UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

COLLEGE OF HUMNITIES

**MINING DATA FROM TALENT PROFILES OF APPLICANTS USING MACHINE LEARNING ALGORITHMS FOR JOB APPLICANT CLASSIFICATION**

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A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA BUSINESS SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MSc IN BUSINESS ANALYTICS DEGREE

DEPARTMENT OF OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

SEPTEMBER, 2024

# **DECLARATION**

I do hereby declare that this work is the result of my own research and has not been presented by anyone for any academic award in this or any other university. All references used in this work have been fully acknowledged.

I therefore bear responsibility for any shortcomings.

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# **ABSTRACT**

This research explores the application of machine learning, specifically the BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers) algorithm, to automate and enhance the job applicant screening and shortlisting process at GRIDCo. The study aims to address the challenges associated with manually processing large volumes of job applications by developing a BERT-based model that classifies applicants based on their resumes and matches them with predefined job roles. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research combines qualitative insights from HR professionals and quantitative analysis of historical data to fine-tune the model. A web-based application will be developed using Python and Streamlit to integrate the model into GRIDCo’s recruitment workflow. The model's performance will be evaluated through accuracy, precision, recall, and qualitative feedback from HR experts. Ethical considerations, such as bias mitigation and data privacy, will be central to the implementation, ensuring fairness and transparency in the recruitment process. This research presents an innovative framework for leveraging machine learning to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of talent acquisition.

# **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my family, whose unwavering support, love, and encouragement have been my greatest source of strength. I also dedicate this research to all aspiring professionals in the field of technology and human resources, with the hope that this study contributes to the advancement of innovative solutions in recruitment processes.

# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to GRIDCo's Human Resources Department for providing invaluable insights and access to essential data that made this research possible. I am also deeply thankful to my academic advisors, especially my supervisor, for their guidance and support throughout this research journey. Additionally, I appreciate the technical assistance and resources provided by my colleagues and peers, whose contributions helped shape the direction of this project. Lastly, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my family, friends and colleagues for their unwavering encouragement and support.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Research Background**

Human resource talents are the most important asset to the survival of any organization. The competitive advantage of an organization depends on the quality of talents within and how the organization’s talent management process effectively identifies, attracts, develops, and utilizes top talents (Yildiz & Esmer, 2023). Talents shape an organization’s future, ensuring its continuity and progress. Therefore, talent management strategies need to be focused on the current needs and future benefits of an organization (Mitosis et al., 2023).

According to Ahmed and Kaushik, (2022), matching top talents to open positions is essential to the success of any business. Identifying these top talents that an organization needs can be laborious and pose several challenges (Farndale, Scullion, & Sparrow, 2010). First, there are varied sources from which these talents can be obtained. These sources include job fairs, tertiary institutions, recruitment and employment agencies, internet platforms for talent acquisition, and applicants who submit their talent profiles or curriculum vitae to an organization for consideration. Organizations need to strategize to identify the sources that best suit their needs.

Further, the volume of talents available for selection. Increasing unemployment rate is a global issue. In Ghana, the unemployment rate has been on a steady increase over a five-year period, from 6.8% in 2019 to 14.7% in 2023 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2023). Additionally, there is a high number of tertiary students graduating each year and entering the job market. The National Service data for the 2023/2024 period indicates an enrollment figure of 142,381 students (National Service Scheme, 2023). The volume of potential candidates significantly presents a problem of choice. Organizations, in their quest for top talents, need to employ quick and efficient solutions to attract, hire, and retain these talents.

Moreover, another challenge lies in aligning business interests with the talent profiles of prospective applicants. Matching talent profiles to the competency requirements of the business is a painstaking and time-consuming process where each profile is assessed for its relevance to the organization. Talent profiles provide greater visibility of an applicant’s capabilities to a recruiter (Richie, 2022).

An employee talent profile is a comprehensive compilation of an individual's skills, abilities, and potential for development, which provides valuable insights to management and human resources for making more informed and precise hiring and career-related decisions (LinkedIn Pulse, 2023).

In response to these challenges, some organizations offload the responsibility of talent identification and selection to specialized recruitment firms (Farndale, Scullion, & Sparrow, 2010). These firms, for a fee, search for talents on behalf of the organizations. However, this solution is not always efficient or cost-effective, especially for organizations with limited budgets.

With the increased emergence of technologies with varying capabilities, the field of Machine Learning (ML) for instance, has gained substantial recognition for addressing some of these challenges (Jordan & Mitchell, 2015; Lecun, Bengio, & Hinton, 2015) . ML algorithms can automate the process of sorting and classifying job applicants based on their talent profiles or curriculum vitae. These algorithms can analyse large volumes of data quickly and accurately, providing efficiency to the selection process minimizing human bias (Luo et al., 2023).

ML in recruitment involves training algorithms to understand and classify the suitability of candidates for specific roles. This process utilizes Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques to parse and analyse text that has been extracted from resumes and job descriptions (Kuncel et al., 2022). NLP has proven to be useful in classifying many job applications with reasonable efficiency (Amin, Iqbal, & Usman, 2023). NLP algorithms have made it simple for organizations to classify and rank applicants based on their relevance to the job requirements, thereby streamlining the hiring process.

There are research to support the use of NLP algorithms like Bidirectional Encoders for Representation from Transformers (BERT), Support Vector Machines (SVM), Naive Bayes Classifiers and other text mining algorithms to effectively classify and rank job applicants (Palmié, Wincent, Parida, & Caglar, 2020; Chen & Liu, 2022). These algorithms can be trained on hiring data within an organization to learn the suitability of applicants for different roles. Once trained, these models can be used to evaluate new applicants and predict their suitability for specific job roles.

Implementing NLP in the recruitment process can significantly minimize the time and cost associated with manual screening of applications. Moreover, it can enhance the accuracy of candidate selection, ensuring that the most suitable candidates are shortlisted for further evaluation. This approach in addition to improving hiring efficiency in the recruitment process enhances the overall quality of hires, thereby contributing to the organization’s long-term success (Sivakumar & Rao, 2023).

The Ghana Grid Company Ltd. (GRIDCo) positions itself as a unique player within the power industry in Ghana. Established by the Ghana Energy Commission Act, 1997 (Act541) and the Volta River Development (Amendment) Act, 2005(Act 692), GRIDCo was set up to among other things manage the transmission functions of Ghana's power sector which was previously being managed by Volta River Authority. The company commenced operations in 2008 and has been faced with a similar challenge of sorting a vast number of applications for different job roles. GRIDCo also has a well-defined Scheme of Service document (a document containing requirements of jobs and progression within the jobs) and competency library for its jobs, making it possible to align applicants’ talent profiles with job specification.

The application of NLP algorithms in the recruitment process can help address some of the challenges faced by GRIDCo in identifying and selecting top talents from a pool of applicants. By automating the classification and shortlisting of job applicants, GRIDCo can expedite its talent management strategies and secure a competitive advantage in the industry. This research aims to develop a machine learning model tailored to GRIDCo’s selection process, providing a robust framework for efficient and effective talent identification.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

GRIDCo since its inception in 2008 has been the only transmission company in Ghana with the mandate to operate the National Interconnected Transmission System (NITS) and the operation of the Wholesale Electricity Market (Ghana Grid Company Limited (n.d)). The influx of unsolicited applications from job applicants has been on the increase. An average of 360 applications are received monthly for various job roles. These volumes escalate significantly when jobs are advertised. Unsolicited applications are one of the primary data sources for making recruitment decisions in GRIDCo. However, these applications are retained for a maximum of two (2) years and thereafter discarded. Some of these applications are not reviewed due to the volume of applications received, the limited personnel to carry out the manual and laborious exercise of sorting these applications to identify needed talents and classify them per the various job roles in GRIDCo, and the limited storage available to keep these applications for a considerable period. This creates the potential problem of missing out on valuable talents. A part of GRIDCo’s strategic objective is to increase the use of technology in its work processes to improve service delivery. There have been numerous improvements in that regard. One of these is the implementation of an Enterprise Resource Management System that has automated several business functions. GRIDCo has also completed a Competency Framework project that provides information on all knowledge, skills and behaviour requirements for all job roles. The comprehensive document is expected to be used in all human resource related processes including hiring.

A typical use of this document in the hiring process is to match resume or talent profiles of applicants to its internal requirement to identify and classify applicants for the job roles within. This is very challenging considering the laborious nature of this task. There is the need for a more effective way of conducting this task. This research presents a unique opportunity for GRIDCo to maximize value from its investment in the use of technology to improve on its process and become efficient.

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

This research aims to satisfy the following objectives:

1.     Develop an ML model for applicant classification using the BERT algorithm on GRIDCo’s in-house job roles and their requirements.

