



STUDENT SUMMARY NOTES

chapter 5 recruitment, selection and talent management

Chapter overview

This chapter begins by providing an overview of the critical processes of recruitment and selection. It emphasizes the importance of the psychological contract in achieving positive HR outcomes and the significance of issues of power. It then goes on to consider various legal issues, forms of discrimination and recent requirements on data protection and human rights. The role of recruitment in managing diversity is considered. Recruitment is seen as an attraction process subject to variations in labour market conditions and variation of interests. The importance of a strategic view is considered to align performance requirement with roles specified in terms of skills and attitudes – often expressed as competences. e-recruitment is also considered. Coverage of various selection methods is provided, based on a consideration of reliability and validity issues.

Chapter objectives:

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand the importance of recruitment and selection in the formation of the employment relationship
2. Understand the key features of recruitment and selection policies
3. Explain the nature of attraction in recruitment
4. Explain the effectiveness of various selection methods
5. Understand approaches to identifying and managing talent in organizations

Introduction

Recruitment followed by selection are vital stages in the formation of the expectations that form the psychological contract between employer and employees.

Study tip:

The chapter's opening vignette – Six killed in Glasgow by Council driver of refuse lorry in 2014 – illustrates the importance of effective recruitment and selection processes.

There are power considerations to bear in mind based on labour market conditions. For example, traditional approaches attempt to attract a wide choice of candidates for vacancies before screening out those who do not match the criteria set in job descriptions and personnel specifications (see **Figure 5.1** pg. 142).

There are wide variations in recruitment and selection practices reflecting an organization's strategy and its philosophy towards the management of people. Employees can be seen as part of:

- a) the primary internal market (see **Chapter 4**)
- b) or the secondary internal market

Organizations attempt to provide models of psychological and behavioural aspects of people so that judgments can be made about who to admit. At the same time, of course, potential applicants are forming their own 'models' about organizations.

In the UK, the key legal provisions are contained in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (amended in 1986), the Disability Discrimination Act 1996 (amended in 2005) and the Race Relations Act 1976 (amended in 2000). All these acts disallow discrimination and in general there are three forms of discrimination which are against the law:

- 1 Direct - where workers of a particular sex, race or ethnic group are treated less favourably than other workers, for example in a policy to recruit only men to management posts.

- 2 Indirect - where a particular requirement apparently treats everyone equally but has a disproportionate effect on a particular group and the requirement cannot be shown to be justified.
- 3 Harassment - where there is conduct which violates a person's dignity and creates a hostile or degrading environment.
- 4 Victimization - where individuals are discriminated against because they have exercised their rights under the law.

Study tip: There is much legislation that influences recruitment and selection. Non-UK students might like to compare and contrast employment legislation. For example, in the UK, since 1995, discrimination against part-time employees could be seen as indirect discrimination against women under the Sex Discrimination Act because most part-time employees are women. Under certain circumstances both the Sex Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Act allow for discrimination on grounds of genuine occupational qualification (GOQ) for a job. For example, under Section 7(2) of the Sex Discrimination Act, it is possible to recruit a man only when 'the essential nature of the job calls for a man for reasons of physiology (excluding physical strength or stamina) or, in dramatic performances or other entertainment, for reasons of authenticity, so that the essential nature of the job would be materially different if carried out by a woman'.

In recent years, UK legislation has had to respond to directives from the European Union such as the 1998 Data Protection Act and The Human Rights Act was incorporated into UK law on 1 October 2000 to implement the European Convention on Human Rights in the UK. Both affect recruitment and selection processes.

A noted new area of legal activity relates to age discrimination. From 2006, under the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations, age discrimination in employment and vocational training are prohibited with no qualifying period.

Anti-discrimination legislation over the past 25 years provides the foundation for a growing interest in diversity at work. Recruitment is an obvious place to focus on diversity, especially in the context of global operations but also an increasingly diverse workforce.

Recruitment and attraction

HRM and globalization 5.1 : Managing discriminatory cultural norms in hiring

This report (p. 144) illustrates cultural pressures to engage in discriminatory recruitment and selection practices.

Recruitment and attraction represent vital stages in the determination of which employees will be able to benefit from integrated HRM of policies. Two crucial issues can be highlighted:

- 1) there is the need to attract people and this implies that people do have a choice about which organizations they wish to work for
- 2) the contribution that people will make to an organization is not totally predictable.

