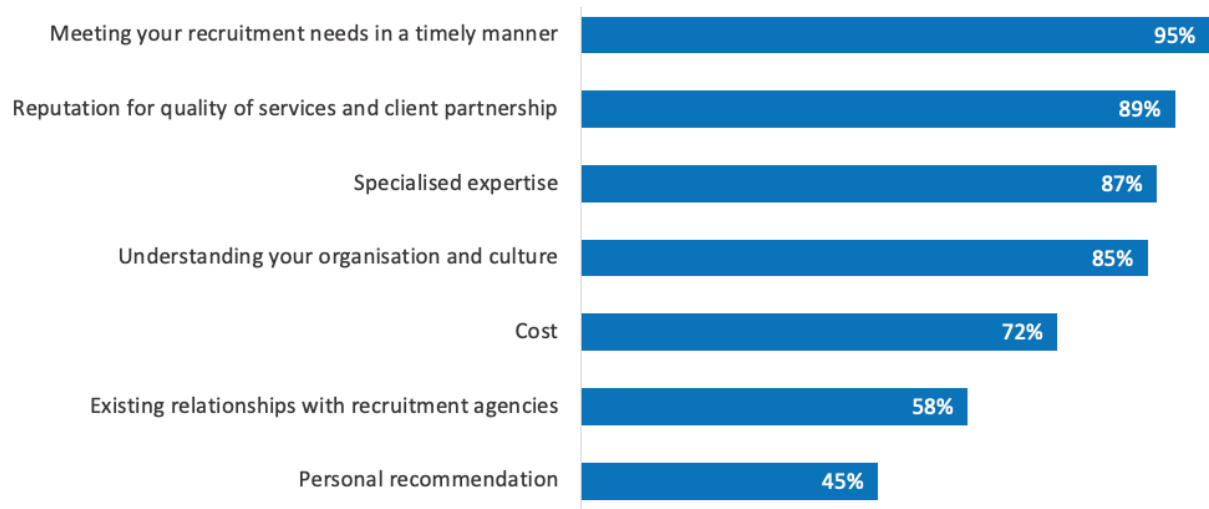
- To access passive candidates who may not be active on professional networking sites (e.g., LinkedIn) or social media
- To receive support for hard-to-fill roles
- To increase the diversity of candidate pool
- To find it difficult rejecting recruitment agencies when they actively send potential candidates

3.3.3 Criteria for choosing recruitment agencies

The most important factor that influences organisations' choice of recruitment agencies is the capability to meet clients' recruitment needs timely.

As shown in Figure 3.12, 95% of the respondents indicated that the most important factor that influences organisations' choice of the recruitment agency is their capability to meet the clients' recruitment needs in a timely manner. This is followed by a reputation for services' quality and client partnership (89%), specialised expertise (87%) and an understanding of client' business and culture (85%). Cost ranked the fifth (72%) in the organisations' considerations of choosing recruitment agencies.

Figure 3.12 Criteria for choosing recruitment agencies

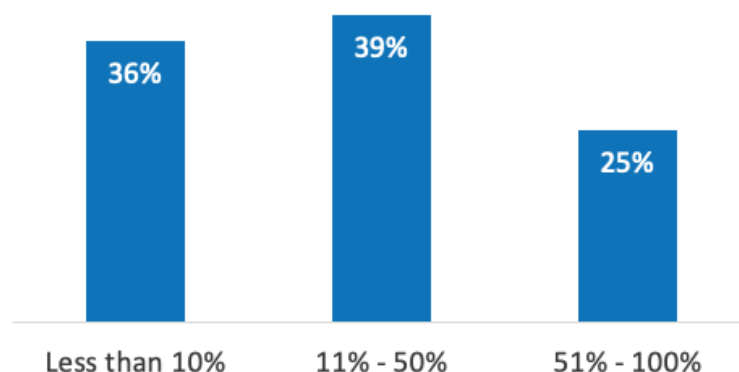


3.3.4 Recruitment agencies effectiveness

- Over 60% of the respondents were satisfied with recruitment agencies' understandings of their organisations and hiring requirements (64%), the candidate quality (63%) and the communication from recruitment agencies (62%).

The survey asked the respondents to indicate the average percentage of hires in their organisations recruited by recruitment agencies. The breakdown of the results is illustrated in Figure 3.13. The average percentage of hires recruited by recruitment agencies was in the range of 51% - 100% in 25% of the organisations, 15% - 50% in 39% of the organisations and 10% or less in 36% of the organisations.

