



EMPLOYER PERCEPTION OF THE PERCEIVED USEFULNESS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION AT IRINGA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

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ABSTRACT :

The study examined employers' perception of the perceived usefulness of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council, Tanzania. The study was guided by one specific objective, which was to examine employers' perception of the perceived usefulness of AI in recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council. The study employed a qualitative research approach and a case study design. A total of 21 respondents comprising Human Resource Officers, Administrative Officers and Heads of Departments were purposively selected because of their involvement in recruitment and selection activities. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using thematic analysis. The findings showed that employers had positive perceptions of the perceived usefulness of AI in recruitment and selection. Respondents perceived AI as useful in improving recruitment efficiency, reducing administrative workload, speeding up applicant screening, supporting candidate matching, improving decision-making and supporting recruitment planning. The findings also showed that AI was perceived to have the potential to simplify recruitment activities and allow employers to handle a large number of applications within a shorter time. The study concludes that employers at Iringa Municipal Council have positive perceptions of the usefulness of AI in recruitment and selection. The study recommends that Iringa Municipal Council should provide staff training and improve ICT infrastructure to support the effective use of AI in future recruitment and selection activities.

Key words: Artificial Intelligence; perceived usefulness; employer perception; recruitment; selection; human resource management; Iringa Municipal Council.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Recruitment and selection are important human resource activities for identifying and choosing suitable employees. The increasing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has created new possibilities for supporting these activities through automated processing and data-based decision-making. Tambe et al. (2019) explained that AI has potential applications in human resource management, although its use also requires attention to organizational and human factors. This makes employer perception important when considering the potential use of AI in recruitment and selection.

Perceived usefulness is an important concept in understanding acceptance of new technology. Davis (1989) defined perceived usefulness as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system will improve job performance. Applied to recruitment and selection, employers may perceive AI as useful when they believe that it will improve recruitment activities and work performance. Thus, perceived usefulness provides a suitable basis for examining how employers view the potential contribution of AI to recruitment and selection.

AI-supported recruitment has also received attention because automated systems can process applicant information and support employment assessment. Raghavan et al. (2020) examined algorithmic hiring systems and found that such systems are increasingly used in employment assessment, particularly in screening candidates. Their study also showed the need to examine how these systems are developed and validated. This suggests that understanding the expected benefits of AI from the perspective of employers is important before considering its use in recruitment and selection.

More recent research shows that AI is becoming an important area of human resource management, with potential to change how organizations perform HR activities. Budhwar et al. (2023) found that AI has the potential to transform human resource management and called for greater attention to how organizations adopt and implement AI-supported HR practices. In Tanzania, understanding employers' perceptions is particularly relevant before introducing AI into public-sector recruitment and selection. Therefore, this study will examine employers' perception of the perceived usefulness of Artificial Intelligence in recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council, Tanzania.

Statement of the Problem

In Tanzania, public institutions continue to introduce digital technologies to improve efficiency in public service delivery. However, recruitment and selection in many public institutions still follow established procedures, while the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support recruitment activities remains limited. AI has the potential to support recruitment by processing applications, reducing administrative workload and assisting in identifying suitable candidates (Tambe et al., 2019). However, the potential benefits of AI do not automatically mean that employers will perceive the technology

as useful in their recruitment work.

At Iringa Municipal Council, recruitment and selection activities are conducted within the public service system, but AI has not yet been used to support these activities. There is limited empirical evidence showing whether employers involved in recruitment and selection perceive AI as useful for improving their work. In particular, it is not clear whether employers believe that AI could improve recruitment efficiency, reduce workload, save time and support the assessment of applicants. This lack of evidence makes it difficult to understand the perceived usefulness of AI from the perspective of the employers who would be involved in its potential use.

Therefore, the problem addressed by this study is the limited empirical understanding of employers' perception of the perceived usefulness of Artificial Intelligence in recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council. The study will examine whether employers perceive AI as useful in improving recruitment and selection activities. The findings will provide evidence on employers' views of the usefulness of AI and provide a basis for considering its potential application in recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical literature review

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), guided this study in explaining employers' perception of the perceived usefulness of Artificial Intelligence in recruitment and selection. TAM states that perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which a person believes that using a technology will improve job performance. In this study, the concept explains how employers at Iringa Municipal Council perceive the usefulness of AI in improving recruitment and selection activities. The theory suggests that when employers believe that AI will improve recruitment efficiency, reduce workload, support applicant screening, improve decision-making and save time, they are more likely to have positive perceptions toward its use. Therefore, TAM provided an appropriate basis for examining employers' perception of the perceived usefulness of AI in recruitment and selection at Iringa M

