# Recruitment Approaches, Candidate Experience and Organisational Engagement: Evidence from an Indian BPO Organization

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines how recruitment approaches influence candidate experience and how candidate experience is associated with organisational engagement among employees and recent joiners in an Indian business process outsourcing context. The study uses a quantitative, cross-sectional design based on 235 valid responses collected through a structured questionnaire. The analysis draws on aggregate frequency distributions, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation, multiple regression model summary and chi-square outputs. To strengthen the analytical contribution, the study applies additional diagnostics that can be validly computed from the available statistics, including Candidate Experience Index, Organisational Engagement Index, Recruitment Process Quality Index, Top-Two-Box and Bottom-Two-Box analysis, Net Candidate Experience Score, recruitment-channel diversity analysis, coefficient of determination, regression F-statistic, Cohen's $f^2$, Cramer's V and contingency coefficient. The Candidate Experience Index is 68.76%, the Organisational Engagement Index is 63.94%, and the Recruitment Process Quality Index is 76.99%, indicating that the recruitment process is generally structured but still has scope for improvement in communication quality, values alignment and post-hire perception management. Candidate experience shows a statistically significant positive association with organisational engagement ($r = 0.540$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 29.16% shared variance. The regression model explains 39.3% of the variance in the dependent outcome ($R = 0.627$, $R^2 = 0.393$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.385$), with a large model effect (Cohen's $f^2 = 0.647$). The chi-square result is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 27.646$, $df = 16$, $p = 0.035$); however, the small Cramer's V value of 0.173 and expected-count limitations suggest that the categorical association should be interpreted cautiously. The findings show that recruitment should be managed not only as a talent-acquisition process but also as an early engagement-building mechanism that shapes organisational perception, role clarity and employee connection.

**Keywords:** recruitment approaches; candidate experience; organisational engagement; employer branding; BPO; composite index; AI recruitment

## INTRODUCTION

Recruitment is no longer a purely administrative staffing function. It is a strategic human resource process through which potential employees first experience an organization's communication quality, fairness, transparency and professionalism. In service-intensive organizations such as business process outsourcing (BPO) firms, recruitment interactions can shape both employer image and early employee engagement.

Candidate experience refers to the perceptions, emotions and judgments formed by job seekers during sourcing, application, communication, assessment, interview, offer and onboarding stages. A transparent and responsive recruitment process can create trust and role clarity, whereas delays, poor communication and impersonal procedures may weaken organizational attractiveness. Organisational engagement, in this article,

refers to the degree to which employees feel emotionally and cognitively connected with their role and organization after joining.

The present research examines recruitment approaches, candidate experience and organisational engagement in an Indian business process outsourcing context. The study uses 235 responses collected through a structured questionnaire and applies descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation, regression, chi-square diagnostics and additional effect-size and index-based measures. The focus is on understanding how recruitment communication, transparency, job-role clarity and candidate perception are associated with early organisational engagement.

**Research Objectives**

- To examine recruitment sources and satisfaction with recruitment methods among respondents.
- To assess candidate experience in terms of transparency, communication, job-role clarity and overall hiring experience.
- To analyse the relationship between candidate experience and organisational engagement.
- To quantify the magnitude of findings using advanced tools such as composite indices, Top-Two-Box diagnostics, coefficient of determination, Cohen's $f^2$ and Cramer's V.
- To suggest HR interventions for improving recruitment communication, candidate experience, employer perception and early-stage engagement.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature is arranged sequentially from recruitment and applicant attraction to applicant reactions, candidate experience, employer branding, AI-enabled recruitment and employee engagement.

**Recruitment, applicant attraction and job choice**

Breaugh (2008) reviewed employee recruitment research and argued that recruitment should be studied beyond source effectiveness by considering recruitment messages, applicant attraction, process quality and post-entry consequences. This supports the present article because the study treats recruitment not only as a hiring channel but also as a contributor to candidate experience and later engagement.

Cable and Turban (2001) developed the employer-knowledge framework and explained how job seekers form beliefs about an employer through familiarity, reputation and job information. This is relevant because the present study examines whether the recruitment process influences candidates' perception of the organization before and after joining.

Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin and Jones (2005), through a meta-analytic review, showed that job and organizational attributes, recruiter behaviour, perceived fit and recruitment process factors influence applicant attraction and job-choice decisions. This supports the study's focus on communication, job clarity, transparency and interviewer professionalism.

**Applicant reactions, fairness and candidate experience**

Gilliland (1993) proposed an organizational-justice model of applicant reactions to selection systems and emphasized the importance of fairness perceptions during recruitment and selection. The model is relevant because candidate experience is shaped by perceived fairness, transparency and respectful treatment during hiring. Hausknecht, Day and Thomas (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of applicant reactions to selection procedures and reported that fairness, face validity, opportunity to perform, feedback and interpersonal treatment are important predictors of applicant reactions. Their findings justify the use of communication quality, process transparency and overall candidate experience indicators in this article.

McCarthy, Bauer, Truxillo, Anderson, Costa and Ahmed (2017) reviewed applicant perspectives during selection and emphasized that candidate reactions are influenced by fairness, technology, communication and

assessment design. Their review provides a strong theoretical basis for analysing candidate experience as a strategic HR construct. Miles and McCamey (2018) positioned candidate experience as an important employer-brand touchpoint and argued that negative experiences can damage employer image. This supports the present study's argument that recruitment interactions influence organizational perception and should be managed as part of employer branding.

McFarland, Ployhart, Shepherd and Ward (2024) introduced the collective candidate-experience framework and connected candidate experience with business-unit outcomes. Their work strengthens the present article's link between candidate experience and organisational engagement, because it treats candidate experience as more than an individual satisfaction issue.

**E-recruitment, employer branding and digital recruitment channels**

Dineen and Soltis (2011) reviewed recruitment research and emerging directions, highlighting the growing importance of technology, job-search behaviour and applicant decision processes. This supports the inclusion of company websites, job portals, social media and recruitment agencies as recruitment-source variables.

Kissel and Büttgen (2015) found that social media activity and employer brand knowledge influence employer attractiveness. This is relevant because the current study includes social media and company websites as job-awareness sources and examines their role in shaping perception of the organization.

Guillot-Soulez, Saint-Onge and Soulez (2019) examined employer labels in recruitment advertising and found that such signals can influence organizational attractiveness through perceived prestige and person-organization fit. This supports the present study's emphasis on organizational perception and cultural alignment during recruitment.

**AI-enabled recruitment, fairness and digital ethics**

Ore and Sposato (2022) discussed opportunities and risks of artificial intelligence in recruitment and selection, identifying both efficiency benefits and concerns about bias, transparency and fairness. Their work supports a cautious interpretation of technology-enabled recruitment.

Kelan (2024) examined algorithmic inclusion in AI-supported hiring and argued that predictive hiring systems may reproduce or amplify bias unless data, design and decision processes are carefully governed. This supports the recommendation that recruitment technology should supplement transparent and accountable human communication.

Rodríguez-Sánchez, Montero-Navarro and Gallego-Losada (2024) analysed fairness in AI and recruitment and showed that fairness, transparency and accountability are central concerns in AI-enabled hiring. This strengthens the argument that candidate experience should include ethical and transparent process design.

**Organisational engagement and early employee experience**

Kahn (1990) introduced personal engagement as the harnessing of employees' physical, cognitive and emotional selves to work roles. This foundational view supports the use of organisational engagement as a meaningful post-recruitment outcome. Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá and Bakker (2002) conceptualized work engagement through vigour, dedication and absorption. Their work supports the measurement of employees' engagement in their current roles.

Saks (2006) tested antecedents and consequences of employee engagement and linked engagement with organizational support and social exchange. This supports the argument that respectful and transparent recruitment may contribute to stronger early engagement.

Bakker and Demerouti (2008) explained work engagement through the job demands-resources model, indicating that resources such as communication, clarity and support can foster engagement. In the recruitment context, these resources begin before formal employment through job-role clarity and candidate care.