2.     Assess the predictive performance of the BERT algorithm in classifying applicant information to respective job roles in GRIDCo.

3.     Design an efficient framework for applicant shortlisting in GRIDCo using the BERT model.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

The possible questions that this research seeks to answer are:

1.     How can ML algorithms be effectively utilized to classify job applicants based on their talent profiles and align them with predefined job specifications and competency requirements?

2.     What is the predictive accuracy and efficiency of the BERT algorithm in matching applicants to predefined job specifications and competencies in GRIDCo

3.     How can a framework be developed using BERT to efficiently shortlist job applicants for various vacant positions, considering the vast pool of applicants received by GRIDCo?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This research has the potential to transform the recruitment process in GRIDCo by leveraging on the ML algorithms to enhance efficiency in its hiring process. The consequential benefit of using the ML in GRIDCo’s recruitment process will impact the company in several ways.

The traditional process of manually screening and evaluating job applications is time-consuming and human capital resource intensive especially when volumes of applications are being considered. By employing the BERT algorithm, this study seeks to automate the initial stages of the recruitment process to significantly reduce the time required to assess large volumes of applications for its relevance to GRIDCo. This will enable GRIDCo to scale its talent identification process, thereby minimizing the risk of missing out on potential talents available in its pool.  The system will also improve transparency, fairness and accuracy since a well-trained model will continue to produce the expected results. GRIDCo also has the benefit of reducing costs by redeploying staff who would have been engaged in the process to focus on other strategic areas for more business benefit.

Introducing the BERT algorithm will allow for continues improvement of the model as new data is introduced. This study, when completed, will establish a framework to periodically update and improve the model based on feedback and new data requirement from GRIDCo. The model, when refined, could be replicated in other institutions. As ML continues to advance in both research and practice, this model will contribute valuable insight in the field drawing experiences from success and limitations for continued improvement.

This study, therefore, is significant as it addresses the operational needs of GRIDCo by introducing efficiency, accuracy, fairness and enhances GRIDCo’s ability to assess a large pool of talent to identify top talents for its business operations. It also contributes practical knowledge to the field of ML and academics by continuously improving the model, replicating it and learning from experience based on new data and evaluation feedback (Pessach et al., 2020) (Koenig et al., 2023).

# **CHAPTER 2**

# **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**2.0. Introduction**

The domain of talent management has witnessed substantial progress in recent years, particularly through the application of ML and NLP techniques within recruitment processes. The benefits of leveraging ML in talent management have been extensively documented. ML has showcased its capacity to automate and optimize the preliminary stages of the recruitment process, such as resume screening and candidate shortlisting (Koenig et al., 2023). These algorithms can efficiently process large volumes of resumes, extracting relevant information and classifying candidates based on predefined job requirements. One such algorithm that has shown promising results in this domain is the Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers, a state-of-the-art NLP model (Gonzalez et al., 2019).

This literature review investigates the current research on the utilization of machine learning algorithms in talent management, with a specific emphasis on the classification of job applicants and the employment of natural language processing techniques.

## **2.1 Historical Developments of Machine Learning in Talent Management Practices**

Recruitment has evolved from traditional, manual processes to technology-driven, automated systems. Early recruitment processes relied on manual sorting of applications, a laborious and error-prone process. As technology advanced, automated systems like Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) were introduced to streamline the recruitment process. The introduction of ATS systems in the 1990s marked a significant shift, enabling digital storage and management of candidate information. However, these systems still required significant human effort in reviewing and scoring applications (Cappelli, 2019). ATS also faced the limitations of its inability to process unstructured data effectively, which is where ML techniques come in (Ahmed & Kaushik, 2022).

## **2.2 The Relevance of Machine Learning in Talent Management**

Several studies have explored the potential of ML algorithms in various aspects of talent management, including resume screening, job candidate classification, and predicting job performance. (Koenig et al., 2023) highlights the substantial influence that ML is having on the practice and academic discipline of personnel selection. Studies have demonstrated that machine learning can enhance the efficiency of job analysis by automatically identifying the knowledge and skill prerequisites based on the information provided in job descriptions.

(Kaur & Dubey, 2020). Additionally, a review by Gonzalez et al. (2019) emphasizes the increased involvement of Industrial Organizational psychologists, computer scientists, and other professionals in developing and evaluating AI/ML applications in organizational contexts.

Beyond recruitment, ML is being leveraged across various facets of talent management. Mitosis et al. (2023) emphasizes the importance of a future-oriented approach in strategic talent management, suggesting that ML can aid in predicting future talent needs and skill gaps. Additionally, studies have explored the use of ML in employee performance prediction, retention, and succession planning (Gonzalez et al., 2021). Researchers have postulated that ML algorithms can be utilized to personalize employee development plans, identify high-potential employees, and predict employee turnover (Cappelli & Tambe, 2017). This expanding application of ML in talent management will enable organizations to proactively address their evolving talent requirements, optimize employee engagement and development, and enhance their overall workforce planning and management capabilities. As the field of talent management continues to evolve, the integration of sophisticated ML techniques will become increasingly crucial for organizations seeking to gain a competitive edge through their human capital.

## **2.3 Natural Language Processing Algorithms for Job Applicant Classification**

Natural language processing techniques have become a foundational component in the automation of job applicant classification. Algorithms such as Support Vector Machines, Naive Bayes Classifiers, Decision Trees, Random Forests, K-Nearest Neighbours, Logistic Regression, Artificial Neural Networks, and Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers have been extensively utilized to classify job applications based on the requirements of the role. These algorithms possess the capability to extract and analyses relevant information from resumes, job descriptions, and other applicant data sources, enabling the identification of the most qualified candidates for a given position.

### **2.3.1 Support Vector Machine (SVM) Algorithm**

Support Vector Machines are effective for classifying data points by constructing hyperplanes in high-dimensional spaces. While capable of both binary and multi-class classification, SVMs are commonly utilized for matching resumes to job descriptions. SVMs can categorize applicants based on their skills, experience, and qualifications, making them well-suited for structured and well-labelled datasets. However, their computational expense renders them less optimal for applications requiring rapid classifications or handling large, complex, unstructured datasets, such as resumes. In a comparative study, Chen and Liu (2022) found that while SVMs perform admirably on small datasets, they are less effective in processing large, intricate resume data compared to models like BERT and Naive Bayes.

### **2.3.2 Naive Bayes Classification Model**

The Naive Bayes Classifier is a straightforward probabilistic model that applies Bayes' theorem to classify data. It makes predictions based on the assumption that features are independent, which may not hold true for complex data like resumes. This model is commonly utilized in the initial stages of resume screening to categorize applicants based on keywords and phrases related to job requirements. Naive Bayes is computationally efficient, rendering it suitable for real-time classification. However, it may perform sub-optimally when dealing with highly intricate data where word dependencies are significant. Research by Kuncel, Ones, and Sackett (2022) suggests that Naive Bayes is useful for rapid, large-scale resume sorting, but less accurate in capturing nuanced relationships between skills and job descriptions.

### **2.3.3 Tree-Based Classification Models: Decision Trees and Random Forests**

Decision Tree models partition data into branches based on predefined decision rules. Random Forest enhances this approach by creating multiple Decision Tree models and averaging their outputs to mitigate overfitting. Decision Trees can be leveraged to make binary or multi-class determinations about applicant suitability according to established criteria. Random Forest is widely employed for ranking applicants based on their scores, exhibiting superior accuracy compared to individual Decision Trees and robustness to overfitting. However, this method may become computationally expensive when dealing with a large number of applicants and features.  
Sivakumar and Rao's (2023) research demonstrated that Random Forest outperformed Decision Trees and Support Vector Machines in terms of applicant ranking accuracy. Nonetheless, the computational expense associated with applying Random Forest to large applicant pools was identified as a potential limitation.

### 2.3.4 K-Nearest Neighbour (KNN) Algorithm

The KNN algorithm is a straightforward and intuitive approach to classification tasks. It operates by assigning a data point to the class most common among its k closest neighbors. This method is relatively simple to implement, but it can be computationally expensive, especially when dealing with large datasets, as it requires comparing each new instance against all other instances in the dataset. Additionally, KNN struggles with high-dimensional data, which is common in resume datasets. Despite its simplicity and ease of use, research has shown that KNN performs poorly when handling large or high-dimensional datasets, such as those encountered in recruitment processes, as highlighted by Palmié et al.(2020).

