

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Darvin's Theory of Natural Selection i.e. "struggle for existence and survival of the fittest" can be seen in the true sense of words all around us and organisations are not an exception to this. The organisation operating across sectors needs to succeed, survive and compete effectively in the in this era of globalization. The employers for the very same reason must be in the position to propound and practice recruitment and selection of employees in the best possible way as they are the only source of competitive advantage in the constantly changing business environment. The success of a business or an organization is directly related to the performance of those who work for that organization and there for a poor concern for productivity and underachievement can be detrimental for the enterprise. It is essential that organizations select people with the precise knowledge, skills and attributes that are indispensable for continued success in the turbulent economy. The only means of achieving this success is by ensuring that the right set of people are employed through a proper recruitment and selection practices.

KEYWORDS: Recruitment, Selection, Productivity & Employee Performance

INTRODUCTION

Recruitment and Selection can play a pivotally important role in shaping an organisation's effectiveness and performance. It is imperative to understand that Recruitment and Selection also have an important role to play in safeguarding employee performance and positive organisational outcomes. It is often claimed that selection of employee occurs not just to replace departing employees or add to a workforce, but rather aims to get in the employees who can perform at a high level and demonstrate commitment (Ballantyne, 2009).

Recruitment and Selection are terms often used interchangeably and it is essential to understand them and also deliberate on the linkage and interdependence. Bratton and Gold (2007), differentiate the two terms while establishing a clear link between them by stating that recruitment is the process of generating a pool of capable candidates to apply for employment to an organisation. Whereas, Selection is the process by which managers use specific instruments to choose from a pool of applicants, a person or persons more likely to succeed in the job(s), given management goals and legal requirements. Recruitment and selection forms a central part of the fundamental activities underlying talent management, namely, acquisition, development and reward of employees. It often forms an important part of the work of human resource managers – or designated specialists within work organisations. According to Storey (1995), it is the human resources that give a competitive edge to the enterprise and therefore should be selected carefully and must be developed constantly so that they remain committed and aligned to the goals of the organisation.

However, recruitment and selection decisions are often for good reason taken by non HR specialists i.e. the line managers (Costello, 2006). Therefore, it is the accountability of all managers even where human resource departments

exist that the right candidates are selected for the job roles. The Human Resource (HR) managers in most of the organisations play more of a supporting advisory role in recruitment & the selection process for those people who will supervise or in other ways work with the newly appointed employee/ employees. According to Mullins (2010), for the Human Resource Management (HRM) function to remain effective, there must be consistently good levels of teamwork, plus ongoing co-operation and consultation between line managers and the HR manager. Further by using the right selection methods the organisations can ensure that the candidate does not only have the right skills for the job, but also owns the right personality to fit into the organisational culture. Once that “right” person has been employed, the corporation has to ensure that the right remuneration and incentives are also put in place for the employee so that he/ she remains motivated in his new workplace. Research from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2009a), concluded that organisations should increasingly be inclusive in their employment offering as the younger generations have grown up with the notion of flexible working, while older people have an interest in flexible working as an alternative to retirement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recruitment & Selection is one of the major functions of HRM. It helps the manager to attract and select best candidates for the organization. According to Edwin B. Flippo, (1979) “Recruitment is the process of searching the candidates for employment and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organization”. Montgomery (1996) said Recruitment is about matching the capabilities and inclinations of prospective candidates against the demands and rewards inherent in a given job. Barber (1998) defines Employee recruitment as “practices and activities carried on by an organization for the purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees”. Many large corporations have employee recruitment plans that are designed to attract potential employees that are not only capable of filling vacant positions but also add to the organization’s culture. Jovanovic (2004) said recruitment is a process of attracting a pool of high quality applicants so as to select the best among them. For this reason, top performing companies devoted considerable resources and energy to creating high quality selection systems. Due to the fact that organizations are always fortified by information technology to be more competitive, it is natural to 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 can be improved. Raymond J. Stone (2005) defines recruitment as the process of ‘seeking and attracting a pool of applicants from which qualified candidates for job vacancies within an organization can be selected According to Costello (2006) recruitment is described 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.

