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Examining the Effect of Algorithmic Hiring, Perceived Fairness, and HR Tech Literacy on Recruitment Acceptance

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ABSTRACT
The increasing integration of algorithmic technologies in recruitment processes has raised questions about candidate acceptance and perceptions of fairness. This study examines the effects of algorithmic hiring, perceived fairness, and HR tech literacy on recruitment acceptance. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 350 job applicants through structured questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression via SPSS. The results reveal that all three variables—algorithmic hiring, perceived fairness, and HR tech literacy—significantly and positively affect recruitment acceptance. Among them, perceived fairness emerged as the strongest predictor, suggesting that candidates' perceptions of just and transparent processes play a critical role in shaping their acceptance of technology-driven recruitment methods. Additionally, HR tech literacy facilitates understanding and comfort with algorithmic systems, enhancing candidate receptivity. The findings contribute to theories of technology acceptance and organizational justice and provide practical implications for designing inclusive, ethical, and effective tech-based recruitment systems. This study underscores the importance of balancing innovation with fairness and transparency to build trust and improve outcomes in digital recruitment.

Keywords:
Algorithmic Hiring; Recruitment Acceptance; Perceived Fiarness; HR Tech Literacy; Human Resource Technology

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, organizations have increasingly integrated artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic decision-making into various facets of human resource management, particularly in recruitment processes. Algorithmic hiring refers to the use of computer-based systems and machine learning algorithms to screen, evaluate, and select job candidates (Lavanchy et al., 2023). The shift towards algorithmic hiring is driven by the need for efficiency, consistency, and data-driven decision-making in talent acquisition. These technologies promise to reduce human biases, process large volumes of applications rapidly, and enhance the objectivity of selection processes (Köchling & Wehner, 2020). However, as algorithmic hiring tools become more prevalent, questions arise regarding how candidates perceive these systems and whether such perceptions influence their acceptance of job offers.

A critical factor shaping candidates' acceptance of algorithm-based recruitment decisions is perceived fairness. Fairness, in the recruitment context, refers to the extent to which applicants believe that the hiring process is just, transparent, and equitable (Zhang & Yencha, 2022). While algorithms are often assumed to be neutral and impartial, studies have shown that candidates may perceive automated decision-making as impersonal or opaque (Ochmann et al., 2024). Concerns about fairness are particularly pronounced when algorithmic systems lack explainability or are trained on biased data sets, which may reproduce or even amplify existing societal inequalities (Hilliard et al., 2022). Thus, understanding how fairness perceptions mediate the relationship between algorithmic hiring and recruitment outcomes is essential.

Another significant determinant in the acceptance of algorithm-driven recruitment systems is HR tech literacy, which refers to an individual's familiarity,

comfort, and competence with digital technologies used in human resource practices. Candidates who possess higher levels of technological literacy may better understand how algorithms function and may be more receptive to AI-driven recruitment tools (Powell, 2024). Conversely, low levels of HR tech literacy can result in skepticism, confusion, or rejection of algorithmic processes. The digital divide, which manifests as unequal access to or knowledge of digital technologies, poses a potential barrier to the equitable adoption and perception of such systems. Hence, candidates' technological readiness is likely to shape their attitudes toward and acceptance of algorithmic hiring outcomes.

The growing reliance on algorithmic recruitment technologies necessitates a closer examination of their social and psychological implications. Although many firms highlight the advantages of automation, such as cost reduction and scalability, there is less attention paid to the candidate experience and behavioral responses to these technologies (Yu et al., 2025). Specifically, little is known about how the interplay between algorithmic hiring, fairness perceptions, and digital literacy influences recruitment acceptance—defined as a candidate's willingness to accept a job offer following an algorithm-mediated selection process. This issue is especially pertinent in competitive labor markets where employer branding and candidate experience play crucial roles in attracting top talent.

Furthermore, as digital transformation in human resources accelerates post-COVID-19, organizations face mounting pressure to adopt fair and inclusive technologies. Regulatory scrutiny, such as the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act, and increasing demands for ethical AI further underscore the need to evaluate the fairness and transparency of algorithmic hiring tools (Calluso & Devetag, 2024). In light of these developments, empirical research is required to explore whether algorithmic hiring fosters or hinders inclusive recruitment practices and how it is perceived by diverse candidate populations. This study contributes to the literature by empirically examining the interconnected roles of algorithmic hiring, perceived fairness, and HR tech literacy in shaping recruitment acceptance.

