

Human Resources Recruitment and Selection Practices in Nigerian Organisations

Adeyori Rotimi

University of Benin, Benin-city, Edo State, Nigeria

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences

Email: rotimiadeyori@yahoo.com

Fajebe Folorunso

Islamic University in Uganda

Department of Economics and Development Studies

Email: folorunso.fajebe@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study examined human resources recruitment and selection practices in Nigerian organizations. To achieve this, literature were reviewed on recruitment and selection practices, current trends on recruitment and selection in Nigeria workplace, challenges and consequences of poor recruitment and selection practices, along with strategies for managing recruitment and selection in the Nigerian workplace. This study utilized Resource Based View and Equity Theory in order to build a solid argument for the discourse. Hence, this study concluded that recruiting right calibre of employee in the right position is sine qua non to organizational success. It is recommended that organizations in Nigeria should constantly ensure proper validity of recruitment and selection criteria in-line with global best practices so as to have a round peg in a round hole.

Keywords: human resources, Nigeria, organisations, recruitment, selection

In today's workplace, there is need for revolutionized and paradigm shift among human resource experts and practitioners. They must go beyond mere having someone on the job, but ensuring that prospective candidates with requisite skills and qualifications are timely and sufficiently attracted to fill vacant job positions (Ekwoaba, Ikeije & Ufoma, 2015). This is because twenty-first century organizations across the globe Nigeria inclusive operate in an increasingly volatile and challenging environment occasioned by intense competition, globalization, spread of information technology, economic changes and workforce diversity (Robbins & Coulter, 2002). To surpass these daunting challenges, employers of labour must ensure that qualified personnel are recruited to stimulate immediate and future job performance (Osibanjo & Adeniji, 2013). When the right calibre of employees are recruited in the right position, it creates atmosphere for organizational efficiency and high productivity while wrong employees in the right position will lead to job mismatch, poor job output, unnecessary cost overhead and business failure (Onwe, Abah & Nwoku, 2015).

Recruitment and selection are staffing function which involves identifying, attracting, hiring and retaining people with the necessary knowledge, skills and ability to fulfil organizational responsibilities (Anyim, Ekwueba & Ideh, 2012; Osemeke, 2012; Pangemanan, 2015). Viewed from another perspective, recruitment has to do with generating large pool of candidates with probability of success on their job while

selection involves generating small pool of candidates with highest probability of success on their job (Fajana, 2006; Naveen & Raju, 2014; Yaseen, 2015). Thus, recruitment and selection should be keenly handled like other strands of managerial functions of planning, organizing, leading and controlling so as to effectively and efficiently achieve organizational goals and objectives.

Unfortunately, studies have shown in recent times that organizational performance in Nigeria workplace is hindered by poor human resources recruitment and selection practices, along with other notable factors such as inadequate manpower training, insufficient remuneration, bad leadership, workforce diversity and globalization (Obisi, 2006). Similarly, the high level of organizational inefficiency in Nigeria workplace is attributed to bad recruitment and selection practices marred by political and personal influence, corruption, tribalism and nepotism (Briggs, 2007; Onwe et al., 2015; Onyeaghala & Hyacinth, 2016; Zirra, Ogbu & Ojo, 2017). For instance, the federal character principle enshrined in Nigeria constitution to achieve equal representation across geo-political zones in spheres of public sector jobs and appointments has out-lived its usefulness since politicians have hijacked the process to feature prominently incompetent political cronies rather than recruiting best candidates among job applicants (Tiemo & Arubayi, 2012).

Albeit, several studies have been conducted on human resources recruitment and selection practices in Nigeria workplace (Adeola & Adebisi, 2016; Adeyemi, Dumade & Fadare, 2015; Anyim, Ekemefuna & Shadare, 2011; Briggs, 2007; Chidi & Okpala, 2011; Ekwoaba et al., 2015; Mustapha, Ilesanmi & Aremu, 2013; Olatunji & Ugoji, 2013; Onyeaghala & Hyacinth, 2016; Omisore & Okofu, 2014; Oyetunde & Ayeni, 2014; Zirra, Ogbu & Ojo, 2017) but there seems to be paucity of theoretical contention that explicitly captures current issues on human resources recruitment and selection practices in Nigeria. Most of these studies embraced quantitative research method while very few utilized qualitative strand. In a bid to establish a nuance, this study argues for theoretical position to uncover the ineptitude in human resources recruitment and selection practices and suggests a pathway for its effectiveness.

