

**RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI:
SUPPLEMENTING THE "CLASSIC TRIO"
METHOD**

by

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**THE UNIVERSITY
of MANCHESTER**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PART FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
SCIENCE IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

SEPTEMBER , 1996

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to register my gratitude to the University of Nairobi for facilitating my training through the Kenya Government/World Bank Training Programme. In this connection, special thanks go to Professor F. J. Gichaga, Vice Chancellor; Professor R.M. Munavu, DVC (A&F) and Professor Lucia Omondi, Principal, CEES.

This dissertation would not have materialised without the support and assistance of many people either materially or morally, who, due to space limitation, it is not possible to mention. To you all I say a big **THANK YOU**. However, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Willy McCourt for going out of his way to provide expert advice, guidance, encouragement and material support throughout the development of this dissertation. I am also very thankful to the staff at IDPM especially Mr Derek Eldridge, the Course Director, and Christina Gee, the Course Administrator, for their personal concern about my well being during my stay in Manchester. My lecturers Willy McCourt, Harry Taylor and Bill Cook also deserve special mention for widening my intellectual scope. In this connection, I also wish to thank all my fellow study fellows for stimulating interactions.

Finally, I extend my deepest appreciation to my wife, Agnes, and children, Njeri, Wairimu, and Magu for providing a constant source of inspiration and necessary support during the most difficult times. Without their understanding, care and their willingness to sacrifice, my mission at Manchester may not have been possible to accomplish.

CHAPTER ONE

CLIMATE SETTING

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The fact that many an organisation find themselves submerged in a turbulent environment characterised by complex and increasingly rapid changes due to technological advances, globalisation of product sourcing, harsh economic conditions, cut-throat competition, shifting client tastes and preferences as well as rising employee demands and expectations among others, has left them with the challenge of how to cope with change and plan for an unpredictable future. In order to cope with this change and turbulence, organisations require managements not only capable of reacting to change, but also initiating and exploiting it (Mayo, 1991). Management strategies for cost reduction, efficient and effective utilisation of all the organisations' resources while simultaneously meeting client demands faster than the competition have therefore become a requirement rather than an option.

The quest to gain a competitive advantage, flexibility and adaptability coupled with the growing belief that the human resource is the most valuable asset necessitates the acquisition, retention and motivation of the right people with the right skills in the right place and time (Mayo, 1991, Torrington and Hall, 1995, Armstrong, 1995). It is in this respect that recruitment and selection have come to be regarded as the single most important challenge facing personnel managers in the 1990's (Curnow, 1989, quoted by Torrington and Hall, 1995).

Whilst there is a consensus on the need to have appropriate human resource, the methods used in the recruitment and selection processes continue to elicit heated debates. And whereas the interview has remained the most common method of selection, it is equally the most attacked by scientific researchers who dismiss it on the basis of its limited reliability and validity in

predicting future performance. Occupational psychologists have little respect for interviews out of their conviction that they are the worst selection methods as they are often abused by managers (Watson, 1989)

Millar et al (1992) join the fray by observing that there exists an unquestioning faith in interviewing as a tradition despite the volume of evidence over many years that interview judgements are often inadequate, biased, and highly subjective. One therefore gets curious as to why, in spite of the scientific condemnation of the interview method, its popularity has continued unabated.

Whereas organisations ought to get their recruitment and selection processes right for their survival, universities, because of their very nature, may have a greater obligation than ordinary organisations. First, universities are public organisations majority of which depend on public funding and goodwill for their survival. They are therefore accountable to society and ought to justify their existence by being seen to be engaged in best practice in all their activities, recruitment and selection included. Secondly, by virtue of their being the apex of education, training and research, they are logically entrusted with not only producing the highest trained personnel in all areas, but also the ideal methods of such activities as recruitment and selection. If universities are to legitimise their status as the centres of highest learning, they not only have to research on and teach best practice but also be seen to practice it. If they teach it without practising it they risk being accused of preaching water and drinking wine.

1.2 SYNOPSIS OF THE UNIVERSITY HISTORY

Located at the capital city, the University of Nairobi has been central to the development of higher education in Kenya. Not only is it the oldest in the country, but it was the only one for a long period of time. It is no wonder then that over time, it has gained a reputation as the pillar of university education in the country.

The University of Nairobi, which some regard as the mother of all the universities in the country, had humble beginnings. Its origin goes back to 1947 when the then colonial Government of Kenya drew up a plan for the establishment of a Technical and a Commercial Institute in Nairobi. By 1951, the plan was ready to be translated into reality as manifested by the granting of a Royal Charter under the name "Royal Technical College of East Africa." Come 1952 and the foundation stone was laid. The Institute was expected to serve all the East African countries. At about the same time, the Asian community in East Africa wanted to build a college for Arts, Science and Commerce in memory of Mahatma Gandhi. Following consultations and consensus between the East African Governments and the Gandhi Memorial Academy Society, the Asian project was merged by incorporation of the Gandhi Memorial Academy into the Royal Technical College of East Africa in April 1954.

However, the need for expert advice on the development of higher education in East Africa led to the establishment of a Working Party in July 1958 under the chairmanship of the then vice chancellor of the University of London. The Working Party submitted its report the following year. Among the main recommendations was that through measures of reconstruction and additions of appropriate facilities, the Royal Technical College should be upgraded to be the second Inter-Territorial University College in East Africa after Makerere. Consequently, the college was re-named the Royal College, Nairobi, and started to offer bachelors degree courses of the University of London. Some courses such as architecture, commerce, as well as land and building economics continued to be tied to the qualifications of various professional bodies in Britain.

In 1962, the faculty of veterinary science was transferred from Makerere University College to the Royal College, Nairobi. Also removed from Makerere control were Extra Mural Studies which the college had been

organising in Kenya. Their control was transferred to the Royal College, Nairobi in 1963.

1963 was a particularly significant year. Not only did it witness the attainment of Kenya's independence, it was also the year that the University of East Africa was inaugurated. The establishment of the University of East Africa marked the rise of three constituent colleges in Nairobi, Kampala and Dar-es-salaam. The Royal College therefore was renamed University College, Nairobi and the students who joined the college in September 1963 registered for degree and diploma courses of the University of East Africa. However, there was an exception in the case of students in the Departments of Domestic Science and Land Economics as they continued to work for the University of Manchester and R.I.C.S respectively. And in the case of those who had enrolled under the Special Relations Scheme, they continued to work for the University of London degrees which were finally phased out in 1966.

The newly re-named University College, Nairobi experienced expansion through additions of departments, faculties and institutes among others. One of the first additions in 1963 was the Institute of Adult Studies which had just been created through merging of Extra Mural Studies and the College of Social Studies which had been established at Kikuyu in 1961. 1965 saw further expansion of the university via the establishment of the Institute of Development Studies whose function was to undertake large scale research on contract from various Government departments on Kenya's economic problems. Come July 1967 and the Faculty of Medicine was established. Following the recommendations of a Working Party on higher education in East Africa, three more faculties, namely agriculture, education and law were added to the college. The School of Journalism was also established and opened its doors in April 1970. At around the same time, the Institute of African Studies was also started.

Out of the need for each East African country to have a national university of its own, the University of East Africa was dissolved in 1970. Consequently, the University College, Nairobi became a fully fledged university through an Act of parliament and was re-named the University of Nairobi with Kenyatta University becoming its first constituent college. During the same year,(1970) the Department of Advanced Nursing was established. This was followed by the establishment of the Department of Pharmacy and Dental Surgery in 1974. At the same time, the Department of Biochemistry became a service department with the Faculty of Medicine being its mother faculty.

Other significant developments included the establishment of the Department of Range Management in the Faculty of Agriculture and the setting up of the Institute of Population Studies and Research. Within the Faculty of Arts, the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies was split into independent departments of Philosophy and Religious Studies respectively. Following the upgrading of Kenyatta College to a constituent college of the University of Nairobi, the Faculty of Education was moved from Nairobi to Kenyatta University College. And with the establishment of Moi University as the second public university in the country, the Department of Forestry was transferred from Nairobi to Moi University in 1983.

As a way of enhancing more effective management and better service delivery, the university was restructured and six campus colleges were created under the University of Nairobi Act of 1985. The colleges that were created are: the College of Architecture and Engineering (CAE), the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS), the College of Biological and Physical Sciences (CBPS) ; the College of Education and External Studies (CEES) the College of Health Sciences (CHS) and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS).(University of Nairobi calendar, 1989/90). Each college is headed by a principal who is answerable to the vice chancellor.

Apart from the creation of colleges, the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor was split into two offices namely; the Deputy Vice -Chancellor (Academic) and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Finance) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) handles all academic matters while the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Finance) is in charge of all administrative and financial affairs of the University. Following the restructuring and establishments of several campuses, the Faculty of Law was moved from the main campus to Parklands Campus while the Faculty of Commerce was transferred to Kabete Campus in 1988. The same year saw the re-introduction of the Faculty of Education in the University of Nairobi with its base being the College of Education and External Studies at Kikuyu.

Since the launching of the University of Nairobi in 1970, several other universities, both private and public, have been established. Among the Private ones are Daystar University and the United States International University (USIU). The additional public universities are Moi University, Kenyatta University, Egerton University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and Maseno University College.(University of Nairobi Development Plan, 1994-2000)

It should be noted however that over the years , the University has witnessed tremendous growth not only in terms of courses offered but also in terms of student and staff populations. For instance , student enrolment rose from 565 in 1963/4 to 5,249 in 1983/4 and by 1988 it had reached 8,984 (Presidential Working Party Report, 1988).

1.2.1 Mission, Aims and Objectives of the University of Nairobi

It has been argued that the University of Nairobi exists in order to develop manpower who have the motivation ,the skills and knowledge to serve the nation (Government Report on educational objectives, 1976). Additionally, the university is expected to engage in continuous and critical analysis of the

objectives and programmes of economic development on the basis of knowledge of the realities of the nation. Consequently, the variety, content, and orientation of the courses offered by the university are expected to relate directly not only to the country's environment, but also to national requirements (Ibid , 1976). The university therefore has a national responsibility but the nature of its activities transcend national boundaries.

According to the University of Nairobi development plan (1994-2000), the mission or strategic vision of the university is:

- (i) To pursue excellence in teaching , research and scholarship,
- (ii) To offer directly through its colleges, faculties, institutes, schools and other channels or in collaboration with other institutions of higher learning, a wide and dynamic range of opportunities for university education and training to all those accepted as being qualified without distinction of ethnic origin, race, political affiliation, sex, sect , creed or disability;
- (iii) To enhance public welfare, prosperity and cultural development by encouraging application of learning and research and
- (iv) To secure and administer resources to achieve these aims efficiently (University of Nairobi Development Plan, 1994-2000:2)

1.3 NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

If the University of Nairobi is to succeed in its efforts to fulfil its mission, then certain facilities, resources and practices have to be in place. The university, being a labour intensive organisation, regards the human resource as its most important asset. The acquisition ,retention and motivation of the human resource therefore become critical to organisational survival and development. Like most organisations, the university acquires its human resource through what Cook (1993) refers to as the "Classic Trio" method of recruitment and selection which basically involves application, shortlisting, and interview. In spite of its

popularity, the interview method has been found to have a very low predictive validity (Cook, 1993, Plumbley, 1985, Smith et al, 1989, Curtis, 1989). The main problem therefore is to do with the reliance on the interview as sole selection method. Whereas the study does not advocate the discontinuation of the interview method, the shortcomings of the method need to be addressed in order to enhance the universities efforts of getting and retaining the right people for the right jobs

Although no organisation can be said to have the ideal recruitment and selection procedures considering that research on methods is an on-going activity, the university procedures have specific problems that also ought to be looked into in addition to those associated with the classic trio.

The first is to do with delay in the process of filling a position. When a vacancy arises, it has to have the express approval of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration and Finance) before it is advertised. This control is important in view of the need for co-ordination and considering the partial freeze on appointment that necessitates rationalisation before any vacancy is filled. When the approval is granted, the position is advertised internally or externally through the print media. Complaints have been registered due to the delay between the time the position is advertised and the time when the interview is held. Sometimes it takes months before candidates are invited for interview. In addition, there has been complaints that even after the interview has been conducted, the university takes too long to communicate the results to candidates and sometimes does not communicate to the unsuccessful ones. This tendency may cause anxiety to potential employees and also poses the danger of the university losing a good candidate to the competitors. It may also lead to other costs through re-advertisement and time as other appointments committees have to be constituted. It also increases the chances of the university getting the second best or out right misfits.

The second problem is to do with the lack of training of panel members themselves. The panel composition depends on the position to be filled. In all cases however, the majority of the members are academicians with the mainstream administrators playing a secretarial role. The composition of the panel is such that effort is made to ensure all the stakeholders' interests are represented. But whereas the academicians are professionals in their respective areas of specialisation, few if any are professionals in matters of selection. Thirdly, the university at the moment lacks a systematic orientation and induction programmes for new employees majority of whom are left to learn through the system of "sitting by Nellie"

1.4 JUTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

There is a growing belief that the performance of an organisation is largely dependent on the calibre of its work force (Mayo, 1990, Plumbley, 1985, Courtis, 1989) It therefore follows that the human beings in an organisation are its most important asset and as such they are literary the life-blood of that organisation (Plumbley,1985) If this argument is correct then any organisation interested in survival and development in a competitive environment has to strive for appropriate recruitment and selection methods if it is to avoid the danger of contaminating this life -blood through bad recruitment.

The recruitment and selection exercise is far much more than an attempt to fill a defined slot. It is, as Plumbley (1985:9) aptly put it, "an attempt to match the needs of the organisation with the skills and aspirations of the individual in an optimal way". Apart from producing misfits, poor hirings can be harmful to an organisation in several ways. For one, once hired it is very difficult to fire an unwanted employee since employees enjoy certain legal protection. Secondly, termination can be very expensive especially if it is declared unfair dismissal (Ibid,1985). Not only can an organisation lose in terms of heavy fines, compensation, payments, and possible reinstatement of a bad recruit, there is

also the cost in terms of the corporate image. In addition, as Herman (1994:xiv) observes, “the cost of poor hiring affects the bottom line-profitability of the organisation in terms of absenteeisms, tardiness, sabotage, poor quality and deterioration of employee morale.” It may also lead to the employer being forced to start the process all over again with its attendant costs.