Despite the widespread adoption of algorithmic hiring tools, there remains a gap in understanding how these systems influence candidate behavior—particularly in terms of recruitment acceptance. Existing studies often emphasize organizational efficiency and cost savings but overlook how candidates react to automated recruitment decisions. There is limited empirical research that simultaneously investigates the impact of algorithmic hiring, perceived fairness, and HR tech literacy on job offer acceptance. As companies increasingly rely on AI to make high-stakes hiring decisions, understanding the candidate's perspective is crucial. The absence of such insights may lead to unintended consequences, such as reduced trust in organizations, lower job acceptance rates, or reputational damage. Therefore, a comprehensive study is needed to explore how these three factors interact to influence recruitment acceptance in the digital age. The objective of this study is to examine the effect of algorithmic hiring, perceived fairness, and HR tech literacy on recruitment acceptance.

Literature Review

1. Algorithmic Hiring and Recruitment Practices

Algorithmic hiring refers to the utilization of machine learning and AI-driven tools to screen, evaluate, and select job applicants (Lee, 2018). This technological

advancement aims to increase efficiency, minimize human bias, and improve consistency in the hiring process. These systems typically analyze resumes, video interviews, and psychometric assessments, generating scores or recommendations for recruiters (Rodgers et al., 2023). As algorithmic hiring becomes more mainstream, especially in large organizations and technology-driven sectors, it has sparked both enthusiasm and concern regarding its impact on recruitment outcomes.

Despite claims of increased objectivity, scholars have raised critical questions about the transparency and fairness of algorithmic systems. Research by (Choung et al., 2024) illustrates that many candidates perceive algorithmic decisions as opaque and impersonal, especially when they are not provided with clear explanations for rejection. Furthermore, algorithms may inadvertently replicate or amplify existing social biases, depending on the quality and structure of the training data used (Shulner-Tal et al., 2023). Consequently, while algorithmic hiring offers the potential for scalable and efficient recruitment, its actual influence on candidates' job acceptance decisions remains contingent upon other psychological and perceptual factors, such as perceived fairness and technological competence.

2. Perceived Fairness in Algorithmic Hiring

Perceived fairness is a central construct in organizational justice theory and plays a significant role in shaping applicants' reactions to hiring processes (Yarger et al., 2020). In the context of algorithmic hiring, fairness pertains to how transparent, equitable, and respectful the recruitment experience is perceived to be. There are three main dimensions of fairness in recruitment: procedural fairness (fairness of the process), distributive fairness (fairness of outcomes), and interactional fairness (fairness in interpersonal treatment).

The literature suggests that candidates' reactions to algorithmic hiring decisions are influenced by how fair they perceive the process to be. A study by (Kelan, 2024) found that when candidates understood the algorithm's logic and felt the process was explained clearly, they were more likely to accept the recruitment outcomes. On the other hand, algorithms that are seen as "black boxes"—providing no justification or feedback—were associated with negative emotional responses, including reduced trust in the hiring organization (Al Assadi, 2024). The importance of transparency and explainability in AI systems cannot be overstated, as perceptions of injustice can deter even highly qualified candidates from accepting offers.

Moreover, (Figueroa-Armijos et al., 2023) argue that perceived fairness in algorithmic decision-making depends on whether applicants believe they were evaluated holistically and not reduced to data points. In cases where candidates believe that the system does not accommodate individual contexts or nuances, their perceptions of procedural fairness diminish. Therefore, perceived fairness not only mediates the relationship between algorithmic tools and recruitment outcomes but also serves as a predictor of broader organizational attractiveness and candidate engagement.

3. HR Tech Literacy and Candidate Receptiveness

HR tech literacy—defined as the degree to which an individual understands, interprets, and interacts with digital HR systems—has gained increasing attention as a moderating variable in candidate reactions to algorithmic hiring. Individuals with higher levels of tech literacy are more likely to perceive algorithmic systems as credible, understandable, and fair (Wang et al., 2020). On the contrary, candidates

with limited exposure to such technologies may feel alienated, confused, or skeptical about the integrity of the recruitment process.

