

Stages of recruitment and selection



Recruitment and selection is a critical process for an organisation, it is because the mistake that occurs during the recruitment and selection can pass the costs to an organisation and detract the organisation effectiveness. Recruiting and hiring the people to the position where they can perform effectively is the objectives of an organisation (Dowling, et al, 1999).

Beaumont (1993) cited that there are three main issues that have increased the potential importance of the selection decision to organisation (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007):

The trend and changes of demographic in the labour market result in a more diverse workforce, thus, it increase the pressure on the notion of fairness in selection.

The need for a multi-skilled, flexible workforce and the emphasis on team working – individual behaviour and attitudes is more concerned.

The emphasis between corporate strategic and people management – links between selection processes and outcomes to an organisation goals.

In the Harvard Business Review, it indicated selection decision lead to 80 percent of turnover which is a costly mistake (the costs comprise money spent on recruitment, selection and training) (Meyer, 2008). Therefore, it is important to ensure the selection methods that used are appropriate to the jobs. Other than that, the performance of the managers often partially relies on their employees. Employees that employed to fill up the position with inappropriate skills and knowledge is an obstacle to improve the effectiveness of organisation.

Moreover, there is a legal compliance that the organisation needs to comply. Equal Employment Law (EEO) has introduced the laws of non-discrimination during selection process for protected groups (Dessler, 2005).

Thus, the selection process is increasingly important to help the organisation hire the employees with the right skills and knowledge that link to its position. The ethical issues in selection process are highly concerned. The issues include individual rights and privacy, the potential of abuse authority and control and unfair offer provided for different types of applicants (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007).

Recruitment and Selection

Figure 1: The stages of recruitment and selection

Job Performance

Selection

Pool of Applicants

Recruitment

Human resource planning

Staffing needs

Options: internal/external

External Factors

Internal Factors

Job Analysis

(Bratton, J. and Gold, J. (2007) Human Resource Management – Theory and Practice, 4th Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, p241)

The process of recruitment and selection are influenced by external and internal factors. Organisations can either internal recruiting or external recruiting based on the requirement of the positions (Griffin, 2003). After that, organisation can use various recruitment methods such as advertising, applicant forms, and websites and so on. The recruitment methods that used must be effective in attracting potential people. Subsequently, organisation can use various selection methods to select the right people to the position, thus, it can contribute to the organisation effectiveness. Finally, organisation can evaluate the effectiveness of the selection methods through job performance of the applicants (Bratton and Gold, 2007).

Basic Testing Concept

Bratton and Gold (2007) pointed out effective selection process largely depends on its reliability and validity.

Reliability – refers to the consistency of the performance measure. There are various methods to test the reliability of the selection.

Validity – refers to the extent to which a selection technique actually measures what it supposes to measure that related to performance on the job.

Furthermore, Neo, et al. (2003) added additional criteria to measure the effectiveness of selection process:

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Generalisability – is known as the degree to which the validity of selection method established in one context extends to other contexts. It is because the test validity often extends across situations and subgroups.

Utility – is the extent to which the information presented by selection methods enhances the effectiveness of an organisation.

Legality – the selection methods that chosen should comply with the existing laws and legal procedures.

Selection Method

Organisation uses various sophisticated selection techniques to reduce the risk of hiring inappropriate employees. However, the methods that used must have a connection with the jobs. A survey of selection methods that frequently used by UK organisation indicated that the most general approach is the interview with curriculum vitae and application form (68%) and 58% are using competency-based interview. Other techniques that been used by organisation contain of structured interview, critical behavioural, reference before interview, and various tests.

Application Blanks

Application blanks often the first step used by organisation to select applicants. In order to gather all the relevant information, application will be the efficient method as compared to others (Griffin, 2003). Application forms often provide four types of information for employers:

Education backgrounds and experiences of an applicant enable the employers to make judgements on substantive matters (Bratton and Gold, 2007).

The information that in the application forms can help the employers to draw conclusions about the applicant's previous progress and growth.

The employment history of applicants can help the employers to predict the applicant's stability.