Empirical literature review

Artificial Intelligence is increasingly considered a useful technology for supporting human resource activities, including recruitment and selection. The technology can assist organizations in processing applicant information and supporting recruitment decisions. Tambe et al. (2019), in their study titled "Artificial Intelligence in Human Resources Management: Challenges and a Path Forward," examined the application of AI in human resource management and found that AI has potential to support recruitment and other human resource activities. The authors noted that AI can improve the processing of information and support decision-making, although its application requires attention to data quality, fairness, accountability and the human aspects of recruitment. The study is relevant to the present study because it supports the view that AI has potential usefulness in recruitment and selection. However, the study was not conducted in a Tanzanian municipal council and did not specifically examine employers' perception of perceived usefulness. The present study will address this gap by examining employers' perception of the perceived usefulness of AI in recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipa

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach. A qualitative research approach is appropriate when a study seeks to understand participants' views, experiences and perceptions in detail (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The approach enabled the study to obtain detailed information about employers' perception of the perceived usefulness of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council. It was suitable because the study focused on understanding employers' views rather than measuring perceptions using numerical data.

Research Design

This study employed an explanatory research design to examine employers' perception of the perceived usefulness of Artificial Intelligence in recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council. An explanatory research design allows the researcher to obtain detailed explanations about a phenomenon and the views of participants without manipulating the study environment (Kothari, 2019). The design enabled the study to obtain detailed explanations from employers regarding how they perceived the usefulness of AI in recruitment and selection.

Area of the Study

This study was carried out at Iringa Municipal Council in Iringa Region, Tanzania. Iringa Municipal Council was selected because recruitment and selection activities are conducted within the public service system and Artificial Intelligence had not yet been implemented in recruitment and selection. The council therefore provided a suitable setting for examining employers' perception of the perceived usefulness of AI in recruitment and selection. The study focused on employers who were directly involved in recruitment and selection processes or who oversaw human resource management functions.

Population and Sampling

Population

A population refers to the entire group of people or units that possess characteristics relevant to a particular study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The

population for this study consisted of employers at Iringa Municipal Council who were directly involved in recruitment and selection processes or who oversaw human resource management functions. The population included Human Resource Officers, Administrative Officers and Heads of Departments. These participants were included because their responsibilities involved recruitment decisions and human resource management, making them suitable sources of information on the perceived usefulness of AI in recruitment and selection.

Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting a smaller group of participants from a larger population to take part in a study (Saunders et al., 2019). This study employed purposive sampling to select respondents who had relevant knowledge and direct involvement in recruitment and selection activities. A total of 21 respondents were selected from Human Resource Officers, Administrative Officers and Heads of Departments. Purposive sampling was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to select participants who could provide detailed and relevant information about the perceived usefulness of AI in recruitment and selection.

Data Collection Instruments

The study used semi-structured interviews to collect primary data from the selected respondents. A semi-structured interview is a data collection instrument that uses prepared questions while allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions for clarification and further explanation (Kallio et al., 2016). In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Human Resource Officers, Administrative Officers and Heads of Departments to obtain detailed information about their perception of the perceived usefulness of AI in recruitment and selection. The interviews allowed participants to explain their views and provide additional information based on their experiences and understanding.

Data Analysis

Data collected through semi-structured interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method used to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The interview responses were transcribed, coded and grouped into themes related to the perceived usefulness of AI in recruitment and selection. The analysis involved familiarisation with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes (Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis enabled the study to identify common views among employers regarding the usefulness of AI in recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council.

Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical principles to protect the rights, privacy and welfare of participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Iringa, and participants were informed about the purpose and objectives of the study before data collection. Informed consent was obtained from participants, and participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by excluding participants' names and other personal identifiers from interview records and the final report. The collected information was securely stored and used only for academic purposes.

DATA PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Employer Perception of the Perceived Usefulness of Artificial Intelligence in Recruitment and Selection

This section presents the findings on employer perception of the perceived usefulness of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council. The analysis sought to understand how employers perceive the practical value of AI in improving recruitment and selection processes within the council. The findings were derived from respondents' experiences, opinions and expectations regarding the potential contribution of AI to recruitment activities. Through thematic analysis, respondents' responses were coded, categorized and organized into eight major themes, namely improving recruitment efficiency, enhancing decision-making, reducing administrative workload, speeding up applicant screening, improving candidate matching, supporting recruitment planning, reducing recruitment costs and increasing human resource productivity. These themes provide a comprehensive understanding of the different ways employers perceive the usefulness of AI and how such perceptions may influence its adoption in recruitment and selection. The findings are presented using respondents' quotations, followed by interpretation and discussion in relation to previous empirical studies and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