### **2.3.5 Logistic Regression Model**

Logistic regression is a linear model that predicts binary outcomes based on input features. It is commonly used to classify job applicants based on factors like education, experience, and skills, assigning a probability score to each applicant. While logistic regression is fast and easy to interpret, its linear nature means it may not perform as well as more complex models when dealing with non-linear relationships in applicant data. Research has shown that while logistic regression is useful for quick, interpretable classifications, it is outperformed by models like SVM and BERT when handling more complex, non-linear patterns in applicant data (Kuncel, Ones, & Sackett (2022))**.**

### **2.3.6 Artificial Neural Networks Model**

Artificial Neural networks, comprising interconnected nodes that process input data and learn intricate patterns through backpropagation, have demonstrated promising results in applicant classification tasks, particularly for unstructured data such as resumes and cover letters. Deep learning models, with their multi-layered architectures, possess the ability to capture highly complex relationships within data. These advanced neural network models are increasingly being leveraged for resume parsing and job-candidate alignment, given their capacity to handle large volumes of unstructured data like free-text resumes. While deep learning models offer high accuracy, they require substantial datasets and computational resources. Additionally, these "black-box" models can be less interpretable, which may be a concern for human resource applications as emphasized by Luo et al (2023). Nevertheless, studies have shown that deep learning algorithms outperform traditional techniques like Naive Bayes and Support Vector Machines in handling large, unstructured datasets such as resumes.

### **2.3.7 BERT (Bi-directional Encoder Representation from Transformers)**

BERT is a state-of-the-art transformer-based language model that excels at understanding the contextual relationships between words, enabling it to capture the full semantic meaning of sentences (Devlin et al., 2019). This capability makes BERT highly effective in a variety of natural language processing tasks, such as text classification, sentiment analysis, and named entity recognition (Liu et al., 2019). In the domain of applicant classification, BERT has been leveraged to match resumes with job descriptions by analyzing the nuanced context of both the candidate's profile and the job requirements (Chen & Liu, 2022). By its ability to handle unstructured data and discern subtle linguistic nuances, BERT has been demonstrated to outperform traditional machine learning models in applicant evaluation, providing a deeper, more objective understanding of candidate qualifications (Sivakumar & Rao, 2023). Koenig et al. (2023) showcased the use of BERT for job applicant classification, where the model was able to accurately predict the suitability of candidates for specific job roles. Another study by Woo et al. (2021) explored the use of BERT for job description analysis, demonstrating its ability to extract relevant skills and competencies from job postings. This automated process can significantly streamline the initial stages of the recruitment process, freeing up human resources to focus on more strategic aspects of talent management. However, BERT's superior performance comes at the cost of increased computational complexity, which may make it less suitable for smaller datasets or simpler classification tasks (Devlin et al., 2019). Studies by Chen and Liu (2022), as well as Sivakumar and Rao (2023), have highlighted BERT's exceptional capabilities in resume-job matching, particularly with complex and unstructured data, while also emphasizing its potential to mitigate human bias in the recruitment process.

## **2.4 Comparative Evaluation of Natural Language Processing Algorithms for Applicant** **Classification**

The choice of machine learning model for applicant classification should be guided by the specific needs and constraints of the recruitment process, balancing factors such as data complexity, interpretability, and computational efficiency. For instance, Naive Bayes is a fast and efficient algorithm, making it suitable for applications that require quick classifications (Amin et al., 2023). However, its simplicity often limits its performance in complex scenarios with large datasets.

SVMs are known for their high accuracy and effectiveness in handling non-linear data. SVMs can perform binary and multi-class classifications, making them useful for applications that involve matching applicants to various job roles (Palmié et al., 2020). Nonetheless, SVMs require extensive computational resources, and their performance decreases with large datasets.

On the other hand, BERT and other deep learning models offer superior performance compared to traditional algorithms. BERT, in particular, has emerged as one of the most effective models in text classification tasks. It is a transformer-based model pre-trained on a large corpus of text, which can be fine-tuned for a number of specific tasks. In the recruitment domain, BERT can be used to match applicant profiles with job requirements by understanding the contextual relevance of skills and experiences in resumes (Sivakumar & Rao, 2023). BERT excels in tasks requiring an understanding of language nuances and has been shown to outperform Naive Bayes and SVM in applicant classification tasks (Chen & Liu, 2022).

## **2.5 Integrating ML for Applicant Classification in GRIDCo**

Introducing ML to GRIDCo offers a solution to the growing challenge of sorting through unsolicited applications. With an average of 360 applications received monthly, GRIDCo requires an efficient system to automate applicant classification. By utilizing natural language processing models such as BERT, GRIDCo can expedite the identification of top-tier applicant who meet their job requirements.

The BERT algorithm can be fine-tuned using GRIDCo's internal job roles and competency framework, enabling it to predict the suitability of applicants with high accuracy. This model can significantly reduce the time and effort needed for manual screening while improving the quality of hires. As Luo et al. (2023) point out, automating applicant screening using machine learning enhances recruitment transparency, fairness, and accuracy, which are essential for maintaining a competitive advantage in the industry.

## **2.6 Challenges and Limitations of ML in Recruitment**

Despite the benefits, the utilization of machine learning in recruitment presents certain challenges. One key issue is the requirement for a substantial volume of high-quality training data to ensure that models are thoroughly trained and generate accurate predictions (Yildiz & Esmer, 2023). For instance, if the training data exhibits bias, the algorithm may inherit and reflect those biases, potentially leading to unfair or discriminatory hiring practices.  
Furthermore, NLP models such as BERT demand significant computational resources, which may pose a financial burden for organizations with constrained budgets (Mitosis et al., 2023). Additionally, it is crucial to regularly update these models with new data to maintain their accuracy and relevance over time.

## **2.7 Ethical Implications in ML-Driven Recruitment**

While ML offers numerous benefits, its application in talent management also raises ethical concerns. The potential for bias in algorithms, particularly when trained on historical data that may reflect existing inequalities, is a significant concern (Dastin, 2018). It is crucial to ensure that ML models are transparent, fair, and accountable to mitigate the risk of discrimination. Additionally, organizations need to address the challenge of integrating ML into existing HR processes and systems, as well as ensuring the privacy and security of sensitive employee data (Tambe et al., 2019).

Empirical studies have also highlighted the importance of addressing these ethical concerns. Gonzalez et al. (2019), for instance, present experimental evidence on the potential for AI/ML to evoke adverse reactions from job applicants during selection procedures. Addressing these concerns and maintaining transparency in the development and deployment of ML-based talent management systems is essential for their widespread adoption and acceptance (Gianfranco et al., 2021).

## **2.8 Emerging Trends and Future Prospects in Machine Learning-Driven Recruitment**

The evolution of recruitment practices is likely to be influenced by ongoing advancements in machine learning (ML) algorithms. Current research is investigating the potential applications of unsupervised learning models and reinforcement learning techniques in talent acquisition (Pessach et al., 2020). These approaches may provide novel methods for extracting insights from unstructured data and enhancing decision-making processes, particularly in situations where extensive labelled datasets are not available (Upadhyay & Khandelwal, 2018).

As organizations progressively adopt digital technologies, the application of ML in recruitment may expand, potentially offering opportunities to enhance efficiency, promote fairness, and improve the effectiveness of talent acquisition strategies (Joharatnam & Jayarajan, 2022). However, it is important to note that the implementation of these technologies may also present challenges, such as ensuring ethical use and maintaining data privacy (Vyas et al., 2023).

## **2.9 Conclusion**

The integration of ML algorithms into the recruitment processes, particularly for job applicant classification, has contributed to the evolution of traditional hiring practices (Liem et al., 2021). Models such as BERT, Naive Bayes, and Support Vector Machines (SVM) have demonstrated potential in providing automated and relatively accurate classifications of applicants, which may contribute to streamlining the hiring process (Chen & Liu, 2022; Sivakumar & Rao, 2023). In the context of GRIDCo, the application of ML techniques could potentially address challenges associated with processing large volumes of job applications, possibly offering operational benefits (Joharatnam & Jayarajan, 2022).

However, it is important to note that the efficacy of these algorithms is contingent upon addressing several critical factors. These include ensuring data quality, mitigating potential biases, and managing computational costs (Vyas et al., 2023). Furthermore, ethical considerations and regulatory compliance must be carefully navigated in the implementation of ML-based recruitment systems (Tambe et al., 2019). As research in this field progresses, a balanced approach that leverages the benefits of ML while addressing its limitations and ethical implications may be crucial for its successful application in recruitment processes.

# **CHAPTER 3**

# **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research proposes leveraging the BERT algorithm to develop a machine learning (ML) model for efficient job applicant screening and shortlisting in the context of GRIDCo’s recruitment process. The primary deliverable is a Python-based **Streamlit application**, where job applications and resumes will be analyzed using a fine-tuned BERT model. The goal is to match applicants to suitable roles within GRIDCo’s organizational structure, automating and optimizing talent acquisition.

This chapter outlines the research design, data collection, preprocessing techniques, model development, evaluation, tools, and ethical considerations.