Parry & Wilson (2009) stated that “recruitment includes those practices and activities carried out by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees”.

Recruitment is a process that creates a link between the employers and the job seekers and thus it can be inferred upon that recruitment is a process of finding and attracting proficient applicants for employment. The process begins when new recruits are sought and ends when their applications are submitted. The result is a pool of applications from which new employees are selected. In simple terms, recruitment is considered as the process of searching for and obtaining applicants for jobs and selecting the right people from the pool thus created. Though, theoretically, the recruitment process is said to

end with the receipt of applications, in practice the activity extends to the screening of the applications so as to eliminate those who are not qualified for the job.

Recruitment & Selection: A Deep Dive

Given its key role and external visibility, recruitment is naturally subject to the influence of several factors. These include external as well as internal forces.

The external market conditions are characterised by Political, Economical, Social, Technological, Environmental & legal factors that govern the business and its decisions to a large extent. The employment brand of the organization also matters in attracting large number of job seekers. Blue chip companies attract large number of applications. Often, it is not the money that is important. It is the perception of the job seekers about the company that matters in attracting qualified prospective employees.

The above are some of the external factors influencing the recruitment function of an organization. In addition to these, there are certain internal forces which warrant contemplation while recruiting personnel. One such internal factor is the recruiting policy of the organization. Most organizations have policies on recruiting internally (from own employees) or externally (from outside the organization). Generally, the policy is to prefer internal sourcing, as own employees know the company well and can recommend candidates who fit the organization's culture. Another related policy is to have temporary (Temp) and part-time employees. "Temps" are typically used for short-term assignments or to help when managers cannot justify hiring a full-time employee, such as for vacation fill-ins, for peak work periods, or during an employee's pregnancy leave or sick leave. This practice is growing because temps can be laid off quickly, and with less cost, when work lessens. (Snell, 2012). In Multinational Corporations (MNCs), there is the policy relating to the recruitment of local citizens. MNCs operating in the country would prefer local citizens as they are conversant with the local languages, customs, and business practices better and also have a hold on local population. Further, Size of the organisation is another internal factor which has a great influence on the recruitment process and an organization with one hundred thousand employees will find recruiting less problematic than an organization with just one hundred employees. Cost of recruitment is yet another internal factor that needs due diligence. Recruiting costs are calculated per new hire and the figure is considerable now-a-days. Recruiters must, therefore, operate within budgets. Careful HRP and forethought by recruiters can minimize recruitment costs. The researchers and practitioners have therefore said that the best solution is to use proactive personnel practices to reduce employee turnover, thus, minimizing the need for recruiting. Evaluating the quality, quantity and costs of recruitment helps ensure that it is efficient and cost-effective. (Werther, 1993). Finally, an organization registering growth and expansion will have more recruitment activity on hand than the one which finds its fortunes declining.

To begin with, it is imperative to have a look at the complete life cycle of recruitment process generally termed as a Recruitment Life cycle, taking care activity from right from sourcing candidates, which means looking for prospective applicants whose qualifications might be suitable for the job openings you have. The Sourcing activity has undergone a massive evolution in the last couple of years with the proliferation of job and career sites all across us. Every organisation has the option of selecting the candidates for its recruitment processes from two kinds of sources i.e. internal and external sources. The sources within the organisation itself (like transfer of employees from one department to another, promotions) to fill a position are known as the internal sources of recruitment. Recruiting candidates from all the other sources (such as outsourcing agencies etc.) are known as the external sources of recruitment. Armstrong (2000a), proposed that the first

consideration should be given to internal candidates, although some organizations with powerful equal opportunity policies (often local authorities) insist that all internal candidates should apply for vacancies on the same footing as external candidates.

