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## E-Recruitment in Palestine: A study into applicant perceptions of an online application system

التوظيف الإلكتروني في فلسطين: دراسة في تصورات المتقدمين لنظام التقديم عبر الإنترنت

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### Abstract

This article examines the subject of the employment of Palestinians in the light of the applicants' perceptions of the online application system. The aim was to examine the level of the university graduated in Palestine for the use of Internet employment in the 12 important dimensions (perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived privacy risk, perceived enjoyment, perceived stress, application-specific self-efficacy, performance expectancy, intention, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, habit, and attitude), and to determine if there are any benefits for graduated in Palestine. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis. The researchers then used correlation analysis to investigate the relationship between the variables. The study found that the employment sites benefits to graduated, it preserves their privacy, increases their job oppor-

tunities and helps them improve their profile. It shows that the 12 important dimensions when employing online employment have been significantly correlated.

**Keywords:** E-Recruitment, Technological Acceptance Model (TAM), Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Coefficient, Graduates.

### ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في موضوع التوظيف الإلكتروني في فلسطين في ضوء تصورات المتقدمين لأنظمة التقديم للوظائف عبر الإنترنت. ان الهدف الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة هو تحديد مستوى استخدام خريجي الجامعات في فلسطين للتوظيف عبر الإنترنت. وقد تم تحديد 12 بُعداً مهماً للتوظيف عبر الإنترنت تشمل (الفائدة المتصورة، وسهولة الاستخدام المتصورة، ومخاطر الخصوصية المتصورة، والتمتع المتصور، والإجهاد المتصور، والكفاءة الذاتية للتطبيق المحدد، والأداء المتوقع، والنية، والمعايير الذاتية، والسيطرة السلوكية المتصورة، والعادات، والموقف)، كما هدفت هذه الدراسة الى تحديد ما إذا كانت هناك أي فوائد لخريجي الجامعات في فلسطين. تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام التحليل الإحصائي الوصفي. ثم استخدم الباحثون تحليل الارتباط لمعرفة العلاقة بين المتغيرات. ووجدت الدراسة مواقع التوظيف الإلكترونية مفيدة للخريجين، فهي تحافظ على خصوصيتهم، وتزيد من فرص حصولهم على عمل وتساعدهم على تحسين ملفهم الشخصي. كما تبين من نتائج هذه الدراسة ان الأبعاد الهامة الـ 12 عند التوظيف عبر الإنترنت مترابطة بشكل ذو مغزى من الناحية الإحصائية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التوظيف الإلكتروني، نموذج قبول التكنولوجيا، الإحصاء الوصفي، الخريجين، فلسطين.

### Introduction

The company is an organization established to achieve a certain type of business and consists of a group of departments. The Human Resources Department is one of the most important divisions in the organization and seeks to achieve the goals that contribute to the development of the working environment. Its tasks include recruitment, organization of employee relations, assistance, and many other businesses. When it works well, it increases organization, efficiency and improves Organizational Performance (Mafini & Poee, 2013). The Human Resources department organ-

izes recruitment procedures by providing equal opportunities to all applicants. Currently, the internet is considered a platform that allows businesses to source and hires the best candidates.

Human resources management aims at investing human resources and capabilities through the existence of good strategies in the selection, recruitment, development, and maintenance of human resources and staff relations in line with the objectives of the business. In early 2000, the main source of contact for most enterprises was professional websites (Holm, 2014). A few years later, the e-recruitment system, which revolutionized the world of employment, uses the Internet as a means of attracting qualified people, improves recruitment procedures, and reduces costs, to find the best candidates.