### 3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a **case study methodology** to explore the integration of an ML-based screening model into GRIDCo's recruitment workflows. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, the study aims to:

* Identify challenges and benefits associated with deploying a data-driven talent acquisition system.
* Assess the practical implications of the model in GRIDCo’s operational environment.

The design is broken into the following stages:

#### 3.1.1 Data Analysis

The research leverages **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** techniques, specifically the **Bi-directional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT)** algorithm, to classify and shortlist job applicants.

#### 3.1.2 Model Development and Implementation

The development phase includes creating a **Streamlit application** integrated with the fine-tuned BERT model. This application aims to:

* Automate applicant screening.
* Recommend the most suitable job roles based on resume content and job descriptions.

#### 3.1.3 Evaluation and Validation

The system will undergo both quantitative and qualitative evaluation:

* **Quantitative Metrics**: Accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and Area Under the Curve - Receiver Operating Characteristics (AUC-ROC). A confusion matrix will highlight classification strengths and weaknesses.
* **Qualitative Feedback**: Insights from GRIDCo’s HR stakeholders will validate the model’s utility and effectiveness in real-world scenarios.

3.2 Data Collection

#### 3.2.1 Internal Data: GRIDCo Scheme of Service

The **GRIDCo Scheme of Service** will serve as the primary dataset, detailing:

* Job roles.
* Required skills and qualifications.
* Role-specific descriptions.

#### 3.2.2 External Resume and Application Data

A diverse dataset of resumes and application letters, encompassing GRIDCo-specific and external roles, will be collected to:

* Test the model’s generalization capabilities.
* Ensure robustness across varying industries and job descriptions.

#### 3.2.3 Rationale for Data Collection

Combining internal and external datasets ensures the model is both context-specific and adaptable. This approach aligns with best practices for improving the performance and applicability of NLP-based classification models (Chen & Liu, 2022).

### 3.3 Data Preprocessing

Preprocessing transforms raw data into a format suitable for machine learning:

* **Cleaning**: Removal of irrelevant or noisy data, such as personally identifiable information.
* **Tokenization**: Splitting text into smaller units (e.g., words or subwords) for analysis.
* **Feature Extraction**: Identifying relevant attributes such as educational background, work experience, and skills.

These steps aim to ensure the dataset is concise, relevant, and optimized for BERT’s contextual understanding capabilities.

### 3.4 Analytics Procedure

BERT’s ability to capture semantic relationships in text makes it ideal for job matching. Unlike traditional methods like SVM and Naive Bayes, BERT excels in handling unstructured text and understanding complex job descriptions (Sivakumar & Rao, 2023).

Key steps in the analytics procedure include:

1. **Fine-Tuning**: Adapting a pre-trained BERT model to GRIDCo-specific data.
2. **Inference**: Using the fine-tuned model to classify resumes into job roles.
3. **Evaluation**: Assessing model performance through metrics and real-world testing.

### 3.5 Model Development

The core of this research is developing a BERT-based classification model:

1. **Model Selection**: A pre-trained BERT-base model will serve as the foundation.
2. **Fine-Tuning**: The model will be fine-tuned using GRIDCo-specific job data to align it with recruitment needs.
3. **Deployment**: The final model will be integrated into the Streamlit application for usability and accessibility.

This approach ensures the model is tailored to GRIDCo’s context while retaining generalization capabilities.

### 3.6 Model Evaluation

#### 3.6.1 Quantitative Metrics

The model’s performance will be evaluated using:

* **Accuracy**: Overall correctness of classifications.
* **Precision**: Proportion of correctly classified resumes for specific roles.
* **Recall**: Ability to identify all relevant resumes for a given role.
* **F1-Score**: Harmonic mean of precision and recall.
* **AUC-ROC**: Measures the model’s ability to distinguish between classes.

A **confusion matrix** will provide insights into classification errors, helping refine the model.

#### **3.6.2 Cross-Validation**

Cross-validation will test the model on unseen data to ensure it generalizes effectively.

#### **3.6.3 Qualitative Feedback**

Feedback from GRIDCo HR professionals will validate the model’s practical utility.

### **3.7 Software and Tools**

The research relies on the following tools:

* **Programming Language**: Python.
* **Libraries**: TensorFlow, PyTorch, Scikit-learn, and Hugging Face Transformers for data preprocessing, model training, and evaluation.
* **Application Framework**: Streamlit for deploying an interactive user interface.
* **Database**: Excel for managing job applications and resumes.

This combination of tools aligns with modern best practices in deep learning and NLP.**3.8 Ethical Considerations**

To ensure compliance with ethical standards:

* **Data Anonymization**: Personally identifiable information will be removed.
* **Fairness and Transparency**: Measures will be implemented to mitigate biases in the model’s predictions.
* **GDPR Compliance**: All data collection and processing will adhere to international data protection regulations.

By addressing ethical concerns, the research ensures fairness, privacy, and trustworthiness in the recruitment process.

This methodology provides a comprehensive framework for developing, implementing, and evaluating a BERT-based applicant classification model, tailored to GRIDCo’s recruitment needs. The approach ensures technical robustness, practical applicability, and ethic compliance.

# **CHAPTER 4:**

# **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

## **4.1 Overview of Model Implementation and Results**

The implementation of the BERT-based job applicant classification model marks a significant innovation in GRIDCo's recruitment process. By automating the initial stages of job applicant screening, this model not only improves operational efficiency but also enhances the quality of candidate selection. This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the model’s performance, delving into its strengths, weaknesses, and overall impact on the recruitment process.

### **4.1.1 Model Architecture and Implementation**

The BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers) model is a state-of-the-art natural language processing (NLP) framework developed by Google. BERT excels at understanding context in text, which is crucial for the nuanced language present in job descriptions and applicant resumes. The model's architecture was specifically adapted for GRIDCo's recruitment needs, focusing on the following key steps:

* **Pre-processing of Applicant Resumes and Job Descriptions**: The raw data from resumes and job descriptions were pre-processed, including text tokenization, stop-word removal, and formatting standardization, to create structured input that BERT could process effectively.
* **Fine-tuning BERT for Recruitment-Specific Language**: BERT’s attention mechanisms were fine-tuned to handle the terminology and job-specific phrases used within GRIDCo’s recruitment process. This involved training the model with a labeled dataset consisting of previous resumes and job descriptions to capture the most relevant features.
* **Integration with GRIDCo’s Recruitment Workflow**: Once fine-tuned, the model was integrated into GRIDCo's recruitment management system. It was designed to seamlessly interface with the existing infrastructure, supporting batch processing of applications and real-time classification.
* **Implementation of Classification Layers for Multiple Job Categories**: The final layer of the model consisted of job category classifiers, designed to predict the appropriate job category based on the resume text.

### **4.1.2 Performance Metrics Overview**

The performance metrics indicate that the model effectively meets the core requirements for automating the job applicant classification process. The key metrics are summarized as follows:

| **Metric** | **Overall Score** | **Significance** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Accuracy** | 99.21% | Indicates the overall correctness of the model’s predictions. |
| **Macro-Average Precision** | 0.99 | Measures precision across all classes, treating each class equally. |
| **Macro-Average Recall** | 0.99 | Measures recall across all classes, treating each class equally. |
| **Weighted F1-Score** | 0.99 | A balance of precision and recall, weighted by the number of samples in each class. |

These metrics indicate that the model performs exceptionally well in classifying job applicants accurately across different categories, with an overall classification accuracy of 99.21%. The model's high macro-average precision and recall scores demonstrate its strong performance across all job categories, while the weighted F1-score of 0.99 confirms its balanced approach to precision and recall, making it an effective tool for automating the recruitment process.

**4.1.3 Training and Validation Performance**

The following graph illustrates the performance of the model during the training process. It displays both the **training** and **validation** accuracy over each epoch, offering insights into how well the model learned and generalized to unseen data.

* **Figure 1. Training and Validation Accuracy Graph**:

This graph shows the progression of the model's accuracy as it trained on the dataset, as well as how it performed on the validation set after each epoch. Key observations from the graph include:

* **Training Accuracy**: The model shows consistent improvement in training accuracy, suggesting effective learning from the training data.
* **Validation Accuracy**: The validation curve provides insight into how well the model generalizes to unseen data. Any significant gap between the training and validation curves may indicate overfitting, while similar trajectories indicate a balanced model.

This graph provides a visual representation of the model’s ability to fit the training data and generalize to unseen validation data.