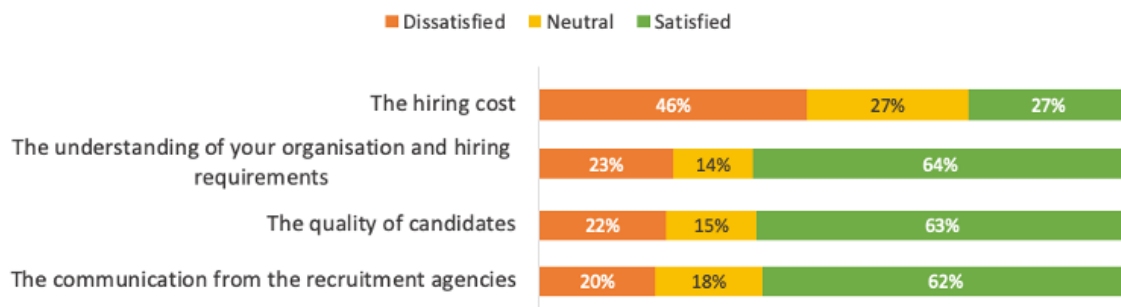
Figure 3.13 Percentage of hires recruited by recruitment agencies



To further investigate the recruitment agencies effectiveness, the respondents were asked their satisfaction with recruitment agencies. Figure 3.14 highlights that over 60% of the respondents were satisfied with recruitment agencies' understandings of their organisations and hiring requirements

(64%), the candidate quality (63%) and the communication from recruitment agencies (62%). Nearly half (46%) were dissatisfied with the hiring cost when using recruitment agencies.

Figure 3.14 Experience with recruitment agencies



The participants also specified other unsatisfying experiences with the recruitment agencies as follows:

- Recruitment agencies came back to target employees that they placed originally.
- They were bombarded with candidates for roles which they are not recruiting.

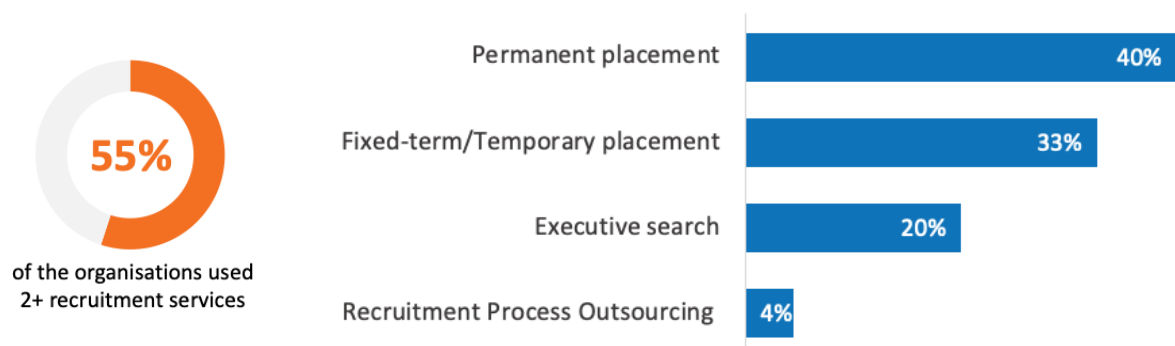
3.3.5 Recruitment services and payment methods

- Permanent placement and fixed-term/temporary placement were the most frequently used recruitment services.
- Pay per placement was the most common payment method adopted by the majority of the organisations.

Figures 3.15 and 3.16 present the use of different services and payment methods from the recruitment agencies.

The permanent placement was recorded to be used the most (40%), followed by fixed-term or temporary placement (33%), executive search (20%) and Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) (4%). Over half of the organisation (55%) used more than 2 recruitment services.

Figure 3.15 Roles filled via recruitment services

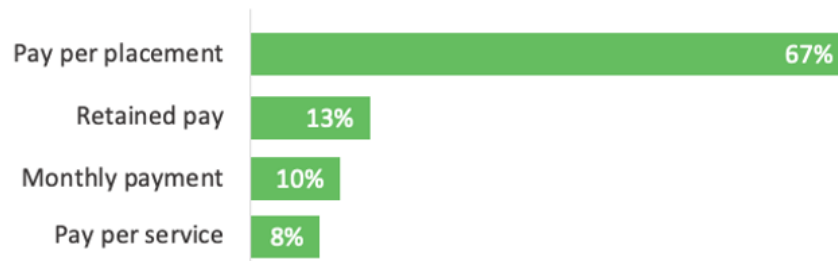


In terms of payment methods for recruitment services, pay per placement was reported to be used the most (67%). Other methods, including retained pay, monthly payment and pay per service, recorded a small percentage of uses (13%, 10% and 8% respectively).

