



Evaluating the Effectiveness of Traditional Recruitment and Selection Practices in a Technologically Dominated Economy

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v7i11.2310>

Abstract

In the contemporary business environment, there is a need for firms to plan and implement proactive traditional recruitment and selection, especially regarding employees working in the gig economy. However, the poor handling of traditional recruitment and selection processes can significantly affect the quality of employees and their performance in an organisation. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of traditional recruitment and selection practices in a technologically dominated economy. The importance of attracting and selecting a highly skilled workforce in a tight and competitive market has made adopting best practices in recruitment and selection by organisations critical. Firstly, the study highlighted various traditional recruitment and selection methods in organisations. Secondly, the overall recruitment and selection process was identified. Finally, strategies to mitigate the identified challenges faced in the traditional recruitment and selection process were suggested. The study was qualitative, adopting the survey strategy. Purposive was adopted, and thematic was used for data analysis. Findings revealed that traditional recruitment and selection as a practice is important for both employees involved in the gig economy. Importantly, the strategic approach to traditional recruitment and selection practices is vital and should be the cornerstone of any projected recruitment and selection process in a gig economy. Results validate the critical role of the traditional recruitment and selection process in achieving organisational aims and objectives in a technologically dominated economy. The study also proves that collaborative methods are central to the success of any traditional recruitment and selection process. Recommendations affirmed that recruitment and selection should be planned and well implemented. Human resource planning was also measured to be vital and emphasis on significant features of traditional recruitment and selection as a process such as having a place a well and implemented traditional recruitment and selection policy was asserted.

Keywords: *Traditional Recruitment and Selection; Human Resource Management Planning*

Introduction

Effective recruitment and selection counts for the best candidates, reduced staff turnover and at the same time improve employee performance which are considered vital management functions. Over the past year, a vast amount of consideration has been paid to the impact of emerging technologies on work, sometimes denoted to as the changing world of work. Some observers suggest that advances in technology will drive changes in the workplace as theatrical as the collapse of the traditional employment relationship, the widespread application of artificial reality instead of travel and the replacement of humans with artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics will hold sway.

However, the poor handling of the recruitment and selection process can significantly affect performance. Armstrong and Taylor (2016) contend that poorly planned and implemented recruitment and selection will result in employee turnover, waste of time, money and energy, especially during this downtime, equally important is that when chaotically applied recruitment and selection in an organisation can lead to high training costs, loss of productivity, and the influencing of good employees to leave the organisation company.

Literature Review

The Concept of Recruitment and Selection

Harrison and Kessel (2014) state that the concept of recruitment and selection is concerned with the chain and sequence of activities regarding the recruitment and selection of employable candidates and job seekers for an organisation. Generally, every organisation has well-defined employment and recruitment policies and hiring procedures. The human resources departments of large organisations and multilateral organisations are generally vested with the responsibilities of employee recruitment and selection.

In addition to the ongoing statements Mathis and Jackson (2018) suggest that recruitment is concerned with an activity that generates a pool of applicants, who have the desire to be employed by the organisation, from which those suitable can be selected.” In other words, recruitment is a process of enticing potential applicants with skills, abilities and other personal attributes linked to job vacancies in an organisation. Selection on the other hand, as mentioned by Harrison and Kessel (2014) is associated with a process wherein a pool of identified candidates goes through the recruitment process and the most appropriate candidate, or candidates are identified through a selection process including but not limited to interviewing, reference checking and testing.

Recruitment and Selection Process in Organisations

Dessler (2014) suggest that four stages are applicable in a recruitment and selection process, these are namely defining requirements, planning campaigns, attracting candidates, and selection.

Defining Requirements

This stage necessitates the groundwork for the definition of the role for the job, generally mentioned as a job description and that of a job specification which is related to the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for job performance the job at an optimum level plus deciding on terms and conditions of employment (DeCenzo and Robbins, 2017).

Planning Recruitment Campaigns

Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright (2014) assert that campaigns associated with recruitment entail the planning, designing and creation of an organised active effort to generate a pool of talented people who can effectively and efficiently contribute to the operations of the business. A recruitment plan therefore comprises a number and types of employees needed for expansion or to cater for any deficits or shortages within an organisation.