The principal disadvantages of internal recruitment have limited choice of talent available in the organization as it evades the arrival of fresh candidates. There may be far better external candidates who have more experience and better qualifications (Sunderland & Canwell, 2008) to suit the position in question. Another problem with internal sourcing is that the existing employees, whether competent or not, will feel that they have an automatic right to be given a more senior post (Sunderland & Canwell, 2008).

Besides above, external sources of recruitment, refer to attracting applicants from outside the organization to fill vacant positions. Like internal sources, they are also equally beneficial in attracting competent applicants for advertised positions. Broad varieties of methods are in use for external recruitment such as advertisement, e-recruitment, employee referrals, employment agencies, labour office, education and training establishment (Beardwell, 2007; Cober & Brown, 2006). Of all the above e- recruitment or recruitment using social media like facebook, linked in etc and employee referrals are most widely used methods by the modern organisations. e-recruitment: or online recruitment uses web-based tools such as a firm's public internet site or its own intranet to recruit staff and carrying out the processes of attracting, screening and tracking applicants, selecting, and offering jobs or rejecting candidates online. Cappelli (2001), has estimated it that it costs only about one-twentieth, as much to hire someone online. Further use of digital platforms such as Facebook and Linked-In gives the real time information on the candidate for the organisation, for which the dependency till date was only on reference checks.

The modern organisations seem quite inclined towards Employee Referral schemes to fill up their vacancies. An employee referral program is a system where existing employees recommend potential candidates for the job offered, and in some organizations if the recommended candidate is hired, the employee obtains a cash bonus. Under this method, a candidate is appointed on the recommendation of some currently working employees. Hence, the HR managers of various corporations depend on the present employees for reference of the candidates for several jobs that occur vacant. This source is gaining a lot of popularity amongst the practitioners as it reduces the cost and time essential for recruitment. Further, this source also improves the effectiveness of recruitment as the candidates come from a known source. HR managers offer various incentives/rewards including cash incentives to the current employees for referring the best candidates (Rajarao, 2010).

Definition of Selection

Mondy (2010: 136), refers to the selection as "the process of indicating from a group of applicants those individuals best appropriate for a particular position in an organization". Whereas the recruitment process is aligned to inspire individuals to seek employment with the organisation, the selection process is to identify and employ the best-qualified and apt individuals for specific job positions. Traditionally, it was implicit that organisations could pick amongst applicants and that they would accept all job offers. However, attracting a large number of applicants was not the problem, but recruiting the right applicants become the main concern amongst employers (Branine, 2008). With the oversupply of applicants (Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011), it can be expected that employers would be very cautious before selecting the best fit for the job. The Employer's decision about the selection of employees is central to the manoeuvre of organizations and to a series of outcomes that matters to individuals, organizations, and society are all dependent on the above.

Amos et al. (2004), as well as Mathis and Jackson (2006), define selection as the process of picking the most suitable applicants. The process, according to them, is guided by predetermined selection criteria such as job descriptions, job specifications and job profiling and begins after the recruitment process has been accomplished. Robbins et al. (2001), point out that the objective of the selection process is to match the applicants' ability, knowledge, skills and experience with job requirements in a fair and legal manner. Further the Managers who are involved in hiring employees need to comprehend the skills and abilities that are required in a particular job and thus finalise upon the candidates that have those required capabilities. Interviews, reference checks, tests, applications and résumés can all help identify differences among candidates. Managers can make their selection decisions with a fuller awareness of the applicants' strengths and weaknesses (Tjosvold and Newman, 2003).