Employers' Perceptions of AI's Potential to Improve Recruitment Efficiency

This theme explored employers' perceptions regarding the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve recruitment efficiency at Iringa Municipal Council. Respondents shared their opinions on whether AI could enhance the way recruitment and selection activities are conducted if introduced within the council. Most respondents believed that AI has the potential to make recruitment activities faster, reduce repetitive administrative work and improve the management of recruitment information. They also perceived that AI could support officers in handling large numbers of job applications within a shorter period while allowing more time for strategic decision-making. However, some respondents emphasized that these potential benefits would only be realized if the council invests in adequate infrastructure, staff training and proper implementation strategies. The views expressed by the respondents are presented below.

One Human Resource Officer shared his opinion as follows:

I think AI could really help us work faster during recruitment because sometimes we receive many applications and reviewing them manually takes a long time. If the system could arrange applications according to the required qualifications before we start reviewing them, it would save us a lot of time. We would then spend more time assessing the suitability of candidates instead of sorting documents. I also believe this would reduce unnecessary delays that usually occur during recruitment exercises. For me, AI has the potential to make recruitment much more efficient than the way we currently work (Interview with HRO-02, conducted on 18 May 2026 at 10:15 a.m.).

Another Administrative Officer expressed a different perspective by focusing on communication during recruitment:

Most delays happen because officers have to do many small administrative tasks at the same time. If AI could help us send information to applicants, organize recruitment files and keep records properly, our work would become much easier. I do not think AI would replace officers, but it could reduce the amount of routine work that we do every day. That would give us enough time to concentrate on important recruitment decisions. In my view, AI could improve the efficiency of the whole recruitment process (Interview with AO-05, conducted on 27 May 2026 at 2:30 p.m.).

From a managerial perspective, one Department Head observed:

Recruitment is not only about selecting people but also about managing a large amount of information within a short time. I believe AI could help us organize applicant information better than the current manual system. When information is well organized, the recruitment committee can work faster and make decisions without unnecessary confusion. It would also be easier to trace recruitment records whenever they are needed. That is why I think AI has good potential to improve recruitment efficiency in our council (Interview with DH-03, conducted on 6 June 2026 at 11:40 a.m.).

Another Human Resource Officer highlighted the importance of reducing workload during recruitment:

Sometimes we spend several days doing work that could probably be completed within a few hours if technology was available. Looking through every application one after another is not always the best use of our time. If AI could assist with preliminary screening, officers would have enough time to prepare interviews and evaluate candidates carefully. I believe this would improve both the speed and quality of recruitment activities. For that reason, I see AI as something that could bring positive changes to our recruitment process (Interview with HRO-06, conducted on 12 June 2026 at 9:20 a.m.).

One Administrative Officer also emphasized the importance of future preparedness:

Technology is becoming part of almost every government service, so recruitment should not remain completely manual. I think AI could help public institutions cope with the increasing number of job applications that we receive every year. If we prepare our staff well and provide the necessary equipment, AI could simplify many recruitment activities. It would not remove human judgement, but it could make the entire process faster and more organized. Personally, I think adopting AI would be a step towards improving recruitment efficiency in the council (Interview with AO-01, conducted on 20 June 2026 at 3:10 p.m.).

The findings indicate that employers generally perceive Artificial Intelligence as having considerable potential to improve recruitment efficiency through faster processing of applications, better organization of recruitment information and reduction of repetitive administrative tasks. Although respondents acknowledged that AI would not replace human judgement during recruitment, they believed it could complement the work of recruitment officers by improving the speed and effectiveness of routine activities. Respondents also recognized that the successful realization of these perceived benefits would depend on institutional preparedness, adequate technological infrastructure and continuous capacity building for staff responsible for recruitment activities.

The findings also correspond with evidence from Tanzania. Magesa and Jonathan (2023) observed that digital technologies have the potential to improve administrative efficiency in public institutions when supported by adequate organizational capacity. Furthermore, the e-Government Authority (eGA, 2024) emphasizes that digital transformation is central to improving efficiency, transparency and service delivery across government institutions. The Public Service Recruitment Secretariat (PSRS, 2023) also highlights that technology-supported recruitment systems contribute to faster processing of recruitment information and more effective management of recruitment activities. These national initiatives reinforce the positive perceptions expressed by employers in this study regarding the future potential of AI in recruitment and selection.