Attracting Candidates

Mullins (2011) asserted that once the pool is created the next stage in the recruitment and selection is the collection of candidates that underpins the job needs by reviewing and evaluating alternative sources of applicants, inside and outside the company: advertising, e-recruiting, agencies and consultants. Attracting candidates is mainly a matter of identifying, evaluating and using the most appropriate sources of applicants.

Selecting Candidates

Mathis and Jackson (2018) opined that candidate selection is aimed at finding a suitable and competent candidate to successfully carry out the duties assigned to them. It is correspondingly about matching the competencies, experience, skills, and education to the requirements of the job and making the right choice between a pool of potential candidates.

Sources of Recruitment and Selection

Searching for suitable candidates and informing them about the openings in the enterprise is the most important aspect of the recruitment and selection process. The candidates may be available inside or outside the organisation. Mullins (2011) states that basically, two sources of recruitment are internal and external.

Internal Sources

Premised on the human resource management facet, internal sources of recruitment mean hiring people from within the organisation. Accordingly, Mello (2014) suggests that competent employees can be found within the organisation. Therefore, when a vacancy arises in the organisation, it may be given to an employee who is already on the payroll. When a higher post is given to a deserving employee, it motivates all other employees of the organisation to work hard. The employees can be informed of such a vacancy by internal advertisement. Some examples of internal sources of recruitment are but are limited to promotions and transfers.

Promotions

Harrison and Kessel (2014) state that promotions are processes that allow for the shifting of persons to positions carrying better prestige, higher responsibilities and more pay. The higher positions falling vacant may be filled up from within the organisation. A promotion does not increase the number of persons in the organisation. A person going to get a higher position will vacate his present position. Promotion motivates employees in improving work their performance allowing them to get promoted when necessary.

Transfer

Booth and Hamer, (2010) posit that transfer involves the shifting of individuals from a present job to other similar jobs. These do not involve any change in rank, responsibility or prestige. The number of people does not increase with transfers.

External Sources

The external sources of recruitment are concerned with the hiring of people from outside the organisation. In other words, seeking applicants from those who are external to the organisation (Elbert Hatfield Warnich & Carrell, 2014). Some of the widely used sources of external recruitment are advertisements and employee exchanges

Advertisement

As mentioned by Van Niekerk, Steyn, Cascio and Aguinis (2018) advertisement is a method of recruitment frequently used for skilled workers, clerical and higher staff. Advertisements can be placed in newspapers and professional journals. These advertisements attract applicants with a large number of highly variable qualities.

However, Hamermesh (2015) cautioned that the preparation of an effective recruitment advertisement campaign is a specialised task and if an organisation company wants to conceal its name, it may request potential applicants the opportunity to apply via post or some advertising agency.

Employment Exchanges

Employment exchanges are generally applicable in recruiting unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled, and clerical posts, it are often used as a source of recruitment. In special cases, Mathis and Jackson (2018) suggest that in some cases it is obligatory for the business concerned to notify their vacancies to the employment exchange. In the past, employers used to turn to these agencies only as a last resort. The job-seekers and job-givers are brought into contact by the employment exchanges (Page, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

Contingency theory is the theoretical framework used for this study. Empirical results sustain the theoretical relationship between context variables and segmentation approaches (Adu-Darkoh,2014), and the explanatory power is well documented. It has been widely used to advance insights into a variety of topics in human resources, especially with recruitment and selection.

In these recruitment-related topics, various links between contextual factors and differences in the studied topic were observed. In recent years, the influence of the effectiveness of recruitment and selection practices on organisations has increasingly become a topic of interest.

Characteristics such as firm knowledge, firm reputation, firm personality (Mello,2014), and brand/organisational image (Steyn, Bezuidenhout and Grobler,2017) have been examined and found to have contributed to the significant influence on the recruitment procedures, techniques, and outcomes.

Noe, *et. al.* (2015) applied the contingency theory framework to study the dependence of recruitment and selection systems on context variables. They acknowledged two important factors that influence the effectiveness of recruitment and selection exercise, and these are related to the structure and targets of the recruitment and selection process: the task complexity (and resulting specialities) and the information uncertainty.

Based on these factors, they were able to establish four recruitment models.