Employers can predict which candidates will succeed on the job based on the information in the applicant forms.

(Example 1) BellSouth use several different forms of application blanks, which tailored to the needs of different components of organisations. The application forms can inform the BellSouth what the applicants have done and what they can bring to job and the organisation (Miner and Crane, 1995).

Application blanks should not contain the questions, which are not related to job, such as race, gender or national origin. Furthermore, employers have to ensure that they comply equal employment law when setting the application forms. There are several questions that the employer should aware (Dessler, 2005):

Education – This question may illegal because the dates of attendance and graduation may reflect the age of applicants. Furthermore, this question should not be asked if it is not a job's requirement (Miner and Crane, 1995).

Arrest Record – Employers must be able to provide a business-related reason, which require the applicants to provide such information. Otherwise, the court will held that employers violate Title VII by disqualifying applicants because of an arrest record (Beardwell and et al., 2004).

Notify in cases of emergency – This question generally requires applicants to provide a person’s information such as name, address, and phone number. Moreover, it often asks the relationship between the person and the applicants, which could show the applicant’s marital status or lineage (Dessler, 2005).

Membership in organisations – The memberships of applicants in clubs, organisation, or societies often reveal the applicants’ race, religion, physical handicaps and so forth (Dessler, 2005).

Physical handicaps – It is unlawful to require the applicants’ to reveal their physical handicaps or health history unless the employers can provide the specification that the health issues may affect the job performance (Miner and Crane 1994). Most of the people refuse to disclose their mental health problem on the application forms because of the stigma and fear of discrimination (www. news. bbc. co. uk). (Example 2) For example, in the application form of GAP, a question “ Do you consider yourself to have a disability” has slightly ruin the disability applicants. If they are rejected, they may think that the organisations reject them because of their disability.

Marital Status – Generally, the application form should not ask the question about the status of the applicants, age of spouse, the number of children and so on (Bratton and Gold, 2007).

Housing – Questions about the housing probably may lead to discriminatory. It can adversely affect the minority group (Dessler, 2005).

Photograph – It is unlawful to request the applicants to submit the application form with photograph because their photograph will imply their age. Thus, it may result in age discrimination (www. timesonline. co. uk).

(Example 3) Today, many bosses are still asking banned questions such as age, length of experiences, and religious. The Employment Protection Act prohibited the employers to ask the questions such as religious, age, race, beliefs, gender, religion, sexuality, disability (www. news. bbc. co. uk).

(Example 4) Asda – the giant supermarket, did not state the question of date of birth on the application form because they found that it is a discrimination act if they require applicants to give their data of birth. Moreover, they emphasised that they will recruit people of all ages – from 16 to over 70 (www. news. bbc. co. uk).

Interview

Interview is the oldest method of selection. There are 2 types of interview (Dessler, 2005):

Unstructured interview – there is no set format to follow, which enable the interviewer to use various direction. Thus, unstructured interview enable the interviewer to ask follow-up questions and pursue points of interests as they develop (Ferris, et al., 2002).

Structured interview – is the interview based on planed questions and responses (Bratton and Gold, 2007). Thus, the structured interview tends to
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more valid and reliable because all of the applicants are asked for the same questions.

Several types of interview content can use for different purpose:

Stress interview – is aimed at identify hypersensitive applicants and those with low or high stress tolerance. Thus, a series of rude question will be asked during stress interview (Dessler, 2007).

Situational Interview – is an interview procedure where managers pose a specific situation to applicants and ask them how they would react to this situation (Leopold, et al., 2005). The applicants are given a situation; managers can request the candidates to provide the answer based on their imagination or previous experiences (Neo, et al., 2003).

Behavioural Interview – concentrate on how interviewee reacted to the actual situation in past and uses it to predict their behaviour in the future (Cole, 2005). (Example 5) Citizen’s Banking Corporation in Flint Michigan used behavioural interview to select the applicants (Dessler, 2005).

Job-related Interview – the question that asked in the interview is job-related questions that focus on relevant past job-related behaviours (Dessler, 2005).