Payment methods

- **Pay per placement:** A fixed fee is charged for each placement made by the agency (e.g., a percentage of the employees' first-year salary)
- **Retained pay:** A fee is charged in instalments based on a number of agreed-upon milestones during the recruitment process
- **Pay per service:** A fee is charged for a specific process to be completed by the agency (e.g., sourcing or initial screening)
- **Monthly payment:** A monthly fee is charged for working on an agreed-upon number of vacancies during a period of time
- **Others** (e.g., hourly payment – an hourly fee is charged for the number of working hours until the placement is made)

Figure 3.16 Methods of payment for recruitment services



4 Conclusion and recommendations

The survey was carried out to explore the recruitment practices and key recruitment challenges in Ireland's organisations. A number of recruitment practices were investigated, including recruitment methods, recruitment difficulties, experience with recruitment agencies and expectations about recruitment services.

Overall, the findings highlight that the majority of the organisations have had an increased use of remote technology, candidate sourcing tools and social media recruiting in their recruitment process besides traditional recruitment methods. However, a high percentage of organisations have not adopted or are planning to use technology recruitment solutions.

In terms of experience with recruitment agencies, over 60% of the organisations were satisfied with the services from the agencies. Half of the respondents reported that they will continue to use recruitment agencies in the future.

The research findings suggest two priorities to help the organisations address recruitment difficulties and enhance recruitment effectiveness in the current challenging climate.

Have a stronger focus on digital recruitment

While technology solutions for better talent recruitment have been growing, the survey findings found that a high percentage of the organisations have not adopted or are planning to use new technology and tools in recruitment process.

The application of appropriate technologies can be hugely beneficial and cost-effective in improving accessibility and speed of recruitment process, enhancing candidate experience and the quality of hires (CIPD, 2020b). Also, with the continuity of remote selection, remote onboarding and remote work in response to COVID-19, the use of technology to facilitate the recruitment process is of paramount importance. Therefore, it is recommended that organisations consider investing in the appropriate technologies and tools to transform the recruitment process. Several technology solutions that are found to be effective include:

- Virtual job interview solutions (e.g., video interviews);
- Active candidate sourcing tools;
- Contact finders;
- Email tools (e.g., tracking e-mail opening or reply rates.);
- Social media recruiting;
- Mobile recruitment;
- Recruitment tracking system (e.g., Applicant tracking system);
- The use of AI or Big Data for recruitment (e.g., AI-powered recruiting software, robot recruiting, data-driven recruiting).

(Sources: Gelinas et al., 2017; Weidner and Landers, 2020; Langer, König and Hemsing, 2020)

Develop a dedicated employer branding strategy and formalise employer value proposition (EVP)

Given the increase of recruitment difficulties in the current tight labour market, coupled with impacts of COVID-19, it is recommended that the organisations put a greater emphasis on improving employer branding strategy and employer value proposition (EVP). A strong employer brand can enable the

organisations to differentiate themselves in the labour market, which, in turn, help them attract, retain and compete for the best talents (CIPD, 2019; Aziz et al., 2019; Maheshwari et al., 2017).

Possible interventions to improve employer branding strategy and EVP include:

- Revisit current employer branding strategy and EVP of the organisation to evaluate their effectiveness. Several actions could be implemented such as holding workshops with senior management and relevant stakeholders, running focus groups, conducting employee surveys or interviewing candidates.
- Measure and maintain regularly through recruitment and retention metrics to have timely justifications.
- Use video, pictures and authentic stories from within the business to connect with potential candidates in a more impactful way.
- Engage experts or consultants to support.

Appendix A: Notes on Methodology

This section provides further details about the survey methodology. It provides additional information about a number of aspects of the study relating to survey administration, survey testing, survey content, and analysis of the data. It also details the ethical guidelines that were adhered to by the research team.

B.1 Survey Administration

The survey was carried out in October 2020. An online invitation was sent through email to 498 HR professionals, as listed by YALA. After two reminders from the research team, the survey received 80 valid responses.

A detailed analysis of the data was then carried out, including descriptive analysis and thematic analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to explore the participants' views on different aspects of their organisations' recruitment practices. Thematic analysis was conducted on the reflective, open-comment section at the end of the survey as it permits for precise qualitative analysis of the meaning of the data in a context.

B.2 Review Group

The survey was reviewed by staff from Yala. Their comments were incorporated to improve the face validity of the questions.

B.3 Survey Scales: Validity and Reliability

The scales used in the survey were derived from well-established and validated measures from the academic literature. Following the administration of the survey, tests of validity and reliability were carried out to check for the robustness of each scale among the sample. These tests re-established the validity and reliability of each scale used.

B.4 Statistical Treatment of the Data

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 26). The raw data were presented using descriptive statistics.

B.5 Ethical Issues

The survey was strictly confidential, and participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were advised that a full report of the study's findings would be provided to them by email.

Participants were assured that this is a strictly confidential survey and under no circumstances would individual responses be made available to anyone outside the research team. Access to the data was limited to the research team and the data was stored electronically and protected by secure passwords known only to the research team.

Appendix B: References

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