As already recognised, the University of Nairobi is a labour -intensive entity and like other organisations, it is not immune to the dynamics of the environment in which it exists. Today’s organisations find themselves in a turbulent environment characterised by rapid changes and cut-throat competition where one has to strive for cost reduction, and try to gain a competitive advantage by having a team capable of working smarter and faster than the competition (Mayo, 1991). Given this kind of environment , the twin concepts of efficiency and effectiveness and quality in service delivery become more of a necessity than an option. Additionally the gospel of getting it right first time prevails and therefore the culture of “ hit or miss” in recruitment practice becomes a luxury that cannot be afforded (Plumbley, 1985)

If organisations , Nairobi University included, are to survive in that environment, then they have to direct their attention to best practice in all their activities. And best practice in recruitment may mean the difference between mediocrity and excellence if not survival and extinction

1.4.1 Aims and Objectives

Given the crucial importance of the human resource to an organisation, this study has been conducted with three basic aims and objectives

- First, the study aims at examining the current recruitment and selection procedures of the University of Nairobi with a view to highlight the problems that hamper greater efficiency and effectiveness of the system.

- Secondly, the study aims to analyse existing literature on recruitment and selection so as to identify the gap between the theoretical perspectives and the practice in the university.
- Thirdly, the study hopes to identify possible ways in which the current recruitment and selection practices of the university could be improved as a way of enhancing efficiency effectiveness and productivity at the university.

1.5 FOCUS OF THE STUDY

The University staff are classified into two broad categories; teaching and non-teaching staff. The teaching grades range from graduate assistant to full professor while the non teaching range from grade (1) to full registrar. This study focuses on the recruitment and selection of academic members of staff. There are several reasons why the study focuses on this category of staff.

- First, though there are specific peculiarities, the recruitment and selection procedures are generally the same for all staff and therefore that of the academic staff is fairly representative of the practices at the university.
- Secondly this is a category that is supposed to be fairly self regulatory although still subject to the wider regulations of the organisation. This is due to the nature of their profession in which recognition of academic freedom is sought and fought for.
- Thirdly, the university being an academic institution, its main business is intellectual pursuit. It therefore follows that the practice is to regard the academic staff as the core staff with all the other staff playing a supportive /facilitating role.

- Fourthly, the academicians have a lot of influence in the running of the university. Not only are they assigned administrative duties, they also form the majority in most committees and perhaps the most critical, the top policy makers of the university are usually drawn from this critical mass of consciousness. Thus bad recruitment in academic grades could impact greatly on almost all the areas of the university. It is therefore critical that best practice be applied not only for immediate academic responsibilities but also future considerations. It is due to these reasons that this study focuses on this category of staff.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although there is some considerable literature on universities in general, especially those in the western world, there is very little research if any, that focuses specifically on recruitment and selection procedures of university personnel especially in the case of the University of Nairobi. Secondly, due to constraints of time and resources, it has not been possible to conduct field study which would no doubt have enhanced a wider perspective of the area under investigation. Thirdly, the study has also been faced with the handicap of distance which has meant that first hand information on some issues could not be got. Fourthly, although the study has adopted a holistic approach to recruitment and selection procedures at the university, it is confined mainly to the academic staff. Analysis of the recruitment and selection of other categories of staff could therefore be an area for further investigation.

Given the limitations, the study relies on the literature available for theoretical perspectives. It also relies on the limited material available that are specific to the University of Nairobi. Finally, the study draws heavily from the author's several years experience as an administrator in the university; his

exposure to personnel issues as a study fellow as well as invaluable interaction and stimulating discussions with his lecturers and fellow study fellows.

Considering that recruitment and selection process is not a one-off activity, and in view of the on-going research on the area, this study is therefore considered as a humble contribution to a continuing debate.

1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organised into five chapters.

- Chapter One sets the climate of the study by providing a historical background of the organisation, aims and objectives, focus of the study, nature of the problem and limitations as well as justifications for the study
- Chapter Two examines the theoretical perspectives on recruitment and selection. In the process an overview of the recruitment and selection is provided. Additionally, the chapter looks at the 'classic trio', principles of a good selection method, problems and limitations of the interview and how the interview could be improved. The chapter also examines the alternative selection methods that could be used to improve or supplement the classic trio. The HRM model on recruitment and selection is also examined.
- Chapter Three provides an overview of the current recruitment and selection procedures at the university. It also examines the selection method used, how assessment and selection decisions are made, provides and discusses the application of the HRM model on recruitment and selection to the University of Nairobi.
- Chapter Four provides an analysis of the theoretical versus the practical perspectives by examining the strengths and weaknesses of the current university practices, how to overcome the weaknesses and also the rationale for modification of current practices.
- Chapter Five is the final chapter. In this chapter, some recommendations are put forward to the university and implementation issues are discussed before conclusions are made.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

As has already been recognised, the human resource is the most valued asset in any organisation. It therefore follows that the process by which this asset is acquired is critical as it determines the success or failure of an organisation's efforts of getting the right people with the right qualifications in the right place and time. Most organisations use the 'Classic Trio' which refers to the standard procedure of recruitment and selection. The classic trio heavily relies on the interview as the only method of selection. Given the inherent problems associated with interviews, the predictive value of the classic trio is therefore highly limited. However, before we discuss the problems associated with the classic trio, it is necessary that an overview of the recruitment and selection process be provided as a basis for the discussion.

2.1 OVERVIEW OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

It has been argued that recruitment is essentially a matching process where the capacities and inclinations of the candidates have to be matched against the demands and rewards inherent in a given job or career pattern (Plumbley, 1985). If this argument is correct, then it is logical that one should first establish the human qualities that determine success or failure in the job to be filled before engaging in other recruitment and selection processes. In general, there are four main stages involved in human resource acquisition, defining requirements, attracting candidates, selection, placement and follow-up. It should however be recognised that the four stages are integrative since the failure of one may negatively affect the others.

Defining requirements

This stage involves preparation of job analysis, job description and person specification for the position to be filled. Positions may occur as a result of departure or promotion of staff, introduction of new technology or expansion among others. Whatever the cause, it is important that accurate information about the job be obtained if the organisation's effort of acquiring the right people is to be realised.

The general consensus is that job analysis provide the best way of obtaining accurate and complete information about jobs by systematically examining job description, person specification and job context (Graham, 1986; Daft, 1988). Job analysis not only help identify the tasks to be performed, but also the respective skills, knowledge and attitudes required for the job. It therefore helps in determining the dimensions upon which advertising, objective short-listing and selection criteria can be based. It is however recognised that not all organisations use job analysis but even those that do not require to address several questions. These include asking what the job consist of, in what way it differs from the job done by the previous incumbent, what aspects of the job specify the type of candidate and what key aspects of the job that the ideal candidate wants to know before deciding to apply (Torrington and Hall, 1995). Whether using job analysis or not, it is important not to understate or overstate requirements as either may attract the wrong applicant.

Attracting candidates

This is the stage at which the employer sends signals to potential applicants on the availability of a position and is done mainly through internal or external advertising. Whereas the internal advertising may be a staff morale booster through promotion, it encourages inbreeding at the expense of competitive bidding. On the other hand, external advertising may allow competitive bidding but are associated with high costs especially where there is use of head hunters. Whichever source of supply the organisation may opt for,

the choice should be based on consideration of speed, cost, and the likelihood of providing a sufficient number of good candidates (Armstrong, 1995).

Short-listing

In order to produce a reasonable short-list, there is need to develop a clear criteria and to devise a clear scoring scheme not only for purposes of short-listing, but also for use during interview and selection. Lack of a clear and objective criteria may lead to invitation of inappropriate candidate and hence increase chances of a wrong recruit. As McCourt aptly puts it, garbage in garbage out (McCourt, MSc Personnel Policy lecture hand out, 1995/96).

Selection

This is the stage at which decisions are made as to who is to be offered appointment, who to put on hold in case the first choice fails to take the offer, and who to write letters of regret. Although there are various selection methods such as assessment centres, psychometric tests, and biodata, the standard practice relies on the interview as the sole selection method

Placement and follow up

This is the final stage of recruitment and selection process and involves engagement, induction and follow-up. Induction helps the new comer settle down and therefore develop a sense of belonging without which the employee may take long to be productive, develop low morale or opt for voluntary turnover. As Finnigan (1983:82) puts it

“no matter how attractive the long-term future with the company, if the new employee does not survive the first few days, weeks or months, then the activity (recruitment) has been futile and the financial loss as well as ill-feelings, have been incurred.”

Follow-up assists not only in checking how the new employee is settling down but also help monitor the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection process (Higham, 1983).

2.2 THE 'CLASSIC TRIO'

The term 'classic trio' was coined by Mark cook (1993) to describe the standard recruitment and selection process. Using the example of a British university, cook illustrates the process as follows :

The advertisement attracts applicants, who complete and return an application form. Some applicants' references are taken up; the rest are short listed and invited for interview, after which the post is filled (Ibid. :13).

Although the details involved in the classic trio may vary from one organisation to another the main elements remain fairly the same, application, letter of reference/short listing and interview. Whereas the application forms provide straightforward and standardised summary of an applicant's background, there are differences on value of references with Cowan and Cowan (1989) even doubling whether references are worth the paper they are written on

'The Interview

The popularity of the interview as a selection method is overwhelming. Research conducted in the USA in 1957 on the utilisation of the selection interview reported that 99 percent of organisations used selection interviews (Ulrich and Trumbo, 1965). A similar survey of top UK organisations revealed that only one who never used the interview as a selection method (Cook, 1993) but perhaps the popularity of the interview is best captured by Dipboye (1992) who observes that interviewing, along with love, death and taxes may qualify as one of life's universal experiences

Besides being a forum for information exchange between candidates and interviewers, the interview plays a public relations role and provides both parties

with an opportunity to assess one another on a face to face basis before decisions are made on whether to make or accept appointment offers. However, despite the popularity of the interview, they have been heavily criticised on the basis of unreliability and poor validity in predicting a person's subsequent job performance. Additionally, interviews have also been seen as prone to subjectivity and even abuse by managers (Watson, 1989).

The familiarity of the interview is part of its problem as it appears easy to conduct resulting in almost everyone being inclined to believe they are good interviewers (Plumbley, 1985). It is generally on this assumption that many an interview are conducted by untrained interviewers. Given these limitations, one would hardly expect a high predictive value out of interviews.

SUMMARY

Having looked at the classic trio, we next look at the principles of a good selection method. This will form the basis of the discussion on the problems and limitations of the interview.

2.3 PRINCIPLES OF A GOOD SELECTION METHOD

Whatever method of selection used, be it interview or test, it is necessary that it meets the basic criteria that would qualify it as a good selection method. Though 'good' is a relative term, there are some characteristics that have come to be regarded as critical elements of a good selection method

A good selection method is that which is reliable, valid and cost effective (Cook, 1993, Ungerson, 1983). Reliability of a selection method refers to the extent to which it consistently measures whatever it is supposed to measure. Smith et al (1989) see reliability in terms of intra-rater and inter-rater reliability. In this respect, intra-rater reliability refers to the extent to which one interviewer would make the same judgement on a group of candidates if he rated them twice in a given period of time; while inter-rater reliability refers to the

extent to which different interviewers would agree on their ratings of a group of candidates.

Validity refers to the extent a selection method successfully measures what it claims to measure (Cook, 1993, Torrington and Hall, 1995). Though there are various forms of validity, the most important in the case of recruitment and selection is predictive validity; which refers to the extent to which the method used can forecast subsequent job performance. Thus, in the case of selection interview, validity refers to the extent to which it is able to select 'good' candidates and reject 'bad' ones. (Smith et al, 1989) The validity of any criteria is expressed in terms of a correlation coefficient between scores obtained on a predictor and scores of job performance ratings. If the correlation is zero, that means there is no relationship at all between predictor, for example selection method used, and the criterion. If there is a perfect one-to-one relationship the correlation coefficient will be one (1.00). However, the best predictors for subsequent job performance have a correlation coefficient of around 0.5 which implies that they are still far from ideal predictors (Open University Human Resource Strategies manual, 1992).

Table 2.1: Validity coefficients obtained by Hunter and Hunter (1984) and Schmitt et al (1984)

Selection method	Hunter and Hunter	Schmitt et al
Education	0.10	
Academic achievement	0.11	
Biodata	0.37	0.24
References	0.26	
Cognitive ability test	0.53	0.25
Interest inventory	0.10	
Interviews	0.14	
Assessment Centres	0.43	0.41

Source: McCourt, W. (1995/96 (unpublished))

Cost effectiveness, which is also referred to as utility analysis, refers to the estimate of savings the employer gains through good selection methods which result in greater output than the costs incurred. It therefore means that if an organisation loses more than what it gains from a selection method, then there is need to review the method or discard with it.

A good selection method should also be **acceptable** to those administering it and those to whom it is administered. This is important not only for legal considerations but also for the corporate image. Whereas it is recognised that what is acceptable may not necessarily be correct, it is also recognised that what may be correct but not acceptable may be equally problematic. So the method used should not only be fair but should also be seen to be fair to enhance its acceptability.

2.4 PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE INTERVIEW

As already recognised, the use of the interview as a selection method has been contentious with some in support while others have been strongly against. This section examines weaknesses of the interview.

2.4.1 Bias and subjectivity in interviews

Interviews have been accused of being characterised by bias and subjectivity which distort the interviewer judgement at the expense of objectivity. There can be several sources of bias among which are the following

a) Snap decision effect :

Research findings indicate that interviewers decide to accept or reject a candidate within the first few minutes of the interview and spend the rest of the time seeking evidence to confirm the correctness of their first impression. (Smith et al, 1989; Webster, 1964; Springbett, 1958). This tendency by interviewers to

reject or accept candidates on first impression is what Springbett (1958) described as the snap decision effect.

b) Primacy/ recency effect

Another problem as evidenced by research findings is to do with the crucial role memory plays in the decision -making process. Evidence from research on memory recall indicate that people remember the information they get early and late in the interview but are less effective at recalling what is said in the middle part (Smith et al, 1989). This therefore means that interview decisions are based on partial information recalled and thus the possibility of crucial information being overlooked (ibid.).