Research by (Fleiß et al., 2024) indicates that digital literacy significantly moderates user trust in AI-based recruitment tools. Candidates who are familiar with data science or machine learning concepts tend to have more favorable views of algorithmic evaluations. These individuals are also more likely to accept job offers facilitated by AI due to increased confidence in the validity and impartiality of the decisions. Conversely, a lack of HR tech literacy is linked to misunderstanding algorithmic outputs and attributing negative intentions to the technology or the employer. This divide underscores the importance of addressing digital equity in recruitment processes. HR departments must consider candidate education, exposure to digital systems, and access to information when deploying AI tools. Otherwise, the risk is that algorithmic hiring may unintentionally privilege digitally savvy candidates over equally qualified but less tech-literate applicants, thus exacerbating inequality (Robinson, 2019).

4. Recruitment Acceptance as Behavioral Outcome

Recruitment acceptance—defined as a candidate's decision to accept a job offer following the selection process—is influenced by both rational evaluations and emotional responses. Studies show that applicants who perceive the hiring process as fair and respectful are more likely to accept job offers and recommend the organization to others (Tandon et al., 2025). In the age of digital hiring, these dynamics are further complicated by the impersonal nature of automated systems, which may weaken interpersonal connections and trust.

According to (Tanantong & Wongras, 2024), applicant reactions are a critical determinant of organizational attractiveness. In algorithmic hiring contexts, reactions are shaped by both the perceived effectiveness of the technology and the candidate's experience navigating it. If candidates find the system user-friendly, fair, and transparent, their likelihood of accepting the offer increases. On the contrary, negative perceptions about automation—such as lack of empathy or personalization—can result in lower acceptance rates, even when the job role or compensation is attractive.

Moreover, employer branding can amplify or mitigate the effects of algorithmic hiring on recruitment acceptance. Strong employer brands that communicate fairness, innovation, and candidate-centric values may buffer any skepticism associated with AI systems (Starke et al., 2022). Hence, the final decision to accept or reject a job offer following algorithmic recruitment is shaped by a combination of technology perceptions, fairness judgments, personal tech literacy, and overall organizational reputation.

METHOD

To examine the relationship between algorithmic hiring, perceived fairness, HR tech literacy, and recruitment acceptance, this study adopted a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design. This approach was selected due to its suitability for identifying patterns and testing hypotheses across a large sample within a specific point in time. The goal was to collect empirical data that could explain how candidates' perceptions and technological competencies influence their acceptance of job offers following algorithm-based recruitment processes.

1. Population and Sampling

The target population of this study consisted of job seekers and individuals who had experienced algorithmic-based recruitment processes—such as online assessments, AI-driven video interviews, or automated resume screening—within the last two years. Given the increasing prevalence of algorithmic hiring across industries, the sample was not restricted to a particular sector but was instead drawn from a broad range of professional and academic backgrounds to ensure diversity and generalizability.

The sampling method used was purposive sampling, supplemented by snowball sampling. Initial respondents were recruited via online professional communities, job-seeker forums, LinkedIn, and university alumni networks. These respondents were then asked to refer others who had also undergone algorithmic recruitment experiences. This approach was appropriate considering the relatively niche nature of the target experience. The final sample consisted of 350 valid respondents, a size deemed sufficient for multiple regression analysis (Hair et al., 2010).

2. Data Collection Procedure

The data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 26. Prior to hypothesis testing, a series of data screening procedures were conducted. These included checking for missing values, outliers, normality, linearity, and multicollinearity. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents and the central tendencies of the variables

To test the hypotheses, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted, with recruitment acceptance as the dependent variable and algorithmic hiring experience, perceived fairness, and HR tech literacy as the independent variables. The analysis aimed to determine the predictive power of each independent variable on the dependent variable, as well as the overall model fit (R^2). Standardized beta coefficients (β), p-values, and confidence intervals were reported to evaluate the strength and significance of the relationships.In addition, an interaction analysis was planned to explore the potential moderating role of HR tech literacy in the relationship between algorithmic hiring and perceived fairness. This analysis was conducted using hierarchical regression by entering interaction terms (e.g., algorithmic hiring × HR tech literacy) to see if the strength of the relationship changes at different levels of literacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Descriptive Statistics and Preliminary Analysis

Before conducting the main analysis, data were screened for accuracy, missing values, and outliers. All cases were complete, and no significant outliers were detected. Assumptions of normality, linearity, and multicollinearity were checked and met. Tolerance values were above 0.1 and VIF values were below 5 for all predictors, indicating no multicollinearity.