Interview can be administrated in different ways:

Sequential interview – interviewee will be asked by a group of interviewer sequentially and interviewee will be evaluated by each interviewer on a standard form (Dessler, 2005).

Individual Interview – involves face-to face interview, thus provides opportunity for the interviewer to stay close with interviewee (Armstrong, 2006).

Panel interview – a group of interviewer will interview the interviewee simultaneously, thus, it will increase the stress of an applicant (Miner and Crane, 1995).

Mass interview – a group of interviewer will ask a group of interviewee simultaneously (Dessler, 2005).

Computerised interview – interviewee's oral or replies are received in response to computerised oral, visual, or written questions (Dessler, 2005).

Some criticised the use of interviews has an adverse impact on selection because interview tend to subjective and stereotyping (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007). Furthermore, interview is used to predict the performance of applicants, which can result in lack of validity. The lack of reliability of an interview often happens as it is measuring the same things for different applicants (Armstrong, 2006).

When designing and preparing the question for an interview, managers should be able to differentiate the questions which is related and important to the job. Most of the managers tend to ask the questions, which is not related to the job. The questions that often asked by managers can be construed as being biased on the ground of sex, race, disability or other interviewee's life should be avoided. For example, ' Are you planning to have

any more children?', ' Are you married?', ' would it worry you being a member of an ethnic minority here?' (Armstrong, 2006).

Furthermore, it is unlawful to ask the question about the previous compensation packages that offered by the previous employers before providing a compensation packages for the applicants (Beardwell, et al., 2004). It is illegal for employers to ask whether the applicants have ever received workers' compensation for a previous injury or illness.

4. 2. 1 Problems of Delving Applicant's Life

According to Greenberg and Baron (2000), prejudice is a negative attitude toward applicants according to their membership in a particular group. Most of the managers reject applicants due to the prejudicial attitude toward the applicants, which lead to the discrimination happens. Interview, background and references investigation and various tests that applied can be as a selection tool can be result in discrimination.

Discriminations can be either divided into (Cole, 2005):

Overt discrimination is discriminate employees based on their sex, race, and nationality and so on.

Covert discrimination is an unfair treatment according to employee's characteristic that belong to such as gender. For example, managers often refuse female applicants because women are emotional.

There are two types of discriminations (Beardwell, et al., 2004):

Direct discrimination often occurs when applicant is treated unfairly as compared to others due to their sex, marital status, race and so on (Leopold, et al., 2005).

Indirect discrimination generally happens when requirements are imposed that are not necessary for the job. For example, the types of test that applied as selection methods for the job must be based on job requirement.

Otherwise, direct discrimination will be resulted.

4. 2. 2 The Issues Arise From Interview

The use of interview as selection method has been open to criticism on grounds of discriminating against the applicant on the factors that are beyond their control. The questions such as age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation that asked during interview process can give rise to the issues of discrimination, morality and invasion of privacy.

Age

Age Discrimination Act makes it unlawful for the employers to specify age when selecting staff. It is unlawful to use terms such as ‘youngish’, ‘recently qualified’ and ‘under forty’ unless employers are able to provide a clear business-related reason for the specification of the requirement. Most of the organisations commonly discriminate the people for employment who are between 40 and 65 years of age (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007).

Managers usually have the assumption those older employees unable to perform the work efficiency because old people tend to work in slow motion. Furthermore, some organisation’s compensation system is based on the age – the older people with experience often receive higher pay than younger

people. Thus, managers tend to ask the age of applicants during the interview and try to reject those older employees indirectly. It is unethical and unlawful to reject applicants based on age.

(Example 6) A recruitment advertisement with the phrase ‘ youthful enthusiasm’ had resulted in discrimination. Mr. McCoy claimed that he has a lot of experience and knowledge of timber trade, thus, he is able to handle the job well. But, he was rejected after two interviews. Mr. McCoy was being asked age related questions during the interview. The court held that it is unlawful to apply age as one of the selection factors. Thus, Mr. McCoy won the case ([www. news. bbc. co. uk](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk)).

