

Recruitment and Selection of Library Staff in Federal University Libraries in Nigeria

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Abstract Recruitment and selection of library staff globally has changed. The changes is to conform to new skills and requisite technological competences. This paper aimed at determining the strategies used for recruitment and selection of staff in federal university libraries in Nigeria. It elicited from randomly selected principal officers of the libraries using stratification to administer validated closed ended questionnaire. The responses were analysed descriptively using frequency distribution and percentages. The findings revealed that the recruitment strategies mostly employed by the university libraries studied were mainly the traditional strategies. The study recommended the use of Internet and employee agencies to provide opportunities that can attract the best candidates globally from the pool of high qualified and suitable applicants.

Keywords Human resource management, Libraries in Nigeria, Library staff, Recruitment, Selection

1. Introduction

A lot of changes should take place in Nigerian university libraries on recruitments to sustain continuous advances in technology use, encourage innovation, and to attract and retain library patrons. Such changes can also support library automation, use of digital and electronic support systems and services. In some cases, these changes account for the replacement of traditional tools and platforms for modern ones. There is no denying the facts that some of the changes have consequences for the human resources management, which aimed at ensuring that competent, skilled and talented staff are recruited in the library for efficiency and effectiveness.

The attributes of an organisation's effectiveness depend on the quality of its recruits done after careful selection. Therefore, selection and recruitment go hand-in-hand to usher into an organisation the human resources [1].

Organisations are saddled with the responsibility of hiring high quality labour force so that they are not destined to experience poor performance from its employees and eventually detriment the overall performance of the organisation. Therefore, the application of appropriate strategies, methods and criteria for the recruitment and selection of the right personnel cannot be overemphasized.

According to [2], recruitment and selection of the best candidate guarantee efficiency and effectiveness while performing specific jobs. Jobs in libraries are aided by

technologies that have to some extent influence library recruitments and selection criteria, and expectedly has removed boundaries making the physical workplace inconsequential. Hax cited by [3] opined that workers and work environment are revolutionized, therefore recruits brought on board should possess skills commensurate with recent technological advances of the globalised social trends and can bring with them changes within statutes of the organization. This however, has brought new challenges for recruitment and selection in specific terms. For instance, Mishra [4] reflecting on the situation confronting libraries, pointed out that the main aim of recruitment of professional librarians is to secure the best candidates to enhance the performance of specific jobs in a library has not changed. This assuaged the fact that people within organizations are the most critical resources and dictate the quality of work [5]. According to [6], recruitment and selection are among the core functions of an organization, which she envisioned involved organization staffing "the right people, with the right skills at the right time".

1.1. Conceptual Clarifications

Walker cited by [3] defined recruitment as the process of identifying and attracting potential candidates from within and outside an organization to begin evaluating them for future employment. While selection is the process of making the choice of the most suitable applicant from the pool of applicants recruited to fill the relevant job vacancy [7]. Selection is the process by which specific instruments are engaged to choose from the pool of individuals most suitable for the job available [1]. Selection involves the use of one or more methods to assess applicant's suitability in order to make the correct selection decision and can be alternatively

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seen as a process of rejection as it rejects a number of applicants and select only a few applicants to fill the vacancy [8].

Beard, Well and Wright cited by [9] see recruitment and selection as processes concerned with identifying, attracting and securing suitable people to meet an organization's human resources needs. Recruitment is concerned with identifying and attracting suitable candidates. The purpose of recruitment is to attract sufficient and suitable potential employees to apply for vacancies in an organization, whereas the principle purpose of selection activities, by comparison, is to identify the most suitable applicants and persuade them to accept a position in the organization (Cole cited by [10]).

1.2. Types and Benefits of Recruitments and Selection in an Organisation

Recruitment, according to [11], is the first dimension of HRM that sets to attract employees with desired competent skills and abilities, which will help and guide organizations accomplish their desired aims and objectives. He further identified the two main sources of recruitment as external and internal sources as follows:

1. External Source

- i. Unsolicited Applicant: this is where applicants on their own visit & submit their application without invitation.
- ii. Advertisement: this is where an organization publicizes information about a particular vacancy that exists in a particular organization aim at attracting suitability qualified applicants either locally or internationally.
- iii. Employee agencies: they are usually private companies, which perform recruitment on behalf of their clients and charge some amount of money.
- iv. Educational institutions also known as campus recruitment: they connect fresh graduates with organization for appointments.
- v. Labour contractors: they are experts who supply the needed work force to organization who are mainly appointed on contract basis. The Job of employee terminates with the termination of the contract between the labour contractors and the client organization.

2. Internal source

- i. Transfer: is a process whereby the employee are transferred from one unit or department to another based on their competence or skills as the situation demands e.g. lateral conversion.
- ii. Promotion: is an act of promoting employees from one department to another or within the same department with more pay and consequently greater responsibilities. Sometimes a promotion results in an employee taking a managerial responsibility.