2. Model Summary

A multiple linear regression was conducted to test whether algorithmic hiring, perceived fairness, and HR tech literacy significantly predicted recruitment acceptance. The results of the model summary are presented in Table 1.

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Table 1. *Model Summary*

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.621	0.386	0.380	0.521

Source: Data Processed

As shown in Table 1, the model explained approximately 38.6% of the variance in recruitment acceptance ($R^2 = 0.386$), indicating a moderate effect size. The adjusted R^2 was 0.380, suggesting a good fit for generalization beyond the sample.

3. ANOVA

The ANOVA results in Table 2 show that the regression model was statistically significant.

Table 2. *ANOVA*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	84.317	3	28.106	72.635	0.000
Residual	134.023	346	0.387		
Total	218.340	349			

Source: Data Processed

The F-value of 72.635 with a significance level of 0.000 indicates that the model as a whole was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), confirming that at least one of the independent variables significantly predicts recruitment acceptance.

4. Regression Coefficients

Table 3 presents the regression coefficients for each predictor variable.

Table 3. *Coefficients*

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.250	0.214		5.841	0.000
Algorithmic Hiring	0.312	0.078	0.285	4.000	0.000
Perceived Fairness	0.458	0.065	0.412	7.046	0.000
HR Tech Literacy	0.276	0.072	0.233	3.833	0.000

Source: Data Processed

All three independent variables were found to significantly predict recruitment acceptance. Algorithmic Hiring had a positive and significant effect ($B = 0.312$, $\beta = 0.285$, $t = 4.000$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that greater exposure to or familiarity with algorithmic hiring processes increases the likelihood of accepting a job offer. Perceived Fairness emerged as the strongest predictor ($B = 0.458$, $\beta = 0.412$, $t = 7.046$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that when candidates perceive the algorithmic process as fair, they are more inclined to accept offers. HR Tech Literacy also showed a significant positive relationship with recruitment acceptance ($B = 0.276$, $\beta = 0.233$, $t = 3.833$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that candidates who feel confident in their understanding of HR technology are more likely to respond positively to such recruitment methods.

Discussion

1. The Impact of Algorithmic Hiring on Recruitment Acceptance

The results show that algorithmic hiring has a significant positive effect on recruitment acceptance. This aligns with recent literature that highlights the efficiency, speed, and perceived objectivity associated with algorithmic tools in recruitment processes (Horodyski, 2023). Job seekers may perceive algorithmic assessments as more consistent and less biased than human evaluations, particularly in initial screening stages where volume and time constraints are critical (Fowle, 2023). Our

findings support this perspective, suggesting that when candidates are aware of or engaged with algorithmic hiring tools, they may feel more assured about the professionalism and impartiality of the recruitment process.

However, while algorithmic hiring contributes to acceptance, its standardized coefficient (β = 0.285) indicates it is not the dominant factor. This suggests that while candidates appreciate the technological advancement and efficiency offered by algorithms, they may still harbor concerns related to transparency, explainability, or the potential dehumanization of decision-making (Revillod, 2024). Thus, companies must ensure that these systems are not only efficient but also understandable and relatable to applicants.

2. Perceived Fairness as the Dominant Predictor

Perceived fairness emerged as the strongest predictor of recruitment acceptance (β = 0.412), reinforcing the crucial role of procedural and distributive justice in shaping candidates' decisions. This finding is consistent with previous research which indicates that fairness perceptions significantly affect applicants' attitudes and behaviors toward organizations (Cai et al., 2024). In contexts involving algorithmic decisions—where explanations and human interactions may be minimal—ensuring fairness becomes even more critical.

