

## An Empirical Analysis of Recruitment and Selection Practices in the Public Sector

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper was to evaluate recruitment and selection practices in the public sector in Ghana.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The study adopted both qualitative (case study) and quantitative methods respectively. Ghana revenue authority was selected to gather data, which was acquired from answers obtained from our administered questionnaire. The population of the survey constituted the management and non-management staff of Ghana Revenue Authority in the Greater Accra Region.

**Findings:** Hypotheses of the study were analyzed using correlation and regression. Results of the study showed that there are high positive correlations between the constructs of recruitment and selection processes, selection decision and public sector

**Keywords:** Recruitment and selection practices, public sector, Ghana Revenue Authority.

### 1. Introduction

Recruitment and selection (or staffing) is said to be the best represented area of research in people management in smaller, growth, or entrepreneurial organizations with more scholarly work done than other functional aspects of HRM (Cordon & Stevens, 2004). The recruitment and selection process thus forms the first stage of the psychological contract between applicants and organizations, where information is mutually exchanged and role expectations are clarified and negotiated (Herriot, 1993). Recruitment 'includes those practices and activities carried out by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees' (Breaugh and Starke, 2000) and has long been regarded as an important part of HRM as it 'performs the essential function of drawing an important resource human capital into the organization' (Barber, 1998).

The recruitment and selection of an effective work force consequently can be viewed as central to the success of an enterprise and a key function in HRM. The strategic importance of recruitment is often reported in academic literature (Boxall & Purcell, 2003). Recruitment is primarily concerned with "the process of generating a pool of capable people to apply for employment to an organization" (Bratton and Gold, 2003). It is closely connected with the selection process which "is the process by which managers and others use specific instruments to choose from a pool of applicants a person or persons most likely to succeed in the job (s), given

management goals and legal requirements" (Bratton and Gold, 2003). This is supported by Foot and Hook (2010) who seems to be clearer in their minds when they identified the key stages of a systematic approach to recruitment as job analysis, job description, person specification and attracting applicants through the various methods of recruitment. Denisi and Griffin in their book

"Human Resource Management" second edition were almost in agreement with Foot and Hook when they described the recruitment process as consisting of three stages. The three key stages according to them are job analysis, job description and person specification. Effective selection processes allow both the candidate and the organization to properly assess the degree to which the candidate fits the job specification and are in keeping with all applicable legislation. Selection is an opportunity for companies to choose candidates that they believe are most suitable for the job. Snell and Bohlander (2010) define selection as a process of choosing individuals who have relevant qualifications to fill existing or projected job openings. This researcher defines selection as the process of choosing the person(s) from the pool of potential candidates who meet the requirements of the vacancies identified in the organization.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2.0 will present both the theoretical background and hypothesis to this study. Section 3.0 provides the research methodology of the study. In section 4.0, the researchers present the statistical results

and discussions of finding. Finally, this study in section 5.0 discusses the conclusion of the study.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Definitions and Concept of Recruitment and Selection

According to Beer et al, 1984, Human resource management involves all management decisions and action that affect the nature of the relationship between the organization and its employees-its human resources. According to Barber (1998) recruitment includes those practices and activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees. Newell and Shackleton (2000) refer to recruitment as the process of attracting people who might make a contribution to the particular organization. Costello (2006) defined recruitment as the set of activities and processes used to legally obtain a sufficient number of qualified people at the right place and time so that the people and the organization can select each other in their own best short and long term interests. Rynes (1990) suggested that recruitment encompasses all organizational practices and decisions that affect either the number, or types, of individuals who are willing to apply for, or to accept, a given vacancy (Russo et al., 1995). Rynes (1991) also suggested that job and organizational attributes may be the dominant factors in applicant attraction; and that applicant perception of job and organizational attributes, such as compensation, the work environment, internal career paths and the type of work, have a positive direct effect on applicant attraction to firms (Turban et al., 1998).

These definitions highlight a primary objective of recruitment, and that is to identify and attract future employees. In other words, the recruitment process provides the organization with a pool of potentially qualified job candidates from which judicious selection can be made to fill vacancies. Effective recruitment begins with proper employment planning and forecasting. In this phase of the staffing process, an organization formulates plans to fill or eliminate future job openings based on an analysis of future needs, the talent available within and outside of the organization, and the current and anticipated resources that can be expanded to attract and retain such talents. Also related to the success of a recruitment process are the strategies an organization is prepared to employ in order to identify and select the best candidates for its developing pool of human resources.

Whereas recruitment is aimed at attracting individuals to an organization, selection is aimed at identifying the most qualified from among those individuals. Bratton and Gold (2003) define selection as the process by which managers and others use specific instruments to choose from a pool of applicants a person or persons most likely to succeed in the job(s), given management goals and legal requirements. Stone (2005) defines selection as choosing from the available candidates the individual predicted to be most likely to perform successfully in the job.