According to Paul Newton, regardless of any other criteria, employers reject the applicants once they notice applicants’ data of birth. This may lead to indirect discrimination, thus, it is unethical for the employers to state the age questions in the application form ([www. news. bbc. co. uk](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk)).

(Example 7) In the case of O’Connor v. Consolidated Coin Caterers Corp, an employee claimed for discrimination of age over 40 because she was replaced by an employee 16 younger than her. As a result, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA) judged that Consolidated Coin Caterers Corporation was accused of age discrimination (Dessler, 2005).

(Example 8) Megan Thomas claimed that she was unfairly dismissed after being informed she was not old enough to deal with its members. The London Employment Tribunal held that Megan Thomas was discriminated against because of her age ([www. caterarsearch. com](http://www.caterarsearch.com)).

Sexual Orientation

Other than that, interview's questions should not include the sexual life of applicants. Gay and lesbian employees often use plenty of time and stress trying to conceal a big part of their identity.

(Example 9) A gay vice president of a large office-equipment manufacturer in Chicago had the opportunity to promote as a CEO of the company; however, he fears his chances will be ruined as the management aware that he is sexual orientation (Greenberg and Baron, 2000).

(Example 10) Nonetheless, the vice president of human resource for Lotus Development Corp. reiterated that extending fringe benefit that tailored for sexual orientation employees is an important key to the organisation success in attracting highly talented technical personnel (Armstrong, 2006).

(Example 11) In the case of Smith v Liberty Mutual Insurance Co., (1978) the plaintiff was rejected employment because of his sexual life. However, the courts claimed that employers have to guarantee equal job opportunities regardless of their sexual life (Huang and Kleiner, 2000).

Race or Ethnic Minority

Generally, managers will enquire the race or nationality of applicants during the interview process. Organisations tend to refuse to hire applicants, who are different from them. It is because organisations believe different race or nationality of an applicant probably can influence the thinking and the way of the applicant performs his/her job. However, it is unlawful to discriminate against any applicants because of their ethnic origin (Dong and Kleiner, 1999).

(Example 12) Toyota was accused of breaching the racial discrimination law – an industrial tribunal noted that Vijay Madara unfairly dismissed from training courses in car plant (www. bbc. co. uk).

(Example 13) In 1993, the Supreme Court of the state of Washington held that Seattle bank was accused – race discrimination against a Cambodian-American employee who was fired due to his accent (Greenberg and Baron, 2000).

(Example 14) Western Digital Corp. Was accused for race discrimination as the company favoured white men during job cuts last year at its Irvine headquarters. Qualified hardworking Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Filipino, Vietnamese and many other Asian people are often denied job opportunities or discriminated against for reasons that are not related to their performance and abilities. However, it is unlawful to deny the employment opportunity of an individual regarding to his/her ethnic origin and race (Dong and Kleiner, 1999).

Gender

The application form should not comprise the question about gender because some of organisations may refuse to hire female to the vacant position. Female applicants tend to be rejected by organisation because managers always think that female applicants less productivity than male applicants. Moreover, female applicants less flexible than the male applicants because female applicants often take care of family and unable to transfer from one country to another. Indeed, only 3.0 percent of senior

managers and 5.7 percent of corporate directors of Fortune 500 companies are women (Greenberg and Baron, 2000).

(Example 15) Australian Iron and Steel Pty Ltd applied a 'last on, first off' redundancy policy at its Port Kembla steelworks. The High Court held that the policy had discriminated the women indirectly, even though, on the surface, it appeared to be neutral policy. It is because the past discriminatory hiring practices that favoured men, a higher proportion of female workers were rejected (Cole, 2005).

(Example 16) The Lord Chancellor – Lord Irvine has been accused of indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex. The court found that he tends to hire white men to be his special adviser and reject the women and black people (www.news.bbc.co.uk).

Marital status

Furthermore, question of marital status and the number of kids should not ask during the interview. It is because the married people may feel that they are discriminated if they are not hired by managers. Married people tend to close to the family and take care of the family. For instance, most of the married people will take day off if their children are sick (Beardwell, et al., 2004).