- Autocratic: with low information uncertainty and low task complexity. The focus is on local recruitment activities in low-skilled labour sources.
- Bureaucratic: with low information uncertainty but high task complexity. This requires targeted recruitment for specialised skills.
- Commitment: with high information uncertainty and low task complexity. Recruiting in this model is targeted at employees who fit with the culture.
- Professional: with high information uncertainty and high task complexity. This requires a targeted recruitment strategy that focuses on employees with soft skills to enable them, employees, to cope with ambiguity due to information uncertainty.

Methodology

The study followed a qualitative research approach. The sample size for the study was 10 employees from the identified target population and they sampled using the purposive sampling method. The sample included males and females belonging to various ethnicities in South Africa aged between 32 and 45 years with more than 5 years of experience working in the HR industry. Recruiters and human resource planners were purposefully interviewed because of their knowledge of the end-to-end recruitment process. This affirmed the fact that people with more practical insight not only in human resource practice but also in the formulation of the policy governing a recruitment and selection process and in a broader scope of HR activities from the planning phase to implementation stages were selected and interviewed. The interview schedule consisting of 9 open-ended questions was employed in data collection; this allowed the participants to freely elaborate, substantiate and explain their responses without much restriction. Human resource practitioners were asked questions on their understanding of recruitment and selection, and whether recruitment and selection are done with internal or external sources of recruitment, their view on the appropriate use of recruitment agencies or recruitment and selection consultants was solicited. The importance of one-to-one interviews and psychometric tests as a significant process was equally asked. Views on the influence of the non-availability of adequate information on vacancies and on whether the application of ineffective selection methods can impact recruitment and selection practices were equally asked. Participants' understanding of the relation between poor human resource management planning can ineffectiveness in a recruitment and selection process and a proper job analysis was implored. The existence of formal policies on recruitment and selection to improve the transparency and accountability in recruitment and selection, Opinions on the need to ensure that the job vacancies are communicated to all divisions of the workplace, intranet, and notice boards were also implored. Thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) cited by Mthembu (2018) was used to analyse the data collected. The purpose of thematic analysis was to identify patterns of meaning across the data set to provide an answer to the research question. Through a rigorous process of data familiarisation, data coding and theme development themes were identified. Perspectives and themes related to the collected data were analysed to determine the findings. The collected data were then analysed and interpreted to draw meaningful conclusions and to identify important patterns and relationships. In ensuring trustworthiness and rigour, the researcher employed Guba (1981) as maintained by Mthembu (2018) consisting of four measures: truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality, correspondingly to ensure credibility, reliability, applicability and objectivity and to avoid researcher bias on the findings presented.

Results

The following theme emerged from the data analysis.

Respondents' sentiments even stated that both "internal and external recruitment is preferred and important". In their words, one echoes that internal sources are "*cheaper and quicker to recruit, thus making a case for internal and the other asserts that external sources of recruitment are important and relevant as they allow for the assessment of a pool of best or talented employees for the job vacancy.* Appropriate recruitment and selection process (the usage of recruitment agencies or recruitment and Selection consultants). Here the interviewer wanted to find out about the usage of recruitment agencies or recruitment and selection consultants, Response affirmed the importance of recruitment and selection agencies stating that generally, *human resource management staff spend several hours browsing resumes and also interviewing unqualified candidates this use up time, Thus, recruitment and selection agencies would best handle this kind of process, as this permits employee in the human resource management department to handle other issues.* The significance of recruitment and selection agencies in *ensuring that only the best candidates qualify for a face-to-face interview session and that all paperwork and job placement training is completed before the employee starts working for organisations* was affirmed by one of the respondents. Mathis and Jackson (2018) affirmed the significant role of recruitment and selection agencies and recruitment and selection consultants in the selection and recruitment process stating that they use a variety of testing methods such as tests associated with aptitude, personality, abilities, honesty and motivation which support the recruitment and selection process in identifying qualified candidate. Another respondent considered the usage and importance of recruitment and selection consultants as making recruitment and selection efficient as they generally *apply applicant tracking systems to filter candidates in a recruitment and selection process thereby ensuring qualified candidates for a job*". Interviews and psychometric tests were equally acknowledged as significant features of a recruitment and selection process. The majority of the respondents acknowledged the importance of interviews and psychometric tests because of the capability of providing a general idea of candidates' abilities and personalities and the required experience to enhance organisational performance. One respondent assert that interviews and psychometric test creates an "*opportunity of a benchmarking of results which can be compared against other candidates who have previously applied*". Zhu and Dowling (2015) assert that psychometric testing can help in investigating personality and aptitude. In addition, also encourages consistency and standardisation. The notion of inadequate information on job availability in the recruitment and selection process. Most, respondents acknowledge the fact that inadequate information on job availability can influence poor recruitment and selection problems. Two declare that "*job advertisements that include adequate information about job opening is critical as this information on required qualifications and instructions on how to apply can enhance the recruitment and selection process in the organisation*". Elbert, *et.al.* (2018) suggest that it is important that adequate information attributed to job announcements is made available to all employees this provides a clear understanding of an advertised job. Furthermore, Armstrong and Taylor (2016) contend that inadequate job information in a recruitment and selection process posting "*cannot ensure equal opportunities within the organisation thus the need to provide adequate information in job adverts is significant*". The majority of the respondents acknowledge that ineffective recruitment and selection practices can allow for the hiring of the wrong person for a position typically resulting in having to repeat the whole process of refilling a new vacancy. Mathis and Jackson (2018) suggest that ineffective selection methods can lead to poor hiring and decision-making. The issue of poor human resource management planning as a constraint for effectiveness in a recruitment and selection process was established in the study. Most respondents confirmed that "*poor human resource management planning can reflect destructively on the corporate ethos of an organisation and can negatively affect the recruitment and selection of an organisation*". Adu-Darkoh (2014) states that poor human resource management planning can lead to poor employee performance and the corporate philosophy of an organisation. *One respondent concurs that poor human resource management planning can affect the "performance of a business and the productivity levels of*