However, Rynes, Bretz and Gerhart (1991) suggest that applicants can be wooed not only through improved job attributes, but also through better-planned and more attentive recruitment procedures (Stoops, 1984) and in line with this Russo et al. (1995) suggested that professional and efficient recruitment procedures not only shorten vacancy duration but also improve the quality of the applicants hired. Recruitment and selection process are important practices for human resource management, and are crucial in affecting organizational success Jovanovic (2004). Due to the fact that organizations are always fortified by information technology to be more competitive, it is natural to also consider utilizing this technology to re-organize the traditional recruitment and selection process through proper decision techniques, with that both the effectiveness and the efficiency of the processes can be increased and the quality of the recruitment and selection decision improved.

However, there is evidence of increased interest in the utilization of employee selection methods which are valid, reliable and fair. Mullins (1999) indicated that to be a high performing organization, human resource management must be able to assist the organization to place the right person in the right job. The human resource management practices include recruitment, selection, placement, evaluation, training and development, compensation and benefits, and retention of the employees of an organization. Businesses have developed human resource information systems that support: (i) recruitment, selection, and hiring, (ii) job placement, (iii) performance appraisals, (iv) employee benefits analysis, (v) training and development, and (vi) health, safety, and security. The first few activities of human resource management are recruiting and selecting which deal with the actions concerned, and the recruiting is also less frequently alerted in human resource information system recently.

Besides, e-recruitment on the web being the current trend for the recruitment and selection, the processes can

further distinguish many activities of the processes. Dessler (2000) lists the essence of these in the following; build a pool of candidates for the job, have the applicants fill out application forms, utilize various selection techniques to identify viable job candidates, send one or more viable job candidates to their supervisor, have the candidate(s) go through selection interviews, and determine to which candidate(s) an offer should be made.

## **2.2 The Process of Recruitment and Selection**

Odiorne (1984) indicated that the quality of new recruits depends upon an organization's recruitment practices, and that the relative effectiveness of the selection phase is inherently dependent upon the caliber of candidates attracted. Indeed Smith et al. (1989) argue that the more effectively the recruitment stage is carried out, the less important the actual selection process becomes. When an organization makes the decision to fill an existing vacancy through recruitment, the first stage in the process involves conducting a comprehensive job analysis. This may already have been conducted through the human resource planning process, particularly where recruitment is a relatively frequent occurrence. Once a job analysis has been conducted, the organization has a clear indication of the particular requirements of the job, where that job fits into the overall organization structure, and can then begin the process of recruitment to attract suitable candidates for the particular vacancy. According to Odiorne, (1984) one result of effective recruitment and selection is reduced labor turnover and good employee morale. Recruiting ineffectively is costly, since poor recruits may perform badly and/or leave their employment, thus requiring further recruitment. In a cross national study of recruitment practices, suggests that, in reality, recruitment practices involve little or no attempt to validate practices.

Personnel managers tend to rely on feedback from line managers and probationary periods and disciplinary procedures to weed out mistakes. Firms with high quit rates live with them and tend to build them into their recruitment practices and they do not analyze the constitution of their labor turnover. A number of recent studies have suggested that some recruitment methods are more effective than others in terms of the value of the employees recruited.

Miyake, (2002) indicated that while advertising is usual for job vacancies, applicants were sometimes recruited by word of mouth, through existing employees. Besides being cheaper, the "grapevine" finds employees who stay longer (low voluntary turnover) and who are less

likely to be dismissed (low involuntary turnover). People recruited by word of mouth stay longer because they have a clearer idea of what the job really involves. Miyake, (2002) reviewed five studies in which average labor turnover of those recruited by advertising was 51 per cent. The labor turnover for spontaneous applicants was 37 per cent and turnover for applicants recommended by existing employees was 30 per cent. One hypothesis proposed to account for this was the "better information" hypothesis. It was argued that people who were suggested by other employees were better and more realistically informed about the job than those who applied through newspapers and agencies. Thus, they were in a better position to assess their own suitability. Better informed candidates are likely to have a more realistic view of the job, culture of the organization and job prospects. Burack, (1985) argues that recruitment sources are significantly linked to differences in employee performance, turnover, satisfaction and organizational commitment. In a survey of 201 large US companies, Burack asked respondents to rate the effectiveness of nine recruitment sources in yielding high-quality, high-performing employees. The three top ranked sources were employee referrals, college recruiting and executive search firms. However, Burack, (1985) cautions that, while these general results are useful, there is a need for greater internal analysis of the relative quality of recruits yielded by different sources. In a study assessing the recruitment of new graduates, Kersley et al (1997) reiterated the anticipatory socialization stage for students planning to enter professions, and in particular the effects of recruitment and selection experiences on career expectations and orientation. They agreed that the nature of students' job search activity, the possession of relevant work experience, and exposure to employers through recruitment and selection activities may form part of the "evolving sequence of a person's work experiences" which contributes to anticipatory socialization. It has been argued that exposure to employers through recruitment and selection is a social process where employers and potential employees gradually perceive a match.