Closely related to the primacy / recency effect is the problem of concentration . Most people are said to have difficulties in concentrating for long periods of time and therefore interviewer judgements may be affected by the number and duration of interviews conducted.(ibid.).

c) Mirror image effect

The mirror image effect is also referred to as similarity effect or 'bringing in the clones' (Curtis, 1989; Cook, 1993). Curtis points out that there is a belief that bosses should not be allowed to hire as they are likely to recruit in their own image i.e. hire those that are similar to themselves. He however argues that on the contrary people recruit non replicas (superficially similar).

Generally, interviewers are said to be likely to over rate candidates whose qualifications in terms of attitude, religion , education and social standing are like those of the interviewer. However, there does not seem to be a consensus on the similarity effect over interview outcomes. Cook (1993) drawing on Schmitt (1976) observes that research on interviewer-candidate similarity has mixed results. There are possibilities that candidates may be underrated for other

reasons that may not be realistic. Arvey and Campion (1982) observe that interviewers may possess stereo types of idealised candidates. The problem with this is that the interviewer would tend to compare the similarities between the real candidates with the stereo types which may lead to overlooking the attributes of the real candidate. The interviewer stereo types therefore contribute to the lowering of interview reliability and validity (Schmitt, 1976)

d) Contrast effect

The problem of contrast arises where interviewers rate a candidate not on the basis of the criteria set but in comparison to another candidate. In this kind of situation, the average candidate may gain or lose depending on the type of candidates interviewed before him or her. So if for instance ,an average candidate is interviewed immediately after two mediocre ones, the average candidate may be rated more favourably (McHenry, 1981). On the other hand, assessment may be lowered if the candidate is preceded by very strong candidates (Robbins, 1982). However, some research have found contrast effect to be non existent or so minimal that they are insignificant (Schmitt, 1976)

e) Physical attractiveness effect

Some research findings show that interviewers may be biased by the physical appearance of the candidate . Cook (1993) drawing on Dipboye ,Arvey and Terpstra (1977) observes that assessors were found to be strongly biased by attractiveness where being good looking was worth two rank positions in 12 regardless of gender.

However, bias on the basis of physical attractiveness seems to be tied to the type of job in question (Cash, Gillen and Burns, 1977). For instance, in the case of managerial positions, Cash (1985) found bias exist against attractive women on the basis of their being stereotyped as too feminine for those kinds of jobs. On the other hand, Forsythe et al (1985) reported that females wearing masculine clothing in interviews were more likely to get high positions.

f) Negative information effect

This is the tendency by the interviewers to concentrate more on negative information or attributes than positive information about an individual (Hollman, 1972). This tendency leads to rejection of most of the candidates. So heavily do interviewers weigh negative information that, according to a survey by Springbett (1958), one bad rating was found to be enough reason to reject 90% of the interviewees. The underlying rationale behind this behaviour is based on the conviction that there is more to lose by hiring poor applicants than rejecting good ones. (Cook, 1993; Byham 1990). This argument seems plausible considering that one can see the effect of a poor applicant who is hired while the effect of the good candidate who is not hired can only be guessed. The problem however, is that the positive attributes of the candidate are overlooked and therefore the distortion of the assessment.

g) Halo effect

The halo effect describes a situation where the assessor or interviewer has a tendency to rate a candidate highly on one dimension as a result of high or favourable score in a different attribute (Smith et al, 1989; Cook, 1993; Plumbley, 1991). The result is the distortion of the true abilities of the individual. For instance, the employee rated punctual may be rated ambitious, able and conscientious (Cook, 1993).

h) The horn effect

The horn effect is a direct contrast to the halo effect. It is a situation where an interviewer develops a negative opinion of a candidate as a result of one unfavourable attribute. It involves lowering the rating of one attribute because of a low score in another attribute. Thus for instance, if the interviewer focuses on a candidate's unfavourable physical appearance, he may overlook other more positive qualities of that particular candidate. The result may be the

distortion of the candidate's true abilities and potential (Schuler and Funke, 1989).

l) Leniency effect

This is where assessors may be generous in rating a candidate. However, Robbins (1982) points out that it is possible for assessors to commit positive leniency error resulting in the candidate being marked high relative to the true or actual performance. Alternatively, there can be a negative leniency error where assessors mark candidates low relative to their true or actual performance. (ibid.)

h) Central tendency

Sometimes the assessors do not skew their ratings negatively or positively. They may however develop a 'central tendency' in rating which refers to the use of the middle points of the scale and therefore avoiding the extremes (Cook, 1993, Smith et al, 1989) The problem of the central tendency is that it may result in distortion as it reduces the variance around the mean score and thus reducing any correlation between predictor and the criterion (Smith et al, 1989). The explanation behind this behaviour is mainly to do with assessors not wanting to create enmity with interviewees especially where the rating is likely to be made public.

2.4.2 Verbal and non verbal behaviour Influence

Verbal or non verbal behaviour by either the interviewer or the candidate have also been found to influence interview outcomes. The candidate reactions such as facial expressions or even eye contact can greatly impact on the kind of impression the interviewer forms about the candidate (Anderson and Shakleton, 1990). In this respect, research findings indicate that interviewees who look the interviewer in the eye, smile, nod or shake their heads more and generally appear more enthusiastic are likely to be more successful than those who do not (Forbes and Jackson, 1980). However, as Cook (1993) cautions, the facial expression

may not be the cause of success since the candidate may be smiling or looking at the interviewer more because of feeling that the interview is going well. All in all, the general consensus seem to suggest that expressions and gestures may greatly influence interviewers. As Hanson and Balestreri- Spero (1985: 114) observe,

“all too often , the person most polished in job seeking techniques, particularly those used in the interview process, is the one hired even though he or she may not be the best candidate for the job”

2.4.3 Organisational policies and practices

Sometimes the problems of the interview may be tied to the policies and practices of the organisation itself. For instance, the lack of consistent rating standards may lead to inaccurate hiring decisions (Byham, 1990), while organisational bureaucracy may cause considerable time lag between the time of interview and confirmation of job offer. This practice may be harmful to an organisation in several ways. For one , it may create a negative image of organisational inefficiency which may put off a very good candidate or lead to voluntary turnover. (ibid.). Secondly, the delay may also result in the organisation losing a well qualified candidate to a competitor (Courtis, 1989).

SUMMARY

We have looked at the various problems and limitations associated with interviews. We will next look at how they can be improved since interviews seem to be here to stay (Plumbley, 1985).

2.5 TOWARDS IMPROVING THE INTERVIEW

Although there may not be a method guaranteed to dramatically improve the reliability and validity of the interview (Robbins, 1982), there are a number of efforts that can be made to raise interview standards. Some of the efforts include:

Training interviewers: Through training , interviewers may be made aware of likely causes of biases, and inaccuracy and how to avoid them by following similar patterns in their questioning and evaluation of responses and also by making efficient use of the rating scale (Robbins ,1982; Cook, 1993). However, research findings on training of interviewers has mixed results where some indicate it helps while others indicate it does not (Cook, 1993). Nevertheless, training does help interviewers to have a better understanding of the interview process, know what to look for and also to operate within the same frame of reference. Training therefore can improve interviews through creation of greater awareness among interviewers which help them make better selection decisions

Giving interviewers detailed information/Basing Interviews on job analysis:

When interviewers know what to look for then it is easier not only to assess the candidate but also to gain consensus since the interviewers will be using the same parameters. As Cook (1993) rightly observes, interviewers using job descriptions are more likely to agree with one another and less likely to make up their minds too quickly. It is therefore important for the interviewers to be provided with a good and updated job description. This will help focus the interviewers on job relevant factors and less on factors less relevant to the job (Robbins, 1982) Since interview decisions are mainly based on available information, it therefore follows that the use of thorough job analysis can improve interview standards through provision of adequate job related information.

Standardisation of the evaluation forms would also contribute to interview improvement as it helps interviewers to operate from the same frame of reference while **avoiding very short interviews** may help interviewers avoid working under pressure and basing their decisions on first impressions. (Cook, 1993)

Listening helps in getting more information from the candidate which is critical in decision-making. Cook (ibid.) drawing on Cline (1964) observes that people who remember what someone looked like, said and did are better at predicting what the person will do in the future. However, listening is much more than staying awake as it depends on how much one learns from it (Anstey, 1977).

Note taking: It is also important that interviewers be taking notes especially in view of their propensity to forget what was actually said in the course of the interview (Armstrong, 1995; Torrington and Hall, 1995, Robbins, 1982).

Structured interviews: These are interviews whose every part, including interviewer judgements and questions, are structured so as to enable the interviewer follow a set procedure. (Robbins, 1982, Cook, 1993). They involve presenting a fixed set of questions to every applicant (Robbins, 1982). Since they are structured and based on appropriate job analysis, they can therefore provide the interviewer with a focus on which to base questions and interpret replies. Though there are various types of structured interviews, they can broadly be classified into criterion referenced interviews or situational interviews. In *criterion referenced interviews*, candidates are asked specific questions designed to extract responses on their experience including skills in particular areas (Smith et al, 1989). For instance, if the idea is assess the candidates on communication skills, they may be asked to describe an occasion when they presented a paper to a group of people and thereafter the responses given are rated on pre-set scale. (ibid.).

Situational interviews on the other hand are based on critical incidents to do with particularly effective or ineffective behaviour (Cook, 1993). They involve giving a candidate a hypothetical problem and assessing his or her responses.

Although Hunter and Hunter (1984) found interviews to have a very low validity correlation of 0.14, and therefore showed it to be a poor selection method, further research by Huffcutt and Arthur (1994) found interviews to have a higher validity correlation of 0.37. The main difference between these two groups of scholars is that the Hunters took a blanket view of interviews whereas Huffcutt and Arthur made a distinction between highly unstructured and highly structured interviews. Among the conclusions made by Huffcutt and Arthur was that the more structured the interview was the higher the validity correlation although there was a ceiling effect for the structure. Additionally, they found that interviews, particularly when structured, could reach levels of validity as high as those of mental ability tests. The inference to be drawn therefore is that the predictive value of interviews can be improved through structuring them.

Other improvements for the interview include thorough interview preparations, systematic interviewing, striking a balance between formality and friendliness, communication to applicants and so on (Plumbley, 1985)

SUMMARY

We have looked at various methods that can be used to improve the interview. We next look at alternative selection methods that can be used to supplement the interview.

2.6 BUILDING ON THE CLASSIC TRIO: OTHER SELECTION METHODS

The evidence against the classic trio on the basis of its unreliability and validity as predictor of subsequent job performance coupled with accusations of subjectivity and a growing concern over the costs of poor selections have contributed to making personnel specialists and the academics alike to focus on the quest for alternative selection methods. This section therefore considers some of the alternative methods that have been developed in an effort to raise

the level of predictive validity. These include tests , group exercise, assessment centres, biodata and work samples

2.6.1 Test methods

Although tests are a familiar feature in the education systems, their use in employment procedures is riddled with controversy. The unreliability of the interview in predicting performance as opposed to the greater potential accuracy and objectivity of the test data provide a strong case for those in favour of testing while those against it either dislike the objectivity that testing implies or the problems of incorporating test evidence into the rest of the collected evidence (Torrington and Hall, 1995). Those in favour of testing also draw from statistics to demonstrate the superiority of tests over interviews. Statistically, ability tests have been found to have a predictive validity of 0.53 whereas the interview was found to have 0.14 (Hunter and Hunter, 1984; Herman, 1994). Although the statistical evidence may seem convincing, those against counter their use by arguing that testing generally lacks flexibility. It also fails to provide an opportunity for face -to face contact that the interview provides. Tests therefore deny a candidate the opportunity of either asking or answering questions about the job that could be raised during the interview and whose answers could influence the selection decisions

The compromise view for the two divergent schools of thought is offered by Plumbley (1985:135) when he points out that :

“Test scores should never be used as the sole criteria in making an appointment. Tests do not supplant the interview but, in appropriate cases, they can supplement and strengthen it”

In spite of the ranging controversy, the use of tests as a selection device is on the increase. A survey conducted by Shakleton and Newel (1991) found that the use of personality tests had increased to 37 per cent as compared to 12 per cent five years earlier. Another survey by the American Society for Personnel



Administration revealed that 84 per cent of their respondents were using testing as part of their hiring process (Herman, 1994). A later study found that 74 per cent of a sample of 101 large companies (with more than 2000 employees) were using ability testing while 59 per cent of the same sample were using personality testing. For the small companies with less than 2000 people, 62 per cent were using ability testing while 41 per cent of the same sample were using personality testing. (Ibid.) Given the higher predictive value of some tests such as ability, it would seem logical to use them to test those attributes that the interview may not be able to assess such as intelligence. There are various types of tests . The following therefore is but a sample of the more common types

General intelligence tests are aimed at assessing the mental capacity of an individual. Intelligence is said to be one of the most difficult attributes to measure from interview alone since there can be misleading interpretations. For instance , it is possible to mistake verbal fluency for high intelligence while hesitancy in speech may be confused with low intelligence (Plumbley, 1985). The use of intelligence tests therefore may help distinguish between verbal fluency and intelligence since they are designed to measure the overall intellectual capacity and the candidate's innate abilities. The importance of intelligence tests lie in the fact that they can test ones capacity to learn. As Plumbley (1985:136) points out, "*it can be shown statistically that a person's ability to score highly on such tasks correlates with his capacity to learn and retain new knowledge, to pass examinations and to succeed at work .*" They cover a variety of items which include general information, similarities and opposites, arithmetic etc. and are based on the assumption that intelligence is distributed normally throughout a given population (Armstrong, 1995)

Special aptitude tests are intended to measure the specific capacity of an individual , which may be either known or latent, to acquire ability required in a specific field. The test are designed to measure such attributes as mechanical ,

numerical and clerical ability, manual dexterity, artistic and creative abilities etc (Plumbley, 1985; Armstrong, 1995; Torrington and Hall, 1995). They can be used in the selection of printing or engineering apprentices, trainee accountants, secretaries, computer programmers, clerical workers and so on (Plumbley, 1985).