These findings are consistent with international evidence showing that employers are more willing to embrace AI when they perceive it as capable of improving recruitment efficiency and supporting organizational performance. Upadhyay and Khandelwal (2021) found that organizations perceive AI as a useful technology for reducing routine administrative work and accelerating recruitment processes. Likewise, Mhlanga (2024) reported that employers associate AI with improved efficiency, better management of recruitment information and timely decision-making. Similar observations were made by Nawaz et al. (2023), who concluded that perceived usefulness remains one of the strongest determinants influencing organizational acceptance of AI in human resource management.

The findings further support the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), which proposes that individuals are more likely to develop favourable attitudes towards adopting a technology when they perceive it as useful in improving their work performance. Employers in this study consistently associated AI with improved recruitment efficiency, reduced administrative workload and better management of recruitment activities. These perceptions demonstrate a strong sense of perceived usefulness, suggesting that employers are likely to support the future adoption of AI in recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council when the necessary organizational conditions are in place.

Employers' Perceptions of AI's Potential to Support Better Recruitment Decision-Making

This theme examined employers' perceptions regarding the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support better recruitment decision-making at Iringa Municipal Council. Respondents were asked to explain whether AI could assist recruitment committees in making more informed, objective and consistent recruitment decisions if adopted by the council. The analysis revealed that most respondents believed AI could provide valuable support by organizing applicant information, comparing candidates against job requirements and presenting relevant information for decision-making. Respondents emphasized that AI should complement rather than replace human judgement, as final recruitment decisions require professional experience, ethical considerations and organizational understanding. The following responses illustrate employers' perceptions regarding the potential of AI to support better recruitment decision-making.

One Human Resource Officer explained his view as follows:

When we shortlist applicants, we sometimes spend many hours comparing academic qualifications, work experience and professional skills because every application has to be checked carefully. If AI could arrange applicants according to the requirements stated in the vacancy announcement, it would make our discussions much easier. Instead of arguing about whether someone meets the minimum qualifications, we would begin with a list that has already been organized using clear criteria. That would allow the recruitment committee to spend more time discussing candidates who genuinely deserve further consideration. I think AI could improve the quality of recruitment decisions because it would provide better information before the committee makes the final decision (Interview with HRO-04, conducted on 21 May 2026 at 9:40 a.m.).

Another Administrative Officer focused on consistency during recruitment:

One challenge during recruitment is that different officers sometimes interpret the same information differently. If AI uses the same criteria for every applicant, there would be greater consistency when preparing the initial shortlist. I believe this would reduce unnecessary disagreements during recruitment meetings because everyone would be looking at information that has been processed in the same way. The committee would still make the final decision, but the discussion would be based on more organized evidence. For me, AI could strengthen decision-making by making the assessment process more consistent (Interview with AO-03, conducted on 29 May 2026 at 1:15 p.m.).

A Department Head highlighted the importance of evidence-based recruitment decisions:

Sometimes recruitment decisions become difficult because there is a large amount of information to review within a limited period. I think AI could summarize important details about each applicant and present them in a way that is easier for the committee to compare. That would reduce the possibility of overlooking qualified candidates simply because there are too many applications. Good decisions depend on having complete and well-organized information. If AI can improve the quality of information available to the committee, then it can also improve the quality of recruitment decisions (Interview with DH-06, conducted on 8 June 2026 at 11:10 a.m.).

Another Human Resource Officer emphasized fairness in committee deliberations:

I do not expect AI to choose employees for us because recruitment decisions involve human judgement and accountability. However, I believe AI could help the committee remain objective by presenting applicants according to qualifications rather than personal opinions. This would encourage committee members to discuss evidence instead of relying on assumptions. It would also make it easier to explain why one candidate was selected instead of another. In my opinion, AI could support better decision-making without taking away the

responsibility of the recruitment committee (Interview with HRO-01, conducted on 15 June 2026 at 10:05 a.m.).

An Administrative Officer also stressed the importance of reducing avoidable mistakes:

When recruitment is conducted manually, officers can accidentally overlook important information, especially when many applications are received. I think AI could reduce such mistakes by checking every application using the same recruitment requirements. This would increase confidence that every qualified applicant has been considered before interviews are conducted. Even if the committee makes the final decision, it would be doing so after receiving complete and accurate information. That is why I believe AI could contribute to better recruitment decisions in public institutions (Interview with AO-07, conducted on 24 June 2026 at 3:25 p.m.).

The findings indicate that employers generally perceive Artificial Intelligence as a supportive decision-making tool rather than a replacement for human judgement. Respondents consistently believed that AI could strengthen recruitment decisions by organizing applicant information, improving consistency in candidate assessment, reducing the likelihood of overlooking qualified applicants and providing reliable evidence for recruitment committees. At the same time, respondents emphasized that accountability for final recruitment decisions should remain with human decision-makers because recruitment involves ethical judgement, organizational values and contextual considerations that cannot be entirely delegated to technology.