Selection Tools & Techniques

Selection tests are often used as part of a selection process for professions where a large number of people are required, and also when it is not conceivable to rely entirely on educational qualification, examination results or information about previous experience as the basis for predicting future performance. These Tests usually form part of a selection criteria / assessment centre procedure. The organisation generally engages in Intelligence, Aptitude and Personality testing to ascertain the suitability of the applicant for a job role. Intelligence tests are helpful in situations where intelligence is a key factor and there is no other reliable method of measuring it. Aptitude and attainment tests are most useful for jobs where specific and measurable skills are required, such as reasoning, logic, analytics, research, computer programming to name a few. Personality tests are potentially of greatest value in jobs such as selling, customer management, employee relations etc. where, personality is important, and where it is not too difficult to obtain quantifiable criteria for validation purposes. It is essential to evaluate all tests by comparing the results at the interview stage with later achievements of the employees. To be statistically significant, these evaluations should be carried out over a reasonable period and cover as large a number of candidates as possible. In some situations, a battery of tests may be used, including various types of intelligence, aptitude and personality tests. These may be a standard battery supplied by a testing agency, or a custom-built battery may be developed. The biggest pitfall to avoid is adding extra tests just for the sake of it, without ensuring that they make a proper contribution to the success of the predictions for which the battery is being used (Philipo, 2008).

Personality/ Psychometric tests are given to measure a prospective employee's motivation to function in a particular working environment. There are various tests designed to assess a candidate's personality. The Bernsenter Personality Inventory measures one's self-sufficiency, neurotic tendency, sociability, introversion and extroversion, locus of control and self-confidence. The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) assesses an individual's achievement and motivation levels. Other personality tests, such as the California Psychological Inventory (CPI), the Thurstone Temperament Survey (TTS), Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and Guilford Zimmerman Temperament Survey, have been designed to assess specific personality traits. The predictive validity of personality tests historically has been quite low.

However, when used in combination with cognitive ability tests, measures of personality traits can lead to a better prediction of job performance. (Emmett, 2004) Personality testing for selection purposes has been viewed as a promising but a controversial issue in management literature. The researchers have attempted to examine the usefulness, validity and ethical problems of personality tests in varied settings. Dwivedi (1973) in his study has endeavoured to validate Minnesota

Multiphasic Personality Inventory for selection of supervisors in a large industrial undertaking in India. Tests must be chosen based on the criteria of reliability, validity, objectivity and standardization. Reliability refers to the standardization of the procedure of administering and scoring the test results. A person who takes a test one day and makes a certain score should be able to take the same test the next day or the next week and make more or less the same score. Whereas, Validity is a test which helps predict whether a person will be successful in a given job. A test that has been validated can be helpful in differentiating between prospective employees who will be able to perform the job well and those who will not. Naturally, no test will be 100% accurate in predicting job success. A validated test increases the possibility of success. (Mandy, 1981)

Further, the Medical Tests reveal physical fitness of a candidate. A medical test is generally given to ensure that the health of an applicant is adequate to meet the job requirements. Along the medical tests the organisation also carries out reference & background check. Reference checks are used to verify the information that is supplied by the applicant and are usually done telephonically. Although most referees are reluctant to respond to certain questions (Mathis and Jackson, 2006), reference checks can be used to gather as much information that will be used in deciding whether to appoint or decline the applicants. The references provide the organization with other people's perceptions of the candidate's professional ability. The company should contact the candidate's previous employers and colleagues. Questions to ask references might address the candidate's creativity and initiative. This is mostly the reason why conditional job offers are given in order to check the authenticity of what the candidate provided on the application form (Snell and Bohlander, 2010). References are one of the more popular and „traditional“ tools in the selection process. However, the validity and reliability of references have been questioned, particularly with respect to their unstructured and often ambivalent nature (Heraty and Morley, 1998).

Quality of Interviews & Selection Process

Interviews are virtually used by all organizations for selection purposes. In support of this, Newell and Tansley (2001), indicate that interviews are by far the most widely used personnel selection procedures. With the use of interviews, managers of organizations get an opportunity to meet the applicants directly. The interview also provides the applicants with an opportunity to also learn more about the public institution. The purpose of the selection interview is to gather as much information and to use such information to arrive at a selection decision (Redman & Wilkinson, 2001:31). During the interview, panel members (interviewers) normally pose questions to which the interviewee is expected to respond. Responses to the questions are often captured by means of scores as determined the interviewers. The applicant that obtains the highest score is recommended for appointment (Wilkinson, 2001:32). Because of interview ambiguity, efforts must be made to ensure that all interviewees are being asked the same questions (Gomez-Majia et al., 2004:175).