Much will depend on the extent to which the overall management philosophy supports and reinforces an approach to HRM that focuses on the utilization and/or the development of new employees once they have gained entry to an organization. Recruitment and then selection processes aim to attract and admit those whom management view as the 'right' people for such an approach.

With a strategic view of its recruitment requirements and the strategic plan representing the starting point, the goals, objectives and targets set the parameters for performance and how work is organized into roles and jobs. A key role for HR is to align performance within roles with the strategy, frequently by the use of competency frameworks.

Study tip: Use the reflective question (pg. 146) to explore different company websites to examine the job expectations of generation Y or Z.

Fitting the person to the environment, organization and job

Images and values projected by an organization, and information on espoused goals will interact with potential applicants in the external labour markets and determine the degree of attraction to an organization on the part of potential recruits.

The achievement of a compatible person-organization (P-O) fit is explored by the use of Schneider's (1987, p. 437) attraction - selection - attrition (ASA) framework (see **Figure 5.2**, pg. 149). In addition to person-organization (P-O) fit, person-job (PJ) fit is concerned with the extent to which there is a match between an individual's skills, knowledge and abilities and the requirements of a job.

Recruitment channels

- Walk-ins
- Employee referrals

- Advertising
- Websites
- Social media

In recent years, there has been a rapid growth in online recruitment with three types of approaches:

- a) general recruitment agents
- b) organizations that focus on providing an online recruitment service on behalf of organisations.
- c) Company sites established for recruitment

The traditional way of providing information about a job is through a job description (see **Figure 5.3** pg. 153). The profile of the 'ideal' person to fill the job is in the form of a personnel specification (see **Figures 5.4 and 5.5, pg. 154**).

Traditional documents may be limited, relying on subjective judgement and masking discrimination. The drive towards flexibility and changing work practices has seen the appearance of new forms of work descriptions such as performance contracts, part of a re-orientation referred to as performance-based recruitment and selection. Competencies are increasingly used to create a specification of the characteristics of the persons sought for particular positions.

The recruitment ratio can be used to test the success of a recruitment process to see whether a sufficient number of applicants of desired quality are attracted within the budget set.

Selection

Organizations use a variety of techniques, and statistical theory is used to give credibility to techniques that attempt to measure people. Organizations also need to consider reactions of applicants to selection methods and an important factor is the perception of fair treatment.

HRM in practice 5.1: Must you be 'posh' to enter the elite professions?

This feature (p. 156), written by sociologist David Denham, draws attention to social class and 'non-educational' attributes as factors in employment selection. The feature can be used in tutorials for a discussion comparing the UK with other countries.

Underlying the process of selection and the choice of techniques are two key principles:

- Measuring individual differences
- Prediction of performance

Reliability and validity issues

Two statistical concepts have been of particular importance in selection:

- a) Reliability
- b) Validity, including criterion validity, concurrent validity and predictive validity.

Study tip: You may wish to consider how reliability and validity are measured but you could also consider difficulties. For example, one difficulty is that it usually takes a long time to conduct validity studies and, by the time such studies are completed, it is highly likely that the work from which some of the criteria were derived would have changed. Validity is also related to the particular environment in which performance is carried out and may have different values for different sexes and different ethnic groups.

CVs and bio-data

CVs provide an early chance for the organization to screen applicants before moving to the next stage of selection. Research suggests that biodata are a strong predictor of future performance.

Selection interviewing

The interview is the oldest and most widely used of all the selection techniques, along with application forms and letters of reference, referred to as 'the classic trio' by Cook (1994, p.15). Various attempts have been made to classify interviews according to:

- (i) Information elicited
- (ii) Structure
- (iii) Order and involvement.

There have been two lines of research to examine the reasons behind poor results for the selection interview. The first line focuses on the processing of information by interviewers leading to a decision on acceptance or rejection. The second focuses on the skills of effective interviewing.

Interviews have been improved by:
situational interviews

behaviour or experience based description interviews
combination with competencies.

Psychometric testing

Selection based on competencies and attitudes has been one result of increased attention given to personality factors and how such factors predict job performance. In particular, interest has focused on the five factor model (FFM) as an explanation of the factors that determine a person's personality.