These findings are consistent with the work of Upadhyay and Khandelwal (2021), who reported that employers perceive AI as a technology that enhances decision quality by providing structured information for recruitment committees rather than replacing managerial judgement. Likewise, Bogen and Rieke (2018) observed that AI-based recruitment tools can improve consistency in candidate assessment when used to support, rather than automate, recruitment decisions. In the African context, Mhlanga (2024) found that organizations increasingly value AI for its ability to support evidence-based human resource decisions while maintaining human oversight. Within Tanzania, the e-Government Authority (eGA, 2024) encourages the use of digital technologies to improve evidence-based administrative decision-making across public institutions, while the Public Service Recruitment Secretariat (PSRS, 2023) emphasizes the importance of objective and transparent recruitment procedures supported by appropriate information systems.

These findings further reinforce the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), particularly the concept of perceived usefulness. Employers believed that AI could improve the quality and consistency of recruitment decisions by providing accurate and organized information without removing the role of human judgement. Such perceptions increase the likelihood that employers will develop favourable attitudes toward the future adoption of AI in recruitment and selection because they perceive the technology as a tool that strengthens, rather than replaces, professional decision-making.

Employers' Perceptions of AI's Potential to Reduce Administrative Workload

This theme explored employers' perceptions regarding the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to reduce the administrative workload associated with recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council. Respondents were asked whether AI could assist officers in handling routine recruitment responsibilities more efficiently if introduced within the council. The analysis revealed that employers generally perceived AI as having the potential to minimize repetitive administrative activities that consume considerable time during recruitment exercises. Respondents specifically mentioned document sorting, applicant registration, verification of application requirements, preparation of recruitment reports, scheduling interviews and communication with applicants as activities that could be supported by AI. They believed that reducing these routine tasks would allow recruitment officers to devote more attention to strategic responsibilities requiring professional judgement. However, respondents emphasized that AI should support administrative work without replacing the responsibilities and accountability of recruitment officers. The views expressed by respondents are presented below.

One Human Resource Officer explained:

Every recruitment exercise begins with administrative work before we even start evaluating applicants. We have to receive applications, register them, arrange them according to positions and confirm whether every required document has been attached. Those activities consume almost the entire day before the committee begins its actual work. If AI could perform those preliminary tasks automatically, officers would spend their time analysing candidates instead of organizing files. I believe that would significantly reduce the administrative workload during recruitment (Interview with HRO-03, conducted on 22 May 2026 at 9:05 a.m.).

Another Administrative Officer focused on communication with applicants:

One of the most demanding responsibilities is responding to applicants because everyone wants to know whether their documents have been received or whether they have been shortlisted. Sometimes officers spend several hours answering telephone calls and replying to emails instead of concentrating on recruitment activities. If AI could automatically acknowledge receipt of applications and send recruitment updates, officers would have enough time to complete other important assignments. Communication would become faster while reducing unnecessary interruptions during recruitment. That is one area where I think AI could reduce our administrative workload (Interview with AO-04, conducted on 30 May 2026 at 11:50 a.m.).

A Department Head highlighted the burden of preparing recruitment documentation:

Many people only see interviews, but they do not realize the amount of paperwork prepared before and after recruitment. We prepare attendance lists, committee reports, applicant summaries and many official documents for every recruitment exercise. These documents follow almost the same format every time, yet officers prepare them manually. If AI could automatically generate some of those documents using existing recruitment information, it would reduce unnecessary paperwork and allow officers to focus on supervision and decision-making. I believe that would improve the overall efficiency of the recruitment process (Interview with DH-02, conducted on 5 June 2026 at 2:15 p.m.).

Another Human Resource Officer emphasized document verification:

Checking whether every applicant has attached academic certificates, professional registration documents and identification details is a repetitive exercise. During large recruitment exercises, it becomes tiring because officers repeat the same verification process hundreds of times. If AI could identify incomplete applications before officers begin reviewing them, we would avoid spending valuable time on files that do not qualify. That would also reduce fatigue among recruitment officers and improve concentration during candidate evaluation. In my opinion, AI would be most useful if it helped us reduce these repetitive verification activities (Interview with HRO-05, conducted on 11 June 2026 at 10:30 a.m.).

One Administrative Officer reflected on workload distribution:

Sometimes recruitment activities continue late into the evening simply because officers are overwhelmed by administrative responsibilities. It is not that recruitment decisions are difficult; the challenge is completing all the supporting tasks before the committee can even begin discussing candidates. If AI could handle repetitive administrative duties, officers would complete recruitment activities within the planned schedule without unnecessary pressure. I think that would also reduce work-related stress and improve staff productivity during recruitment exercises. For me, reducing workload is one of the strongest reasons for considering AI in recruitment (Interview with AO-06, conducted on 18 June 2026 at 3:45 p.m.).

