

EXAMINATION OF STRATEGIC ISSUES IN MANPOWER RECRUITMENT FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SURVIVAL IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Recruitment is the first part of the process of filling a vacancy. It includes the examination of the vacancy, the consideration of sources of suitable candidate, making contact with those candidates and attracting applications from them. In this study, attention is focused on the strategic issues concerning manpower recruitment which involve recruitment goals, recruitment philosophy, internal and external sources, countercyclical hiring, and alternatives to traditional recruitment. The study applied literature survey method to gather information, which was analysed qualitatively. The study also concluded that the nature of a firm's recruiting activities should be matched to its strategy and values and the firm's ability to pay or otherwise induce new employees to join. It was recommended that recruitment should provide a pool of potentially qualified job candidates.

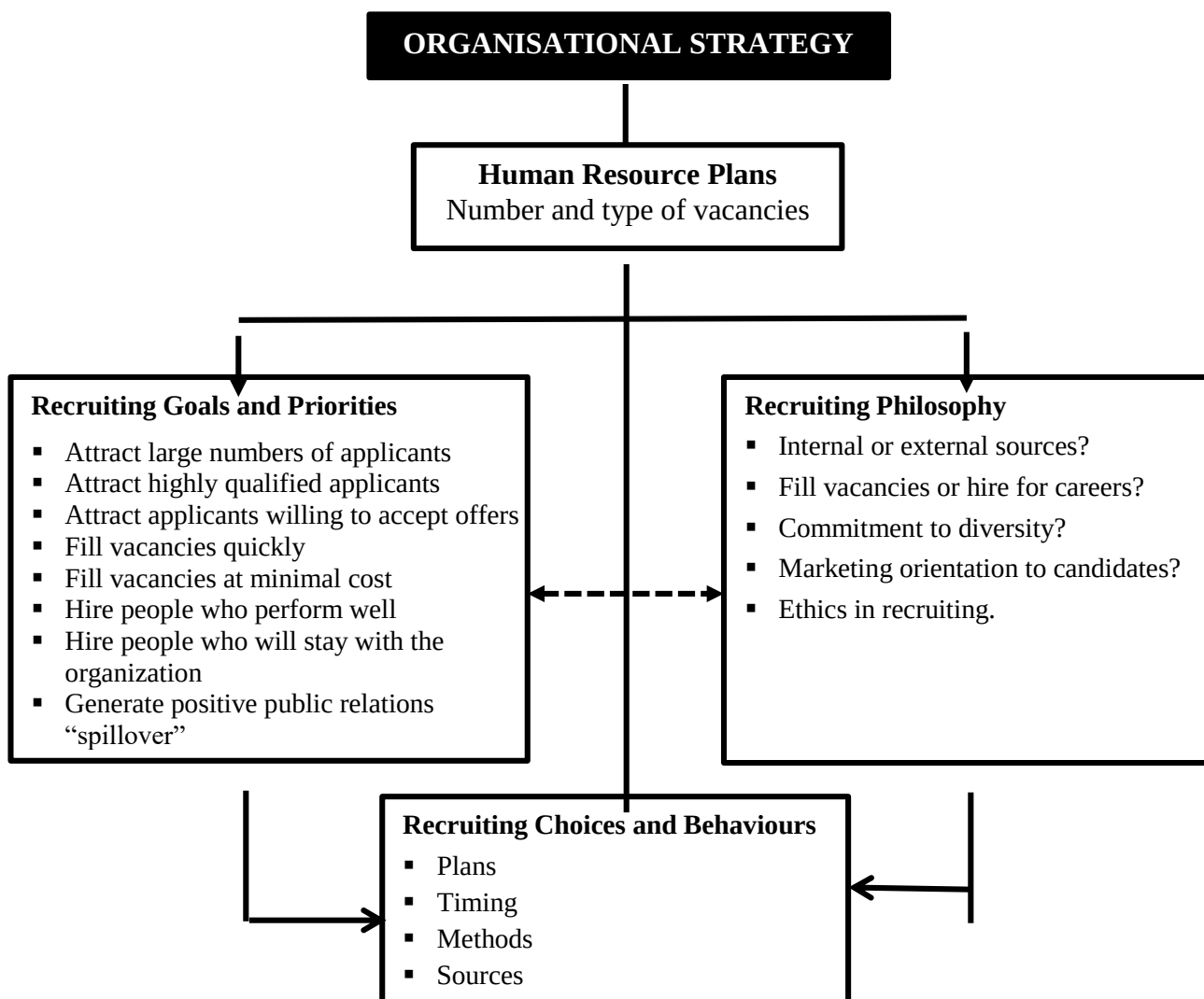
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INTRODUCTION