The recruitment process is the first stage where the employee contacts the employer and vice versa, but it can be mentioned as an initial stage for both the employee and the employer's expertise (Mishra & Kumar, 2019). The rapid technological development nowadays and the increasing level of people who have high digital literacy; is where communication and access to information are increasingly through digital technologies such as social media, internet platforms, and mobile applications. Thus, an organization is currently really in the technologies to recruit employees. E-recruitment is defined as the organization of the recruitment process and activities, which employing technology and human agents to facilitate collaboration and interaction independent of time and space, to identify, attract and influence qualified candidates (Holm, 2012). In Palestine, several organizations recently currently really in E-recruitment whereas the traditional process of job advertising, CV screening, short-listing, and communication with candidates are significantly changed toward the use of digital technologies.

Even though several studies in the field of online recruitment were conducted last decades around the world (e.g., B. Holm, 2014; Kucherov & Tsybova, 2021; Yoon Kin Tong, 2009). However, "Online recruitment remains an unknown research topic, particularly regarding the profile of Online Recruitment candidates" (Brandão, Silva, & dos Santos, 2019).



footprint (Rahman, *et al.* 2020).

Technological Acceptance Model is considered as a psychological model appropriate for adoption in studying user acceptance of e E-Recruitment; the model has been validated by a plethora of studies around the world and using different applications, the Technological Acceptance Model has been recommended for the investigation of web user behavior (Hernandez, Jimenez, & Martín, 2008; Mulyono, Suryoputro, & Jamil, 2021; Siregar, Wardaya Puspokusumo, & Rahayu, 2017; Sternad & Bobek, 2013). In addition, the Technological Acceptance Model has been used by information systems studies to investigate the individual acceptance of technology and is a solid predictor of intention to use technology in various institutions and personal situations (Stoel & Lee, 2003). Thus, in this study, it is suitable to apply the Technological Acceptance Model to investigate the job seekers' acceptance of the online application system.

Several studies (e.g., Brahmana & Brahmana, 2013; Khalid, Zaheer, Munir, & Sandhu, 2021; Kumar & Priyanka, 2014; Yoon Kin Tong, 2009) were conducted based on the Technological Acceptance Model of Davis, *et al.* (1989). In addition, several studies stressed that perceived usefulness is the main factor that influences individuals to use e-recruitment (Fujimoto, *et al.* 2007; Bebetos & Antoniou, 2008). These studies state that e-recruitment makes it easier for job seekers to look for jobs quickly, effectively, and eagerly. Fujimoto, *et al.* (2007) study examine e-recruitment from the usefulness perspective in that online communication is associated with work dynamics and work behaviours; and links each to the cross-cultural online communication context. It was found in a more practical sense that combined use of individualist and collectivist human resources management practices can produce greater efficiency and effectiveness in online communications worldwide. This is supported by Bebetos & Antoniou (2008) which revealed that perceived usefulness that individuals spent more of their free time on computer usage rather than enjoying other activities.



This research is explanatory where it explains the relationships between the variables. The data were subjected to a descriptive analysis using frequencies and percentages for each item in the instrument, and then the researchers used correlation analysis to identify the relationship between the variables of the current study.

A national, cross-sectional, online survey of university graduates in Palestine was conducted; 245 job seekers responded. All of the participants in this study who respond to the questionnaire already used online recruitment sites. They are from one of the national universities in Nablus, Palestine (An-Najah National University) the largest university in West Bank, the graduates from this university are from all the areas of West Bank including the cities and villages, thus they graduated from An-Najah National University best represent the job seekers in West Bank of Palestine. Cities resident respondents was 49.8% and villages resident of respondents was 45.7%. Female graduates made up 66.9% of the respondents and male graduates, 33.1%. Of these participants, 72.6% have bachelor's degrees, and 78.8% belong to the age group of 21–25 years.

The data collection instrument was adapted questionnaire from previous research on the Technological Acceptance Model of Davis, (1989) and subsequent studies (e.g., Brahmana & Brahmana, 2013; Eastin & LaRose, 2000; Khalid, *et al.* 2021; Koufaris, 2002; Kumar & Priyanka, 2014; Moon & Kim, 2001; Tan & Chou, 2008; Yoon Kin Tong, 2009). The questionnaire was distributed online and contained two parts. The first part requested demographic details of the respondents, while the second required the respondents to indicate their level of agreement to 45 items that measured intention to use online recruitment in twelve proposed aspects: perceived usefulness (4 items), perceived ease of use (4 items), perceived privacy risk (5 items), perceived enjoyment (3 items), perceived stress (3 items), application-specific self-efficacy (3 items), performance expectancy (5 items), intention (4 items), subjective norm (4 items), perceived behavioral control (3 items), habit (4 items), attitude (3 items). The items have measured the constructs on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).