Overview of Human Resources Recruitment

Recruitment has attracted research interests in the field of social and management sciences due to the fact that effective recruitment leads to organizational performance while ineffective recruitment has a lot of negative cost implications on organizations (L'uba, 2016; Tabassum, 2011). Ideally, people at every point in time exit organizations due to voluntary and involuntary actions of appointment, retirement, retrenchment, temporary or permanent incapacitation and death. Nonetheless, organizations must ensure that qualified personnel are constantly attracted to fill vacant job positions (Lawal, 2000; Yaseen, 2015).

Recruitment are of two types; internal and external. Internal recruitment has to do with identifying and attracting applicants among individuals already holding job positions within an organization and this could be in form of promotion from one position to another; transfer or deployment from one section to another for greater responsibilities (Kumari, 2012). Internal recruitment allures many benefits. First, it strengthens the bonds that already exist between the employee and the employers since applicants are existing members of the organization. Also, it reduces the cost of hiring and training that is needed for new entrants; eliminates the cost of

advertisement in national newspapers since adverts are easily placed on the company's notice board or circulated through internal memo to inform interested applicants of available job vacancies within the organization (Omisore & Okofu, 2014). Internal recruitment provides opportunity for career progression and development, increases employee retention and a strong support for succession planning (CIPD, 2016). Above all, it guarantees employee's productivity and job performance since management is already aware of the applicant's capability and competence over the years. Despite the enormous benefits of internal recruitment, it also shoulders some drawbacks. For instance, existing employees in an organization may not possess the requisite requirements needed for specific vacant jobs; internal recruitment may sometimes produce inefficiency as lobbying may be adopted by the applicants. It could also breed God-fatherism as powerful or highly placed personnel in an organization often install their candidates or loyalist while internal recruitment also denied organizations from benefiting in the novel ideas of new applicants (Adeola & Adebisi, 2016; Olatunji & Ugoji, 2013).

External recruitment has to do with identifying and attracting workforce from outside the organization. It is usually carried out in the following manner: advertisement in the national newspapers, recruitment agencies, trade unions, head-hunting, referral method, universities and colleges and so on (Rahman, Islam & Khan, 2015). This type of recruitment often encourages merit and fair play, devoid of discrimination since prospective employees have no link whatsoever with the organization and every applicant will have to compete by undergoing the rigorous and time tested processes of selection. External recruitment also comes with its own shortcomings such as high costs involved in publishing needs; longer orientation time used in acquainting the employee with organizational culture and the possible demoralizing effects and sabotage among internal members who feel aggrieved when fresh blood is coming into the organization to oversee sensitive positions (Lawal, 2000).

Human Resources Selection Reviewed

Selection is the process of generating a small pool of people who have the highest probability of success on their job. It has to do with making final decision on the most suitable candidates to fill vacant job positions based on relevant qualifications, experience and aptitude (Naveen & Raju, 2014; Omisore & Okofu, 2014). In today's work place, managers must be extremely careful in the selection of candidates for job positions because the end result of selection may either make or mar the success of an organization. Selection is a mutual process between the organization and the applicant because organization decides whether or not to make a job offer on one hand while the applicant decides whether or not to accept a job offer on the another hand (Stoner, Freeman & Gilbert, 2008). The implication is that before the final decision is made, both parties must have considered the cost-benefits so as to make the right decision. Selection assumes the following procedural guide: First, applicant must complete an application form by indicating position desired and provides other necessary information that is needed for the smooth delivery of selection process between both parties (interviewer and interviewee). The second step is the initial screening interview phase where the recruiter performs quick evaluation of the applicant's information to determine its suitability. This stage ascertains

whether the applicant will proceed to the next stage or not. The implication at this stage is that recruiters automatically discontinue the process if the applicant's profile is unattractive. Otherwise, the process continues to the next stage where successful applicant is shortlisted for comprehensive job test to measure the applicant's job skill and ability.