Recruitment is generally defined as searching for and obtaining qualified job candidates in sufficient numbers that the organization can select the most appropriate people to fill its job needs (Okere, 2019). In addition to filling job needs, the recruitment activity should also be concerned with satisfying the needs of job candidates (Stoops, 1982). Consequently, recruitment not only attracts individuals to the organisation but also

increases the chance of retaining the individuals once they are hired. The recruitment activity must be done in compliance with legal regulations. According to Okere (1994), recruitment is specifically the set of activities and processes used to obtain by legal means a sufficient number of the right people at the right place and time so that the people and the organization can select each other in their own best short-run and long-run interests (Schneider & Sohnutt, 1986). The general purpose of recruitment is to provide a pool of potentially qualified job candidates. Effective recruiting helps an organisation attain increased productivity, quality of work life, and legal compliance. Thus, the nature of a firm's recruiting activities should be matched to its strategy and values as well as to other important features such as the state of the external labour market and the firm's ability to pay or otherwise induce new employees to join.

Figure 1: Strategic Decisions in Recruiting



Recruitment Goals

A good recruiting programme needs to serve many and sometimes conflicting goals. A commonly mentioned goal is to attract a large pool of applicants, but applicant pools can be too large and thus costly to process. Recruiting must also attract a high proportion of well-qualified candidates who are seriously interested in accepting a job offer (Okere, 2019). Post-hiring goals also must be considered that is, recruiting process must yield workers who are good performers and who will stay with the organisation for a reasonable length of time (Lyman et al., 1975). An additional goal is that recruiting efforts should have beneficial “spillover” effects, that is, the organization’s general image should be enhanced and even unsuccessful applications should develop positive attitudes toward the company and its product. Further, all the preceding goals should be reached with the greatest speed and at the least possible cost to the organization (Sara & Alison, 1990). Balancing this varied goals against one another should be done with reference to the organization’s overall strategy and values. As a part of this process of prioritizing goals, the organisation may develop a recruitment philosophy.

Recruitment Philosophy

One of the key issues in manpower recruitment philosophy is whether to promote largely from within the organisation or to hire from the outside for vacancies at all levels. Some organisations puts greater emphasis on developing and socializing managers within the organisation, from the ground up. Other organisations prefer to hire proven talents from the outside (Barner, 2000). A second aspect of recruitment philosophy concerns where the emphasis is: on merely filling vacancies or on hiring for long-term careers. Does the organisation seek people with skills sufficient for present vacancies, or does it try to attract the type of talented candidates who can feed the management pipeline of the future? A short-term view may emphasize filling vacancies quickly, whereas a longer-term view may tolerate delay in the interests of finding just the right people to bring in for the long haul (James, 1992). A third aspect of recruitment philosophy concerns depth of commitment to seeking and hiring a diverse range of employees. Some firms are still at the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action stage of mere compliance with the law, whereas others have graduated to valuing diversity as a control principle of organizational life. Their recruiting practices both internal and external actively encourage participation by all types of people perhaps more important, extensive training and consultative processes strive to create a climate that is welcoming to and supportive of all candidates (Rooseveltdt, 1990). A fourth aspect of recruitment philosophy is whether applicants are viewed as commodities to be purchased or as customers to be wooed. Organisations that adopts a marketing orientation with respect to recruiting will spend substantial time and money to determine what their customers (Potential applicants) want and to tailor their recruiting practices and messages to various segments of the market (Steven et al., 1992). A fifth aspect of recruitment philosophy has ethical overtones, in terms of fairness and honesty in the recruitment process. This theme is further developed in the pages of human resource management literature.

