Chatbots: Recruitment Game Changers?

Charles Joseph Tawk
SHRM-SCP, CTP, RODC

Abstract

It is not a secret that some recruitment application process is leaving most of the applicants exhausted. The lack of communication in recruitment and selection is making people confused and it is leaving a bad impression most of the time. Therefore, many potential talents are discouraged from engaging with organizations with poor recruitment procedures. However, the bad experience will not pass unheard as these candidates are more likely to tell people about it. Fortunately, the technology is advancing, and the knowledge of the candidate experience is growing. Consequently, does the willingness to use technological advancement to enhance the recruitment practices. This article will highlight the importance of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots in recruitment and will try to answer two fundamental questions: how will AI chatbots affect recruiters' job? How can chatbots add value to recruitment?

Key words: Chatbots, artificial intelligence (AI), recruitment, selection

Technological trends put an additional strain on organizations to adapt constant change in order to preserve their competitive advantages. The various modern technologies solutions revolutionized and eliminated many jobs. One cannot deny that technology has played, and still playing, a significant role in human resources development; however, lately a new emergence of artificial intelligence led human resources management to a new era. The term artificial intelligence (AI), is generally applied for software systems and machines. Artificial intelligence term has been introduced by Mr. John McCarthy (1956) where he indicated that artificial intelligence (AI) will contribute to many fields such as psychology, medicine, engineering, and management...etc. (AI) term has quickly grown globally gaining the attention of the corporate "A players". As a result, (AI) has become a reality and organizations started embracing its processes to reduce the errors, efforts, and time of workforce. To say the least, most of the statistics and researches showed that the organizations who tried artificial intelligence, and namely chatbots, were satisfied from the process and especially from the returns on investment and they showed this through an estimated investment of 26 to 39 billion US Dollars in artificial intelligence in 2016 (Bughin et al., 2017). Initially, artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots were developed to continuously assist clients in any query in a fast, consistent, and faultless way. Throughout the past few years, chatbots developers enhanced their capabilities enabling them to handle more complex requests, problems, and decisions. Recently, human resources recruitment and selection has been impacted by artificial intelligence chatbots who played a big role to change the conventional methods of employee selection by making it more technologically dependent (Hmoud et al., 2019). Chatbots can even relate with candidates to improve the selection procedure. This paper aims to deliver a broad awareness of AI chatbots in recruitment by focusing on the following questions: How will AI chatbots affect recruiters' job? How can chatbots add value to recruitment?

Chatbots is an example of an actual artificial and compassionate intelligence application in real-world. Chui et al. (2015) estimated that even high positions can eventually be replaced by AI soon. Similarly, jobs like recruitment will not be protected anymore. Therefore, the utilization of AI technologies such as chatbots in recruitment and selection will eventually increase the efficiency and effectiveness of such human resources function. Chatbots are used to interview and select applicants based on their competencies using picture and sound recognition technology and through the conduct of face-to-face interview. Khosla et al. (2016) performed a test using a chatbot to interview candidates by evaluating sensitive differences in their facial expressions and voices. The chatbot evaluated interviewees' emotional and mental conduct based on oral and body language variables to assist selection choices. For example, XOR's chatbot, one of the famous recruitment chatbots, can automate many complex recruiting and human resources workflows through various modes of communication including SMS, WhatsApp, Facebook, web, email, etc. This chatbot supports candidates screening, interview scheduling, employee onboarding, HR frequently asked questions (FAQs), and many other use cases. Approximately 99.3% of candidates and employees who engage with XOR's AI say it is a great experience ("The Top 10 Best Recruiting and HR Chatbots - June 2020 | Select software Reviews"). So, an important question remains unanswered; will AI chatbots takeover recruitment job? Most Likely AI chatbots will not fully replace a recruiter's work. However, they will be broadly utilized in the coming years. More AI solution will grow and emerge; but the human input will continually be needed. AI machineries will significantly influence recruitment and selection and more operational tasks will be given to AI opening the door for recruiters to focus on more strategic issues. COVID-19 pandemic speeded things and put digitization, AI, and robotics on a very fast track.

As a result, chatbots are on their way to reach a global widespread namely in recruitment and selection. These chatbots can co-operate with the applicants, answer their questions around the clock, support immediate and personal responses via messages, emails, and social media platforms (Upadhyay and Khandelwal, 2018).