*Continue table (1)*

No.	Variable	No of Item	Cronbach's Alpha Value
3.	Perceived Privacy Risk	5	0.82
4.	Perceived Enjoyment	3	0.87
5.	Perceived Stress	3	0.71
6.	Application-Specific Self-Efficacy	3	0.67
7.	Performance Expectancy	5	0.84
8.	Intention	4	0.80
9.	Subjective Norm	4	0.82
10.	Perceived Behavioral Control	3	0.80
11.	Habit	4	0.80
12.	Attitude	3	0.86
13.	All variables in the questionnaire	45	0.95

## Results

This cross-sectional survey explored Palestinian university graduated' Intention to Use Online Recruitment. The items have measured the constructs on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The result of the descriptive analysis is shown in Table 2 below.

**Table (2):** Respondents' Agreement to Factors Influencing Intention to use Online Recruitment in Palestine.

Item	Agreement	Neutral	Disagreement
<i>Perceived Usefulness</i>	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
1. Using E-recruitment sites enabled me to look for a job quickly	172 (70.2)	41 (16.7)	32 (13.1)
2. Using E-recruitment sites improved my job searches	196 (80)	28 (11.4)	21 (8.6)

...continue table (2)

Item	Agreement	Neutral	Disagreement
3. Using E-recruitment sites to look for a job was very effective	160 (65.3)	50 (20.4)	35 (14.3)
4. Using E-recruitment sites made it easier for me to look for jobs	193 (78.8)	28 (11.4)	24 (9.8)
<b><i>Perceived Ease of Use</i></b>			
5. Learning to use E-recruitment sites was easy for me	195 (79.6)	34 (13.9)	16 (6.5)
6. I found it easy to do what I want to do in E-recruitment sites	180 (73.5)	39 (15.9)	26 (10.6)
7. My interaction with E-recruitment sites was clear and understandable	188 (76.7)	38 (15.5)	19 (7.8)
8. It was easy for me to become skillful at using E-recruitment sites	192 (78.4)	37 (15.1)	16 (6.5)
<b><i>Perceived Privacy Risk</i></b>			
9. Using E-recruitment sites is secure.	160 (65.3)	61 (24.9)	24 (9.8)
10. I trust the ability of E-recruitment sites to protect my privacy	134 (54.7)	73 (29.8)	38 (15.5)
11. I trust E-recruitment sites as a job search tool	170 (69.4)	43 (17.6)	32 (13.1)
12. I am not worried about the security of E-recruitment sites	126 (51.4)	60 (24.5)	59 (24.1)
13. Matters of security have no influence on me using E-recruitment sites	134 (54.7)	37 (15.1)	74 (30.2)
<b><i>Perceived Enjoyment</i></b>			
14. Using E-recruitment sites is fun	148 (60.4)	54 (22)	43 (17.6)
15. Using E-recruitment sites is exciting	139 (56.7)	55 (22.4)	51 (20.8)

...continue table (2)