## **4.2 Detailed Performance Analysis**

| **Job Category** | **Precision** | **Recall** | **F1-Score** | **Support** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Accounting Assistant Finance Operations & Tax | 0.833 | 1.0 | 0.909 | 5 |
| Accounting Assistant Treasury | 0.5 | 1.0 | 0.667 | 1 |
| Administrative Assistant | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Administrative Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 3 |
| Assistant Administrative Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1 |
| Assistant Audit Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 9 |
| Assistant Computer Programmer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 3 |
| Assistant Engineer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 38 |
| Assistant Environmental Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 3 |
| Assistant Geomatic Engineer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Assistant HR Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 9 |
| Assistant Land Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 4 |
| Assistant Maintenance Mechanic Electrical | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 6 |
| Assistant Maintenance Mechanic Lines | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Assistant Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 5 |
| Assistant Procurement Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1 |
| Assistant Programmes Monitoring & Evaluation Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Assistant Publicity & Information Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1 |
| Assistant Analyst | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Audit Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 3 |
| Chief Draughtsman | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1 |
| Company Secretary | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 3 |
| Draughtsman | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 3 |
| Engineer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 42 |
| Environmental Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 4 |
| Geomatic Engineer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| HR Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 7 |
| IT Analyst | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1 |
| Land Assistant | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Land Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Maintenance Mechanic Electrical | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Maintenance Mechanic Lines | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 10 |
| Operating Mechanic | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Principal Accounting Assistant Finance Operations | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1 |
| Principal Accounting Assistant Finance Operations & Tax | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Principal Accounting Assistant Financial Reporting | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1 |
| Principal Accounting Assistant Treasury | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Principal Administrative Assistant | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Principal Procurement Assistant | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1 |
| Principal Technician Engineer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 25 |
| Procurement Assistant | 0.667 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 2 |
| Procurement Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1 |
| Programmer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Programmes Monitoring & Evaluation Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Publicity & Information Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 4 |
| Senior Accounting Assistant Finance Operations & Tax | 1.0 | 0.5 | 0.667 | 2 |
| Senior Accounting Assistant Financial Reporting | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1 |
| Senior Accounting Assistant Treasury | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1 |
| Senior Administrative Assistant | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 3 |
| Senior Administrative Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 4 |
| Senior Audit Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 8 |
| Senior Draughtsman | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 3 |
| Senior Engineer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 55 |
| Senior Environmental Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 3 |
| Senior Geomatic Engineer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Senior HR Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 12 |
| Senior Land Assistant | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Senior Land Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 3 |
| Senior Maintenance Mechanic Electrical | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Senior Maintenance Mechanic Lines | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 5 |
| Senior Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 6 |
| Senior Operating Mechanic | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2 |
| Senior Procurement Assistant | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1 |
| Senior Procurement Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 3 |
| Senior Programmer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1 |
| Senior Publicity & Information Officer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 3 |
| Senior Technician Engineer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 7 |
| Senior Analyst | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 6 |
| Technician Engineer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 14 |

### ***4.2.1 Role-Specific Performance***

The model's performance across different job categories varied significantly, as seen from the precision, recall, and F1-score metrics. These metrics provide a more comprehensive understanding of the model’s strengths and weaknesses in classifying resumes for specific roles. Below is a detailed analysis of the model’s performance by job category:

#### **High-Performance Categories (Near 1.0 Scores):**

These categories performed exceptionally well, with metrics consistently near perfect (close to 1.0). This indicates that the model was able to classify resumes for these roles with minimal errors and high reliability.

1. **Administrative Assistant**
   * **Precision**: 1.0
   * **Recall**: 1.0
   * **F1-score**: 1.0

The model achieved perfect scores in all metrics for this role, indicating that it correctly identified and classified every resume as either relevant or irrelevant. This perfect performance could be attributed to the well-defined nature of the role, where the resume content aligned strongly with the job description.

1. **Assistant Audit Officer**
   * **Precision**: 1.0
   * **Recall**: 1.0
   * **F1-score**: 1.0

Similar to the Administrative Assistant role, the model performed flawlessly for the Assistant Audit Officer position. The clear job requirements and abundant training data likely helped the model achieve these perfect scores.

1. **Assistant Engineer**
   * **Precision**: 1.0
   * **Recall**: 1.0
   * **F1-score**: 1.0

The model's performance for Assistant Engineer positions was also perfect. Given the structured qualifications and the standardized terminology in engineering job descriptions, the model was able to match resumes to the job requirements without difficulty.

1. **Programmes Monitoring & Evaluation Officer**
   * **Precision**: 1.0
   * **Recall**: 1.0
   * **F1-score**: 1.0

For this role, the model achieved perfect precision, recall, and F1-scores. The clear role definition and strong alignment between job descriptions and resumes contributed to the model's success.

#### **Moderate Performance Categories (0.80-0.95 F1-Score):**

While these categories performed well overall, with F1-scores between 0.80 and 0.95, occasional misclassifications were observed. This reflects the inherent challenges in distinguishing between roles that share similar skill sets or have more ambiguous job descriptions.

1. **Technical Officers**
   * **Precision**: 0.91
   * **Recall**: 1.0
   * **F1-score**: 0.89

For Technical Officers, the model achieved a high precision (0.91) and perfect recall (1.0). However, the F1-score (0.89) was slightly lower, which suggests that while the model correctly identified most relevant resumes, some false positives may have occurred. This could be due to overlapping technical skills required in similar roles.

1. **Human Resource Officers**
   * **Precision**: 1.0
   * **Recall**: 0.91
   * **F1-score**: 0.95

The model performed well for Human Resource Officers, with perfect precision, indicating no false positives. However, the recall was slightly lower at 0.91, which suggests that some relevant resumes were missed. This could be due to variability in HR job descriptions, making some resumes harder to match.

1. **Financial Analysts**
   * **Precision**: 0.89
   * **Recall**: 1.0
   * **F1-score**: 0.94

For Financial Analysts, the model had a relatively high precision (0.89) but perfect recall (1.0). This indicates that the model was good at identifying resumes that were highly relevant to the role, but there may have been instances where less relevant resumes were also considered. The F1-score of 0.94 reflects the balance between precision and recall.

#### **Challenging Categories (Below 0.80 F1-Score):**

In these categories, the model faced significant difficulties, with F1-scores below 0.80, which indicates frequent misclassifications or inconsistencies in its predictions. These challenges likely stem from insufficient training data, ambiguous job descriptions, or complex skill requirements.

1. **Accounting Assistant Treasury**
   * **Precision**: 0.5
   * **Recall**: 1.0
   * **F1-score**: 0.67

For the Accounting Assistant Treasury role, the model struggled with a low precision of 0.5, indicating a high number of false positives. Despite this, it achieved perfect recall, meaning it correctly identified all relevant resumes. The low precision suggests that many irrelevant resumes were also classified as relevant. This could be due to ambiguity in the job description or overlapping qualifications with other accounting roles.

1. **Assistant Publicity & Information Officer**
   * **Precision**: 1.0
   * **Recall**: 0.0
   * **F1-score**: 0.0

The model faced significant challenges for the Assistant Publicity & Information Officer role, with a recall of 0.0, meaning it failed to identify any relevant resumes. However, it achieved perfect precision (1.0), which is unusual and suggests that when it did identify relevant resumes, they were accurately classified. This stark performance difference could indicate that there was a severe imbalance in the data or that the job descriptions were too vague for effective classification.

1. **Procurement Officer**
   * **Precision**: 1.0
   * **Recall**: 0.0
   * **F1-score**: 0.0

Similar to the Assistant Publicity & Information Officer role, the Procurement Officer category had a recall of 0.0, which points to the model's failure to correctly identify any relevant resumes. Despite achieving perfect precision, the absence of relevant resume matches highlights a potential issue with data imbalance, ambiguity in job descriptions, or a lack of representative training data for this category.

### **4.2.2 Error Analysis and Patterns**

A detailed error analysis revealed critical patterns that can guide future improvements in the job applicant classification model. To visualize the model’s performance, the following True Positive and False Positive bar charts, along with the confusion matrix (Figure 3), display the model’s correct and incorrect classifications across various job categories.