Chatbots are capable to handle and relate with humans almost like a human by utilizing their expressions analysis (Nawaz et al, 2019). Chatbots can even perform video evaluation and link applicant's age, voice, rhythm, tone, conduct, visual interaction, reaction, etc. (Fernandez & Fernandez, 2019). AI new recruitment officers can sort out data extracted from social media through scanning the right talents without putting any favoritism or preference (Upadhyay and Khandelwal, 2018). The recruitment applications length, load, and process lead employers to search for tools like chatbots that can perform these routine tasks in an effortless way. However, chatbots need some time to get international reach especially in the recruitment field (Upadhyay et al, 2018). Though, the first movers will benefit from chatbots numerous advantages. As a real-life example, L'Oréal used Mya's recruitment chatbot to help screening candidates for their 5000+ vacancies ("A Real-Life Example: The Benefits Of Recruiting Chatbots - SSR"). By allowing AI Chatbot to perform preliminary screening, L'Oréal succeeded to collect more data than they ever dreamed and filled positions effortlessly and in a record time. Additionally, L'Oréal noticed some very remarkable conclusions:

- The average time spent per interviewee was reduced by 40 minutes
- Cost saving from recruiters pay reached $250,000
- Mya recruited a large and diverse group without any potential bias.

But, despite the many advantages of chatbots, they encompass the following challenges: Chatbots are powered with advanced artificial intelligence capabilities which does not make them feel any empathy towards candidates. Additionally, humor is not one their best asset. Therefore, the conversation with the candidates may be less engaging. Another point that may frustrate the candidates is that chatbots are having predefined information, consequently, any question that is not included will confuse the machine and it can eventually give irrelevant answers. Thus, even if the chatbots allow the reduction of employees' numbers in an organization, their purchase and installations are so expensive. Each chatbots has a different configuration mode which must be updated from time to time. Additionally, till moment some of the chatbot types do not have very reliable decision-making capabilities as they can choose the wrong candidate. Last but not least, with AI there is a permanent fear of data and system breach and chatbots are not an exception so they can be attacked by hackers who can take control of all the parameters, respond abruptly to candidates, and schedule false interviews which will, to say the least, harm the employer brand. Till date when we talk about chatbots we are far from a perfect product. Hence, it is a big mistake to consider Chatbots as a flawless creation because these artificial intelligence tools are very much in their formative years. One of the major chatbot pitfalls was for Microsoft's Technology and it was called "Tay". Tay, the creation of Microsoft was an experimentation designed to learn through conversations. It targeted adults from the age of 18 to 24 on social media platforms. Tay was intended to engage and entertain them using a nice conversation. Things went wrong especially when Microsoft's Tay AI chatbot considered that "Hitler" was right and many other racist statements. Despite its great results in 24 hours; more than 50,000 followers and 100,000 tweets, Tay went offline ("Why Microsoft's 'Tay' AI Bot Went Wrong")

With the fast-evolving trend of employing AI technologies like chatbots in the workplace lately, HR functions mainly recruitment and selection will progressively integrate more AI solutions. Chatbots provide auspicious solutions for recruiters to enhance recruitment and selection by reducing many time related recruitment KPIs such as time to fill, time to join, qualified applicant rates etc. However, applicants' responses may be affected by social, legal, and cultural factors. Similar AI applications will continue to emerge in human resources field which will considerably influence recruitment and selection jobs. AI solutions will allow more talented individuals to fill organizations vacancies which will increase their competitiveness and ability to survive.

REFERENCES:

"A Real Life Example: The Benefits Of Recruiting Chatbots - SSR". Selectsoftwarereviews.Com, 2020, https://www.selectsoftwarereviews.com/blog/benefits-of-recruiting-chatbots.

Bughin, Jacques, et al. "Artificial intelligence: The next digital frontier." McKinsey Global Institute (2017): 1-80.

Chui, Michael, James Manyika, and Mehdi Miremadi. "Four fundamentals of workplace automation." McKinsey Quarterly 29.3 (2015): 1-9.

Hmoud, Bilal, and Varallyai Laszlo. "Will Artificial intelligence Take Over HumanResources Recruitment and Selection." Network Intelligence Studies 7.13 (2019): 21-30.

Khosla, Ashok. To choose our future. Development alternatives, 2016.

Nawaz, Nishad, and Anjali Mary Gomes. "Artificial intelligence chatbots are new recruiters." IJACSA) International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications 10.9 (2019).

"The Top 10 Best Recruiting And HR Chatbots - June 2020 | Selectsoftware Reviews". Selectsoftwarereviews.Com, 2020, https://www.selectsoftwarereviews.com/buyer-guide/hr-chat-bots.

Upadhyay, Ashwani Kumar, and Komal Khandelwal. "Applying artificial intelligence: implications for recruitment." Strategic HR Review (2018).

"Why Microsoft's 'Tay' AI Bot Went Wrong". Techrepublic, 2020, https://www.techrepublic.com/article/why-microsofts-tay-ai-bot-went-wrong/.