- iii. Upgrading and demotion: it is mainly based on performance. Their performance determines whether they are to be promoted or demoted.
- iv. Recruitment of retired employees: this is where employees that are recruited or retrenched could be recruited mainly in jobs that do not require physical strength.
- v. Recruiting of relatives of disabled or deceased as a gesture of reciprocation.
- vi. Temporary worker pool: this is managed by in-house temporaries who help in meeting up the irregular labour stress and demand.

Recruitment and selection is no doubt vigorous, valid and sophisticated as organizations continue to expand. The expansion avails it to benefits from the accrued experiences, which helps in identifying the right candidates with potentials to perform. These benefits are not limited to modification of policies but also instituting a rigorous selection system that support a sense of elitism, creates high expectations of performance, and signals a message of importance of people to the organization so that the persons recruited from a selection process have edge over others. This was affirmed as benefits by [12] who hypothetically proof that selection is positively related to performance, which benefits help to avoid mismatch between a person and the job.

1.3. Recruitment and Selection Criteria

Bratton and Gold [13] asserted that recruitment and selection processes should aim at attracting and admitting those whom management views as the 'right' people for such an approach. Bratton and Gold [2] identified two main types of recruitment; the 'narrow' and the 'broad'. The broad recruitment embraces both the different activities of attracting applicants to organisations and the selection of people to fill vacancies. The narrow recruitment limits the range of activities to those involved in attracting people to apply for employment in an organisation. The narrow recruitment portrays recruitment as "the process of generating a pool of capable people to apply for employment in an organisation".

Selection is conceived as a discrete and specific instrument to choose from a pool of applicants, a person or persons most likely to succeed in the job(s), given management goals and legal requirements. However, [4], warned recruiters of the following:

- 1) Have a clear understanding of the current and future skills required for any post.
- 2) Be fully up-to-date with development especially in the field of technology.
- 3) Provide a clear description of the essential skills and attributes that are needed.
- 4) Have a good specification that should lead to a well-worded advertisement that attracts potential candidates with the right mix of skills and qualities.

- 5) Have a clear vision of what an institution is trying to achieve and the skills that the staff need to deliver that vision, the recruiter can communicate clearly to the outside world its values and expectations and,
- 6) Note that clarity and objectivity are vital to ensuring that interviews are conducted fairly and that a person with required skills and qualities is appointed.

Jin [14] listed the criteria to consider for selection as: the quality of candidate who should meet the job requirement; qualification such as education, work experience and specific skills; how well new hire will get along with other staff; and their potential growth, new ideas and skills they bring of which should benefit the organization. He warned managers to select good staff to work with and strengthened the staff team. If a wrong person is selected, it can cause endless headaches to an organization.

The selection and appointment of library staff should be done very carefully, because much of the success of the library staff member on the job in a library depends on skillful personal administration. Getting the right people in the right places at the right time and doing the right job is an essential element of recruitment and selection process in the library. Similarly, [15] pointed out that human resources managers and other staffing professionals use many recruitment strategies that can be employed to ensure the existence of the best possible pool of qualified applicants from which they can fill vacancies. These are: referral, Job postings, placing advertisements on bulletin board, words of mouth referrals, company newsletters, office memoranda, walk-in applicants, advertising agencies, magazines, newspaper, radio (audio media), list of qualified internal candidates generated by the organisation, promotion from within, hiring former employees, use of employment agencies and, on line application form.

Davis [16] also agreed that business, human resources managers and other staffing professionals use many recruitment strategies and methods. Some of the more widely used recruitment methods include placing advisements in local newspapers and online; publishing of internal announcements for promotions and personal referrals; enlisting employment and executive recruitment agencies and using government job centers to target the best candidates for their staffing needs.

Hrcouncil.com [17] acknowledge the fact that in choosing the method of recruitment a good recruitment plan includes a mix of recruitment strategies and a variety of communication processes which can inform organisations and relevant communities of an available position, such as:

- i. Internal recruitment: this includes promotion to higher level and lateral moves to the same level
- ii. Employee referrals: this refers to people that are confident and a good match for the position
- iii. Print advertisements: this is advertisement in national and local newspapers, bulletins, professional journals or magazines

- iv. External recruitment: this involves posting adds on Internet job board, organisation's website or professional association's websites
- v. Internship/field placement/ co-op placements: where an organization liaise with a university or college's career to receive resumes of students and new graduates
- vi. Recruitment agencies: these are private companies that find and screen potential candidates for organisations
- vii. Unsolicited resume: this is where individuals send in resumes to be considered when a suitable opportunity arises
- viii. Career fairs and outreach program: this is where fairs or forums are organised to connect organisations and interested candidates

In Nigeria, the story is a little bit different, due to the desire to satisfy the country in their quest to work in Federal Civil Service (FCS), merit alone could not be used as the basis for employee recruitment into FCS. This development has made it possible for vacancies in the FCS to be filled through pattern other than merit, Federal character principle, political consideration and government discretion [18]. It is unfortunate that many organizations in Nigeria ignored standard selection programs that make selection of staff besieged with innumerable unethical practices, bias, discrimination and favouritism [19].