Item	Agreement	Neutral	Disagreement
16. Overall, I enjoyed using E-recruitment sites	153 (62.4)	49 (20)	43 (17.6)
<b>Perceived Stress</b>			
17. I don't need to wait for long for the E-recruitment site page to load	164 (66.9)	49 (20)	32 (13.1)
18. Whilst using the E-recruitment site, the page will not hang/freeze suddenly	149 (60.8)	45 (18.4)	51 (20.8)
19. I do not have trouble logging into the E-recruitment site	189 (77.1)	29 (11.8)	27 (11)
<b>Application-Specific Self-Efficacy</b>			
20. I would be able to use E-recruitment sites even if there was no one around to show me how to use it	212 (86.5)	19 (7.8)	14 (5.7)
21. I could use E-recruitment sites on my own if I had just the built-in help facility for assistance	214 (87.3)	19 (7.8)	12 (4.9)
22. I feel confident about using E-recruitment sites on my own	154 (62.9)	62 (25.3)	29 (11.8)
<b>Performance Expectancy</b>			
23. Using E-recruitment sites increases the chance of being spotted by recruiters	184 (75.1)	31 (12.7)	30 (12.2)
24. E-recruitment sites help promote my profile to the recruiters	156 (63.7)	47 (19.2)	42 (17.1)
25. Using E-recruitment sites, I spent less time on repeated job applications	177 (72.2)	33 (13.5)	35 (14.3)
26. I received a timely response from recruiters using E-recruitment sites	97 (39.6)	54 (22)	94 (38.4)

...continue table (2)

Item	Agreement	Neutral	Disagreement
27. Overall, the performance of E-recruitment sites as a job search tool meets my expectations	144 (58.8)	51 (20.8)	50 (20.4)
<b>Intention</b>			
28. The likelihood that I would use E-recruitment sites for job search is high	179 (73.1)	41 (16.7)	25 (10.2)
29. I am willing to use E-recruitment sites for job search	211 (86.1)	15 (6.1)	19 (7.8)
30. Soon, I would consider using E-recruitment sites for job search	206 (84.1)	24 (9.8)	15 (6.1)
31. I regularly use E-recruitment sites for job search	197 (80.4)	33 (13.5)	15 (6.1)
<b>Subjective Norm</b>			
32. I believe that my closest family would think that I should use the E-recruitment sites	168 (68.6)	53 (21.6)	24 (9.8)
33. I believe that people, who are important to me, would think that I should use the E-recruitment sites	180 (73.5)	47 (19.2)	18 (7.3)
34. I believe that my closest friends would think that I should use the E-recruitment sites	171 (69.8)	51 (20.8)	23 (9.4)
35. I believe that my lecturers would think that I should use the E-recruitment sites	172 (70.2)	49 (20)	24 (9.8)
<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>			
36. I have the resources to use the E-recruitment	185 (75.5)	41 (16.7)	19 (7.8)
37. I have enough knowledge to use the E-recruitment	203 (82.9)	27 (11)	15 (6.1)
38. I can use the E-recruitment	209 (85.3)	27 (11)	9 (3.7)

*...continue table (2)*

Item	Agreement	Neutral	Disagreement
<b>Habit</b>			
39. E-recruitment site is where I usually go to search for jobs	190 (77.6)	34 (13.9)	21 (8.6)
40. An E-recruitment site is my preferred online job search tool	182 (74.3)	31 (12.7)	32 (13.1)
41. When I look for jobs, E-recruitment site is where I go first	190 (77.6)	29 (11.8)	26 (10.6)
42. I often search for jobs from this E-recruitment site	204 (83.3)	23 (9.4)	18 (7.3)
<b>Attitude</b>			
43. All things considered, the use of E-recruitment is extremely positive	132 (53.9)	72 (29.4)	41 (16.7)
44. All things considered, the use of E-recruitment is extremely beneficial	153 (62.4)	53 (21.6)	39 (15.9)
45. All things considered, use of E-recruitment is extremely good	150 (61.2)	58 (23.7)	37 (15.1)

### ***Perceived Usefulness***

More than 65% of the graduates said that E-recruitment sites enable them to look for jobs quickly, improved their job searches, made it easier for them to look for jobs, and also is effective. This shows how useful this site is for the graduates.

### ***Perceived ease of use***

A huge majority of the graduates reported that learning to use E-recruitment sites was easy for them (79.6%), and 78.4 of them reported that it was easy for them to become skillful at using E-recruitment sites, 76.7% of them agreed that their interaction with E-recruitment sites was clear and understandable, and 73.5% of the graduated found it easy to do what they want to do in E-recruitment sites.