Attainment tests are the opposite of aptitude tests since whereas the former test potential, the latter measure what has already been achieved through either training or experience. Compared to other types of tests, attainment have a higher acceptance rate among candidates since they provide an opportunity to demonstrate what they have already achieved and therefore they are more confident (Torrington and Hall, 1995).

Trainability tests involve assessing a potential employee's ability to be trained, usually in craft type jobs. Whereas attainment tests measure what has already been achieved, trainability tests differ in the sense that the tasks involved are those that the candidate has not performed before. The applicants are shown how to perform a task before being asked to perform it after which they are assessed to see how well they responded to the training and how their performance improved (Torrington and Hall, 1995).

Personality tests /questionnaires are devised to measure the variety of dimensions that make up an individual's total personality. Whereas one may have the necessary technical skills for a particular job, the person may possess other personal characteristics that may hinder effective performance. For instance, a person who is an introvert may have difficulties in jobs that require one to be outgoing. Personality tests include self report, personality questionnaires and other questionnaires that measure interests, values or work behaviour (Armstrong, 1995).

The problem of using personality tests arise from the fact that they are based on human personality and there are as many differences on theories of human personality as there are on human intelligence (Torrington and Hall, 1995). Plumbley (1985) observes that the moment that personality tests are transplanted from the medical profession to the industrial scene, they become the most controversial of all psychological tests. Smith et al (1989) seem to hold a similar view when they observe that early attempts to measure personality bordered on the insane. Research findings by different scholars on the validity of personality tests have only helped to fuel the controversy. For instance, whereas Schmitt et al (1984) found personality tests to have a validity coefficient of 0.15, a study by Smith (1988) found tests to have a validity coefficient of 0.39. However, there is a general consensus that although personality tests can be useful in testing competence in management positions, they are complicated and need to be administered with care to avoid misuse. In defence of the tests, Fletcher (1991) points out that psychometric tests, like any other selection procedure, can be used well or badly and therefore it would be foolish to dismiss all the evidence of the value of personality assessment in selection on the basis of some misuse.

Since tests are intended to facilitate in making good selection decisions, it is therefore necessary that regardless the kind of test preferred, it should at least meet the basics of a good selection method discussed earlier in this study

2.6.2 Assessment centres

Assessment centres have been described as *“a process of gathering valid information about an individual's readiness to perform a job”* where *“Data is gathered by observing him performing in a series of relevant job samples in a simulated work environment”* (Nel, 1987, as quoted by Bates, 1993:66). Assessment centres involve the combination of many different techniques so as to assess job candidates in a short but intensive experience

(Wanous, 1980). Activities include group exercises whose intention is to capture and simulate the key dimensions of the job. The main focus of the centre is on behaviour and performance is measured from several dimensions in terms of the competencies required to achieve the target level of performance in a particular job or at a particular level in the organisation (Armstrong, 1995). The candidates are assessed by several observers who are trained for the job but it is important for senior managers to be involved if a sense of 'ownership' of the process is to be developed. One of the most common exercises is the in-basket which involves presenting each candidate with a basket of memos, phone messages and letters that are similar to those one is likely to handle in actual job (Herman, 1994). The applicant is given a time limit within which to make note of each item in the in-basket, specifying how he /she intends to deal with a specific item and why. In general, assessment centres are aimed at assessing quality of decision, planning, organising, decisiveness, delegation and managerial control (Herman, 1994, Torrington and Hall, 1995, Armstrong, 1995). However, assessment centres are time consuming and require trained specialists. In spite of the constraints of cost, time and administration, Acs not only have a higher predictive value than interviews they are also able to assess more attributes and therefore can enhance the making of better selection decisions.

Group selection methods are closely related to assessment centres. They involve assessing several candidates in a group situation with a view to test several attributes. These include ability of the candidate to get along with the others; influence others and how they do it; express themselves verbally; think clearly and logically; argue from past experience and apply themselves to a new situation and the type and role they play in group situations (Plumbley, 1985). Plumbley identifies three types of group tasks that can be used, namely, leaderless groups; command or executive exercise; and group problem solving. It is these groups that are observed.

Composed of six to eight members, the leaderless group is given a topic of general interest to discuss in a circle while assessors watch and record interactions. In the command or executive exercise, each member is allocated a role and expected to outline his/her solution on the basis of their role and defend it to the rest of the group. The main aim of the exercise is for assessors to observe the candidate's ability to take directions, give directions, utilise the group resources, analyse situation and understand situation from perspectives other than their own particular roles (Herman, 1994). In the case of group problem-solving group, it is leaderless and the challenge is to organise themselves in order to solve a problem, related to the job to be filled, within a given time limit. One of the main problems of group selection methods involves the difficulty of assessing individual contribution especially where some participants may not be willing to participate (Torrington and Hall, 1995).

2.6.3 Work sample

This involves a candidate providing demonstrated evidence of ability to do some work. It may involve assessing a candidate's work in temporary posts or for instance assessing finished work of an artist or photographer which is normally presented at the time of the interview (Torrington and Hall, 1995). Work sample tests enjoy face validity since applicants are expected to carry out tasks closely related to the job they have applied for and which they feel confident to perform or be trained to do (Smith and Robertson, 1989). Although work sample tests can improve selection since they have a higher predictive value and provide a more realistic preview of the job, they are more costly, and more time consuming to administer compared to psychological tests (Ibid).

2.6.4 Biodata

Biodata have been defined as a system which allows
“the respondent to describe himself in terms of demographic, experiential, or attitudinal variables presumed or demonstrated to be related to personality structure, personal adjustment or success in social, educational or occupational

pursuits”(Owens, 1976, as quoted in Smith et al ,1989:54-55). Biodata involve trying to relate the characteristics of applicants to characteristics of successful job holders and the method is suitable with large numbers of candidates. Biodata have been found to have very high predictive value for most criteria related to a person’s future behaviour (Smith and Robertson, 1989). They involve collecting information about a person’s life history and are based on the assumptions that one will behave in the future in fairly the same way as in the past. Owens (1976) argues that if interpreted sensitively and insightfully, biodata represents an alternative factually-based view of a person’s life so far and which could therefore be used to make predictions about the individual’s future behaviour in a rational and coherent manner. Since research evidence have shown biodata to have a high predictive value (e.g. Reilly and Chao, 1982; Hunter and Hunter, 1984) it therefore means that their use can improve the selection process. However, they are said to be quite cumbersome and require the service of specialists to administer. Additionally, biodata is faced with criticism of the accuracy of the information provided by individuals (Smith and Robertson) Perhaps more seriously, biodata method looks to the past whereas the future requirements may be completely different from those of the past

Other methods include graphology, drug testing and so on. However, they are not as widely used as the methods discussed and neither do they have substantial scientific backing to warrant great attention.

SUMMARY

Having looked at some of the methods that could be used to supplement the interview it is felt necessary that we examine what the new management styles have to say about recruitment and selection. We will therefore look at the HRM model on recruitment and selection.

2.7 THE HRM MODEL ON RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) has been defined as “*a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve a competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques.*” (Storey, 1995:5). It is composed of several key elements among which is the belief that it is the human resource that make a difference in an organisation and the calibre of the human resource distinguish successful organisations from the rest (ibid.) Given the importance of the human resource to organisational success, their recruitment and selection is seen by HRM as a key process that should be integrated with the overall human resource strategies which in turn should be integrated with the overall business strategy. The HRM approach therefore involves taking much more care in matching people not only to the particular needs of the job but also to the overall requirements of the organisation (Armstrong, 1995). The necessity of integrating recruitment practice with other HRM activities is aptly captured by Iles and Salaman (1995) when they observe that existing HRM practice may put a brake on innovative recruitment practices. Additionally, for recruitment practices to be effective, there is need for changes in other HRM policy areas (ibid). From an HRM perspective, recruitment also involves taking great care in specifying the competencies, attitudes and behavioural characteristics required of employees and then using a wide range of techniques to identify candidates who match the specifics (Armstrong, 1995). The HRM approach therefore involves going beyond the skills and knowledge requirements of a job. Such other qualities as commitment, flexibility, and team working are also considered as being equally important and therefore steps should be taken to achieve them. Their achievement however, require top management support. Armstrong (1995) drawing on Wickens (1987) gives the example of Nissan’s efforts to link selection with the overall business plans by subjecting candidates to a variety of tests and exercises. The steps taken by Nissan to achieve commitment and team working were attributed to management support. As Wickens observed the

Nissan success was due to genuine management support *“It is something which develops because management genuinely believes in it and acts accordingly and recruits or promotes people who have the same belief”* (Wickens, 1987, as quoted by Armstrong, 1995:421).

Thus recruitment and selection activities should be harmonised not only with the needs of the department where the vacancy exists, but also with the overall organisational strategies.

SUMMARY

This chapter has provided the theoretical perspectives on recruitment and selection with reference to the classic trio. The next chapter provides the practical perspectives with reference to the recruitment and selection of academic staff at the University of Nairobi.

CHAPTER THREE

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

Before we conduct an analysis of the theoretical versus the practical perspectives it is important to first understand the practices of the organisation we are dealing with. This chapter is therefore primarily intended to give a general overview of the recruitment and selection procedures at the University of Nairobi. However, mention will be made of some of the main problems associated with the current practices. The problems will be revisited in the next chapter for more detailed analysis.

3.1 *CURRENT RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES*

It should be noted from the onset that all appointments at the university are centrally controlled through the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor. This therefore means that no substantive appointment of staff can be made without express approval of central administration. Secondly, whether it is a new appointment or promotion, the practice is that all appointments are made through appointment committees. Thirdly, the University of Nairobi, just like many other organisations, fills positions through the classic trio - advertising, short listing and selection. The following is an elaboration of what happens at each stage.

Determining requirements

As is the case elsewhere, vacancies at the University of Nairobi may arise following resignation, retirement, death or dismissal of staff. Additionally, they may occur as a result of expansion, introduction of new technology, staff demotion, promotion or transfer



Every department has its own departmental staff establishment which reflects the staff entitlement for that department. Each department is expected to liaise with the administration and finance departments in working out its staff requirements for every financial year. For monitoring purposes, staff lists are updated accordingly depending on the staff movements.

Any department wishing to fill a position is required to prepare a job description and person specification which have to be channelled through the respective Dean and Principal for vetting and forwarding to the recruitment and training section in the Deputy Vice Chancellor's office. It is this office that organises for advertisement after verifying the existence of the position, and confirming that the job description/person specification has the standard information on title, qualifications, salary, where to submit application and deadline.

However, although the university does make job description cum person specifications, they are largely based on old records and do not have much regard for the changing needs of the job. One major problem therefore is to do with lack of job analysis which literature tells us is the basis of a good selection practice.

Attracting Candidates

It is a policy of the university to advertise every substantive position that is to be filled and a department can request for either internal or external advertisement.

Whereas the university does use internal advertisement for promotion and other means of career development to enhance motivation and boost staff morale, the most common form of advertisement is through the national newspaper. However, the university sometimes gets staff through the help of agencies such as CIDA, DAAD and the British Council. These are mainly

expatriate staff in specialised areas and they may be fully or partially supported by the government represented by these agencies. It should however be recognised that these kind of staff form a very small percentage of the academic workforce.

Processing Applications/Short listing

Although the university is expected to acknowledge receipt of applications, in most cases this does not happen. But after the deadline, a folder containing all the applications is passed over to the department concerned for short listing. This is normally done through a departmental subcommittee and then forwarded to the respective Dean and Principal for vetting before forwarding to recruitment section for the next stage. The short listing process is normally guided by the published requirements of the job and involves scrutinising available evidence on the applications so as to identify the most appropriate candidates. Thereafter, the university may directly write to the referees of short listed candidates or advise the candidates themselves to ask their referees to submit the reference reports. Although candidates are interviewed even without reference reports, they are asked to ensure that the report is received by the university soon after the interview.

The next stage is the setting of interview dates which is done in consultation with the person to chair the meeting. In the case of full professor appointments, committees are chaired by the Chairman of Council while those for associate professor it is the Vice Chancellor. Senior Lecturer and lecturer appointment committee meetings are chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of academic affairs while committees for Assistant Lecturer and below are chaired by the College Principal. However, colleges do conduct interviews for lecturer position in which case the principal chairs the committee meeting but offers of appointment are made by the Deputy Vice Chancellor

Each short listed candidate is sent a standard letter of invitation while panel members are sent notices of meeting together with a folder containing application packages including reference reports for each short listed candidate. The panel member therefore is able to have a fair idea of the type of candidates even before getting to the interview. This stage also involves preparation of staffing lists for the department wishing to recruit with clear indication of the vacant position to be filled

The next stage from there is interview and selection where the panel tries to identify the most suitable candidate in the light of published requirements of the job

This stage is supposed to be followed by induction and orientation. However, as already recognised earlier in the study, orientation and induction at the university is neither systematic nor effective and in most cases it is hardly done.