Sourcing for competent workforce in private organizations is largely through advertisement of vacant positions in newspapers, the Internet, collection of unsolicited applications from applicants and use of recruitment consultants. Gberevbie [20], and [21] suggested that under these strategies the emphasis is on merit, that is, recruitment is based on relevant qualifications in terms of education, skills and experience. This oppose to political influence, quota system or federal character as insinuated to balance recruitment in a multi-factor basis for recruitments in Nigeria. The tendency of abuse by public officials and recruitment of unqualified candidates is obvious because recruitments is not objective but subjective. It is therefore very essential and necessary to plan, design and put in place recruitment strategies capable of ensuring that persons with the competent skills are recruited for the vacant position. This is to ensure that the right people with the ability to perform and carry out the tasks required are the ones successfully selected and employed for the job.

Thus, staff recruitment and selection strategies and procedures are designed to supply an organisation such as a library, with competent and talented employees with knowledge, abilities, and skills pertinent to their roles within the library.

1.4. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study is to ascertain the strategies used for recruitment and selection of staff in federal university libraries in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

Hewitt, Moran & March cited by [22], in their study of New Zealand University library, spoke on technological changes as factor to be considered for recruitments in libraries. Persons with technological bias has become inevitable because the library profession is no longer traditional and deserves the consideration of functioning outside the walls, and capable of reaching out using their acquired skills and competence on modern information dissemination and harnessing platforms.

In a study on organizational behavior, Ofoegbu and McOliver cited by [23], established a relationship between strategy for employee recruitment and performance in an organization. The study identified problems such as nepotism, favouritism, political consideration and federal character principle in employee recruitment as basis for poor performance of public workers in Nigeria.

Anderson cited by [9], in his studies on recruitment focused on the changing skills required for the job. According to him, with the changing roles of libraries and librarians, personnel structure is no longer adequate to support the varied roles and skills required for the new changes.

Ikwesi cited by [24], studied the effects of recruitment and selection procedures on the efficiency of the public service in Nigeria, descriptive survey design was applied and the major findings revealed that recruitment and selection procedures in public service are not strictly followed; politicization and other informal processes dominate the established recruitment and selection procedures. Merit does not always count to secure employment in public service rather the use of federal character, quota system, indigene-ship, son of soil syndrome, etc. are mostly considered. In addition, the study revealed that there was an established relationship between inefficiency of the Nigerian public service and weak recruitment and selection processes.

Rahmany [25] study on "The effect of recruitment and selection process on employees' performance", indicated that the employees' performance is strongly related to the recruitment process. The relationship showed that having a better recruitment process and adherent to rules and regulations directly lead to better employees' performance.

Amadu [26] study on the Effect of recruitment and selection policies and practices on organizational performance of a company identified the use of internal recruitment methods such as promotion, transfer, job postings and inventory largely to fill vacant position in the company. The study also revealed that socio- cultural factors

and bias constitute the major challenges influencing recruitment practices in the company.

The result of the study by [8] on the impact of recruitment and selection criteria on organizational performance of a company, showed that recruitment and selection criteria have significant effect on organisational performance and that the more objective the recruitment and selection criteria, the better the organizational performance.

Karia, *et al.* [27] conducted a study on impact of recruitment and selection on performance of a public water utility company, revealed that majority of their respondents indicated that the recruitment and selection process are politically biased. The findings by [28] on influence of recruitment and selection on organizational performance of a bank, showed that recruitment and selection have effect on organizational performance and the processes of recruitment and selection were able to produce qualified candidates and lead to the employment of competent staff. Therefore, better recruitment and selection strategies result in improved organisational outcomes.

3. Methodology

The study adopted survey research design to administer questionnaire using stratified random sampling technique to draw from the six Federal universities selected from each of the geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The stratified random sampling technique was used because, according to [29], it ensures that each group is represented equally in a sample. Forty-two heads of division in the six federal university libraries were purposely selected as respondents because they occupy the strategic level and constitute principal members of the recruitments and selection committees responsible for the library staff sourcing in federal university libraries in Nigeria.

The data generated from the instrument administered and retrieved from respondents were analysed descriptively using frequency distribution and percentages table. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse these data.

4. Result and Discussions

In order to answer the related research question, a list of recruitment strategies was provided for the respondents to indicate whether they were being employed in their respective libraries. The table below presented the data collected and analysed.