Internal or External Sources of Personnel Recruitment

Okere (2019) demonstrated that deciding whether the position is to be filled internally or externally is often an early task in personnel planning for a specific vacancy. In some cases, there is no decision to be made. For example, entry-level jobs must be filled externally, but for other positions, the company's policy or union contract may require that internal sources may be used first. Most organisations use a mixture of internal and external sources, that is, promotion from within when qualified employees are available and recruiting from external sources when new skills are needed or growth is rapid. Dave and Patrick (1977); Chan (1996) pointed out that when internal recruiting is used, the vacancy is filled by a person of known ability. Since the employer has observed the employee in one position, there is less guesswork involved in assessing his or her suitability for a second position. However, Elmer and Nicholas (1980); John (1987) said that if the organisation is expanding rapidly, there may be an insufficient internal supply of qualified individuals above the entry level. This situation may result in people's being promoted before they are ready or not being allowed to stay in a position long enough to learn how to do a job well. Scott (1989) concluded that external recruiting can bring in new ideas and viewpoints, avoid the confusion that accompanies the ripple effect, meet affirmative action goals, and cope with the demands of rapid growth without overusing inexperienced personnel. Another advantage as highlighted by Chung et al. (1987); Gupta (1988); Okere (2019) may be savings in training costs. Hiring experienced workers away from other companies may cut down on the need for a comprehensive training and development programme in-house. One disadvantage of external recruiting is the cost. Because the external labour market is much larger and harder to reach than the internal one, recruiting externally usually takes longer and costs more.

Countercyclical Hiring of Personnel

In the opinion of Talbott (1996) one strategic issue relevant to external recruiting is when to do it. Most organisations recruit each year to meet that year's needs. They attempt to hire many personnel in a boom year and hire very few during years when the industry, economy, or company is on a down cycle. William (1976) in a research suggested that the firms most likely to engage in countercyclical hiring emphasize human resource planning to avoid shortages, strive to maintain a regular age distribution of managers and value training and developments. They also are firms that can afford to hire in downturns, since they are among the stronger financial performers (Charles & Timothy, 1992).

Alternative to Traditional Recruiting

Traditional recruiting is not always the answer to a firm's human resource needs (Okere, 2019). A traditional approach is to intensify essentially similar recruiting efforts, that is, to run yet another advertisements, extend a contract with an employment agency, or recruits in a larger geographical region. Research suggest that in this situation organisations should broaden their focus from recruiting activities to the concept of applicant attraction. In addition to doing more of the same, in the way of recruiting, firms

can attempt to attract applicants by improving or changing the nature of inducements, perhaps increasing wages or providing flexible work arrangements or stock options. New benefits in the race to attract technical professionals have included signing bonuses, paid sabbaticals, casual dress codes, concierge services, being allowed to bring one's pet to work, reduced summer hours and messages in the office (Cunningham, 2000). Public-sector organisations have had to work very hard to attract information technology professionals, as they cannot offer stock options and sky-high salaries. According to Okere (1994), some organisations have had success attracting new employees by offering flextime and job-sharing, as well as playing up the facts that very little travel is required and that working hours are reasonable. A third strategy is to change the focus of recruiting to labour pools that are relatively more plentiful and underutilized (Sara & Alison, 1990). For example, to recruit from retirees, people with disabilities, disadvantaged urban residents, mothers with young children, and so on. Inducement says Margaret and George (1992) as well as recruiting methods and messages will have to be tailored to the needs and desires of these groups. In some cases, Okere (2019) said employees from these pools may need assistance with adaptive devices or arrangements, transportation to work, or extra training. Another alternative for finding scarce professionals in technical fields is to sponsor their immigration from other countries (Turpin, 2000). A number of visa programmes are available in various countries globally. There are even more distinct alternative to traditional recruiting, which include not hiring at all. Many firms have no desire to repeat the painful retrenchments of the 1980s and early 1990s and are reluctant to recruit enough full-time staff to meet all their needs. Instead, they have adopted the staffing strategy of keeping a small cadre of permanent employees, along with a buffer of temporary or contract workers (Barner, 2000). Several alternatives to recruiting and hiring employees directly have increased in popularity. The first is to use temporary workers obtained from a temporary help agency. Gladys (1983); Simonetti et al. (1988) observed that the temporary help industry has been expanding rapidly since the 1970s. Temporaries are especially helpful for covering peak demand periods, especially in an uncertain economic climate when demand could drop precipitously.