3.2 SELECTION METHOD USED

As already pointed out selection involves scrutinising the candidates and their qualifications with a view to identify those who appear to be potentially suitable for employment. Though there are several selection methods, the university relies on the interview as the sole means of selecting academic staff. Given the problems associated with interviews especially unstructured ones, it is this tendency to rely on a method whose reliability has been vigorously questioned that forms the main concern of this study

3.2.1 The Interview Process

Stakeholders in interviews

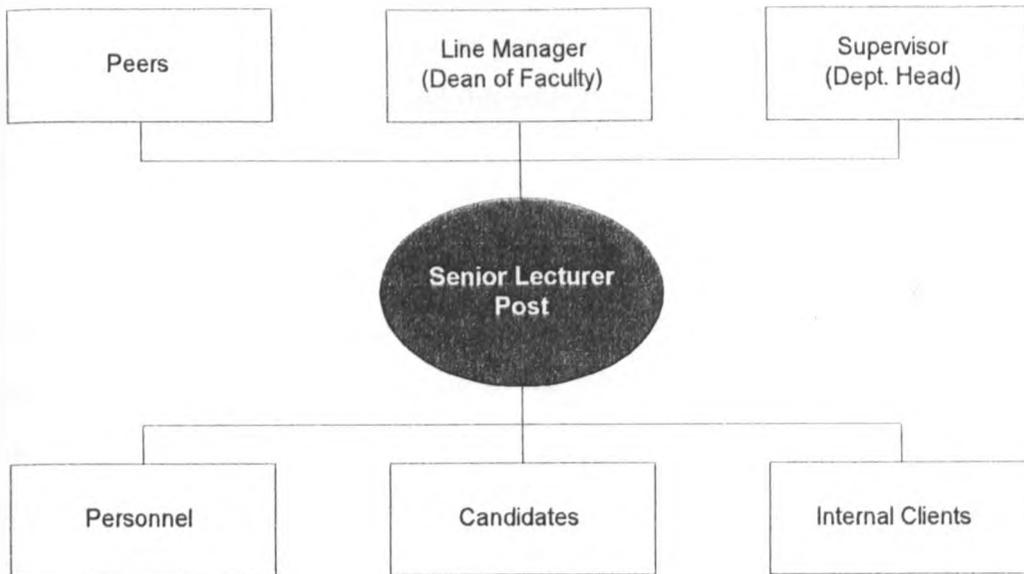
A look at the interview panel composition in the university reveals that effort is made to take care of stake holder's interests. Although the panel composition may vary depending on the position to be filled, it should be



recognised that all appointment committees are standing committees of the University Council and various positions have various stake holders. A stake holder has been defined as *“any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation’s objectives”* (Freeman 1984:46, as quoted by McCourt, 1996). The more the stake holder interests are represented the greater the ownership of the selection process. However, it may not be possible to have all stake holders’ interests represented in the interview but the more pronounced always are. In the case of the University of Nairobi the statues are very clear on who should be included in which appointment committee. Thus for instance an appointment committee for senior lecturer positions will be composed of the following :

- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) - Chairman
- One council representative appointed on behalf of council by council chairman
- Principal of the College
- Dean of the Faculty
- Chairman of Department
- Two senate representatives appointed by chairman of senate
- Secretary

A candidate is expected to meet the interests of the various interest groups represented by the various members if they are to rate him highly as a potential employee. McCourt (1996) advocates the drawing of a stake holder map in order to identify stake holders. (see figure I for stake holder map of a senior lecturer position at the University of Nairobi)

Figure 3. I: Senior Lecturer Post : Stake Holder Map

After Willy McCourt (1996)

Although the university does attempt to conduct the interview in a systematic manner with some form of rating for each candidate, the interview is to a large extent unstructured.

During the interview, members scrutinise all the short listed candidates. They also peruse the CVs; letters of application, certificates and testimonials, reference reports, any publications as well as any thing else that the candidate may present at the interview. For those applicants who may not be physically present for genuine reasons such as the case with overseas candidates, the committee may consider them in absentia. The panel normally peruses the papers of those candidates and makes decisions on the basis of job requirements and the strength of the other candidates who were physically interviewed

The fact that some candidates are considered in absentia while the local ones have to be physically present has led to complaints of unfairness.

The interview is largely conducted in what Hacket (1978) described as frank and friendly manner where effort is made to encourage the candidate to relax and give as much information as possible. The interviewers take turns to pose questions to the candidate and this taking of turns help avoid having a free for all situation

Using the information obtained from the interview, the interviewers are expected to determine the suitability of the candidate for appointment and the entry level of the person in relation to the job requirements. For instance, a candidate who had applied for lecturer position may not measure up to the position but may display potential for academic growth, in which case, the person may be offered a lower position such as Graduate Assistant or Tutorial Fellow but it is made clear that further advancement is subject to attainment of further academic achievements. The candidate may also be advised that he or she is required to divide their time between further study and teaching responsibility.

The terms of service also make it clear that in addition to immediate academic responsibilities, for staff, they are also expected to help develop others and interact with colleagues and hence expected to become part and parcel of the wider university community. However, this is easier said than done.

Although efforts is made for the interview to be orderly and systematic, the interview remains unstructured for there is no standardisation of questioning and little if any standardisation of the rating scale. Additionally, although most of the questions asked are job related and based on available job descriptions, the fact that the university does not conduct job analysis suggests that the said job descriptions are not up to date and may be only focusing on narrow aspects of the job.



3.3 HOW ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION DECISIONS ARE MADE

There are various ways of making decisions. Simon (1989) proposes that decisions can either be programmed or unprogrammed. In this respect, programmed decisions are to do with routine matters while unprogrammed decisions are to do with the unprecedented or the issue involved is of particular difficult such as relocation of business (Ibid).

Being a bureaucratic organisation, the university like many other organisations of its kind, largely operates through the committee system in most of its decision making process. Decision making at the university has been described as an engagement of various interested parties in problem definition and resolutions (Davies, 1985).

Once all the candidates have been interviewed, the evidence collected from all of them plus the supplementary information from reference reports and testimonials is assessed in the light of job requirements. The idea is to attempt to exercise meritocracy. So the panel of interviewers are expected to rank the candidates in order of merit. It should be pointed out here that given that the university is an academic institution, interviewers tend to place a higher premium on academic achievement than on any other attribute. However, if the available research is anything to go by, education is a poor predictor of future performance (Hunter and Hunter, 1984). Once ranking has been done, the panel members reach a general consensus on the candidates to be selected.

It is after the selection exercise has been completed that minutes are prepared and signed by the Chairman of the particular committee. It should be noted here that the minutes are expected to clearly indicate the vacancy against which the appointment is being made; the appointment criteria used, summary of candidates selected as well as justifications why a certain candidate was selected and another one not found appointable. This is important in enhancing transparency and accountability.



However, the whole process is plagued by bureaucratic delay that can occur at any stage over and above the problem of the interview not being based on job analysis and hence not structured

3.4: JUSTIFICATION FOR CURRENT PRACTICE

Universities world-wide, Nairobi included are usually conservative institutions with a tendency to pride themselves more with upholding traditions than flexibility. The University of Nairobi has traditionally acquired its staff through panel interview. Thus the main reason for the current practice can be attributed to the fact that it is part of the university tradition and being conservative, the university has been guided by tradition in as far as recruitment and selection is concerned. Even at this period of transition where staff with new orientations are needed, the university is still using the old job descriptions in advertising for positions.

Secondly, the academic staff, although they are employees of the university and in that respect its workers, do not seem to fit the category of ordinary workers. Not only do the academic staff demand a reasonable degree of independence not enjoyed by ordinary workers, they also actually fight for academic freedom. Thus subjecting them to alternative selection methods such as trainability tests may sometimes not be acceptable as it may appear demeaning.

3.5 APPLICATION OF THE HRM MODEL ON RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION TO UON

Though the dividing line between personnel management and Human Resource Management (HRM) is narrow, the practice at the university seem more oriented towards the traditional personnel management than HRM. The university has for long been operating as a non-profit oriented service entity. Thus its main concern has been to generate and transmit knowledge through teaching and research. Because of its traditional function, the university like



other universities, has been engaged in trying to strike a balance between demands for academic freedom and public accountability (Pratt and Lockwood, 1985). This balancing act between accountability and autonomy distinguish universities from other organisations. Whereas in other organisations, the officers at the top may have clear responsibilities backed by commensurate authority the situation at the university differs for the officers may possess massive responsibility but without commensurate authority. As Pratt and Lockwood (1985:2) observe, "The autonomy, pluralistic nature and the gradualism of universities limit managerial power." Thus the personnel function is often confined to routine issues such as staff selection salary administration and health and safety (Davies, 1985) including such other activities as training and satisfying employee work related needs (Mackay, 1995)

Whereas the university does have respect for its staff, their recruitment has not been tied to the HRM approach of regarding the human resource as a means of gaining competitive advantage. There are two main reasons that can explain this. One, profit-making has not been a primary concern for the university. Two, the tendency has been to seek collaboration especially in research areas rather than competition with other universities. In general, the staff in the university have not been seen in financial terms but in terms of their academic contribution. While the HRM model requires that recruitment and selection of staff be integrated with the overall business strategy, the practice at the university has tended to emphasise the interest of the department first. However, there seem to be a global wind of change blowing across universities. Mackay (1995) observes that in Northern England, universities are being exhorted to become 'market-led' consumer responsive institutions giving value for money and that most universities are willing to consider private sector practices of talking in terms of business. The new thinking also includes seeing the academic staff as resources whose contribution has to be maximised (Ibid.).

The University of Nairobi and indeed all public universities in Kenya seem also to be headed in the same direction. Not only do public universities have to compete for the scarce resources available, they have also been advised by the state to look for ways and means of being self sustaining by engaging in income-generating activities. The changed government policy on university financing was made explicit by the Minister for Education when addressing a workshop for Vice Chancellors on 22nd June 1994.

He pointed out that:

“This is a turning point in the development of our public universities, where they are being called upon to adopt business like -financial management styles. It is also a point in time when universities have to plan ahead about resources expected to be forthcoming from sources other than exchequer”

(as quoted in University Development Plan 1994-2000:115).

So even though in the past the university did not have an HRM approach to management, the new challenges may dictate that it follows the path taken by universities in Northern England and consider adopting the HRM approach to not only recruitment and selection in particular, but to university management in general

3.6: SUMMARY

This chapter has given an overview of the recruitment and selection procedures at the University of Nairobi. It has alluded to the problems of the procedures. The next chapter therefore provides a critical analysis of the procedures in the light of literature. In so doing effort will be made to suggest how the problems analysed can be overcome and how the university can gain by improving the procedures

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES IN THE LIGHT OF LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT PROCEDURES

Whereas on one hand the current procedures have netted in some competent and committed workers for the university, on the other hand they have brought in personnel who have turned out to be more of a liability than assets. What this tells us is that the methods used work sometimes and some times don't. It seems therefore to be a process of hit or miss. The lesson to be learnt from available literature is that there is need to get it right first time and therefore the culture of hit or miss in recruitment is a luxury which cannot be afforded (Plumbley, 1985).

This section therefore analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the existing procedures in the light of the literature review as a prelude to identifying possible remedies. We start with the strengths of the current procedures.

4.1.1: STRENGTHS

(a) *Use of Panel Interviews* : Though there are doubts about the reliability and validity of the interview as a selection method, if available literature is anything to go by, there are no doubts about interview popularity and hence its high acceptance rate by both interviewees and interviewers. Additionally, panel interview composition at the University of Nairobi reflect different stake holder interests. This therefore means that the selection process enjoys wide ownership in the organisation especially in view of the fact that decisions are based on consensus and hence the creation of collective responsibility

(b) Accountability: From the literature, we learn that one of the accusations against interviewers is lack of accountability. However, at the university, accountability is enhanced through the taking of minutes with clear justifications for decisions made to select or not select a particular candidate. Though the taking of minutes may not completely stamp out illegitimate influences over interviewers, it does make them conscious that they will be held accountable for their decisions and therefore encourages them to rationalise their actions.

(c) Guidelines on Minimum Requirements: The current procedures provide guideline on minimum entry requirements for each position. So even if the raters may differ on ranking a candidate, they cannot differ on minimum requirement as guidelines are already provided. However, whereas guidelines are clear on minimum educational qualifications and experience, they are silent on other attributes that may distinguish a good worker from a poor one. The fact that one has the papers and experience needed does not necessarily make him or her an effective worker as evidenced by research findings which indicate that education is among the lowest predictors of job performance (e.g. Hunter and Hunter, 1984)

The system also allows the hiring on a lower position for those candidates who display high potential but do not measure up to the advertised post. For instance, a candidate may be offered Tutorial Fellow position instead of the advertised lecturer post but the offer is made as a training grade where further progress is subject to attainment of higher qualifications. This tendency prevents the university from losing a potentially good worker to another organisation and saves it the trouble of starting the recruitment process afresh.

However, despite the strengths of the process, it has numerous weaknesses. We will therefore now look at the weaknesses of the procedures.

4.1.2: WEAKNESSES

(a) Complex Bureaucratic Delay: One of the main accusations against the current practice is that of delay which ranges from the time a request to fill a position is made to the time of offer of appointment. Whereas available literature shows that delay can harm the organisation in such ways as negative image creation and loss of candidates to other employers (e.g. Courtis, 1989), experience has shown that filling a position at the university usually takes several months. (see Table I for examples of delay at the College of Education and External Studies). Whether there are genuine causes for the delay (as is the case sometimes) or not, the net effect is the same: negative image creation and the likely chance of losing good employees to another organisation. The problem of delay therefore needs to be addressed if the twin concepts of efficiency and effectiveness are to be realised.

Table 4.1: Time span on Recruitment at CEES

Position Advertised	Year	Time From Advert to Interview (Weeks)	Time From Interview to Appointment (Weeks)	Total time (Weeks)	Approving Authority
Secretary	1988	8	2	10	Principal
Clerk	1989	20	3	23	Principal
Admin./Snr. Assistant	1989	8	2	10	Principal
Technical	1989	4	12	16	Principal
Secretary	1989	36	2	38	Principal
Technician	1990	64	16	80	DVC
Lecturer	1991	16	4	20	DVC
Lecturer	1991	16	8	24	DVC
Lecturer	1992	12	8	20	DVC
Lecturer	1992	8	8	16	DVC
Admin./Snr Admin. Assistant	1992	8	8	16	DVC
Messenger*	1992	-	4	4	principal
Lecturer*	1992	-	32	32	DVC
Secretary	1992	16	20	36	DVC

Key : DVC - Deputy Vice Chancellor

* Review Cases - hence not advertised

CEES - College of Education and External Studies

SOURCE : MUNYOKI J.M. (1992) - (unpublished with modification)

(b) Lack of Job Analysis

There is a general consensus that job analysis is a prerequisite to a good recruitment and selection processes. The rationale behind this general belief is that job analysis provides information to do with job content and requirements. We learn from the literature that this information is critical as it helps in the formulation of job description and person specification which in turn help in the formulation of the criteria used at every point of the recruitment and selection processes. Whereas the literature is clear on the benefits of job analysis, we however note that the university does not use it as a basis for recruitment and selection. Nevertheless, it does use job descriptions, person specifications which are based on past records and tradition rather than an actual job analysis. The lack of job analysis therefore denies the university valuable information that could raise the standards of interviewing. As Pearn and Kandola (1993:3) rightly advice :

“It is better to solve problems on the basis of data and evidence rather than speculation or by reliance solely on things that have worked in the past”

The importance of this advice is reinforced by the fact that jobs are not static even if some may take longer to change than others. The lack of job analysis therefore means that the whole process of recruitment and selection is based on inadequate if not largely out of date information.