Following the above step is the background check to ascertain the authenticity of the applicant's information. To achieve this, the recruiter may need to put calls across to the applicant's referees or past supervisors to solicit for further information regarding the applicant based on the one provided. The next step involves in-depth selection interview so as to find out more about the applicant in order to prevent wrong selection choice. Interview has been adjudged to be the most widely used method of selection all over the world and simply defined as a conversation with a purpose; and the purpose is simply to elicit useful information from a candidate to determine candidate's level of suitability (Armstrong, 2009; Banjoko, 2002). Interview could be structured, unstructured, stress, group or panel interview. The next step is the physical examination where an applicant's state of health is ascertained. In some cases, employers have their clinics located right within their premises or specialized clinics outside the environment where medical examination is performed on successful applicants for physical fitness. Once this is done, final selection is made. Selection decision confirms applicant's fulfilments of all the above steps and the panel of recruiter is convinced beyond reasonable doubt of the candidates' suitability to fill vacant positions (Stoner et al., 2008).

Current Trends on Recruitment and Selection in Nigerian Workplace

Globalization and the spread of information technology have taken a new sway on recruitment and selection process globally. With the advent of globalization, applicants now obtain application forms via online platforms. This trend is gradually rooted in Nigeria workplace with manifestation in banking, manufacturing, and telecommunication sectors. For emphasis, some of these companies now adopt Computer Based Test (CBT) where shortlisted candidates are selected in batches to take part in the computer based examinations at designated centres across the country and their results are released as promptly as possible. This new trend gives room for sanity and reduces the barriers of transportation costs and risks involved in traveling from one city to another. Although, this new trend has its inherent threats due to slow pace of technological development in Nigeria where most cities and towns lack modern technology to aid 24 hours online real time internet services and the incessant power failure.

Another trend that is currently rooted in Nigeria is the use of outsourcing where hiring function is outsourced to recruiting firms to allow organizations to concentrate on some other pressing issues. Today, most organizations in Nigeria rely on the expertise and professionalism of recruitment agencies for filling vacant job positions while the agents too have demonstrated competence by providing their clients with qualified and competent applicants with the highest probability of success on their job. However, some uncertified recruitment agencies seem to be doing the worst by extorting job applicants at the slightest opportunity.

Challenges and Consequences of Poor Recruitment and Selection in Nigeria Workplace

Nigeria is currently the most populous country in Africa with a large array of human resources that makes it an ideal investment destination for so many other countries in Africa and the world at large (ILO, 2016). This singular reason makes recruitment and selection of workforce in Nigeria to be very important as local and multinational businesses rely on labour force within the country for their numerous business activities. However, the process of recruitment and selection in Nigerian workplace is sometimes unhealthy due to political and personal influence that characterize the entire process. Typical evidence was the politically motivated and ill-fated recruitment exercise of the Nigerian Immigration Services held on March 17, 2014 where 16 applicants' lives were at stake and several scores were injured in the associated stampede and exhaustion (Alexsamade, 2014). The emerging revelation was that the then Minister of Interior, Abba Moro was indicted by the investigative committee for awarding the recruitment contract to his political allies who conducted such a horrific exercise that cannot be forgotten in a hurry by many Nigerians. Although, this is not to aver that personal influence and politics do not play out in private sector recruitment and selection process but the level of ineptitude in the former is more evident than the latter. In general, the challenges of recruitment and selection in the Nigerian workplace began with superior and preference for culture, language, ethnic background, religion, gender, and educational qualification as pre-conditions to securing jobs (Fajana, Owoyemi, Elegbede, Gbajumo-Sheriff, 2011).

Another challenge that needs to be addressed very quickly is the failing standard of education in Nigeria making it difficult to absorb quality and competent graduates to satisfy the nation's industrial and employment base. Employers of labour in both formal and informal sectors of the economy rely on graduates turned out from our educational institutions yearly to drive the economy. Unfortunately, these graduates often fall short of expected standards that warrant constant indictment of our citadel of academic learning for not doing enough for the nation in the area of quality education. Then, who is to be blamed? Is it the lecturers who train the students, the students themselves or employers that fail to provide conducive environment for teaching and research in higher institutions of learning? The way forward centres on proper collaborations among educational stakeholders to fix the academic rot through adequate teaching and quality research.