### Research gap

The reviewed literature shows that recruitment, applicant reactions, employer branding, digital recruitment and engagement have been studied extensively. However, fewer studies integrate recruitment approaches, candidate experience, organizational perception and organisational engagement in the Indian BPO context. The present research addresses this gap using primary survey evidence from 235 respondents of a BPO firm in Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India.

### Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The conceptual framework assumes a sequential relationship in which recruitment approaches shape candidate experience. Candidate experience influences perception of the organization and is associated with organisational engagement after joining. The conceptual pathway is: Recruitment Approaches -> Candidate Experience -> Perception of Organisation -> Organisational Engagement.

H1: Recruitment approach quality is positively associated with candidate experience.

H2: Candidate experience is positively associated with organisational engagement.

H3: Candidate-experience indicators jointly predict a significant proportion of variance in engagement-related outcomes.

H4: Recruitment-related categorical variables show significant association with perception or experience categories.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research design and setting

The study adopted a quantitative descriptive and analytical design. The empirical context was a BPO organization based in Coimbatore. The respondents included currently employed persons and recent joiners who had experienced a formal recruitment process.

### Sample and sampling

The sample consisted of 235 respondents. The non-probability purposive sampling technique was used because respondents needed to have experienced a formal recruitment process.

### Instrument

The structured questionnaire included sections on demographics, recruitment approaches, candidate experience during hiring, perception of the organization and organisational engagement. The reported reliability test showed Cronbach's alpha = 0.884 for eight items, indicating good internal consistency.

### Additional advanced research tools applied

This article applies Candidate Experience Index, Organisational Engagement Index, Recruitment Process Quality Index, Top-Two-Box/Bottom-Two-Box diagnostics, Net Candidate Experience Score, channel-diversity analysis, Pearson $r^2$, model-level regression F-statistic, Cohen's $f^2$, Cramer's V and contingency coefficient. These tools improve interpretability by reporting effect size, magnitude and practical diagnostic meaning in addition to statistical significance.

## Data Analysis and Results

### Respondent profile and recruitment source pattern

The sample of 235 respondents had balanced gender representation and a strong concentration in the 18-45 age range. The company website was the most common job-awareness source, followed by recruitment agencies, referrals/personal contact, social media and job portals.

| Variable | Major category / finding | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 36-45 years | 81 | 34.4% |
| Gender | Female | 119 | 50.7% |
| Education | Bachelor's degree | 95 | 41.0% |
| Employment status | Currently employed | 138 | 59.0% |
| Job awareness source | Company website | 55 | 23.0% |

### Advanced descriptive diagnostics

Top-Two-Box analysis combines the two favourable categories, Bottom-Two-Box combines the two unfavourable categories, and the net score subtracts Bottom-Two-Box from Top-Two-Box. This helps identify whether the recruitment process is strongly positive or merely acceptable.

| Construct | Weighted mean | Index % | Top-Two-Box % | Bottom-Two-Box % | Net score | Neutral % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recruitment method satisfaction | 3.553 | 63.83% | 58.72% | 18.72% | 40.00 | 22.55% |
| Transparency of recruitment process | 3.757 | 68.94% | 60.00% | 8.09% | 51.91 | 31.91% |
| Communication during hiring | 3.813 | 70.32% | 62.13% | 7.66% | 54.47 | 30.21% |
| Overall candidate experience | 3.685 | 67.13% | 58.72% | 13.19% | 45.53 | 28.09% |
| Recruitment-based organization view | 3.783 | 69.57% | 65.53% | 12.34% | 53.19 | 22.13% |
| Organisational engagement | 3.426 | 60.64% | 50.64% | 20.43% | 30.21 | 28.94% |
| Values and culture alignment | 3.532 | 63.30% | 50.64% | 16.60% | 34.04 | 32.77% |
| Positive recruitment contributes to engagement | 3.715 | 67.87% | 56.60% | 11.06% | 45.53 | 32.34% |

The results show positive net scores across all major constructs. Communication during hiring has the strongest net score among experience indicators (54.47), while organisational engagement has a lower net score (30.21), showing that positive recruitment experience does not automatically convert into high engagement for all respondents.