(c) Inappropriate Scheduling of Candidates

As a tradition, the university asks short listed candidates to report at the same time for interview regardless of the number to be interviewed. Whereas it is rare for a candidate to be late it is equally rare for the interviews to start on time. Even when the interviewers arrive on scheduled time, they normally spend around half an hour agreeing on interview formalities and procedures. Candidates are left waiting for their turns and usually have no idea whether they are next or last. Experience has shown that a candidate who reported at 8.30



a.m. may be interviewed at 3.00 p.m. Whether that candidate can perform as well as the candidate who was interviewed in the morning is subject to debate. What is clear however, is that the problem of waiting could have been avoided or minimised through appropriate scheduling of interview time for each candidate.

(d) Interviewers not Trained

As recognised elsewhere in this study, the majority of the panel members are academic staff. Whereas it is recognised that they are professionals in their respective areas of specialisation, it is also recognised that majority of them have little or no qualifications in personnel matters. However, some of them do gain substantial experience by virtue of their responsibilities. Available evidence indicates that the problem of untrained interviewers is common to organisations (e.g. Plumbley, 1985). However, this is not a consolation since two wrongs do not make a right. If available literature is anything to go by, then it means that interviewers at the university may experience great difficulties in rating applicants. Training is supposed to enable interviewers to operate within the same frame of reference (Cook, 1993, Armstrong, 1995, Robbins, 1982). So, although the interviewers at the university are expected to give objective rating for each candidate, their lack of training increases the possibilities of coming up with different ratings. Given that university committee decisions are based on consensus, the likelihood of, to use Freeman's terminology, 'those affected by us' seeking cues from those who affect us' cannot be ruled out.

(e) Use of Unstructured Interview

The interview process as is conducted at the university is largely unstructured. Yet research evidence indicate that the more unstructured the interview is the less its validity coefficient (e.g. Huffcutt and Arthur, 1994, Conway et al, 1995). The fact that the university is using unstructured interview therefore means that it is relying on a selection method whose predictive validity is among the lowest.

Although panel members do generally agree on a broad format to follow, there is lack of standardisation of questions asked, response ratings and so on which would enhance the probability of interviewers working within same frame of reference. If one adds the fact that the interviewers are not trained in this area, then one would be safe to conclude that the likelihood of university interviews being good predictors of subsequent job performance is hampered by these limitations. The greatest problem however, is relying on the interview alone in making selection decisions.

(f) Emphasis on Educational and academic Achievements

The university has a tendency to place a higher premium on educational and academic qualifications than on other attributes. Yet, research evidence show education and academic achievement to be among the lowest predictors of subsequent job performance since they have validity coefficients of 0.10 and 0.11 respectively (Hunter and Hunter, 1984).

It is, however, logical that the university being an academic institution itself, be seen to recognise academic achievements by hiring the most educated candidate. But given that a lecturer's responsibilities are not confined to teaching alone and therefore can be called upon to perform other duties, it would therefore be important that other attributes such as leadership and interpersonal skills be given adequate weighing. At the moment those other attributes that are not directly related to teaching are not given much consideration in spite of the fact that they may make the difference between a good lecturer and a poor one.

(g) Selection Focused on Immediate Job Requirements

Though the advertisements sent out and the terms of service do imply that a successful candidate is expected to play a greater role than just teaching, the selection method is often more focused on meeting the immediate needs of the concerned department. Given that it is from the teaching lot that the university gets its top policy makers it is therefore necessary that selection not be

confined to meeting the parochial needs of the department but put the wider interests of the university into consideration.

(h) Lack of systematic Induction

Whereas in comparison to other staff academic staff members are relatively better off when it comes to induction since they meet the chairman who provides a course outline, the induction seems to end with assignment of duties. Although in theory there is need for systematic induction to help the new employee settle down the fastest possible, the reality is different when it comes to the university. The new comers are rarely introduced to the staff outside their department and in most cases the learning they get about their responsibilities and the organisation is through the system of 'sitting by Nellie'.

SUMMARY

This section has tried to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the current recruitment and selection procedures at the university. The next section discusses some of the ways of overcoming the weakness that plague the present procedures. However, although a diversity of problems have been highlighted, the discussion will be more confined to the main concerns of this dissertation

4.2 HOW TO OVERCOME THE WEAKNESSES

The literature on recruitment and selection reveal a number of options that can be taken to address the kind of problems associated with the procedures being used by the university. Though most may not be applicable, some of them are viable. This section therefore aims at analysing the options that could be considered.

a) Job Analysis

Given that jobs are not static (McCourt, 1995/96 handout on Job Analysis) the introduction of job analysis to the university would enhance its

efforts of getting upto date information in respect of job content and requirements. This would help avoid relying on inadequate information that can lead to narrowly defined job requirements which may result in ineffective recruitment (Scarpello, 1988).

As already recognised in the literature, job analysis for recruitment purposes helps in the formulation of job description and person specifications (e.g. Pearn and Kandola, 1993). It can therefore help the organisation through the provision of reliable information that can be used to formulate objective criteria to be used at all stages of the recruitment and selection process. The advantage of this is that it helps the interviewers in knowing what to look for and therefore concentrate on skills, knowledge and ability rather than assessing personal characteristics. Additionally, basing an interview on job analysis assist interviewers in focusing more clearly on relevant information which is easier to rate and therefore less susceptible to systematic error across ratings (Conway et al, 1995).

Although job analysis can be expensive, time consuming and require specialists, its introduction in the university would improve the situation in several ways. One, it would help improve the rating of candidates through provision of adequate and up to date job related information. This would in turn raise the predictive validity of the interview. Two, it would help interviewers avoid making decisions based on impressions and speculation. Three, the setting of objective criteria through information provided by job analysis would enhance accountability which is critical for a public organisation. Four, job analysis helps in the process of matching people to jobs.

(b) Use of Assessment Centres

The university relies on the interview as the only basis of selection. Yet literature indicates that there are various attributes that the interview cannot assess (Smith et al, 1989). Given that academic staff are not confined to

teaching duties alone, it implies that assessing them on their academic capability alone as is the case at present is not adequate. They need to be assessed on other attributes such as leadership, planning and organising which are not covered by interview.

The introduction of assessment centres would enhance the selection process since they provide opportunities to study individuals operating in a group and allows aspects of individuals to be studied which could not be possible in an interview (Cook, 1993). These opportunities therefore may help in revealing the strengths or weaknesses of a candidate. Additionally, the use of various methods to assess various attributes of an applicant help reduce bias which is one of the main problems of interview. However, assessment centres pose the challenge of time consumption, high cost and need for skilled organisation (Woodruffe, 1993).

Although Hodgson (1987) argues that the cost of assessment centre is justifiable compared to the cost of poor hiring, the university may not be in a financial position to allow it to run a centre. However, it can borrow some of the AC methods and incorporate them into the interview.

(c) Use of Biodata

Like assessment centres, biodata have a high predictive validity not only in predicting future productivity but most other criteria. They are intended to provide detailed life-history information of an applicant and are based on the assumption that an individual will do in the future what he has done, under similar circumstances in the past (Plumbley and Williams, 1981).

Since a main problem with interviews at the university as elsewhere is predicting future performance, and biodata have been found to have a high predictive validity as evidenced by research findings of Reilly and Chao (1982) and Hunter and Hunter (1984), they can therefore improve the interview by



providing an additional source of information. The fact that biodata are paper and pencil makes them cheaper than other tests (Cook, 1993) and therefore easier to introduce at the university.

If the argument that a person's future behaviour is best predicted by past behaviour is correct, then the introduction of biodata at the university will help interviewers have a better understanding of applicants and therefore have a basis for making better selection decisions.

(d) Use of Psychological tests

Since psychological tests are systematic, standardised and aimed at evoking responses which can be scored, their use can improve the selection process in several ways. One, they enable the assessor to cover all relevant aspects of a characteristic in a systematic manner as opposed to a situation in an interview where questions may be asked in an ad hoc way. Two, tests may increase fairness in the selection since the applicants are given equal opportunities. Not only are candidates asked the same type of questions or assigned similar tasks, they also operate in similar settings and their responses are assessed in an identical manner (Smith and Robertson, 1993). Since candidates undergo identical experiences and are assessed in a similar method, the selection decisions are therefore likely to be more objective and have higher predictive validity.

However, the available literature indicates that psychological tests are surrounded by controversy and their validity vary from one test to another (cf. ability test validity of 0.53 and 0.15 for personality questionnaires according to Hunter and Hunter, (1984) and Schmit et al, (1984) respectively). So whereas ability tests are appropriate to use, personality questionnaires are not.

Apart from being controversial and having diverse validity coefficients tests are said to be expensive and also complicated. The fact that they are

expensive and require skilled personnel to administer them may therefore militate against their use at the University of Nairobi in spite of the fact that they can improve the predictive validity of the selection process. However, the use of cognitive ability test is worth considering.

(e) Training Interviewers

Although research findings on the effect of training interviewers has produced mixed results (Cook, 1993), the general consensus is that training interviewers does help improve interviews. Since training helps interviewers know what things to look for, what type of questions to ask, how to listen and to rate the candidates it therefore helps them to operate within the same frame of reference.

So if the university trained its interviewers, the selection process would improve through better informed decision making. This is important for the university not only because of the necessity to be seen to be fair to all applicants but also because better rating method will lead to better selection decisions

(f) Structuring Interviews

If statistical evidence is anything to go by, then there is enough research evidence to show that interviews can be improved by structuring them. For instance, McDaniel et al (1994) found highly structured interview had validity coefficient of .30. Conway's et al (1995) findings of 0.67, 0.56 and 0.34 validity coefficients for highly structured, moderately structured and low structured interviews respectively, also seem to confirm the difference between structured and unstructured interviews in terms of their predictive validity.

The use of structured interviews, can for one help the interview process to be conducted in a systematic manner which is beneficial to both interviewers and candidates. Secondly, since structured interviews are based on thorough job analysis, they help the interviewer in focusing on information that is relevant to

the job. Thirdly, given that structuring interviews involves standardisation of questions and response rating among others, it means that the candidates are put under the same conditions and asked identical questions and therefore gives them equal opportunities. Additionally it raises the objectivity of ratings and therefore likely to result in better predictions.

So the introduction of structured interviews in the university can improve the selection process through standardisation of questions and rating methods which may enable interviewers operate within the same frame of reference and therefore make better selection decisions.

However there is need for the university to intermarry the various forms of structured interviews such as situational and criterion-referenced interview depending on the attributes being assessed.

Having discussed some of the main ways in which the recruitment and selection method can be improved, we now wish to show why it is necessary for the university to modify and improve the procedures. The next section therefore looks at the reasons for change and the benefits to be gained from the change

4.3 RATIONALE FOR MODIFICATIONS (REASONS AND BENEFITS)

As already recognised in this dissertation, universities world-wide are normally conservative with a tendency to pride themselves in upholding their traditions. Thus if any modification is to occur in their operations, it can only be accepted if it is based on sound grounds. This section therefore attempts to justify the need for the university to consider modifying the existing recruitment and selection procedures. We will therefore look at some of the reasons and benefits of modification.

4.3.1: REASONS

(a) *Changed Economic Conditions*

For almost a generation, the University of Nairobi has operated as a non-profit oriented service entity with a primary concern for academic excellence. With financial needs being met by the state and donors, the university survival was assured regardless of its performance. However, if the recent trends are anything to go by, life in Canaan for the university seems to have come to an end. Not only are there clear symptoms of donor fatigue as evidenced by reduced donor support but also over the last decade, the university has continued to receive less financial allocation from the government than estimated expenditure. While it may not be easy to explain the behaviour of the donors, the government action may largely be attributed to its determination to reduce the education budget from 37% to 30% of the national budget.

Of late, the university has not only experienced shortfall in estimated expenditure but also in the approved estimates. According to the University of Nairobi Development Plan (1994-2000), the net effect of the shortfall both in estimated expenditure and under provision on approved estimates has been progressive accumulation of budget deficits. Thus the deficits have risen from K£1.2M in 1990/91 to K£5.5M in 1991/92 and by 1992/93 financial year the university had an accumulated deficit of K£12.7M. And the death knell for the milk and honey from the state was sounded by the Minister for Education when he announced that *“time has come to seriously take account of the universities potential to generate income”* (Ibid. 115). There is therefore need for public universities to diversify their activities to include income generation

The university is therefore in a transition stage from non-income generating service entity to an income generating if not self-sustaining organisation. If the university is to acquire the staff needed to meet the new challenges, it has to start by improving its recruitment and selection procedures.

(b) Competition

The University of Nairobi was for a long time the only university in the country. However, the situation has changed and the university has to compete for scarce resources with four other public universities not to mention university colleges. Additionally, there are numerous private universities and institutions of higher learning all of which add to the competition especially for staff.

4.3.2: BENEFITS OF MODIFICATION

(a) Higher Productivity and Continued Growth

If the argument that an organisation's performance depends on the calibre of its workforce is correct (e.g. Plumbley, 1985) then the use of good selection methods will help in acquisition of the right calibre of people capable of helping the university raise its productivity.

(b) Efficiency and Effectiveness

Using better recruitment and selection methods may contribute to the university efforts to realising the twin goals of efficiency and effectiveness which are a prerequisite to organisational success. Since improved selection methods are likely to help the university net in good workers, it is likely to help in better resource use and hence greater efficiency.

(c) Acquisition of the Right People for the Right Jobs

As already recognised, recruitment is largely a matching process where effort is made to match people to jobs. This therefore means that the use of appropriate selection methods will help in getting the right people for the right jobs.