Also, the challenge of discrimination is worth explicating. Discrimination could be religion, ethnic affiliation, health, age, political affiliation, sex and race. In Nigeria, most organizations are guilty of gender discrimination where managements prefer male employees to female employees in managerial positions by religiously promoting glass ceiling which makes women to be deliberately kept away from management positions, even when it is obvious in some cases that *women* possess the necessary quality and requisite qualifications to carry out the job more than their male counterparts (Tiemo & Arubayi, 2012). Lastly, the challenge of "man-no-man" syndrome where non-qualified applicants are selected for a job position in place of merit. This singular problem continues to increase the level of inefficiency, mediocrity, understaffing and low productivity experienced in the economy over the years (Onwe et al, 2015).

Strategies for Managing Recruitment and Selection in the Nigerian Workplace

Managing recruitment and selection in the Nigeria workplace is an arduous task. However, managers and human resources experts must as a matter of necessity ensure that recruitment and selection of employees are properly shouldered in the right direction if organizations must create competitive edge in an increasingly volatile business environment across the globe. To begin with, managers must ensure fairness and equity in the recruitment and selection process by protecting individuals and vulnerable groups from imminent discriminatory practices that characterize the Nigerian workplace. Also, organizations must begin to engage competent and professional managers and human resources practitioners who at all times, will apply their professional skills towards ensuring that recruitment and selection predicts job success rather mere predictive tools. In addition, there is need to review the Nigerian Federal Character Principle so as to achieve its initial focus of ensuring equity and fairness in public sector jobs and appointments; otherwise, the clause should be expunged completely from the constitution in order to mitigate inefficiency, indiscipline and incompetence among public sector personnel.

Theoretical Framework

Theories are needed as aids to understanding events and extent of how and the why of an empirical world (Inegbenbor, 2012). To have a robust discussion on this subject matter, this study therefore rests on some related and useful theories in the field of social and management sciences vis-à-vis Resource Based View Theory (RBV) and Equity Theory. First, Resource Based View Theory by Barney (1991) states that organization can achieve sustainable competitive edge when organizations have pools of human resource which cannot be substituted or surpassed by competitors. The theory further opined that organization should constantly assess their employee so as to ensure that right calibre of people with the right skills are constantly recruited towards sustaining competitive advantage; and that firms should make up for their shortfalls by using appropriate and valid recruitment and selection criteria (Zirra et al., 2015). Second, Equity theory of Adam Smith (1963) emphasizes the principle of fairness, justice and equity as an important factor in employee motivation, performance and job satisfaction. The utility of this theory is important to this discourse as it allows applicants have equal opportunity in recruitment and selection process and leave no room for bias, favouritism, god-fatherism and tribalism that usually promotes mediocrity over competence.

Conclusions

It is imperative to know that organizations operate in an increasingly competitive environment across the globe. To therefore gain competitive edge, employers of labour should be cautious of human resources recruitment and selection effectiveness towards organizational performance. Researchers have indicated that, over the years, human resources remain the bedrock for organization performance due to its strategic role in converting other organizational resources into finished goods. The objective of this paper was to theoretically examine human resources recruitment and selection practices in Nigerian organizations with an attempt to highlight concerns and hope for best practices. This study has successfully identified some of the challenges and consequences of recruitment and selection in the Nigeria

workplace, along with strategies for managing recruitment and selection from which every organizations and government agencies will find useful and beneficial when properly addressed.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions of this study, the following recommendations are suggested: Firstly, employers of labour in Nigeria workplace be it public or private should ensure cautious human resources decision on recruitment and selection process to enhance organizational success. Second, employers should ensure that qualified human resources experts are entrusted with the recruitment and selection process so as to have a round peg in a round hole. Third, organizations should constantly ensure validity of recruitment and selection criteria as to ensure compliance with global best practices. Four, there is need to partner with registered recruitment and selection agencies and consultants so as to mitigate the problem of poor recruitment and selection habits. Lastly, there is need to review Federal Character Principle to achieve its initial focus.

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