### Composite indices

| Composite index | Basis | Score | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Candidate Experience Index (CEI) | Mean of recruitment satisfaction, transparency, communication, candidate experience and recruitment-based organization view | 67.96% | Moderately strong but improvable candidate experience |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Organisational Engagement Index (OEI) | Mean of engagement, values alignment and perceived contribution of recruitment experience | 63.94% | Moderate-to-positive engagement climate |
| Recruitment Process Quality Index (RPQI) | CEI items plus job-role clarity and process preparedness | 76.93% | Process design is strong, but experience quality is lower than preparedness |

The difference between RPQI (76.99%) and CEI (68.76%) is important. It shows that the process is perceived as well-prepared and role clarity is high, but candidate experience elements such as satisfaction, transparency, communication and emotional perception remain less strong than procedural preparedness.

**Recruitment-channel diversity analysis**

The five recruitment-awareness channels account for all 235 responses. To quantify source concentration, the Herfindahl–Hirschman Index (HHI) was computed as $HHI = \Sigma p_i^2$, where $p_i = n_i/235$ is the share of each source. Shannon entropy was computed as $H = -\Sigma p_i \ln(p_i)$, and normalized Shannon evenness as $J = H/\ln(5)$. The resulting HHI is 0.20221, Shannon entropy is 1.60395 nats and Shannon evenness is 0.99659. The HHI is near its five-channel minimum of 0.20 and evenness is near 1, indicating that reported job-awareness sources are comparatively evenly distributed. These measures describe respondents' discovery channels; they do not establish the effectiveness or conversion performance of those channels.

| **Recruitment source** | **n** | **%** | **Share ($p_i$)** | **$p_i^2$ (HHI)** | **$-p_i \ln(p_i)$** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Job portal | 40 | 17.0% | 0.17021 | 0.02897 | 0.30140 |
| Company website | 55 | 23.0% | 0.23404 | 0.05478 | 0.33989 |
| Recruitment agency | 49 | 21.0% | 0.20851 | 0.04348 | 0.32690 |
| Referral/personal contact | 46 | 20.0% | 0.19574 | 0.03832 | 0.31925 |
| Social media | 45 | 19.0% | 0.19149 | 0.03667 | 0.31652 |
| Total | 235 | 100% | 1.00000 | 0.20221 | 1.60395 |

Calculation note: HHI = 0.202209; H = 1.603947; J = 1.603947 / ln(5) = 0.996588. Shares are calculated from frequencies rather than rounded percentages. The HHI minimum for five equally represented channels is 1/5 = 0.20.

**Correlation and regression effect-size analysis**

| **Analysis** | **Reported statistic** | **Advanced metric added** | **Interpretation** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson correlation | $r = 0.540$, $p < 0.001$ | $r^2 = 0.2916$ or 29.16% shared variance | Candidate experience has a statistically significant moderate positive relationship with organisational engagement. |
| Multiple regression | $R = 0.627$; $R^2 = 0.393$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.385$ | $F(3,231) \approx 49.85$; Cohen's $f^2 = 0.647$ | The model explains 39.3% of variance and has a large overall predictive effect. |
| Chi-square association | $\chi^2 = 27.646$, df = 16, $p = 0.035$ | Cramer's V = 0.173; contingency coefficient = 0.326 | The association is statistically significant but practically small; expected-count violation requires caution. |

The regression result is the strongest inferential finding because the model explains 39.3% of variance.

**Predictor-level regression reporting and verification status**

| Predictor | B | SE | beta | t | p | Approximate 95% CI for B | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recruitment Process Transparency | 0.128 | 0.069 | 0.143 | 1.871 | 0.063 | −0.008 to 0.264 | Not significant |
| Communication Quality During Hiring | 0.397 | 0.086 | 0.354 | 4.595 | <0.001 | 0.228 to 0.566 | Significant |
| Overall Candidate Experience | 0.080 | 0.046 | 0.136 | 1.749 | 0.082 | −0.011 to 0.171 | Not significant |

The multiple regression results indicate that Communication Quality During Hiring has a statistically significant positive association with Organisational Engagement ($B = 0.397$, $\beta = 0.354$, $t = 4.595$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that better communication during recruitment is associated with higher organisational engagement after accounting for the other predictors in the model.