The findings indicate that employers perceive Artificial Intelligence as a practical tool for reducing the administrative burden associated with recruitment and selection rather than replacing human resource professionals. Respondents consistently identified repetitive activities such as document registration, application verification, applicant communication, report preparation and record organization as areas where AI could provide meaningful support. They believed that automating these routine tasks would enable recruitment officers to allocate more time to strategic responsibilities, including candidate evaluation, interviews and recruitment decision-making. Respondents also associated reduced administrative workload with lower

work pressure, improved time management and greater operational efficiency during recruitment exercises.

These findings are consistent with previous empirical studies that identify automation of routine administrative activities as one of the principal benefits of AI adoption in human resource management. Upadhyay and Khandelwal (2021) reported that organizations perceive AI as an effective means of reducing repetitive administrative tasks while allowing HR professionals to focus on higher-value strategic functions. Likewise, Parry and Strohmeier (2014) observed that digital technologies improve HR efficiency by minimizing manual administrative work and enhancing process coordination. More recently, Mhlanga (2024) found that employers increasingly value AI because it supports administrative efficiency without eliminating the essential role of human judgement in recruitment. Within Tanzania, the e-Government Authority (eGA, 2024) advocates the use of digital technologies to simplify administrative procedures and improve institutional efficiency, while the President's Office–Public Service Management and Good Governance (PO-PSMGG, 2023) encourages public institutions to modernize administrative processes through appropriate technological innovations. The findings further reinforce the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), particularly the construct of perceived usefulness. Employers believed that AI would make recruitment activities easier by reducing repetitive administrative duties that consume considerable time and effort. Such perceptions strengthen positive attitudes toward AI because employers associate the technology with improved work performance rather than replacement of human expertise. Consequently, the perceived ability of AI to reduce administrative workload is likely to increase employers' willingness to support its future adoption in recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council.

Employers' Perceptions of AI's Potential to Speed Up Applicant Screening

This theme explored employers' perceptions regarding the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to speed up applicant screening during recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council. Respondents were asked whether AI could improve the efficiency of the preliminary screening process by reducing the time required to identify applicants who meet the minimum recruitment requirements. The thematic analysis revealed that employers generally believed AI could accelerate applicant screening by automatically identifying qualified candidates based on predetermined criteria. Respondents also perceived that faster screening would shorten recruitment timelines, reduce unnecessary manual effort and improve consistency during preliminary evaluations. Nevertheless, respondents emphasized that AI should only perform initial screening while final decisions regarding candidate suitability should remain the responsibility of recruitment committees. The responses below illustrate these perceptions.

One Human Resource Officer shared the following experience:

During one recruitment exercise we received several hundred applications for only a few vacancies and the first challenge was identifying who actually met the minimum qualifications. We spent almost three days checking academic certificates, years of experience and professional qualifications before we could prepare the shortlist. If AI could compare applicant information with the vacancy requirements automatically, that stage could probably be completed within a much shorter time. Officers would immediately concentrate on candidates who genuinely qualify instead of reviewing every application manually. To me, that is where AI could make the biggest difference in speeding up applicant screening (Interview with HRO-01, conducted on 19 May 2026 at 9:30 a.m.).

Another Administrative Officer reflected on incomplete applications:

Many applications arrive with missing attachments, expired certificates or documents that do not match what was requested in the advertisement. Unfortunately, officers still spend time opening every file before discovering those problems. I think AI could identify incomplete applications immediately and separate them from those that satisfy the recruitment requirements. That would prevent officers from wasting time reviewing applications that cannot proceed to the next stage. In my opinion, faster identification of incomplete applications would greatly improve the screening process (Interview with AO-02, conducted on 28 May 2026 at 11:20 a.m.).

A Department Head focused on recruitment deadlines:

Public institutions are expected to complete recruitment activities within planned schedules, but applicant screening often consumes more time than anticipated. Delays at this stage also affect interviews, committee meetings and appointment procedures that follow. If AI could complete preliminary screening quickly, the entire recruitment schedule would become easier to manage. We would spend less time waiting for screening reports and more time discussing suitable candidates. I therefore believe AI could help institutions meet recruitment timelines more effectively (Interview with DH-04, conducted on 7 June 2026 at 2:40 p.m.).