Nonetheless, married female normally are ready to pregnant. Thus, if the organisations reject the applicants, they may think that the organisations discriminate them as a married people. It is because organisation has to pay for the pregnancy leave and more benefits for the pregnant women.

(Example 17) During the interview, Ms Tobin was rejected by the store manager because she was pregnant. The tribunal claimed that the store manager was not ready to hire MS Tobin when the store manager was informed that she was pregnant. Thus, Ms Tobin was awarded 2, 500 in compensation for injury to her feeling ([www. news. bbc. co. uk](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk)).

(Example 18) The manager of John Martin Group in East Lothian refused the request of the Mr Walkingshaw to work as a part timer after having children. Thus, Mr Walkingshaw thinks that he was treated differently from the women in the company who had requested for part-time work. The tribunal claimed that Mr Walkingshaw had been discriminated against because of his sex ([www. hrmguide. co. uk](http://www.hrmguide.co.uk)).

(Example 19) British Airways' pilot – Jessica Starmar claimed that she was discriminated against because of her sex. She has been rejected to work as part timer so she can look after her children. ([www. newsbbc. co. uk](http://www.newsbbc.co.uk)).

Background and References Investigation

References and biographical data investigation are used universally in UK, along with the interview (Ferris, et al., 2002). Often, more than one applicant is eligible for the jobs, thus, the managers will try to check and verify the job applicant's background information and references (Armstrong, 2006).

Furthermore, background and reference investigation can help the organisations to predict individual's absenteeism because employers believes that the factors such as personal or family related characteristics can affect absenteeism indirectly (Rosenblatt and Shirom, 2005).

Background investigation and references check with the purpose of obtaining the factual confidential information of the applicants and opinion about his/her character and suitability for a job. (Example 20) BellSouth, for instance, using background and reference check as one of the selection tools. The director estimates that 15% to 20% of applicants secrete their own confidential information. He reiterated that it is general and common to find someone who applies and looks good, but with all types of criminal history (Dessler, 2005).

(Example 21) APCOA Inc. (a Cleveland based company that operates parking facilities at 400 urban sites and 70 airports in 42 states) carries out background checks include driving records, credit history, criminal record, and education and employment verification. The types of background checks vary across the position in the company (Neo, et al., 2003). For instance, the level of education check is needed with the purpose of hiring an accountant. In contrast, there is no requirement to have education check for a cleaner.

Telephone references provide advantages for the managers because people are more likely to give honest opinion orally than writing (Armstrong, et al, 2006). (Example 22) Northwestern Bell's district managers found that reference check can inaccurate because previous employers mostly said that " this is the greatest individual the world has never seen". (Example 23) Intuit Corporation, the Menlo Park, California, Software Company that produces Quicken, attempts to get rid of these problems by asking references in large amount such as 10 references (Neo, et al., 2003).

4. 3. 1 Problems Arise from Background and References Investigation

It is important to have background and references check because dangerous will be result if previous employer didn't provide relevant information.

(Example 24) In Florida case, an employee was terminated due to allegedly bringing a handgun to work. After that, he went for other company and fired by his employer for absenteeism. Subsequently, he returned to the second company and shot a supervisor, HR director and 3 staff before committing suicide (Dessler, 2005).

(Example 25) Airlines sued by employees for invasion of privacy because providing negative references and documented poor performance. Thus, most of the employers fear to provide inaccurate references. Consequently, the American Airlines pilots mistakenly thought there was engine failure and the commuter plane he was piloting crashed near North Carolina (Jones and George, 2003).

(Example 26) A previous employee of California telecommunications company had hired BadReferences. com to check whether his previous employer give some bad-mouth on him towards his current company. Finally, the employee won \$45, 000 in compensation due to the defamation (Dessler, 2005).

