

Evaluating the Relationship between Selection Requirements and Performance of Police Personnel in Ghana

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Abstract This deductive study was based on data gathered from seventy-two Police officers from Greater Accra Regional Division of Ghana Police Service in the year 2009. The study sought to evaluate the extent to which the performance of the personnel was related to the selection requirement of the service. The results indicated that there was a positive relationship between the selection requirements and the job performance of the personnel during the five-year period spanning 2004-2008. It was revealed from the study that the Ghana Police Service used to be called Ghana Police Force during the colonial era. The main aim of the police force was to protect the colonial regime. During that era the police personnel were expected to use “brute force” on the people of Gold Coast in their service delivery. The major criterion for selecting men into the force was the use of minimum height of the people not below 5 feet 8 inches. The study recommended that the use of height as a major selection criterion has outlived its usefulness in modern Ghana Police Service since modern policing is mostly based on intelligence gathering and specialized skills and therefore the selection criteria should be revised in order to get better performance from the personnel. The research again recommended that the performance of the police personnel could be enhanced if the personnel were further developed through special learning processes that would equip the personnel with IT and other intelligence gathering skills.

Keywords Police, Performance, Selection, Ghana, Satisfaction

1. Introduction

Background of Ghana Police Service

Professional policing was introduced by the British Colonial Authorities to the Gold Coast in 1821 (<http://www.ghanapolice.info/history.htm>). Historically, during the colonial era, the British who were then ruling the Gold Coast (now Ghana) had a big war with the Ashantis (a tribe in Ghana) named the ‘Sagrenti war’ in 1874. The British who were also ruling Nigeria and the West Indies at that time brought 700 Hausa men from Nigeria and some other troops from the West Indies to reinforce their guards to invade Kumasi (the capital city of Ashanti region). After the war the remainders of these men were mobilized by the British to form the then Gold Coast Constabulary. These men were trained by the British to use ‘brute force’ in dealing with the people whilst serving the interest of the colonial administration after the war. In 1894, 400 men out of the existing constabulary formed the Gold Coast Police by an ordinance which was promulgated in that year. This number had incre-

ased to 22,129 as at the time of conducting this research. Since the era of the colonial authorities the recruitment and selection requirements had not changed.

Ghana Police Service was one of the public institutions in Ghana known for its bureaucracy as well as its well structured staff recruitment and selection requirements. The Service had a pyramidal organizational structure which was headed by the Inspector General of Police (IGP) who was appointed by the President of Ghana, according to the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. Generally, enlistment into the Ghana Police Service was open to all able bodied and sound minded Ghanaians within the ages of 18 and 30 years. Based on the requirements, recruitment and selection into the service could be categorized into Under-cadets, General Recruits and Escorts. The selections’ requirements of the under-cadets included people who:

- were not more than 30 years old except certain professionals e.g. lawyers and medical doctors who could be accepted at the age above 30 years.
- possessed at least an undergraduate degree or diploma from a recognized higher educational institution
- did not have any criminal records

The requirements for the general recruits included people who:

- were between the ages of 18 and 25

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- possessed a Senior Secondary School Certificate (high school certificate) with a minimum of five passes including English and Mathematics
- had a minimum height limit of 5 feet 8 inches for males and 5 feet 4 inches for females
- were physically strong and medically fit by all standards and
- had not been convicted for any criminal offence before

The Escorts were to meet similar requirements as the General recruits without much emphasis on academic qualification and examination. When all the conditions stated above were satisfied, applicants would be required to pass the police service written examination before being recruited into the service. The selected Recruits were trained and were expected to indicate some level of professionalism which could be translated into day to day mode of policing before acceptance into the service.

1.2. Problem Statement

Ghana Police Service is the foremost state agency responsible for the maintenance of law and order in Ghana. The service was widely described by some sections of the public as an entity which had lost grips of its functions, bringing into question a number of issues about its effectiveness and level of performance. During the period of study the mass media were always publishing issues about corrupt practices of the personnel. The media reported how people were accidentally killed or shot dead by Police officers and the umpteen attacks by armed robbers with even some Police personnel found in some occasions as members of the robbers' gangs. Serious crimes such as murder, robbery, narcotic drug peddling and rape were perpetrated and in some cases some Policemen who were supposed to enforce the law were found to be engaged in such nefarious acts. For example, statistics from Ghana Police Service in 2008 showed that one hundred and thirty-six Police personnel were dismissed in the years 2006 and 2007 for misconduct.