In addition, more effort placed on screening potential at entry means that less emphasis may be placed on such areas as training and socialisation or on monitoring once they have taken up the offers (Cohen and Pfeffer, 1986)

**(d) Reduced Turnover**

Good recruitment and selection methods are likely to net in workers who can fit in the organisation. If they cannot fit the organisation is likely to experience problems of low morale and absenteeism. At other times, frustrated workers are likely to 'vote with their feet'.

(e) Profitable Recruitment

Improved recruitment and selection methods may help the university net in the new type of academic needed. Whereas in the past the university may have been contented to acquire a dedicated scholar, the present situation demands that the university seeks people not only capable of academic excellence but also have the entrepreneurial skills to generate income that is necessary for organisational survival.

(f) Positive Corporate Image

If the university is associated with best practice in its operations, recruitment and selection included, it is likely to enhance a positive corporate image.

4.4: SUMMARY

This chapter has analysed the recruitment and selection procedures of the University of Nairobi in the light of literature review. Effort has been made not only to suggest the various options to overcome some of the highlighted weaknesses but also a rationale has been made to show why the procedures should be improved. The next chapter therefore provides some of the recommendations which the writer feels could help improve the procedures.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES AND CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY

As has already been acknowledged earlier, the main concern of the study is the improvement of the recruitment and selection of academic staff at the University of Nairobi

There are a number of points that have emerged in the course of the study which need highlighting. The first is the recognition that recruitment and selection is an indispensable activity for any organisation as it deals with the most important of all assets; the human resource, and therefore the proficiency and precision with which it is conducted is critical to organisational success. As such, a proper recruitment and selection system should not only be aimed at obtaining the right quantity of required people but also the right quality.

Secondly, it has also been found that the dependence on the interview as the only method of selection, as is the case at Nairobi, is problematic in view of the inherent difficulties associated with interviews especially their unreliability as predictors of subsequent job performance.

A good selection method not only has a reasonable predictive value but should also be fair and objective and be seen to be so by all concerned parties

Thirdly, the study has also covered certain interventions that can help improve the validity value of the interviews. These include the use of thorough job analysis, training interviewers and structuring interviews. Additionally, the weaknesses of the selection process could be overcome by supplementing the interview with other selection methods. These include psychological tests,

Assessment Centres, biodata, work sample and group selection. However, these interventions and methods have also been found not to be immune to some problems. Like interviews they can be prone to abuse and some like personality tests have been found to have low validity. They are also expensive in terms of money and time and some require trained specialists to conduct them. However, in view of their higher predictive value some have been identified as viable options that can be utilised to improve the recruitment and selection procedures at the university.

Having highlighted some of the main points covered in the study, we now wish to make some recommendations to be considered by the university. Whereas it is recognised that the recommendations will not be a panacea to all the problems that ail the recruitment and selection procedures, it is the sincere belief of the writer that if they are implemented, they will contribute to the improvement of the process by which the university gets its most valued resource.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the discussion and findings of the dissertation, the following recommendations are proposed

5.2.1 Job Analysis

Though selection methods may differ in approach and content, it is clear that they have one thing in common: they all need to be based on adequate, relevant and up to date information about the job to be filled if the outcomes are to be worth the effort. Given that selection is primarily an attempt to get the right person for the right job, it is only logical that the process be based on adequate and up to date information about the job and this can be done through a thorough job analysis. As we have already seen, a thorough job analysis helps to define the job in terms of skills required, performance standards, responsibilities, relationship to other jobs, decision making authority and so on

It is this information that is in turn used for job description, person specification, advertising and setting criteria for short listing and selection which would help interviews operate within the same frame of reference. This in turn helps the interviewers know what to look for and what to assess and therefore increase the chances of making better selection decisions.

It is therefore important that the university be conducting thorough job analysis if the recruitment and selection process is to be improved. Relying on old job descriptions may not be adequate especially now when the university is in a transition stage.

It is proposed that the university assigns some specific officers or appropriate unit the duty of conducting job analysis. Such officers could be in the Recruitment and Training section or from the Planning Division. Alternatively, the university could take advantage of the fact that it has a critical mass of consciousness in the form of the academic staff who can be persuaded to incorporate job analysis into their research activities

5.2.2 Training Interviewers

As already recognised, training interviewers helps them to know what things to look for, how to listen, how to ask questions and how to evaluate responses. Additionally, it helps to standardise ratings and therefore enables the interviewers to operate within the same wave length. In the process rating errors and personal biases are likely to be reduced as interviewers will be trained to focus on attributes relevant to the job requirements and to distinguish between essential and desirable qualities and characteristics. The net effect is among others, an increased chance of making better selection decisions. It is therefore important that the university be training all those officers who are involved in interviews. Such people as heads of department who are charged with the responsibility of designing job description and person specification and who also

make crucial decisions in short listing and selection need to be among the first to be trained

Training is also important as a way of harmonising the selection process across the university. Although most of the services are decentralised, it is crucial that some activities like recruitment and selection remain harmonised not only for purposes of maintaining standards but also to ensure fairness for university employees regardless of the college or faculty they come from

The university should arrange to train interviewers through workshops. Due to resource and time constraints, it is important that the training be conducted on a cascading basis. Secondly the training workshops should be short but intensive. Thus the university should consider organising three-day workshops where those involved in interviews could be trained on such areas as preparation of job description and person specifications and also how to use them in the selection process. They should also be trained on how to conduct training including interview briefings. Additionally, as an effort to enhance interviewer training, a code of practice for staff selection should be prepared whose format should be used by all the interviewers. The importance of the code of practice is not only in harmonising the selection process but also in providing a ready guide to be followed by all interviewers. However, the code of practice should be updated to ensure it continues to meet the changing needs of the organisation

5.2.3 Moderately Structured Interviews

Structured interviews have an obvious appeal as they imply order, fairness and objectivity. This is because they involve conducting the interview process in a systematic manner where candidates are asked more or less identical questions, their responses rated against set job-related criteria and where the focus of the interviewer is on information relevant to the job rather than the person

Because they are systematic, involve standardisation of questions, response rating and focused on information relevant to the job, they are therefore less prone to interviewer biases. It is therefore proposed that the university introduces moderately structured interviews as part of the selection process. Not only are structured interviews fair to candidates because they go through identical experience but also because structured interviews have been found to have a high predictive validity (e.g. Huffcutt and Arthur, 1994; Conway et al, 1995).

However, highly structured interview may be too mechanical and be more or less like a test and hence deny the interview the flexibility which is part of its strength. For that reason therefore, it is recommended that the university uses semi structured/moderately structured interviews. Semi structured interviews not only allow the process to be conducted in a systematic manner but also will allow flexibility while at the same time enhancing higher predictive validity.

5.2.4 Incorporating some Assessment Centre Techniques into the Interview

Since an assessment centre is a technique that combines work samples, psychological tests and interviews into an integrated evaluation package it would therefore seem to be the ideal selection method. It not only has a high validity co-efficient, it also covers more than the interview or any other single selection method can cover. However, the world we live in is not ideal. It is a world characterised by shortages in skills, finance and time all of which are a prerequisite for a successful assessment centre. No matter how beneficial the assessment centre can be, at the moment the University of Nairobi is not in a position to conduct a successful assessment centre due to the constraints stipulated above. Be that as it may, it can incorporate some of the techniques used in the assessment centres into the interview. For instance, when interviewing a candidate for lecturer position, the candidate can be asked to give a presentation and the presentation can be assessed. This would therefore

provide a kind of ability test. Additionally, the questions asked can be tailored in such a way that they can assess some of the attributes tested in assessment centres.

Decision Process Needed

The proposed recommendations involve policy changes. For them to be translated into reality they need to be accepted by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) and have the blessings of both the University Senate and University Council for them to become part of the university policies. Whereas the initiative should originate from the DVC's (Academic) office, there is need for collaboration with the DVC (Administration and Finance) and other senior officers of the university not only for resources but also as a strategy for enhancing ownership and therefore reducing the level of resistance to change.

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

Having attempted to offer recommendations on ways of improving the current recruitment and selection process it is felt appropriate to highlight some issues to be considered as they can hinder the implementation of the suggested recommendations. Whereas the highlighting of the issues is in no way intended to discourage implementation of the recommendations, it is however intended to facilitate an understanding and appreciation of the challenges ahead. We therefore next look at the constraints and thereafter look at ways of overcoming the identified constraints.

5.3.1 Constraints

Costs

It is envisaged that the introduction and implementation of the proposed innovations will have substantial cost implications for the university in terms of extra financial costs, time and the supervision all of which are needed to ensure the success of the undertaking.

For instance, finance will be required to train interviewers, to prepare structured interviews, to conduct job analysis and so on. This therefore creates a need for the university to set priorities as it may not be possible to do everything simultaneously. If changes are introduced on an incremental basis then there may be opportunities for review, creation of better understanding of the process and innovations being introduced and hence better chance for success since the organisation will be moving at a pace it can control and afford.

Given the cost constraints, it is advisable that the university should focus on low cost options such as conducting training on a cascade basis and briefing interviewers thoroughly before any interview is conducted. Additionally, production of a code of practice on recruitment and selection would be a cost effective way of improving the selection process. However, there is need for monitoring to ensure that all interviewers adhere to the code.

Expertise

Apart from the cost implications, the innovations proposed require the services of professionals in administration, training, and even psychology among others. These are necessary if a proper and thorough job analysis has to be conducted and if proper structuring of the interview has to be done, with clear guidelines on questions to be asked as well as the rating procedures.

But perhaps more urgently, the university will require the services of professionals to conduct training for interviewers. However, as recognised elsewhere, the training may be done on a cascade basis. This should be a regular activity not only because of the numbers involved considering the size of the university but also because interviewers keep changing depending on the position to be filled and its location. For instance, an interview panel for a lecturer position in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences will be composed of different members from a similar panel at the College of Education and external Studies.



Resistance to Change:

Given the fact that the proposed recommendations will involve a departure from the traditional way of conducting the recruitment and selection process, it is envisaged that there will be a considerable amount of resistance to change. As already recognised elsewhere, universities, Nairobi included, are conservative institutions with a tendency to go by past practice. It is therefore envisaged that there will be reluctance to break with the established procedures for the sake of methods, which in the eyes of the organisation, have not been tried. The preference of the 'devil we know over the devil we don't know' may carry the day especially if those entrusted with implementing changes feel that the innovations are too costly or too complicated to introduce.

Additionally, the fear of the unknown as well as the fear of loss of status and the likelihood of skills redundancy may militate against the acceptance of the innovations regardless of their implied benefits to the organisation's recruitment and selection procedures.

Kotter and Schlesinger's (1979) model on change provide four main reasons why people resist change; fear of losing something of value, lack of understanding of the change and its implications, a belief that change means more costs than benefits to themselves and the organisation and limited tolerance for change.

Another explanation for resistance to change is provided by the 'Big Three' model of change formulated by Kanter et al (1992). According to this model, resistance to major organisational change may be largely due to the disjunction between change strategists and implementors on one hand and change recipients on the other because of inherent differences in perspectives between the two groups. So even though it is important to include recipients among the strategists and implementors of change, Kanter et al feel that this may be counteractive since, as they put it, much resistance to change occurs because



recipients bring their own interests, goals and group membership to the change table (Ibid.)

The Kotter and Schlesinger model provides six approaches to overcome resistance. First is through education and communication which help people see the need for and logic of change. The second involves the participation of the potential resisters in the design and implementation of change since participation enhances commitment.

The third involves facilitation and support to change recipients especially where the basis of resistance is fear and anxiety. The support from management in this case helps the individuals to adjust. The fourth approach involves negotiation and agreement especially where change recipients are likely to lose out but have the power to resist the changes.

Fifth, resistance may be overcome through co-operation or manipulation of individuals or groups through such strategies as giving the individual or the group leader a desirable role in the design or implementation of change. However, there is a danger that those co-opted may not work in the best interest of the organisation (Ibid).

The sixth approach involves the use of explicit or implicit coercion. The strategy involves intimidating people into accepting change. They may either be threatened with loss of jobs, denial of promotion or actually sacking them. However, the strategy may be counter productive but if there are no other working options the manager may use it.

The choice of strategy would be dictated by the situation an organisation finds itself in.

5.3.2 How to Overcome the Constraints

Having looked at the constraints implementation of the proposed innovations, we constraints could be overcome.

Effective Communication

As already recognised, resistance to change is mainly based on the unknown. Change is therefore associated with uncertainty. If this argument is correct, then it means that efforts aimed at uncertainty reduction should precede the introduction of any innovations. Such efforts include effective communication systems that create awareness amongst the concerned on what is being introduced, how it will be introduced, why and, perhaps the most appealing of all, how the organisation and those within it stand to gain through the changes. Given that change is inevitable, it is critical that those in the organisation learn not only to anticipate change but also to initiate and exploit it for organisational survival if not development. Communication creates better understanding which in turn makes people more open to suggestions. Effective communication therefore will help in reducing resistance to change.

Positive Attitude

For any form of change to succeed the recipients of change need to have a positive outlook. An organisation may have the human and financial resources required to implement changes but if the proposed changes are not attractive, then their chances of being implemented are limited. By ensuring that there is a positive attitude towards proposed changes, one therefore increases the chances of the changes being accepted and implemented.

The Support of Top Management

The recommendations proposed involve modification of university policy and practices in relation to recruitment and selection. At the university, just like in any other organisation, policy making is a prerogative of the top management.

Not only does the top management formulate policies, it also sets the pace to be followed by all those within the organisation and determines the allocation and distribution of resources.

The support of the top management therefore will enhance the successful implementation of the proposed innovations. It should be mentioned here that top management support is the single most important factor for any innovation to succeed for without it, the proposed changes cannot become part of the university policy and practice. Additionally, top management support will involve willingness to provide the resources needed to translate the proposed innovations into reality.

Utilisation of University Personnel

Unlike other organisations, the university enjoys certain advantages which if fully exploited, could help in overcoming the constraints highlighted above. For instance, the university is not only a research institution, it is also charged with the responsibility of training the highest level human resource. So it has most of the facilities and personnel required both of which could be used to conduct research with a view to collect information for job analysis, structured interviews and so on. Additionally, the academic staff who are specialists in personnel matters can be used as internal consultant to train university officers on how to conduct interviews and related matters.