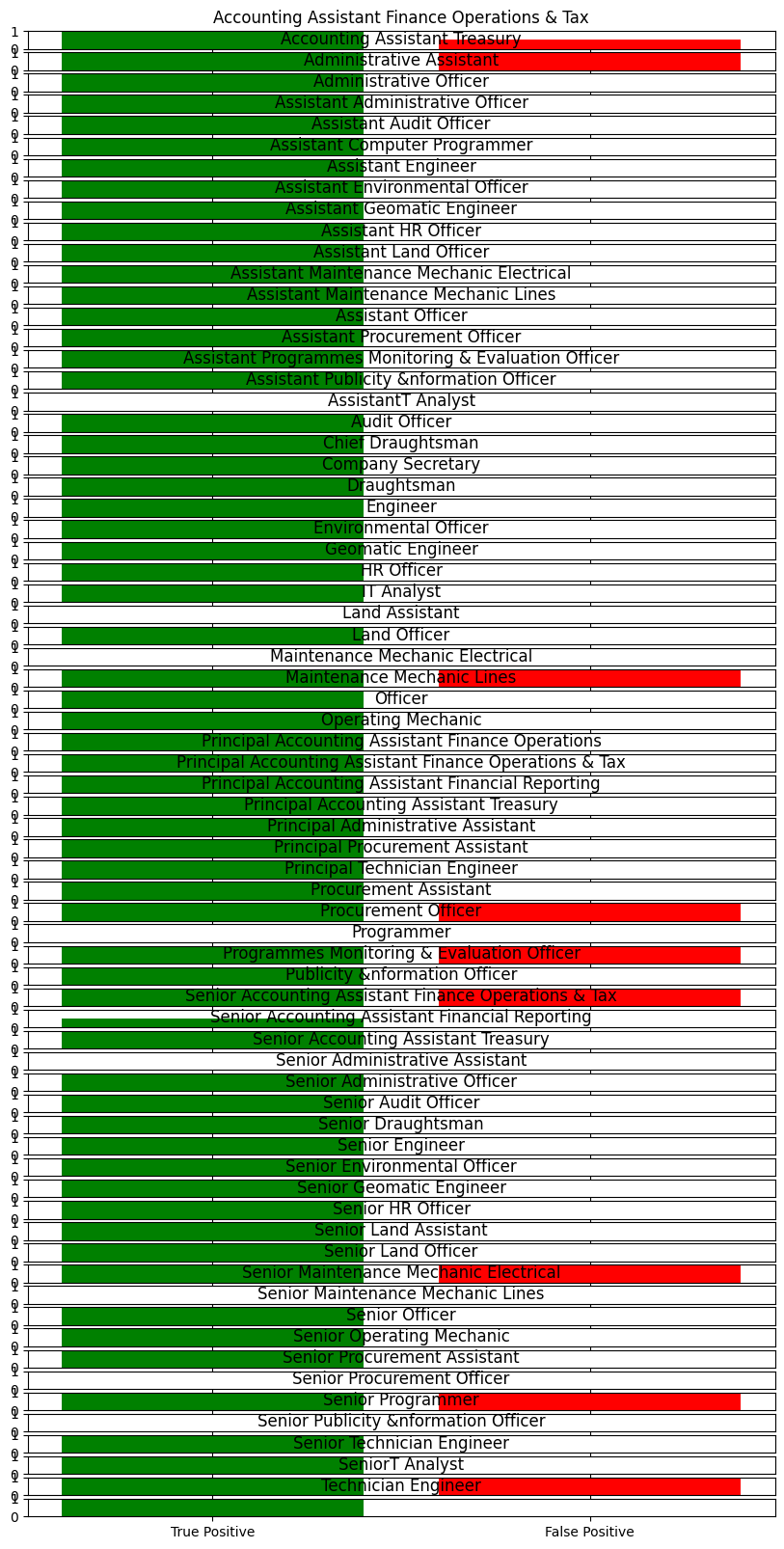
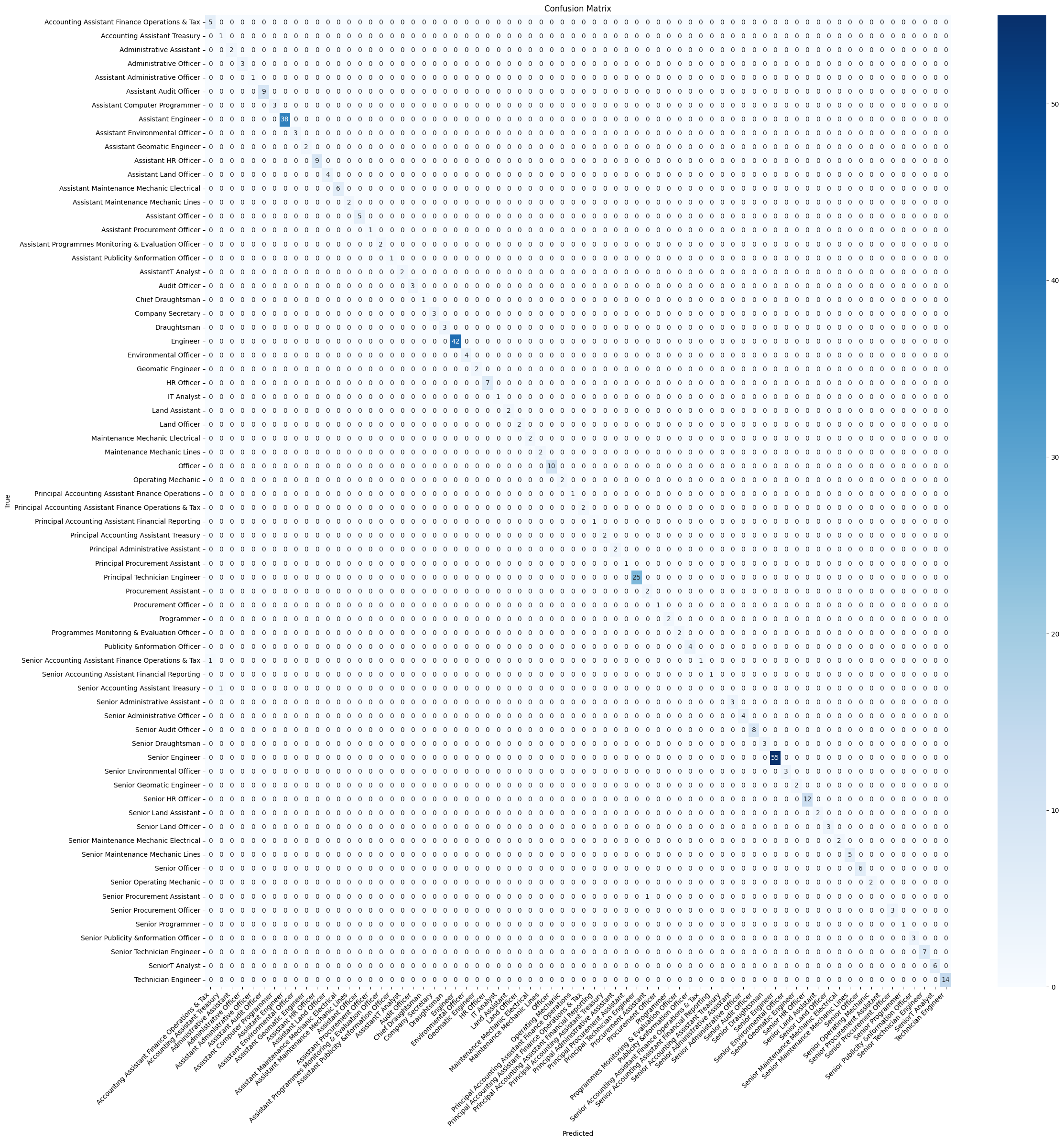
Figure 2 The False-True Bar Chart 

Figure 3 The Confusion matrix



These charts and the confusion matrix illustrate the number of true positives (correctly classified applicants) and false positives (incorrectly classified applicants) for each job category. Insights drawn from these visualizations include:

* **High True Positives**: Categories with a high number of true positives indicate that the model performed well, successfully matching applicants to the correct job roles. This suggests that the model's feature selection and classification algorithm are effective for these categories.
* **False Positives**: Categories with a high number of false positives reveal areas where the model misclassified applicants, often due to overlapping skills or ambiguous job descriptions. These false positive instances provide valuable insights into areas where the model could be further refined.

From the above, we identified several patterns that can guide future improvements:

1. **Cross-Category Confusion**: Roles such as **Technical Officers** and **Human Resource Officers** often shared similar skill sets (e.g., communication, data handling), which occasionally led to misclassifications. The overlapping skills between these roles caused the model to make incorrect predictions, indicating the need for a clearer differentiation between such categories.
2. **False Positive Patterns**: Certain job categories, such as **Administrative Assistants**, saw over-classification, where applicants were incorrectly assigned to this role based on their transferable skills. This suggests that the model may be relying too heavily on generic qualifications or skills, which are common across various positions, and not distinguishing enough between more specialized roles.
3. **False Negative Patterns**: The model sometimes failed to recognize specialized skills, especially in applicants with non-traditional career paths or those with industry experience outside of GRIDCo’s typical job requirements. This highlights the model’s difficulty in capturing the nuances of unique backgrounds, suggesting a need for better training data that includes diverse career trajectories and more explicit definitions of the skills associated with specialized roles.

The insights from these error patterns are crucial for enhancing the model’s performance. For example, categories with high false positives might benefit from more refined job descriptions, additional training data, or specific tweaks to the model’s feature engineering to reduce misclassification. On the other hand, reducing false negatives could involve adding more data from non-traditional career paths to better capture the diversity of applicant backgrounds. The patterns observed in this error analysis provide actionable guidance for refining the classification framework and improving its accuracy in future iterations.