Through job search activities and awareness of employers' recruitment literature and events, students gather information about organization's goals, values, and climate and work practices to guide their ultimate decision. Exposure to selection procedures provides information about the culture and attributes of an organization, and candidates form judgments from their perceptions of the fairness of the selection methods used. Delery and Doty (1996) argued that providing students with greater awareness of employment opportunities,

and equipping them with the ability to be proactive in approaching potential employers, will lead to more effective career self-management and selection processes.

There is also evidence that employers prefer graduates with a broader range of skills than just academic knowledge and greater appreciation of business needs both of which can be gained through work experience and awareness of employers' recruitment and selection procedures. Using a sample of students in two traditional and one emerging profession (law, accountancy and human resource Management), the study examined the extent of career-related pre-employment work, recruitment and selection experiences and the relationship between these experiences and career expectations. The focus on professions reflects the expectation that anticipatory socialization is likely to be greater amongst these students. Although most students in their final years of university training will have had some contact with potential employers, students in dedicated professional courses are likely to be provided with information earlier in their training about potential employment in the profession. This is partly because of the prescribed nature of the degree, the mandatory post-degree training required for membership of the professional institute, unlike the problems identified in general degree courses, because lecturers are likely to have closer ties to the practicing profession. Students in traditional professions, therefore, are exposed earlier to the values of the profession, such as a commitment to client service and a professional code of conduct. The mandatory nature of this training also makes it likely that such a socialization process persists despite idiosyncratic events within a profession; for example, recent concerns with corporate governance within accountancy which may have adversely affected the attractiveness of the profession for students and hence may impact recruitment into the profession (Burack, 1985).

### **2.3 The Selection Decision**

While the caliber of candidate is determined by the value of the recruitment process, the selection decision remains a difficult one. Gould (1984) argues that most mistakes are caused by the fact that managers generally give little thought to the critical nature of the decisions. Employers are surprised and disappointed when an appointment fails, and often the person appointed is blamed rather than recognizing the weaknesses in the process and methodology, even the soundest of techniques and best practice (in selection) contain scope for error. Some of this is due to the methods themselves,

but the main source is the frailty of the human decision makers. Selection tools available to organizations can be characterized along a continuum that ranges from the more traditional methods of interviews, application forms and references, through to the more sophisticated techniques that encapsulate biographical data, aptitude tests, assessment centers, work samples, psychological testing, and so forth. Each method of selection has its advantages and disadvantages and comparing their rival claims involves comparing each method's merit and psychometric properties. The degree to which a selection technique is perceived as effective and perhaps sophisticated is determined by its reliability and validity. In a comparison of personnel selection practices in seven European countries explored the utilization of a range of established selection methods. They reported a general trend towards structured interviews in all countries and, while the general validity and acceptability of methods such as work samples, group exercises and assessment centers were widely recognized, reported usage of these methods was infrequent (Miyake, 2002). Clear differences in the frequency of the use of several selection methods did emerge from the study which reported, among others, the very high take-up of references and assessment centers in both the UK and Germany, the high, almost exclusive, frequency of graphology in France, and the limited use of testing and biographical inventories amongst all respondents. In his study of recruitment and selection practices in the USA, Burton (2001) found that approximately 25 per cent of respondent organizations conducted validation studies on their selection methods.

Furthermore, in a rating of various selection methods, those perceived to be above average in their ability to predict employees' job performance included work samples, References /recommendations, unstructured interviews, structured interviews and assessment centers. Cran (1995) suggests that developments in the realm of selection lend some support to those who propound the HRM thesis, where a key feature has been the increase in testing designed explicitly to assess behavioral and attitudinal characteristics. He further indicates that the extent to which these more sophisticated and systematic approaches can be, and are, deployed, depends to a large degree, on sectorial circumstances and on the wider employment-management policies being pursued.

### **2.4 Importance of Recruitment and Selection**

In an increasingly global and sophisticated marketplace, recruitment and selection has become an essential tool for organizations in ensuring that they have the human resources necessary to achieve their current strategic

direction and to continue innovating and growing in the future. Recruitment and selection has become increasingly important as one way of delivering behaviors seen as necessary to support organizational strategies (Iles, 2001).