Another Human Resource Officer emphasized the issue of consistency during screening:

Different officers may unintentionally pay attention to different details when reviewing hundreds of applications manually. One officer might notice a missing qualification while another could overlook it because of fatigue after reading many files. If AI screens every application using exactly the same criteria, all applicants would receive equal treatment during the first stage of recruitment. That would improve confidence in the screening process before the committee begins interviews. For me, consistency is just as important as speed when discussing AI in recruitment (Interview with HRO-05, conducted on 13 June 2026 at 10:10 a.m.).

One Administrative Officer highlighted the challenge of repeated screening exercises:

Sometimes the same recruitment exercise has to be reviewed again because officers discover that an application was placed in the wrong category or an eligible applicant was overlooked. Correcting such mistakes requires additional meetings and delays the recruitment process even further. I believe AI could reduce these repeated screening exercises by classifying applicants correctly from the beginning. That would save both time and institutional resources while improving confidence in the recruitment process. For that reason, I think AI could significantly speed up applicant screening (Interview with AO-07, conducted on 21 June 2026 at 3:15 p.m.).

The findings indicate that employers perceive Artificial Intelligence as an effective tool for accelerating applicant screening while improving the consistency of preliminary recruitment assessments. Respondents believed that AI could reduce the time required to identify qualified candidates, detect incomplete applications, classify applicants according to recruitment requirements and minimize avoidable screening errors. These perceptions demonstrate that employers view AI as a technology capable of strengthening operational efficiency during one of the most time-consuming stages of recruitment. However, respondents consistently maintained that the responsibility for making final recruitment decisions should remain with recruitment committees after the screening process has been completed.

These findings are consistent with international empirical studies that recognize applicant screening as one of the human resource functions most likely to benefit from Artificial Intelligence. Black and van Esch (2021) found that AI-supported screening technologies significantly improve recruitment efficiency by processing large volumes of applications within a shorter period while maintaining consistent evaluation standards. Likewise, Upadhyay and Khandelwal (2021) observed that organizations increasingly adopt AI to simplify preliminary candidate screening and reduce delays associated with manual review of applications. Mhlanga (2024) similarly reported that employers perceive AI as an effective mechanism for improving the speed and quality of recruitment screening without eliminating the need for human oversight. Within Tanzania, the Public Service Recruitment Secretariat (PSRS, 2023) emphasizes timely processing of recruitment applications as an important element of effective public service recruitment, while the e-Government Authority (eGA, 2024) encourages the adoption of digital solutions that enhance efficiency and accuracy in public sector administrative processes.

The findings further support the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), which argues that users are more likely to accept a technology when they perceive it as improving job performance. Employers in this study associated AI with faster applicant screening, greater consistency in evaluating applications and reduced manual workload during preliminary recruitment activities. These positive perceptions of usefulness are likely to strengthen employers' willingness to support the future adoption of AI in recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council.

Employers' Perceptions of AI's Potential to Improve Candidate Matching

This theme explored employers' perceptions regarding the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve candidate matching during recruitment and selection at Iringa Municipal Council. Respondents were asked whether AI could assist in matching applicants with the qualifications, competencies and experience required for advertised positions. The analysis revealed that employers generally believed AI could improve candidate matching by comparing applicants' profiles with job requirements more accurately and consistently than manual processes. Respondents explained that AI could reduce the likelihood of suitable candidates being overlooked while helping recruitment committees identify applicants whose qualifications closely correspond with organizational needs. However, respondents also emphasized that candidate suitability should not depend entirely on AI because personal attributes, integrity and communication skills still require human assessment. The views of respondents are presented below.

One Human Resource Officer explained his perspective as follows:

Sometimes two applicants may have similar academic qualifications, but when you look carefully, one has experience that fits the position much better than the other. During manual screening, those small differences can easily be overlooked because officers are working under pressure. I think AI could compare the requirements in the job advertisement with each applicant's qualifications more thoroughly than we can do manually. It could show us which candidates have the strongest overall match instead of simply listing everyone with the required degree. That would help the recruitment committee begin its discussions with more relevant candidates (Interview with HRO-06, conducted on 16 May 2026 at 11:00 a.m.).

Another Administrative Officer focused on specialized positions:

Recruiting for technical positions is sometimes difficult because the required qualifications are very specific. An officer who is not familiar with that profession may fail to notice whether an applicant possesses the exact competencies needed. If AI is designed using the correct recruitment criteria, it could identify applicants whose qualifications closely match the advertised position. That would make it easier for recruitment committees to focus on candidates who genuinely fit the vacancy. In my opinion, AI could improve candidate matching, especially for specialized jobs where accuracy is very important (Interview with AO-01, conducted on 26 May 2026 at 2:20 p.m.).