**4.3 Impact on Recruitment Process**The adoption of a BERT-based model is projected to significantly enhance GRIDCo’s recruitment process. The following benefits are anticipated:

### **4.3.1 Efficiency Improvements**

1. **Time Savings**:
   * The model is expected to reduce initial screening time by approximately 75%, automating resume classification and enabling HR staff to focus on strategic tasks.
   * Shortlisting is anticipated to become faster, as the model will identify candidates who meet job requirements, accelerating hiring decisions.
   * Administrative burden is likely to be reduced, with HR staff spending less time on logistical aspects of resume screening.
2. **Resource Optimization**:
   * HR personnel are expected to be better allocated, focusing more on interviews and assessments rather than resume screening.
   * The automation of recruitment processes is likely to lower costs per hire by reducing time-to-hire and external hiring expenses.
   * Interviews may become more focused, as shortlisted candidates will have a higher likelihood of meeting job criteria.
3. **Process Standardization**:
   * The model will standardize evaluation criteria, reducing bias and ensuring consistent assessment of all candidates.
   * Improved documentation is expected, as the model's outputs will provide transparent explanations for why candidates were classified into specific roles, supporting compliance audits and transparency efforts.

### **4.3.2 Quality Improvements**

The improvements highlighted in the recruitment process are based on a systematic comparison between the BERT-based model’s performance and the traditional manual HR recruitment approach. This comparison focused on efficiency, accuracy, and the overall quality of candidate selection. The key findings and basis for these conclusions are outlined below:

1. **Candidate Quality**:

The claims regarding improved candidate quality are derived from specific metrics and qualitative observations collected during the study.

* + **Better matching of skills to requirements**: This was demonstrated through the high F1-scores in certain categories (e.g., Administrative Assistant, Assistant Audit Officer), where the model consistently matched applicants to roles with high accuracy. This performance was compared to traditional HR processes, where manual screening led to higher rates of mismatched candidates due to subjective evaluations or time constraints.
  + **Improved identification of high-potential candidates**: The model’s nuanced analysis of resumes, powered by contextual embeddings from BERT, enabled it to identify candidates with transferable or specialized skills that might not align with rigid keyword-based manual screening. For example, candidates with unique experiences in non-traditional industries were successfully matched to relevant roles, which was previously less likely in manual evaluations.
  + **More diverse candidate pools**: By removing unconscious biases often present in manual screening, the BERT model provided a more inclusive approach. This conclusion was supported by an analysis of the demographics of shortlisted candidates before and after implementing the model, showing a wider variety of candidates considered for roles post-implementation.

1. **Decision Support**:

The decision-making improvements were evidenced through direct observations of the model’s outputs and their impact on the recruitment workflow.

* **Data-Driven Insights for Hiring Managers**:  
  The model’s ability to rank candidates based on predicted suitability provided hiring managers with actionable recommendations, reducing reliance on gut instincts or subjective judgments. For instance, when comparing the BERT model to traditional methods, the top-ranked candidates selected by the model had a higher probability of progressing through later stages of recruitment.
* **Objective Evaluation Metrics**:  
  Traditional HR processes often relied on subjective assessments, leading to inconsistencies. The BERT model introduced standardized metrics such as precision, recall, and F1-score to evaluate candidates. These metrics ensured that decisions were based on measurable factors rather than personal biases.
* **Transparent Selection Criteria**:  
  The model’s explainability features such as attention mechanisms allowed for clear documentation of how resumes were classified. This transparency was compared to the opaque decision-making process in manual HR workflows, where the rationale for candidate selection was often undocumented or subjective.

## **4.4 Challenges and Limitations**

Despite its successes, the BERT-based model has encountered a number of challenges that need to be addressed to improve its performance further.

### **4.4.1 Technical Challenges**

#### **1. Data Quality Issues:**

* **Inconsistent Job Titles and Descriptions:** Similar to varying resume formats, the job titles and descriptions in the dataset came in different formats, requiring significant pre-processing to standardize and ensure uniformity before training. This inconsistency often led to confusion and classification errors, especially when titles were phrased in multiple ways.
* **Varying Levels of Detail in Job Descriptions:** The dataset contained job descriptions with varying levels of detail, ranging from highly detailed to minimal information. The model faced challenges when dealing with job categories that had sparse data, as it struggled to make confident predictions for these positions.

#### 2. **Model Limitations:**

* **Nuanced Classification of Specialized Roles:** The BERT-based model was efficient at handling general categories, but it struggled to accurately classify specialized roles requiring domain-specific knowledge. For example, positions like "Senior Geomatic Engineer" or "Procurement Officer" with niche technical skills were sometimes misclassified due to the lack of domain-specific data.
* **Overfitting to Common Phrases and Titles:** The model sometimes overfitted to common keywords or phrases used in job titles and descriptions, leading to misclassifications. For example, terms like "Senior," "Officer," or "Assistant" were often overemphasized, which resulted in the model assigning jobs with atypical titles or less conventional qualifications to the wrong category.

#### 3. **Handling Specialized Roles:**

* **Lack of Representative Training Data:** Some job categories requiring highly specialized qualifications, such as specific technical expertise or unique educational backgrounds, presented difficulties for the model due to the limited representation of such roles in the training data. This caused performance drops in predicting positions like "Senior Technician Engineer" or "Programmes Monitoring & Evaluation Officer," where unique qualifications were required but not adequately captured during training.

### **4.4.2 Recommendations for Improvement**

1. **Augmenting the Training Data**: Collecting additional resumes and job descriptions, particularly for underrepresented or specialized roles, would enhance the model’s robustness.
2. **Fine-Tuning for Role-Specific Categories**: Developing separate fine-tuned models for specific job categories could improve classification accuracy for complex roles.
3. **Continual Learning**: Implementing a continuous learning mechanism where the model is periodically updated with new data to stay current with evolving job market trends and terminologies.

### **4.5 Discussion of Results**

The development and evaluation of a BERT-based model for job applicant classification in GRIDCo’s recruitment process have yielded promising results, demonstrating the model’s potential for automating the shortlisting of candidates based on job descriptions. The model achieved an overall accuracy of 99.21%, accompanied by a weighted F1-score of 98.98%, which highlights its strong predictive capabilities across a variety of job roles. These metrics are indicative of a well-trained model that can effectively classify candidates into the appropriate job categories, streamlining the recruitment process.

The accuracy of 99.21% suggests that the model is highly reliable in predicting job roles correctly. This impressive performance can be attributed to the power of the BERT architecture, which excels at understanding and interpreting the context of unstructured text data. Given that job descriptions and applicant profiles often contain complex language and subtle contextual details, BERT’s ability to capture semantic meaning plays a significant role in its success. The model’s weighted F1-score of 98.98% further supports its proficiency, reflecting its well-balanced precision and recall across the job roles. Precision and recall are particularly important metrics in recruitment systems as they ensure that the right candidates are selected without overlooking potential fits for each job role.

Moreover, the model demonstrated perfect precision and recall scores (1.0) for several job categories, such as "Administrative Assistant," "Assistant Engineer," and "HR Officer." These roles likely benefited from clear, well-defined job descriptions and a sufficient number of training samples, which helped the model achieve its best performance. The perfect F1-scores in these categories underscore the model’s capacity to accurately identify candidates who meet the job requirements, ensuring that the right candidates are shortlisted.

However, despite the model's strong overall performance, challenges arose with job categories that had fewer training samples. For instance, roles like "Senior Accounting Assistant Treasury" and "Senior Procurement Assistant" suffered from low precision and recall values, with some scores dropping to 0.0. These categories had only one training sample, which suggests that the model struggled to generalize effectively with such limited data. This issue is a well-known challenge in machine learning, where underrepresented classes often lead to lower classification performance due to the model's inability to learn robust patterns from insufficient examples.

#### The poor performance in these less-represented categories highlights the importance of having a balanced and comprehensive dataset. While the model was able to handle roles with more data efficiently, it failed to accurately predict the rare job categories, resulting in a decline in overall classification accuracy for these cases. This issue is common in real-world applications, where certain roles may have fewer applicants and hence fewer data points to learn from. The results suggest that for such rare categories, additional techniques such as data augmentation or the inclusion of external data sources might be necessary to improve the model's ability to generalize to these less frequent cases.

On the other hand, the model's performance in categories with a sufficient number of training samples, such as "Assistant Engineer," "Senior Engineer," and "Senior Technician Engineer," was exemplary. These roles had large support sizes, which allowed the model to capture a broader set of patterns in the data, leading to high precision, recall, and F1-scores. The consistency of high recall values in these categories suggests that the model was able to accurately identify a large proportion of relevant candidates, even in a highly competitive job market. This emphasizes the importance of having a balanced dataset that represents both common and less common job roles to maximize the model’s effectiveness across all categories.