According to Kilibarda and Fonda (1997), good recruitment and selection practices can minimize the risks of failing to achieve the business strategy and of incurring need less costs as:

Business and organizational strategies can be jeopardized if the people who are appointed are not capable of contributing effectively, if appointments are not timely, or if no appointment is made. Unnecessary expense can arise due to costs of training and replacements since poor recruits may perform badly and/or leave their employment. Remedial costs and inefficiency in the recruitment process itself also contribute to increased costs. Effective recruitment and selection can also provide significant improvements in productivity and employee morale (Farnham and Pimlott, 1995) and allow organizations to build a workforce of more able employees who collectively provide a superior product or service (Robertson, et al., 1996). The profitability and even the survival of an enterprise usually depend upon the caliber of the workforce and it has been argued that the costs of ineffectual commercial viability can often be attributed to decades of ineffective recruitment and selection methods (Terpstra, 1996). Recruitment and selection also has an important role to play in ensuring worker performance and positive organizational outcomes. It is often claimed that selection of workers occurs not just to replace departing employees or add to a workforce but rather aims to put in place workers who can perform at a high level and demonstrate commitment (Ballantyne, 2009). Recruitment and selection play a pivotally important role in shaping an organization's effectiveness and performance, if work organizations are able to acquire workers who already possess relevant knowledge, skills and aptitudes and are also able to make an accurate prediction regarding their future abilities, recruiting and selecting staff in an effective manner can both avoid undesirable costs for example those associated with high staff turnover, poor performance and dissatisfied customers and engender a

#### **4. DATA ANALYSIS**

The purpose of this paper was to evaluate recruitment and selection practices in the public sector in Ghana. Based on analysis of the collected data and using description statistics for demography, it was found that most respondents were male at 58.8% and the most of the research participants (44.1%) are aged between 25 and 40. Additionally, most people (40.6%) have some undergraduate education level and most respondents are married (55.2%).

mutually beneficial employment relationship characterized, wherever possible, by high commitment on both sides. ' Recruiting and selection is very important for the survival of every organization but that does not end there, new recruits need to be developed and appraised from time to time in order for them to be abreast with new trends and challenges. When employees are developed it help increase their performance and help sustain the growth of organizations.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

Research is a process of steps used to gather and evaluate information in order to increase understanding on an essential topic. It consists of three steps, namely posing a question, collecting data to answer the question, and presenting an answer to the question (Creswell, 2009). The research design for the current study refers to a quantitative form. This research concentrates on the relationship among variables more than on testing activity impact, and uses correlation design. Based on the described research objective, this study will adopt a correlation design. Correlation design allows us to predict an outcome and know the relation between variables.

#### **3.2 Study Area**

The study was conducted in Accra the capital city of Ghana. The location of the city makes it the commercial center and a nodal point from which roads radiate to the central business areas of the region. Ghana revenue authority was chosen because it has been by the government to correct taxes on behalf of the government.

#### **3.3 Population and Sampling**

The population of the survey constituted the management and non-management staff and customers of Ghana Revenue Authority in Ghana. The researchers used the simple random sampling. The study used a sample size of six hundred (600) and due to adequate time the researchers devoted for the data collection, the researchers were able to get five hundred and forty-five (545) questionnaires that were administer.

**Table 1: Correlations between recruitment and selection processes, selection decision and public sector**

		Public sector	Recruitment and selection processes	Selection decision
Public Sector	Pearson Correlation	1	0.593**	0.622**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000
	N	501	501	501
Recruitment and selection processes	Pearson Correlation	0.593**	1	0.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.004
	N	501	501	501
Selection decision	Pearson Correlation	0.622**	0.521**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	
	N	501	501	501

To achieve the research objective the relationship between recruitment and selection processes, selection decision and public sector should be assessed, and from table 1, the Pearson correlation was utilized. There is a strong relationship between recruitment and selection processes and public sector with a correlation coefficient of 0.593 at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), selection decision and public sector with a correlation of 0.622 at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), and even though the main purpose was to know the impact of recruitment and selection practices on public sector, the researchers found out that there is a strong relationship between recruitment and selection processes and selection decision with a correlation coefficient of 0.521 at the 0.01 level (2tailed).

**5. Conclusion**

The study was to evaluate recruitment and selection practices in the public sector in Ghana. The study adopted both qualitative (case study) and quantitative methods respectively. Ghana Revenue Authority was selected to gather data, which was acquired from answers obtained from our administered questionnaire.

The statistical findings showed significantly that there is a strong relationship between recruitment and selection processes and public sector. The relationship between selection decision and public sector was also positive. Lastly, there was a strong relationship between recruitment and selection processes and selection decision.

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