### ***Perceived Privacy Risk***

More than 50% of graduates found that E-recruitment is secure, protects their privacy, can be trusted as a job search tool, do not have any influence on them using the sites, and they are not worried about the security of E-recruitment sites.

### ***Perceived Enjoyment***

A majority of the graduates feel E-recruitment is an enjoyment tool. More than 55% of them agreed that the site is fun, exciting, and enjoyed overall using the sites.

### ***Perceived stress***

With regards to stress from using the sites, there are more than 65% of the graduates do not need to wait for long for the sites to load, do not have any trouble logging into the sites, they didn't face any hang/freeze suddenly whilst using the sites.

### ***Application-Specific Self-Efficacy***

There is more than 85% of the graduates able to use the sites even if there was no one around to show me how to use it and could use it on their own if they had just the built-in help facility for assistance. And almost 63 of them graduated feel confident about using the sites on their own (62.9%).

### ***Performance Expectancy***

More than 58% of the graduates said that Using E-recruitment sites increases the chance of being spotted by recruiters, helps promote their profile to the recruiters, they spent less time on repeated job applications, and overall, the performance of E-recruitment sites as a job search tool meets my expectations. And more than 39% of them received a timely response from recruiters using E-recruitment sites.

### ***Intention***

With regards to the intention of using the sites, there are more than 73% of the graduates would use it for job search, willing to use it for job

search, would consider it as sites for job search, and they regularly use it for job search.

### ***Subjective Norm***

More than 68% of the graduates believed that their closest family, people who are important to them, their closest friends, and their lecturers would think that they should use E-recruitment sites.

### ***Perceived Behavioral Control***

More than 75% of the graduates have the resources, enough knowledge, and the ability to use E-recruitment.

### ***Habit***

74% and above of the graduates stated that E-recruitment is where they usually go to search for jobs, their preferred online job search tool, they go to the site as the first one to look for their jobs, and they often search for jobs from this E-recruitment site.

### ***Attitude***

In terms of graduated' attitude, 62.4% of them agreed that all things considered use of E-recruitment are extremely positive, 61.2% of the graduated agreed that all things considered use of E-recruitment is good, and 53.9% of them agreed that all things considered use of E-recruitment are extremely beneficial.

### **Relationships among using online recruitment constructs**

Pearson's correlation procedures run on the summated scores of all twelve (12) constructs showed statistically significant positive relationships among them. The respondents' perceived usefulness significantly and positively correlated with their perceived ease of use ( $r = .421$ ,  $p = .001$ ), perceived privacy risk ( $r = .351$ ,  $p = .001$ ), perceived enjoyment ( $r = .453$ ,  $p = .001$ ), perceived stress ( $r = .300$ ,  $p = .001$ ), application specific self-efficacy ( $r = .402$ ,  $p = .001$ ), performance expectancy ( $r = .518$ ,  $p = .001$ ), intention ( $r = .517$ ,  $p = .001$ ), subjective norm ( $r = .236$ ,  $p = .001$ ),



subjective norm ( $r = .422$ ,  $p = .001$ ), perceived behavioral control ( $r = .469$ ,  $p = .001$ ), habit ( $r = .631$ ,  $p = .001$ ), and attitude ( $r = .419$ ,  $p = .001$ ). As well as between subjective norm and perceived behavioral control ( $r = .350$ ,  $p = .001$ ), habit ( $r = .451$ ,  $p = .001$ ), and attitude ( $r = .279$ ,  $p = .001$ ).

Statistically significant positive relationships also existed between perceived behavioral control and habit ( $r = .491$ ,  $p = .001$ ), and attitude ( $r = .308$ ,  $p = .001$ ). As well as between habit and attitude ( $r = .504$ ,  $p = .001$ ). The results show that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived privacy risk, perceived enjoyment, perceived stress, application-specific self-efficacy, performance expectancy, intention, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, habit, and attitude were linearly correlated with one another, and significantly affected the overall using online recruitment in Palestine. Table 3 shows the summary of correlation analysis results.