Temporaries may cost more per hour worked, but they are paid only for the time they actually work. Another advantage of using temporaries is that they are quickly and easily available, therefore, recruiting costs are minimal. Essentially, Frazee (1996) opined that firms can "try before they buy" to be sure a candidate is qualified and fits in. Some temporary agencies charge a "conversion fee" when their employees are hired within thirty to ninety days of initial placement. Historically, temporaries have been used primarily in jobs such as assembler, labourer, secretary, clerk, or truck driver. In today's work environment, however, they are available for a variety of other professions, including nursing, computer programming, engineering and accounting (Garth, 1985; Max 1991). There is even a trend toward "interim executives" that is, high caliber, experienced managers who can be brought in for a few months to oversee a turnaround, liquidation, or special project (Stephanie, 1993). Another alternative is "employee leasing"

which is a way to obtain the services of individuals over a longer time period than would normally be the case with temporaries. An employee leasing firm according to Okere (2019) recruits, tires, trains, and compensates employees, and the organisation that leases them provides their work facilities, direct daily supervision, and duties. For example, a nursing services firm employs many nurses and provides them to hospitals on a contract basis. This arrangement relieves the hospitals of a great deal of Human Resource Management responsibility. In the future, a number of Human Resource professionals may find themselves working in employee-leasing firms rather than in large production-oriented companies. John (1991) highlight that employee leasing provides the organisation with flexibility to change the number of employees easily and without actual layoffs. Yet another alternative to recruiting and hiring to staff a function within the organisation is to hire an outside firm to perform the entire function, either on or off the organisation's premises. Strategic management experts such as Barner (2000) suggest that unless an organisation can perform a support function extremely well, it should consider subcontracting that function so that the organisation can concentrate all available resources on building unique core competencies. By hiring out such functions as maintenance, security, and office services, the organisation can achieve greater efficiency by having these activities performed by specialists. Also, the organisation can place competitive pressure to perform on the supplier, in that the supplier can always be replaced by another supplier. This type of incentive is not present when the function is performed in-house. A similar situation is for the organisation to contract with a single individual or consultant on a project basis (Martin & David, 1989). For instance, a firm may award a contract to a freelance computer consultant to do a piece of programming rather than hire an additional full-time programmer. Not infrequently, the individuals providing these services are former employees who have become self-employed.

All these options says Okere (2019) which include temporaries, employee leasing, subcontracting, do reduce an organisation's employment levels and thus its recruiting needs. Another approach to reducing the need to recruit is to attempt to increase the retention of current employees. Loss of talented, experienced staff to voluntary turnover can be very costly and disruptive to an organisation.

Research Method Applied

The research adopted literature survey method to obtain information covering the areas of the study. The relevant information gathered were qualitatively analysed.

CONCLUSION

Individuals seeking jobs and organisations seeking good employees may have conflicting objectives during the recruiting process. These may lead each side to emphasize the positive and conceal the negative about itself. The nature of a firm's recruiting activities should be matched to its strategy and values, and the firm's ability to pay or otherwise induce new employees to join. Thus, organizational recruiting plans should be guided by good human resource planning and keyed to the strategy and values of the organisation.

A firm's recruiting philosophy and goals will influence the approach it takes to recruiting. In some cases, recruiting may not be necessary if a company explores creative ways of dealing with labour strategies, such as temporaries, employee leasing, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following for organizational survival in Nigeria:

1. Recruitment should provide a pool of potentially qualified job applicants.
2. The nature of a firm's recruiting activities should be guided and matched to its strategy and values.
3. Organisational recruiting plans should be guided by good human resource planning.
4. A good recruiting programme should serve many and sometimes conflicting goals.
5. Recruitment philosophy should emphasize promoting personnel largely from within the organisation or to hire from the outside for vacancies at all levels, and should be committed to seeking and hiring a diverse range of employees.
6. Organisations should use a mixture of internal and external sources to employ personnel.
7. Organisations should recruit each year to meet that year's manpower needs.
8. Firms should attract applicants by improving or changing the nature of inducements, perhaps increasing wages or providing flexible work arrangements or stock options.
9. Organisations can find scarce professionals by sponsoring their immigration from other countries.
10. Temporaries should be used to cover peak demand periods, especially in an uncertain economic climate when demands drops.
11. Employee leasing should be used to obtain the services of individuals over a longer time period.
12. Organisations should contract single individual or consultant on a project basis.

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