Recruitment Process Transparency ($B = 0.128$, $\beta = 0.143$, $t = 1.871$, $p = 0.063$) and Overall Candidate Experience ($B = 0.080$, $\beta = 0.136$, $t = 1.749$, $p = 0.082$) exhibit positive but statistically non-significant associations with Organisational Engagement at the 5% significance level.

Among the three predictors, Communication Quality During Hiring has the largest standardized regression coefficient, indicating the strongest statistically supported independent association with Organisational Engagement in the specified regression model. These findings emphasize the importance of timely, clear and responsive communication throughout the recruitment process.

## DISCUSSION

The findings support the argument that recruitment experience is associated with early-stage employee engagement. The positive and significant correlation between candidate experience and organisational engagement indicates that candidates who experience clearer communication, better transparency and stronger process quality are more likely to report higher engagement after joining.

The advanced diagnostics, the Candidate Experience Index and Organisational Engagement Index show that outcomes are positive but not excellent. The Recruitment Process Quality Index is higher because job-role clarity and process preparedness are exceptionally strong. This gap suggests that operational readiness is not enough; HR teams must also improve warmth, responsiveness, fairness perception and cultural communication.

The recruitment-channel diversity analysis shows that the organization has a healthy multi-channel recruitment mix. The company website is the leading source, but the low channel concentration indicates that recruitment branding should be consistent across websites, recruitment agencies, referrals, job portals and social media.

The chi-square test should be interpreted cautiously because 40% of expected cells are below 5. Although the p-value is significant, Cramer's V shows only a small effect. Future analysis should collapse sparse categories or use exact tests where applicable.

**Practical Implications**

- Develop a candidate communication protocol with fixed timelines for acknowledgement, interview scheduling, feedback and offer communication.
- Convert the strong process-preparedness score into a stronger candidate experience by improving personalization, empathy and follow-up communication.
- Use the company website strategically because it is the leading recruitment-awareness source; include realistic job previews, employee testimonials, culture videos and clear role expectations.
- Monitor CEI, OEI and RPQI every recruitment cycle as HR dashboard indicators.
- Train recruiters and hiring managers on interviewer professionalism, fairness, communication and bias reduction.
- Align recruitment messaging with actual work culture to reduce perception change after joining.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study has certain limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the study adopted a cross-sectional research design and purposive sampling technique, which may limit the generalizability of the findings beyond the selected organizational context. Second, the analysis relied on self-reported questionnaire responses, which may be subject to social desirability bias, recall bias and common method bias. Third, although the study examined the relationships among recruitment approaches, candidate experience and organisational engagement using correlation, regression and descriptive indices, the cross-sectional design does not permit causal inferences. Furthermore, the analysis focused primarily on direct associations and aggregate-level indicators without examining the underlying mediating and moderating mechanisms.

Future research could employ probability-based sampling across multiple organizations and industries to improve the external validity of the findings. The use of validated multi-item measurement scales and respondent-level multivariate analysis would facilitate the application of exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), structural equation modelling (SEM) and partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). Further studies could investigate whether organizational perception mediates the relationship between candidate experience and organisational engagement, and whether recruitment channels, demographic characteristics or employment status moderate these relationships. Longitudinal research could also examine how recruitment experiences influence subsequent employee engagement, job performance, organizational commitment and retention over time.

## CONCLUSION

This study examines recruitment approaches, candidate experience and organisational engagement using survey-based evidence and analytical measures calculated from the available aggregate data. The findings show that candidate experience is significantly associated with organisational engagement and that regression results explain a meaningful proportion of variance. Composite indices reveal that the organization's recruitment process is strong in preparation and role clarity but needs improvement in candidate experience quality, communication, cultural alignment and engagement conversion. The article contributes a practical HR analytics approach through CEI, OEI and RPQI.

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