**Table (3):** Summary of Correlation Analysis Results.

Relationship between constructs	Pearson's r	P-Value
perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use	.421	.001
perceived usefulness and perceived privacy risk	.351	.001
perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment	.453	.001
perceived usefulness and perceived stress	.300	.001
perceived usefulness and application-specific self-efficacy	.402	.001
perceived usefulness and performance expectancy	.518	.001
perceived usefulness and intention	.517	.001
perceived usefulness and subjective norm	.236	.001
perceived usefulness and perceived behavioral control	.252	.001
perceived usefulness and habit	.448	.001



*Continue table (3)*

<b>Relationship between constructs</b>	<b>Pearson's r</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
perceived enjoyment and application-specific self-efficacy	.437	.001
perceived enjoyment and performance expectancy	.508	.001
perceived enjoyment and intention	.406	.001
perceived enjoyment and subjective norm	.277	.001
perceived enjoyment and perceived behavioral control	.196	.001
perceived enjoyment and habit	.325	.001
perceived enjoyment and attitude	.466	.001
perceived stress and application-specific self-efficacy	.455	.001
perceived stress and performance expectancy	.458	.001
perceived stress and intention	.378	.001
perceived stress and subjective norm	.279	.001
perceived stress and perceived behavioral control	.439	.001
perceived stress and habit	.273	.001
perceived stress and attitude	.354	.001
specific self-efficacy and performance expectancy	.569	.001
specific self-efficacy and intention	.587	.001
specific self-efficacy and subjective norm	.426	.001
specific self-efficacy and perceived behavioral control	.544	.001
specific self-efficacy and habit	.507	.001
specific self-efficacy and attitude	.409	.001
performance expectancy and intention	.504	.001
performance expectancy and subjective norm	.390	.001
performance expectancy and perceived behavioral control	.272	.001

*Continue table (3)*

<b>Relationship between constructs</b>	<b>Pearson's r</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
performance expectancy and habit	.386	.001
performance expectancy and attitude	.582	.001
intention and subjective norm	.422	.001
intention and perceived behavioral control	.469	.001
intention and habit	.631	.001
intention and attitude	.419	.001
subjective norm and perceived behavioral control	.350	.001
subjective norm and habit	.451	.001
subjective norm and attitude	.279	.001
perceived behavioral control and habit	.491	.001
perceived behavioral control and attitude	.308	.001
habit and attitude	.504	.001

### **Conclusion and Implications**

Recruitment has been moved online over the past few decades. From advertising vacancies to using online application forms and candidate selection. However, recruitment remains one of the most important tasks for any company. This study demonstrates the usefulness of employment sites to graduates, as they agreed on how easy it is to use and secure their privacy. It also increases the chances of finding work, helps to enhance their profile, and most graduates resort to it for a job. With statistical significance among the elements of employing online employment. The results show that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived privacy risk, perceived enjoyment, perceived stress, application-specific self-efficacy, performance expectancy, intention, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, habit, and attitude were linearly correlated with one another, and significantly affected the overall using online recruitment in Palestine. These positive relationships between all twelve (12) constructs have several important practical implications. It means that the twelve (12)

constructs are important factors to the use of employment sites by graduates. Thus, the practitioners involved in recruitment might take into consideration these factors in designing the employment sites. Moreover, HR managers may find it necessary to reorganize the entire hiring process and acquire different types of employees and ICTs to run it. This study provided practical and theoretical contributions. By adopting the Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) of Davis (1989), this study expanded our understanding of the importance of human psychology in e-recruitment when examining job seekers' intentions. Further research may shed light on the effects of these factors on the job applicants' willingness to use employment sites and other technological advancements in the recruitment process and how this may affect their attitude towards the hiring organization and job application likelihood.

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