Table 1. Recruitment strategies employed in the universities libraries Studied

| S/N | Recruitment strategies employed | University Libraries Studied | | | | | | | | | | | | Total | |
|-----|--|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | UAM | | UDUS | | MAID | | CAL | | M.O. | | U.I. | | Yes | No |
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | | |
| 1. | Newspaper Advertisement | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 42 (100) | 0 (0.0) |
| 2. | Radio Advertisement | 3 (7.1) | 4 (9.5) | 3 (7.1) | 4 (9.5) | 3 (7.1) | 4 (9.5) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (2.3) | 10 (23.8) | 32 (76.2) |
| 3. | Internal postings | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 5 (11.9) | 2 (4.7) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 38 (90.5) | 4 (9.5) |
| 4. | Internal Promotion | 6 (14.2) | 1 (2.3) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 40 (95.2) | 2 (4.7) |
| 5. | Internet Advertisement | 1 (2.3) | 6 (14.2) | 5 (11.9) | 2 (4.7) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 5 (11.9) | 11 (26.2) | 31 (73.8) |
| 6. | Notices on bulletin boards | 1 (2.3) | 6 (14.2) | 3 (7.1) | 4 (9.5) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 1 (2.3) | 6 (14.2) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 6 (14.2) | 11 (26.2) | 31 (73.8) |
| 7. | Federal character principle | 5 (11.9) | 2 (4.7) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 34 (80.9) | 8 (19.0) |
| 8. | Human Resource Department List | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 3 (7.1) | 4 (9.5) | 1 (2.3) | 6 (14.2) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 21 (50.0) | 21 (50.0) |
| 9. | Words of Mouth | 2 (4.7) | 5 (11.9) | 1 (2.3) | 6 (14.2) | 5 (11.9) | 2 (4.7) | 1 (2.3) | 6 (14.2) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 2 (4.7) | 11 (26.2) | 31 (73.8) |
| 10. | Employee Agencies | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 1 (2.3) | 6 (14.2) | 1 (2.3) | 6 (14.2) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 2 (4.7) | 40 (95.2) |
| 11. | Former employees Recruitment | 1 (2.3) | 6 (14.2) | 4 (9.5) | 3 (7.1) | 1 (2.3) | 6 (14.2) | 6 (14.2) | 1 (2.3) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 25 (59.5) | 17 (40.5) |
| 12. | Walk-in-Approach (applicants visit and submit application) | 2 (4.7) | 5 (11.9) | 4 (9.5) | 3 (7.1) | 5 (11.9) | 2 (4.7) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (16.6) | 0 (0.0) | 26 (61.9) | 16 (38.1) |

KEY: UAM=University of Agriculture Markudi, UDUS=Usman Danfodio University Sokoto, MAID= University of Maiduguri, CAL=University of Calabar,

From table 1, it can be seen that the recruitment strategies mostly employed by the university libraries studied were: newspaper advertisement 42 (100%), internal posting 38 (90.5%), internal promotion 40 (95.2%), federal character principle 34 (80.9%), walk- in- approach 26 (61.9%), human resource department's List 21 (50.0%). However the recruitment strategies not generally employed by the Nigerian university libraries studied were: radio 10 (23.8%), Internet 11 (26.2%), notices on the bulletin board 11 (26.2%), words of mouth 11(26.2%), and employee agencies 2 (4.7%). The federal character principle response rate was close to the finding of [23] in which he posited that 100% or 92.59% of his respondents agree that the strategies for employee recruitment was based on federal character principle and political consideration. He posited further that this negatively affected the caliber of employee or employee performance of federal civil servants. While words of mouth and employee agencies strategies were agreed by only 9(21.42%) respectively of the respondents.

This finding suggests that some of the Nigerian university libraries employ traditional methods of staff recruitment such as newspapers to attract applicants. This traditional thrust is in contrast with the study of [30] that found out that 96% of competent people looking for jobs use the Internet and therefore become the global communication medium, and requisite new approaches to attract competent hands. Online recruitment and using employee agencies are usually done via the Internet also, and now widely used strategies of recruitment. The study finding corroborate is also not in agreement with that of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) which revealed that companies that used online recruitment, rather than the traditional media such as newspapers, received a greater number of applicants and better quality candidates overall [31]. The implication of this finding is that universities that fail to utilize the internet as strategy of recruitment may not be able to attract the best candidates from a larger pool of potential applicants for their university libraries.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The analysis and summary of findings of the study revealed that all universities employed traditional recruitment strategies such as newspapers and other media to recruit staff. New recruitment strategies such as using the Internet and employee agencies were not employed. It is expected that a sound and proper recruitment strategy will attract the best candidates. It is therefore recommended that university libraries should use the Internet and employee agencies because currently, most people look for job vacancies online and also apply for the jobs online, thus easing the challenges faced in finding skilled and well trained applicants for jobs. Thus, there is need for university libraries to adopt global best practices for recruitment.

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