Study tip: Use the research by Barclay (1999, 2001) and Huffcutt et al. (2001) to explore recent issues relating to questions and structure in selection interviews. For example, it is suggested that behavioural questions are based on past behaviour with an assumption that behaviour is consistent over time, allowing prediction into the future. However, this assumption can be challenged on the basis that people do learn from their mistakes and can learn new ways of behaving. It might also be suggested that people tend to behave according to contingent factors such as time, place and especially the presence of others. A second assumption is that behavioural questions allow a fair comparison between different candidates. However, this might disadvantage those candidates with more limited experience or with poor recall of their experience.

Psychometric tests have a good record of reliability and validity. There are different kinds of test:

- a) Ability tests
- b) Inventories

Online testing

Online testing is being used for selection and other HR purposes - referred to as e-assessment. It is claimed that on-line testing provides organizations with the ability to test at any time and any place in the world with the added benefit of quick processing of applicants.

There are doubts about an overreliance on tests with respect to their use in predicting future performance, especially in relation to complex tasks such as management.

Assessment centres

Organizations may combine techniques and apply them together at events referred to as assessment centres. It is claimed that the combination of techniques provides a fuller picture of an applicant's strengths and weaknesses.

Applicants may react negatively to such techniques which may be seen as unfair.

Realistic job previews (RJPs) help applicants form expectations about how the organization will treat them.

Pre-employment activities

Realistic job previews (RJPs) have a long history. Organizations may provide opportunities for applicants to 'shadow' someone at work in order to enable applicants' expectations to become more realistic.

Study tip:

Go to the *HRM As I See It* (pg. 171), which features HR professional, Alison Blayney, explaining what she means by 'going beyond normal sourcing strategies' to recruit talented people .

Talent management and development

Late 1990s talent management and development (TMD) gained popularity. Term is elastic and the chapter discusses the need for organizations to adopt a 'smart' version of TMD in order to retain staff and their knowledge. **Figure 5.6** (pg. 172) shows a variety of approaches – 'exclusive' to 'inclusive' to TMD.

Succession-planning

In recent years, succession-planning has been presented as the purpose of TMD. The key link between succession-planning and TMD is the focus on a plan that considers the firm's future direction and requirements against the capabilities and potential of those selected for a 'talent pool'. In large organizations, there can be different talent pools for different levels:

- * Entry level
- * Emerging talent
- * Rising stars
- * Executive talent

Figure 5.7 (pg. 174) shows a typical approach to chart high performers against high potential, which can be used to identify staff for talent pools.

Career management

HRM in practice 5.2: Talent as a collective endeavour in the West Yorkshire Police

This feature (p. 176) gives an example of TMD in a public sector organization.

TMD strategies are increasingly required to focus on the retention of committed staff, who in turn expect their careers to be considered. Cultural and structural factors (e.g., 'glass ceiling') can be an obstacle to career progression. In recent years, there has been change in organizational career philosophy, which may mean the term 'career' has lost its commonly understood meaning.

Engaging in critical thinking

Chapter case study: TNNB Ltd

This case requires students to demonstrate an understanding and apply TMD strategies.

Tip to students: See Gold et al (2016) 'Exploring talenting: talent management as a collective endeavour', *European Journal of Training and Development*, 40 (7): 513-33.

Reflective question/essay question

Comment on the notion of fairness in relation to issues of selection in organizations.

Tip to students: This question asks students to consider fairness in relation to selection. Suggest that students consider the balance of power in the formation of psychological contracts during selection. Labour market conditions may occasionally give power to candidates but many selection techniques used by organizations have hidden limitations which mask unfairness. Students can consider the legal framework that provides for protection against discrimination; however, there are more intractable difficulties. Iles and Salaman (1995) refer to a 'psychometric model' that is pseudo-scientific, that values individualism, managerialism and utility. These criticisms can be applied to various selection techniques. There is also significant research on each of the main selection techniques and how they measure on reliability and validity. Fairness can be particularly considered in relation to reliability. See Cooper & Robertson (2001). There is also interest in face validity of techniques. Refer students to work of Bauer et al. (2001) who have sought to measure the reactions of applications for jobs using a selection procedural justice scale (SPJS), work by Phillips (1998) on the role of realistic job previews (RJPs) and Hausknecht et al (2004) on applicant reactions to selection procedures.