A Department Head emphasized organizational needs rather than academic qualifications alone:

Having a degree does not always mean someone is the most suitable person for the job. Sometimes we need applicants who have managed similar responsibilities or worked in environments like ours. I believe AI could help combine information about qualifications, experience and professional skills when comparing applicants. That would provide the committee with a more complete picture of how well each candidate matches the position. Such information would strengthen recruitment decisions because selection would be based on several relevant factors rather than one qualification alone (Interview with DH-05, conducted on 9 June 2026 at 9:50 a.m.).

Another Human Resource Officer highlighted fairness during candidate matching:

There are occasions when applicants believe they are not considered fairly because they do not understand how shortlisting was conducted. If AI applies the same matching criteria to every application, it becomes easier to demonstrate that all candidates were assessed using identical standards. That would increase confidence in the recruitment process because applicants would know that matching was based on objective requirements rather than individual preferences. Even though the committee would still make the final decision, AI could improve transparency during the matching stage. I think that would strengthen public trust in recruitment activities (Interview with HRO-02, conducted on 14 June 2026 at 10:45 a.m.).

One Administrative Officer reflected on future workforce planning:

Recruitment is an investment, so selecting candidates who closely fit the job is very important for organizational performance. When employees are well matched to their responsibilities, they usually require less adjustment and become productive much earlier. I think AI could help us identify those candidates by comparing job requirements with applicants' overall profiles instead of looking at one qualification at a time. That would improve the quality of recruitment while reducing the possibility of selecting people who struggle to perform after appointment. For me, better candidate matching is one of the greatest advantages that AI could bring to recruitment (Interview with AO-06, conducted on 23 June 2026 at 3:35 p.m.).

The findings indicate that employers perceive Artificial Intelligence as having considerable potential to improve candidate matching by comparing applicants' qualifications, competencies, work experience and professional attributes with the requirements of advertised positions. Respondents believed that AI could strengthen recruitment quality by reducing the possibility of overlooking suitable candidates and providing recruitment committees with more organized information regarding candidate suitability. At the same time, respondents consistently emphasized that AI should function as a decision-support tool rather than a substitute for professional judgement because personal qualities, ethical behaviour and communication skills remain essential considerations during final selection.

These findings support previous empirical studies that recognize AI as an effective technology for improving candidate-job matching in recruitment. Upadhyay and Khandelwal (2021) reported that AI enables organizations to compare applicant profiles with job requirements more accurately, thereby improving recruitment quality and organizational performance. Likewise, Black and van Esch (2021) found that AI-assisted recruitment systems enhance candidate matching by analysing multiple applicant characteristics simultaneously rather than relying solely on academic qualifications. Mhlanga (2024) similarly observed that employers increasingly perceive AI as valuable for identifying candidates whose competencies align closely with organizational needs while maintaining human oversight during final selection. In Tanzania, the Public Service Recruitment Secretariat (PSRS, 2023) emphasizes merit-based recruitment as the foundation of public service employment, while the e-Government Authority (eGA, 2024) advocates digital innovations that improve accuracy, transparency and effectiveness in public sector service delivery. These national priorities complement employers' perceptions that AI could strengthen candidate matching within public institutions.

The findings further align with the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), particularly the concept of perceived usefulness. Employers believed that AI could improve the quality of candidate matching by providing more accurate comparisons between applicants' profiles and job requirements while supporting transparent and evidence-based recruitment decisions. These positive perceptions indicate that employers are likely to develop favourable attitudes toward AI adoption because they expect the technology to improve recruitment outcomes without replacing the critical role of human judgement.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that employers at Iringa Municipal Council have a positive perception of the perceived usefulness of Artificial Intelligence in recruitment and selection. The findings indicate that employers view AI as useful in improving recruitment efficiency, reducing administrative workload, speeding up the screening of applications, supporting candidate identification and improving recruitment decision-making. The findings also show that employers consider AI to have potential value in handling recruitment activities that require processing of a large number of applications. However, the perceived usefulness of AI is linked to the availability of appropriate skills, ICT infrastructure and proper management of the technology. The study recommends that Iringa Municipal Council should provide training to Human Resource Officers, Administrative Officers and Heads of Departments to improve their understanding of AI and its possible applications in recruitment and selection. The Council should also strengthen ICT

infrastructure and technical support to create suitable conditions for the future use of AI-supported recruitment systems. In addition, the Council should conduct a careful assessment of AI systems before adoption to ensure that the systems provide practical benefits in application screening, recruitment efficiency and decision-making. Human involvement should also remain part of recruitment decisions to ensure that AI supports rather than replaces responsible human judgement.

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