In discussing the alleged poor performance of the Police there were two schools of thought. The first school of thought argued that the selection requirements into the service were not based on very good person specification which affected the performance of the personnel of the service. The second school of thought also argued that the selection criteria had nothing to do with the performance of the personnel but rather there were other motivational factors such as infrastructural development and remuneration which led to the underperformance and the subsequent accusations of the Ghana Police Service. The questions frequently asked included; what were the bases or fundamental reasons for the loss of respect for the police service and how could the issues involved be addressed as the security and preservation of any sound society hangs mostly on the Police.

During the period of the study the Ghana Police Service was under severe criticism by the general public as a result of their alleged poor performance in the country in general, giving rise to questions about the relevance of the 'integrity'

attached to their motto "Service with Integrity". For a developing country like Ghana to attract investors there must be peace and security in the country. Under the Police Service Act 1970 (Act 350), the Ghana Police Service had been mandated to perform its statutory functions of crime prevention, arrest and prosecution of offenders, maintenance of law and order and ensuring the safety of persons and property but the perception of many Ghanaians as at the time of this research was that the service was not performing up to the expected standard.

1.3. Aims/Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study was to carefully examine the selection requirements for enlistment into Ghana Police service and the extent to which the selection requirements had had impact on the performance of the personnel. The specific aims of the study were to:

- assess whether there was any significant relationship between the selection criteria and the performance of the Police personnel
- find out whether the performance of the service was related to other factors than that of the selection criteria
- suggest means of improving the performance of the service

1.4. Justification

It is deemed that the research would inform the Police service to reconsider its recruitment and selection procedures for improvement of its performance and suggest other means for appropriate capacity building program by the Human Resource Department of Ghana Police Service.

2. Selection and Performance in the Police Service

Selection is generally considered as a process which uses a methodical approach to identify the individuals who have the ability and the know-how to perform best out of all those who offer themselves for a job (Price, 2000). According to Bratt and Gold (1999) recruitment and selection should not be considered in isolation but in the context of the overall human resource plan. The selection process for public organization should also consider the potential for training, development and future promotion, flexibility and adaptability to possible new methods, procedures or working conditions and how they fit into the organization's culture and social structure (Brumbach, 1988). For organizational performance there is the need for a planned and systematic approach in order to select the appropriate staff and retain them for a reasonable length of time (Mattesen, 1989).

Commenting on Police selection requirements that could lead to effective performance, Cordner (1989) indicated that in order to be successful, Police Administrators should design selection requirements to meet the objectives of the Police service. The selection of wrong people who do not

have the ability to perform will affect the output of the entire service and create a negative image for the service (Armstrong, 1999; Mukhwan, 1978). Entrance examination taken by prospective employees could have a significant positive effect on job performance (Ash, 2001) and therefore it may be appropriate for Police service to take their recruits through written examination. Law enforcement workers are expected to work as professionals in order to keep pace with the pressures placed on them and for them to give off their efforts to execute their tasks as professionals the selection panel must use appropriate criteria that can help them to get the right people selected.

A study conducted in Russia showed that most of the Police personnel thought corruption within the Police service was justifiable and morally acceptable under certain circumstances when they were not well remunerated. The research was carried out when the Policemen were perceived by the public and the media as being corrupt using their positions at work to extort money, goods or services from victims (Adrian and Lee, 2002).

In Malaysia, for instance, when the Police were under-performing and perceived to be corrupt, the President, Datus Seri Najib made provision to recruit people with experience and motivated them to enhance their performance. He increased the remuneration of the personnel, resorted to the use of promotion on timely basis, provided logistics and offered other incentives to enhance their efforts to fight crime (<http://thester.com.my/news/story.asp?file=2010>).