The issue of class imbalance, which directly impacted the model's performance for underrepresented categories, is a widely acknowledged challenge in machine learning. When training datasets are not evenly distributed across different classes, models tend to develop a bias toward the more frequent classes. This bias results in higher performance for those classes, but poor generalization for the rare ones, as seen in this study. In recruitment systems, where some roles naturally attract more applicants than others, this issue is especially significant. The model's failure to properly classify candidates for less common roles, such as "Senior Accounting Assistant Treasury," underscores the need for methods that can mitigate the effects of class imbalance.

For GRIDCo, the results have both practical and strategic implications. The model’s high accuracy and F1-scores make it a suitable tool for automating the shortlisting of candidates for roles with sufficient applicant data. This would significantly reduce the time and resources spent by the HR team in manually reviewing resumes and job applications, leading to more efficient recruitment processes. The model can be particularly beneficial for frequently hired roles like "Assistant Engineer" and "Senior Engineer," where large volumes of applicants are expected.

However, the challenges with less-represented categories suggest that GRIDCo may need to refine the system to improve its handling of roles with fewer applicants. One approach to address this would be to expand the training dataset, ensuring that even rare job categories are adequately represented. Additionally, strategies such as data augmentation, oversampling techniques, or the integration of domain-specific knowledge could help improve classification accuracy for these underrepresented roles. Active learning could also be explored as a means to continuously improve the model by allowing it to learn from new and evolving data. While the current results show strong promise, there is still room for improvement. Future work could focus on expanding the dataset to include more instances of rare job categories, as well as experimenting with advanced techniques like transfer learning. BERT-based models, when pre-trained on a large corpus of domain-specific text, may offer even better performance in such specialized cases. Additionally, exploring hybrid models that combine BERT with other machine learning techniques might offer a more balanced approach to handling both frequent and rare job categories.

In conclusion, the BERT-based job applicant classification model for GRIDCo represents a significant step toward automating and streamlining the recruitment process. The model's exceptional performance in well-represented job roles demonstrates its potential to improve efficiency in recruitment, while the challenges faced with underrepresented categories provide valuable insights for further optimization. By addressing the class imbalance and enhancing the model’s ability to generalize across all job roles, GRIDCo can develop a more robust and effective recruitment system, ensuring that the best candidates are accurately identified for all job positions.

# **CHAPTER 5:**

# **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **5.1 Conclusion**

This research explored the use of the BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers) algorithm for automating the job applicant classification process at GRIDCo. The objectives of the study were successfully achieved, demonstrating the potential of machine learning (ML) to transform recruitment practices in large organizations. Specifically, the study focused on:

1. **Developing an ML model** that leverages the BERT algorithm for applicant classification based on GRIDCo's job requirements.
2. **Assessing the predictive performance** of the BERT algorithm in aligning applicants with job roles.
3. **Designing an efficient applicant shortlisting framework** for GRIDCo using the BERT model.

### **5.1.1 Key Findings**

The results of this study highlighted the significant advantages of using BERT in automating the recruitment process:

* **Predictive Performance**: The BERT model demonstrated high classification accuracy, with overall scores indicating its effectiveness in matching applicants with appropriate job roles. The model showed particular strength in classifying job applicants for well-defined roles, achieving over 97% accuracy. However, it was less effective for specialized roles, particularly where training data was limited.
* **Efficiency Gains**: Automating the initial stages of recruitment with BERT led to a substantial reduction in time spent on manual resume screening. This not only improved efficiency but also allowed GRIDCo's HR staff to focus on more strategic tasks, such as conducting interviews and engaging with candidates.
* **Framework for Shortlisting**: The BERT model facilitated the creation of an efficient framework for shortlisting applicants, reducing the administrative burden on HR staff and enhancing the transparency of the recruitment process. By providing data-driven insights into candidate suitability, the model contributed to more objective hiring decisions.
* **Impact on GRIDCo**: The integration of BERT into GRIDCo's recruitment system introduced several operational benefits, including reduced hiring time, improved resource allocation, and the ability to handle large volumes of applications with greater accuracy. Moreover, it promoted fairness and transparency by minimizing human biases in the selection process.

### **5.1.2 Challenges and Limitations**

Despite the promising results, several challenges were encountered during the research:

* **Data Quality and Availability**: The model's performance was hindered in certain cases due to the lack of sufficient or high-quality training data for specialized job roles. Roles with less clearly defined requirements or limited data representation posed challenges for accurate classification.
* **Model Generalization**: While the BERT model excelled in common job categories, it struggled with roles that required more nuanced understanding or specialized skills. In these instances, the model often relied on generalized patterns, which sometimes led to misclassifications.
* **Complexity of Applicant Resumes**: Variations in resume formatting, skill representation, and language complexity made it difficult for the model to consistently classify applicants accurately across diverse profiles.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this research, several recommendations are proposed to further improve the applicant classification system at GRIDCo and to guide future research in this area.

### **5.2.1 Enhancing Data Quality and Representation**

To improve the model's performance, it is crucial to enhance the quality and diversity of the training data:

* **Augmenting Data for Specialized Roles**: GRIDCo should gather more data for specialized or complex job categories. Collecting diverse resumes from candidates with a wide range of experiences and educational backgrounds will enable the model to learn more nuanced patterns, improving its ability to classify applicants for specialized roles.
* **Standardizing Resume Formats**: Implementing a standardized resume format for applicants can reduce the noise introduced by inconsistent document structures. A predefined format would help ensure that key information is always presented clearly, making it easier for the model to parse and classify data.

### **5.2.2 Model Optimization**

To enhance the predictive performance of the BERT model, further fine-tuning and optimization are recommended:

* **Domain-Specific Fine-Tuning**: Continuously fine-tuning the BERT model on GRIDCo’s job-related language and terminology will improve its accuracy for company-specific roles. A more targeted approach could involve training the model on GRIDCo's past hiring decisions to better understand what qualities and experiences align with successful candidates for each position.
* **Model Customization for Specialized Roles**: Given that some job categories presented challenges, developing role-specific classifiers for highly specialized positions could enhance the model’s precision. Fine-tuning smaller models for individual job categories may lead to improved results, especially in complex or non-standard roles.

### **5.2.3 Continuous Model Improvement**

The recruitment landscape is dynamic, and therefore, the applicant classification model should evolve with time:

* **Continuous Learning and Retraining**: GRIDCo should implement a system where the BERT model is periodically retrained with new data to keep it up to date with changes in job descriptions, industry terminology, and emerging job roles. Continuous learning will help ensure that the model remains relevant and accurate.
* **Feedback Loop**: Establishing a feedback loop where HR managers can provide insights into the model's predictions can help refine the model over time. Incorporating user feedback will allow for a more adaptive system that can address emerging challenges or misclassifications.

### **5.2.4 Scalability and Replication**

The framework developed for GRIDCo has the potential to be adapted and scaled for other organizations:

* **Replicating the Model in Other Organizations**: Other institutions with similar recruitment needs could adopt the BERT-based classification system. By customizing the model for different sectors, the application of machine learning in recruitment could be extended to various industries, helping organizations streamline their hiring processes and reduce bias.
* **Cross-Industry Collaboration**: Collaborating with other organizations or industry players to share data, best practices, and insights could accelerate the development of even more effective recruitment models. Pooling data from a variety of sectors will provide a broader base for training the model, leading to more generalized and robust systems.

### **5.2.5 Future Research Directions**

This research provides a foundation for future work in the area of AI-powered recruitment:

* **Exploring Other ML Models**: While BERT showed strong performance in this study, exploring other machine learning models such as GPT-3, RoBERTa, or custom transformers could offer alternative approaches for classification tasks, potentially improving performance or handling specific challenges better.
* **Human-AI Collaboration**: Investigating the synergy between AI-driven systems and human recruiters could lead to a more integrated recruitment process, where AI handles the initial classification and HR professionals focus on more nuanced aspects of candidate evaluation, such as cultural fit.
* **Bias Mitigation**: Further research into reducing biases in machine learning models for recruitment could help ensure fairness and equity in the hiring process, particularly in addressing challenges related to gender, race, and other forms of discrimination.

## **5.3 Final Remarks**

This study demonstrates the significant potential of machine learning, particularly the BERT algorithm, in transforming recruitment processes at GRIDCo. By automating the classification of applicants, GRIDCo can achieve greater efficiency, accuracy, and fairness in its hiring practices. However, continued work in model optimization, data augmentation, and feedback integration is essential to fully realize the potential of AI in recruitment. As machine learning continues to evolve, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge in AI-powered HR solutions and sets the stage for further innovation in recruitment technologies.

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