All the employers are searching for the best candidates available and undoubtedly the overall aim of the selection process is to identify the candidates who are suitable for the vacancy or wider requirements of the HR plan. 'Interview' has been used as a 'critical selection method' by HR managers. The interview is the most valid method of determining an applicant's organizational fit, level of motivation, and interpersonal skills (Stevens, 1997).

An interview is a specialized form of conversation conducted for a specific task-related purpose (Whetton& Cameron, 2002). The primary objective of the interview is to predict whether a candidate will meet the performance expectation on the job (Camp et al, 2001). The increasing competition for skilled and talented workers calls for effective

interview and an interview is regarded as effective when it can serve its purpose, i.e. selecting the right candidate for the right job.

Whetton and Cameron (2002) cite a six-step process of conducting an interview, what they named as PEOPLE-oriented selection interview process. Here the word 'PEOPLE' clearly explains the interview process: P = prepare, E = Establish rapport, O = Obtain information, P = Provide information, L = lead to close, and E = evaluate. Several contradictions arise among the scholars regarding effective interview techniques with respect to type of questions to be asked, kind of interview to be applied i.e. individual or panel, competency based or behavioural interviews, traits interview and so on.

Behavioural interview is more effective than 'trait interview' in a sense that the trait approach, permits stereotyping candidates based on first impression rather than predicating a candidate's future behaviour based on his /her life history experiences (Green, 1991). Research indicates that behavioural interviews are nearly eight times more effective for predicting successful job performance (Merritt, 2003). Stress interviews are becoming more common place in today's business (Poundstone, 2003). In this case, interviewers observe how a candidate will react under pressure as well as his or her values and ethics in stressful conditions. Koen (2004) suggested to avoid 'closed questions' that require a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Again, a challenge for the interviewers is to keep bias out of the interview (Hackney and Kleiner, 1994). Foster & Godkin (1998) think that the interviewer often holds a stereotype of what represents a 'good' applicant. They often tend to favour applicants who share his or her own attitudes.

Further, the Interviews should always be planned properly, meaning that interviewers must prepare for the interview (Dickel, 2008). Certainly interview is a two-way process and it is an interviewer's best interest to find good prospects, hire them, and have them stay in the organization. Therefore, the interviewee should be provided sufficient information about the job and the organization. Buda (2003) suggested realistic job preview (RJP) to achieve this goal. It allows job candidates to know favourable as well as unfavourable information about the job (Ganzach, Pazy & Brainin, 2002). The selection interview plays an important role in bringing the best employees into the organization. The challenge of today's HR managers is to develop and maintain a valid and productive selection interview. There is no magic formula for hiring the best candidate for a job.

Physical Examination

Applicants are often expected to undergo test(s) to determine if they are fit to perform the job, should they be appointed. The most common example of the employment tests that applicants often undergo is a medical examination. Medical examination, also referred to as preplacement medical testing, is conducted only where the applicants are required to use physical strength to successfully perform their duties (Mathis and Jackson, 2006).

Job Offer

The next step in the selection process is a job offer to those applicants who have crossed all the previous hurdles. In other words, it is the last step in the selection process. Development of an offer via e-mail or letter is sometimes a more formal part of this process.

CONCLUSIONS

It can now be inferred upon that Recruitment and selection has the capacity to take up a key part of the process of managing and leading people as a routine part of organizational life. It also has become more important as organizations increasingly regard their workforce as a source of competitive advantage. Of course, not all employers engage with this proposition even at the linguistic level. However, there is evidence of increased interest in the utilization of employee selection methods which are valid, reliable and fair. Most of the 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 recruitment & 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. Indicated that the quality of new recruits depends upon an organization's recruitment practice, and that the relative effectiveness of the selection phase is inherently dependent upon the calibre of candidates attracted. One result of effective recruitment and selection is reduced labour 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 analyse the constitution of their labour turnover. 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 centres, 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.

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