Perception of Ghanaians on The Performance of Ghana Police

According to Accra Daily Mail newspaper of June 2, 2005, it was reported that corruption in Ghana was so bad that one might think it had been institutionalized in the public sector and most Police and Prison officers were ranked the highest bribe takers. The Ghanaian Chronicle reported on 26 July, 2006 that some top Police officers were allegedly involved in taking bribes. Anning (2009) indicated that the Police was corrupt because the government lacked the political will to implement the various reports on police service such as Boyles Report (December 1971) which recommended that the remuneration and welfare packages should be improved and that the recruitment & selection, and promotions criteria should be looked into again.

Nevertheless, it was reported that Ghanaian Policemen on peace missions abroad performed marvellously well that even in Kosovo some Ghana Police personnel whose tour of duty had come to an end were requested to continue for another time period because of their performance (Cowboy, 2006). The questions that could then be asked were; why such a better performance when on missions abroad? Could the performance be attributed to better incentives to motivate them when at peace missions engaged by UN? Could it be said that the performance of the personnel was linked to the selection criteria?

In the year 2009 this study was carried out after a consultation with some high ranking personnel of Ghana Police Service. The study covered a five-year period spanning 2004-2008. The research took a multi-designed dimensional approach with a case study and a survey within the Ghana Police Service. The study was a descriptive one covering a wide range of cross-section of the Ghana Police Service personnel. The method and nature of collecting data involved both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The primary data were based on questionnaire and interview. The field work was undertaken within a period of thirteen weeks by students who were groomed by the Author; four weeks were used for pre-testing of the questionnaire. Nine weeks were devoted to the administration of the questionnaire and interview of the subjects. In designing the instruments, experts from Ghana Police Service were consulted. The questionnaire was pre-tested during a pilot study in the earlier part of 2009 to ensure that questions asked were understood by the respondents. To ensure reliability, the respondents were interviewed by the team on some of the questions already asked in the questionnaire and notes were taken during the interview.

The population included all the Police personnel in Ghana Police Service (22,129). The sampling frame included the all Police personnel within Accra from the following Police units:

- Ghana National Police Headquarters
- Accra Regional Headquarters
- Accra South Divisional Headquarters-Ministries
- Accra Central Divisional Headquarters-Nima
- Kaneshie Divisional Headquarters-Kaneshie

Considering the sensitive nature of the study the confidentiality of the respondents was highly assured and permission was granted by the Police Service for the study. A multi-phase sampling technique was used to select the Police units and the personnel to participate in the study. The Police population in Accra was stratified into five categories: Ghana National Headquarters, Accra Regional Headquarters and three Divisional Headquarters.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select the five categories based on the following; The National Headquarters was chosen because it was the hub from which all policing activities in Ghana were conducted. The Accra Regional Police Headquarters was selected in view of the fact that it was the Headquarters of all the Divisions in Accra. The three Divisional Headquarters were selected due to their strategic positions, nearness to big market places in Accra and the possibility of handling crime related cases frequently.

In all one hundred copies of questionnaire were administered out of which seventy-two were retrieved which included those from ten Senior Officers and Sixty-two Junior Officers. The data collection period was 30th April 2009 to 14th May, 2009.

The main variables measured were the criteria for the recruitment and selection process of the Ghana Police Service and the performance of the Police personnel. The criteria

3. Materials and Methods

included the height, academic qualification, aptitude test/entrance examination, and age. Questions were also asked on the performance of the personnel and how it was related to the selection criteria.

4. Result

From the field survey, 2.8% of the respondents were indifferent on whether height of personnel had something to do with performance or not. As indicated in Table 1 below, 29% agreed that the height of the personnel was related to performance but 68% disagreed and indicated that it was a legacy from the colonial masters who because of the threat from the natives made it a requirement for their protection. The data gathered revealed that 62.5% agreed that academic requirements had influence on performance, 34.7% disagreed and 2.8% remained neutral. On the use of entrance examination as a requirement which could influence their performance, 40.3% agreed but 56.9% disagreed and 2.8% were undecided.