Perceived fairness in algorithmic hiring is closely related to transparency, explainability, and ethical handling of candidate data (Hunkenschroer & Luetge, 2022). When applicants understand how decisions are made and believe that these decisions are based on relevant, job-related criteria, they are more likely to trust the system and accept the outcome (Bankins et al., 2022). Conversely, opaque processes can result in negative perceptions, rejection of offers, or even reputational damage to the employer. To promote fairness, companies must adopt ethical AI design principles and communicate clearly about how their hiring technologies function. Informing candidates about the nature of algorithmic assessments and providing feedback when possible may significantly improve acceptance rates. Given the strong influence of perceived fairness, HR departments should prioritize transparency and ethics over mere efficiency.

3. HR Tech Literacy as a Facilitator of Acceptance

HR tech literacy, defined as an individual's awareness and competence in interacting with HR technologies, also had a significant positive effect on recruitment acceptance (β = 0.233). This supports the idea that digital literacy plays a mediating role in technology acceptance (Mihaljević et al., 2024). Candidates who are more familiar with online assessments, AI-based interviews, or gamified screening tools are less likely to feel intimidated or alienated by these systems.

This finding has several implications. Firstly, as organizations increasingly integrate sophisticated technologies into their HR processes, the digital divide could widen, potentially disadvantaging candidates with lower tech proficiency. Secondly, providing pre-assessment tutorials, simulations, or even optional training could help bridge this gap and create a more inclusive process. Moreover, HR tech literacy may moderate perceptions of fairness. Candidates with higher tech literacy might better understand and interpret algorithmic decisions, thereby perceiving them as more legitimate. In contrast, those with limited exposure may view such decisions as arbitrary or biased. Therefore, organizations should not only consider the deployment of technology but also how to support candidates in engaging with it meaningfully.

4. Theoretical Contributions

The findings of this study contribute to several theoretical frameworks in HR and technology adoption. First, the results support the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) by showing that attitudes (e.g., fairness perception) and perceived behavioral control (e.g., tech literacy) influence behavioral intentions (recruitment acceptance). Second, the findings extend the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by incorporating fairness perceptions as a critical determinant of technology-related outcomes, especially in HR contexts where decisions have lasting implications. Additionally, this study aligns with the justice framework in organizational behavior, particularly in algorithmic environments. As suggested by (Powell, 2024), perceptions of procedural justice are essential in determining reactions to selection systems. Our findings provide empirical support for applying these theories in digitally-mediated recruitment processes.

5. Practical Implications

For HR practitioners and organizations, the study offers valuable insights into designing recruitment strategies that integrate technology while remaining candidate-centered. The strongest implication is the need to embed fairness into algorithmic systems—not just technically, but perceptually. This involves providing transparency, communicating rationale, and incorporating human oversight where needed. Organizations should also consider the tech readiness of their applicant pool. While algorithmic systems may be scalable and cost-effective, failing to account for varying levels of tech literacy could exclude qualified candidates. Offering pre-assessment guidance and ensuring accessibility can improve both the fairness and effectiveness of the recruitment process. Furthermore, training recruiters to interpret and explain algorithmic outcomes can enhance candidate experience. Candidates still value human interaction, especially when they seek feedback or clarification. A hybrid approach that blends algorithmic precision with human empathy could be the ideal model.

6. Limitations and Future Research

Although the study offers compelling findings, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional nature of the data limits causal interpretations. Longitudinal studies could better capture the dynamics of how perceptions evolve throughout the hiring process. Second, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce social desirability bias, particularly in responses related to fairness. Future research could explore mediating or moderating variables such as trust in technology, previous exposure to algorithmic systems, or cultural dimensions affecting fairness perceptions. Comparative studies across industries or countries would also be beneficial in understanding contextual differences in technology acceptance. Another avenue worth exploring is the long-term impact of algorithmic hiring on job satisfaction and performance. Does perceived fairness during recruitment translate into stronger employee engagement and retention? Longitudinal tracking of hires selected via algorithmic methods could offer valuable insights into this question.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that while algorithmic hiring can enhance recruitment efficiency, its success largely depends on how fair and understandable the process appears to candidates. Perceived fairness and HR tech literacy significantly shape

candidates' willingness to accept job offers, underscoring the need for human-centered design and communication in the application of recruitment technologies. By balancing innovation with ethical and inclusive practices, organizations can enhance both recruitment outcomes and employer branding in an increasingly digital job market.

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