employee”. Mello (2014) asserts that proper human resource management planning allows for an *alignment of the job analysis/ description with the vision of the organisation leading to an informed search for core competencies for a vacancy*. Respondents' view on whether the existence of formal policies on recruitment and selection can leverage transparency and accountability in the recruitment and selection process. The majority of the respondents acknowledged the importance of formal policies on recruitment one avers that *“existing formal policies on recruitment and selection can improve the process as it offers opportunities for job descriptions to meet business requirements”*. Booth and Hamer (2010) contend that formal policies on recruitment and selection make the process credible and promote diversity and gender equality in the workplace.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study have indicated that internal and external recruitment sources are important in the recruitment and selection process. The majority of respondents acknowledge that recruitment and selection agencies and recruitment and selection consultants are critical alternatives to in-house recruitment and selection practitioners who because of workload may be engaged and will find it difficult to effectively plan and implement a successful recruitment and selection programming. Interview and psychometric testing and the provision of adequate information were considered significant. Issues such as constructive human resource planning were projected to be important in the recruitment and selection process. Some human resource practitioners assert that an effective existing recruitment and selection policy ensures that the overall recruitment and selection process is being conducted fairly and legitimately and a fair and authentic policy allows a candidate to take legal action if they feel they are being discriminated against any factor.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

The study was restricted to a company in Westville Durban. Ideally, owing to the changing nature of business operations there is a need to study the effectiveness of recruitment and selection practices in a broader segment However, because of various constraints, this was not practicable for the researcher. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to all sectors; generalisation should be done with caution and with due consideration of a broad spectrum of factors that are unique to each sector. Future studies could also examine recruitment and selection on broader segments in all sectors in South Africa, to undertake a comparative analysis among sectors, at provincial levels and even among other African countries.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This investigation has focused on evaluating the effectiveness of recruitment and selection practices in organisations. The human resource division is still lagging in the idea of revisiting or evaluating the effectiveness of its recruitment and selection practices in efficiently contributing to the achievement of organisational objectives. To achieve this emphasis must be placed on the appropriateness of sources such as internal and external recruitment sources to source core competence in terms of job requirements. The role of recruitment and selection agencies and recruitment consultants must be recognized especially in processing and filtering applications through tracking systems. Interviews and psychometric testing were considered important in the process of recruitment and selection as insight and a general idea of the candidate's abilities and personality is presented.

Adequate information and well-organised human resource planning are affirmed to be leveraged in the effective execution of any recruitment and selection program. Having in place a well-documented recruitment and selection policy leverages diversity and equality, especially in terms of gender.

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