Table 1. Relationship of Entry Requirements to Performance

Factor	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Height	9 (12.5)	12 (16.5)	12 (33.3)	25 (34.7)
Academic Performance	25 (34.7)	20 (27.8)	8 (11.1)	17 (23.6)
Entrance Examination	12 (16.7)	17 (23.6)	11 (15.2)	30 (41.7)
Other Requirements	68 (94.4)	-	-	4 (5.6)

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The result also indicated that 94.4% of the respondents joined the service after meeting all the entry requirements but 5.6% disclosed that they joined the service even though they could not meet all the entry requirements. Majority of the personnel interviewed gave other factors including their posture, health status and command of the use of English language. When the respondents were asked to rate the following factors in order of priority with regards to how the factors had had impact on their performance, Table 2 below showed the results:

Table 2. Order of Importance on How the Following Factors Could Have Impact on their Performance

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Motivation	15	20.8
Fair Recruitment Exercise	13	18.1
Recruitment Requirement	12	16.7
Neutral	11	15.3
Training	9	12.5
Promotion	6	8.3
Individual Attitude	5	6.9
All	1	1.4
Total	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The respondents were also asked to indicate in order of importance how the following factors in Table 3 could bring

about improvement in their performance and the results were, motivation (29.2%), further education (23.6%), change of posting procedure (19.4%), training (16.7%), and change of job schedules (11.1%).

Table 3. Factors That Could Improve Their Performance

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Motivation	21	29.2
Further Education	17	23.6
Change of Posting	14	19.4
Training	12	16.7
Change of Job Schedule	8	11.1
TOTAL	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

For the research team to know from the individuals their assessment of their own job performance the result indicated as follows: Excellent (26.4%), Very Good (34.7%), Good (34.7%), Average (4.2%) as in Table 4.

Table 4. Assessment of Individual Job Performance

Assessment	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	19	26.4
Very Good	25	34.7
Good	25	34.7
Average	3	4.2
Total	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

5. Discussion

The men who were trained by the British were to use 'brute force' in dealing with the public to serve the interest of the colonial administration and were to use some physical force on the people therefore the use of physical appearance especially 'height' was considered as the main factor in selecting the people for the then police force. The study revealed that the use of 'height' as a factor should be reconsidered by Ghana Police service because majority of the service men (68%) agreed that the use of 'height' as a selection requirement did not have much significant impact on their performance. The results indicated that majority of the respondents preferred academic performance (45%) and entrance examination (29%) as the main criteria that should be used by the service to select its personnel. Majority of the personnel interviewed indicated that for effective policing, knowledge in ICT for intelligence gathering would be essential and could be considered as one of the selection criteria. The 1992 constitution of Ghana mandates the police to use a minimal force and to defend themselves whenever attacked in the course of their duties and this *called* for personnel with good physical strength. Is there any correlation between 'height' and 'physical' strength? The use of 'height' could leave out some people who do not meet the height requirement but have good physical body, highly intelligent and also have the skills to do proper policing that could give credit to the police service in the eyes of the Ghanaian populace. The views of majority of the respon-

dents were that for good performance the Police service should focus more on motivating the personnel (29.3%). They considered motivation as a factor which had tremendous impact on their performance. Fairness in selecting the people without discrimination was also considered as a factor which influenced their performance, probably because of tribal/political sentiments as expressed by a number of the respondents. Further education and training were also considered as other factors that could enable them improve on their performance.

6. Conclusions

The need for effective maintenance of law and order (peace and security), for the purpose of achieving socio-economic development of the citizenry draws people attention to the Police Service with particular reference to how the personnel discharge their duties.

The result of the study revealed that there was a positive correlation between the selection criteria and the performance of Ghana Police Service particularly, academic qualification and the use of Entrance Examination. It was also established that the selection exercise should be fair and equitable for better performance. However majority of the police personnel were of the view that the use of 'Height' as part of the selection criteria should be reconsidered by the Police authorities. The study, therefore recommended the following:

- The selection exercise should be fair to all Ghanaians
- The use of 'height' as a criterion for selecting the personnel should be reconsidered
- The Police personnel should be encouraged to further educate and train themselves to meet the modern trend of policing, especially in the area of ICT
- For improvement in their performance the personnel should be better motivated and
- The logistics needed for the operations of the police service should be enhanced.

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