Although it may be unethical for employer to check the criminal records of applicants, it is necessary to check the criminal records of the applicants in order to avoid second tragedy happen. (Example 27) In case of Ponticas v. K. M. S. Investments, an apartment manager with passkey entered a woman's

apartment and assaulted her. The courts found that employers negligent in not properly checking the manager's background before hiring (negligent hiring). Hence, employer liable when employees with criminal records to commit crimes (Deresky, 2005).

Furthermore, the background and reference investigation may lead to the invasion of privacy. Employers have no authority to have a criminal or credit check, unless, employers are able to give a job-related reason for carrying out the certain investigation. (Example 28) In Australia, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission claimed that applicants are protected from being rejected because of their criminal record ([www. hr-topics. com](http://www.hr-topics.com)).

Organisation should not further background and reference investigation on sexual issue. It is because this type of question can ruin the sense of self respect of the applicants (especially applicants, who are homosexual). The applicants, who are homosexual, may fear of being 'discovered'. It is unethical and unlawful to refuse the applicant on the basis of sexual orientation.

Other Selection Methods

Preemployment Information Services

Nowadays, most of the companies are using preemployment information services to delving into an applicant's life. It employs databases to accumulate information about matters such as workers' compensation and credit histories. However, companies should select the firm that complies with all relevant rules and regulation such as the Fair Credit Reporting Act and uses only legal data sources (Dessler, 2005).

Based on the information that provided, some companies may discriminate the employees according to their race, religion and disability. Thus, the 1990 American with Disabilities Act (ADA) forbid employers from making preemployment inquiries into existence or severity of a disability. Further, it is unlawful to offer the job compensation to the applicants after reviewing the applicants' previous compensation claims (Dessler, 2005).

Physical tests

Physical Ability - can be used to examine the applicant performance, predict occupational injuries and disabilities (Neo, et al., 2003). Physical test can used to avoid the employees filling the compensation claim for pre-existing injuries. Neo, et al., (2003) identified 7 classes of tests: muscular power, muscular endurance, cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, balance and coordination.

Physical test has adverse impact on applicants with disabilities. Under Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), employer has no right to reject an applicant with disabilities if he/she is qualified and able to perform the basic job function with reasonable accommodation (Dessler, 2005). Moreover, physical test often applied to the jobs that require some physical feature such as production job applicants (Greenberg and Baron, 2000).

Furthermore, some employers may reject the applicants for high stress job who have health problems such as heart problem. It is because employers may think that the employees with heath problem may not able to carry out the job successfully. However, it is unethical to reject employees because of their health problem.

(Example 29) PC Paul Weaver wins disability discrimination case – he was rejected (because he was suffering from a debilitating condition) to join a scheme, which is developed to give long-serving officers an alternative to be retained by Force beyond their usual retirement age (www. rjw. co. uk).

(Example 30) Greiner Engineering, Inc of Irving, Texas provided its employees in wheelchairs simply by substituting a lighter weight door in its rest rooms and by raising a drafting table with some bricks under legs (Greenberg and Baron, 2000).

(Example 31) In Scotland, there are two applicants was rejected because of colour-blindness and they found that colour blindness only found in men. Thus, the physical test of colour blindness accused of sex or disability discrimination. Mr Dixon had lost the similar claim under disability discrimination legislation because Tribunal claimed that it is important to hire officers with the colour-blindness condition (www. news. bb. co. uk).

(Example 32) In Volkswagen's Wolfsburg plant, they are practising a policy of integrating people with disabilities into workforce. Thus, they had employed an employee – Mr Janz, who is blind.

4. 4. 3 Genetic Screening

Genetic Screening – attempt to measure the employee's physical by using blood testing. In 1990, 15% of US companies had intended to use genetic screening as a tool of physical testing. However, there is strong debate over the ethics of basing employment decision on unchangeable traits as the use of genetic screening has increased. Applicants are unable to improve or change as the companies are using genetic screening as a selection tool.

Furthermore, companies also will be forced to design a hassle-free workplace (Kramar, et al., 1997).

4. 2. 4 AIDS Test

(Example 33) IBM and Johnson and Johnson has provided applicants with AIDS or HIV positive with equal opportunities as applic