Although the use of university staff as internal consultants will still cost the university a considerable amount of money, the cost is likely to be far much lower than what would be charged by external consultants. Additionally, the academic staff are familiar with the way the university runs and therefore more likely to provide training which is more focused to the university needs. Also, given that the academic staff have a stake in the university progress, they are likely to be more committed in their consultancy than external consultants.

Piece-meal Implementation

It should be pointed out here that considering the position the university is in, it would take a zealot to advocate that all the recommendations be implemented at a go. As already recognised, implementation of the proposed innovations require finance, personnel and time. Time will be needed not only to collect information for job analysis and so on but also for attitude change. To overcome some of the constraints therefore, it is suggested that the innovations be introduced in bits. This can be done in terms of priority areas or alternatively start with what is easiest and most affordable to implement. For instance, it may be found that the university can start by training interviewers through workshops and seminars before engaging in the more involving activities of conducting a job analysis.

The use of piece-meal implementation method is likely not only to enable the university move at its own pace but also provide opportunity for review or redefining of strategies depending on the situation.

Having looked at some of the ways of overcoming the constraints we wish to draw conclusions by tying up what has been covered by the study

5.4 CONCLUSION

In an effort to identify ways of improving the recruitment and selection methods at the University of Nairobi, this dissertation has discussed many other related issues. Thus the problems of the interview as well as the principles of a good selection method have been discussed. In addition methods of improving the validity value of interviews as advocated in the recruitment and selection literature have been examined. Such methods include the use of thorough job analysis and interviewer training. Additionally, alternative selection methods that could be used to supplement the interview have also been examined. Such methods include assessment centres, group exercises, psychological tests and work samples. Though it is recognised that each has its own weaknesses, their

relatively high predictive value make them appealing. However, the fact that they are associated with high cost and time consumption, plus the fact that they require skilled personnel to organise and administer them may militate against their easy adoption by the university. Be that as it may, effort has been made to show how some of them could be implemented at the university in order to raise the predictive value of the selection process.

Since the current trend in organisational management is the adoption of the HRM approach, the HRM model on recruitment and selection has been examined and possibility of its application to the University of Nairobi discussed. The study has also looked at the current recruitment and selection procedures at the university as a prelude to their analysis in the light of the literature review. In the process, a justification for the current practice was provided.

The analysis section has examined the strengths and weaknesses of the university procedures and possible ways of overcoming the identified weaknesses are analysed. Since the methods suggested imply change in the procedures used, a rationale indicating the reasons and benefits to be gained from modification is provided. It is realised that the university is in a transition stage and the writer is of the view that the new challenges require new management strategies which include the review of how the organisation acquires its most valuable asset – the human resource.

The recommendations made include use of thorough job analysis, interviewer training and incorporating some assessment centre techniques into the interview. Although it is recognised that their adoption may not be smooth sailing as there are a number of implementation issues, it is also recognised that their success will largely depend on the willingness of the university to learn and develop, and to monitor, review and evaluate its procedures. No innovation, no matter how viable, can succeed in an organisation if that organisation is not willing to try it out.

For recruitment and selection processes to succeed and therefore contribute to organisational effectiveness, there is need for a strategic focus, support of top management, appreciation of the language of competence and a

firm link between the process and other human resource strategies. The fact that no selection method is perfect should not be an excuse for not trying out new methods. Rather, it should be a justification to keep on searching and trying out methods that seem more viable than what an organisation is currently using as a way of avoiding repeating mistakes done in the past.

As already recognised, making a good recruitment is an expensive affair : a wrong recruitment is an even more expensive one. Whichever method the organisation is to use, there are some urgent problems that need to be addressed. These are to do with bureaucratic delay in the selection process and lack of systematic induction. No matter how effective a selection process is in netting the right person, the problem of delay will always reflect badly on the organisation. Closely related to this is the problem of induction. As pointed out earlier, the induction at the university is neither co-ordinated nor systematic. Yet there is a general belief that it is during the first days and weeks that there is the greatest opportunity to win over an employee's loyalty, stimulate his interest and get him or her started to a satisfactory work pattern (Government Report, 1972). Thus if the university wishes to increase employee commitment and reduce the chances of their voting with their feet, it has among other things, to address the problems associated with induction and orientation.

Lastly but not least, if in general organisations have reasons to engage in best practice in recruitment and selection then universities in particular, by their very nature, have greater reasons to do so. This is not only due to the need for greater efficiency and effectiveness but also for credibility. Universities are entrusted with training top managers for the other organisations. This therefore implies that they have an obligation to be engaged in best practice in recruitment and selection. So the universities, Nairobi included, should not only be seen to be teaching best practice but also engaged in best practice in all their activities. In the absence of that they risk being accused of preaching water and drinking wine.

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Appendix 1: Alec Roger's Seven -Point Plan of analysing requirements

- 1. Physical make-up** -health, physique, appearance bearing and speech
- 2. Attainments** - education, qualifications, experience
- 3. General intelligence** - fundamental intellectual capacity
- 4. Special aptitudes**- mechanical, manual dexterity, facility in the use of words or figures
- 5. Interests**- intellectual, practical, constructional, physically active, social artistic
- 6. Disposition** - acceptability, influence over others, steadiness, dependability, self- reliance
- 7. Circumstances**- domestic circumstances, occupation of family

Source: Armstrong, M. (1995)

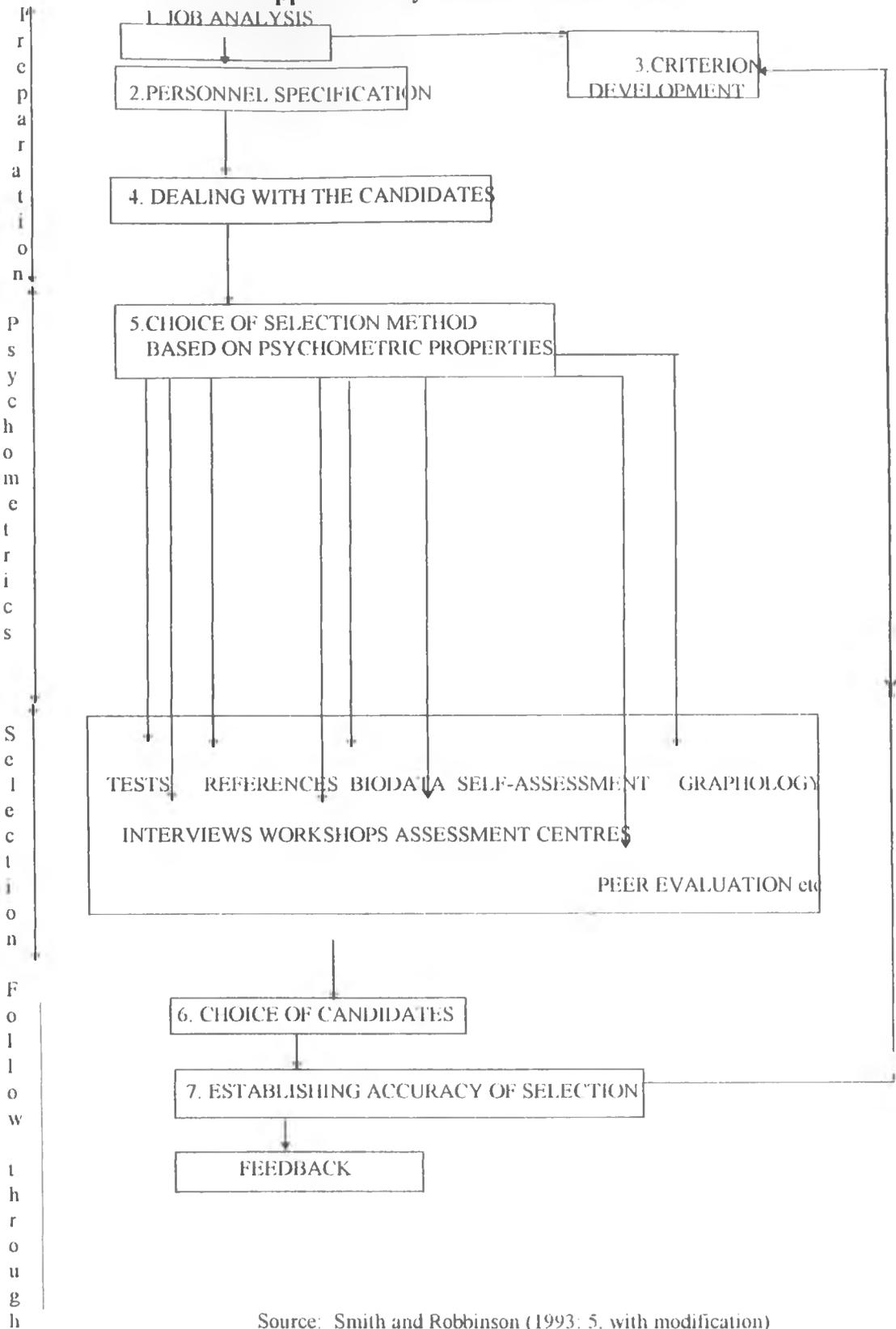


Appendix 2: Munro -Fraser's Five-fold Grading System

1. **Impact on others** -physical make-up, appearance, speech and manner
2. **Acquired qualifications**- education, vocational training, work experience
3. **Innate abilities** - natural quickness of comprehension and aptitude for learning
4. **Motivation** - the kinds of goals set by the individual , his or her consistency and determination in following them up, and success in achieving them
5. **Adjustment** - emotional stability, ability to stand up to stress and ability to get along with people

Source: Armstrong, M. (1995)

Appendix 3: Systematic model of selection



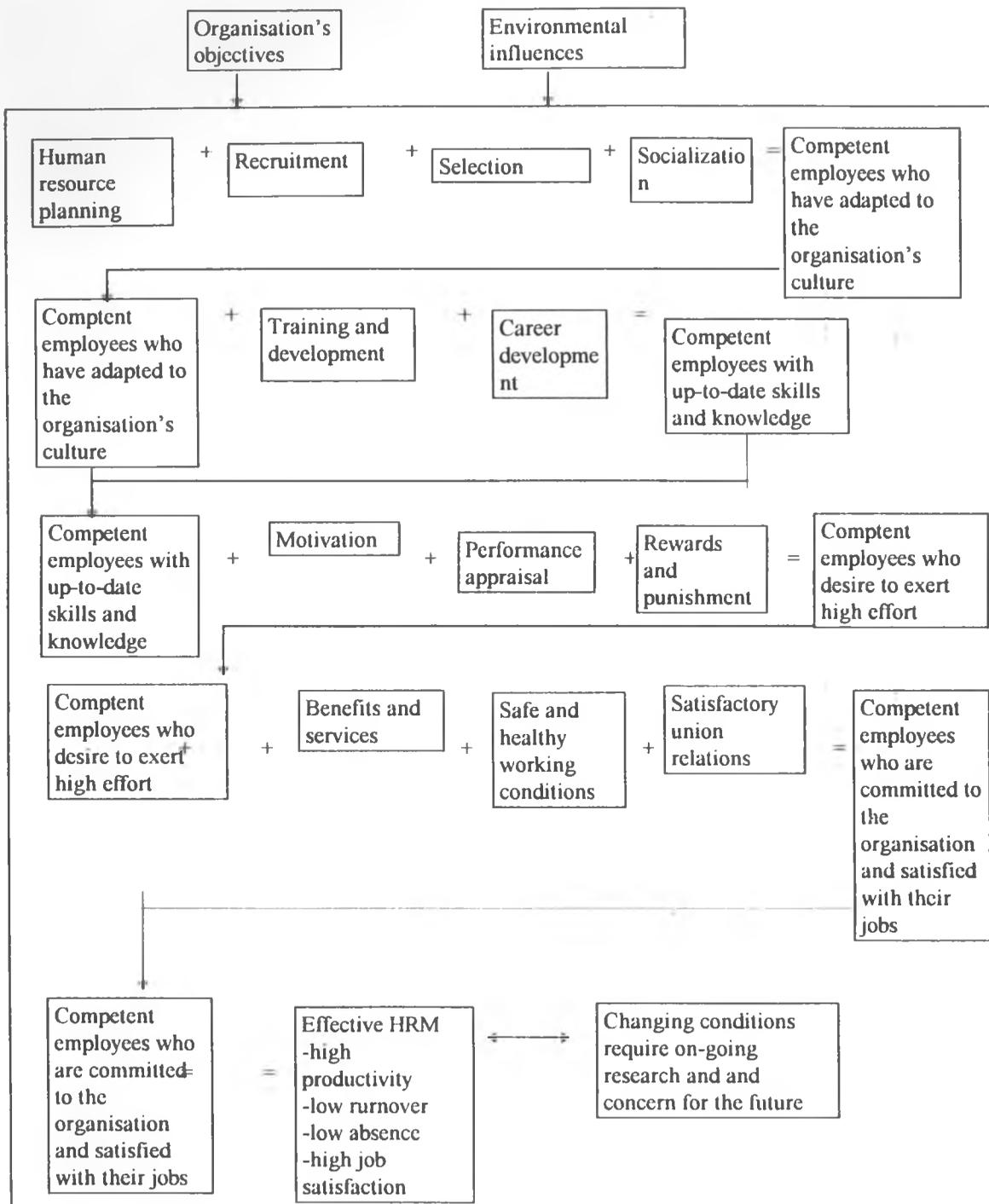
Source: Smith and Robbinson (1993: 5, with modification)

Appendix 4: Summary of 11 selection tests by five criteria

	Validity	Cost	Practicality	Generality	Legality
Interview	low	medium high	high	high	untested
Structured interview	high	high	high	?limited	no problem
References	moderate	very low	high	high	A few doubts
Peer ratings	high	very low	very limited	?unformed services	untested
Biodata	high	medium	high	high	some doubts
Ability	high	low	high	high	major doubts
Personality	variable	low	fair	high	untested
Assessment Centres	high	very high	fair	airy high	no problem
Work Sample	high	high	high	blue collar	no problem
Job knowledge	high	low	high	blue collar	some doubts
Education	low	low	high	high	major doubts

Source: Cook, M. (1993)

Appendix 5: The HRM model



Source: Robbins, S.P. (1982)