

British armed forces



Management now are aware of the importance of employees, hence using the correct recruitment and selection methods are crucial part of management functions. The success of any organisation depends largely on acquiring the right balance of employees, with the right skills and abilities. Most companies have an established personnel department responsible for this function. (Armstrong, M. 2009)

Poor recruitment and selection techniques can result in rise in cost, lower morale, and a rise in labour turnover. As a result of these, the aim of management is to reduce cost and maximise productivity. This assignment looks at recruitment and selection methods used in the British Armed Forces, selection methods, reliability and validity. (Noe, R. A. et al, 2004)

However, interviews and its benefits and types are also dealt with in details. The different types and drawbacks of test, and government legislation form the basis of employment and organisation has to follow set procedures as such. These are all discussed in subsequent chapters. (Noe, R. A. et al, 2004)

This assignment focuses on recruitment and methods of selection processes. These systems may be the first formal interaction which candidates have with the organisation. Their impact may extend across a range of stages in the pre-employment relationship with the organisation, not only during the initial attraction, the selection process and the offer of employment, but also in the subsequent attrition, and decision by existing staff to leave. Example Toyota's recruitment and selection practices are tailored to find the best possible applicants to hire. (Beardwell, J., and Claydon, T. 2007)

1. 2 Recruitment and selection in the British Armed Forces

The British Armed Forces described recruiting as the measures taken in order to attract a pool of candidates for selection. Recruits are then taking in for training in order to prepare them for their careers in the Army. The training is a continuous process throughout a soldiers' career. (www. armedforces. co. uk, 2011)

1. 2. 1 Army Recruiting and Training Directorate (ARTD)

This body is in charge of the step by step progress of potential recruits from the initial recruitment through to the selection process, specialist training and deployment in the army field. (www. armedforces. co. uk, 2011)

The ARTD has an estimated annual budget approximately £700m in which they have enlist 13000 potential candidates, and train 100000 soldiers and officers. The ARTD functions operations are categorised into three phases; such are, general training, Specialist training and Career training. (www. bbc. co. uk, 2011)

1. 2. 2 Soldier Selection

The selection process requires all potential recruit to do an entry assessment at the Army's Careers Office. Here potential recruits will undertake a touch screen British Army Recruit Battery (BARB) test, psychometric test all computer based designed to see which area in the Army is best suited for the recruit. The tests also include a numeric and literacy test.. (www. armedforces. co. uk, 2011)

Candidates who successfully passed both the tests and interviews will be booked for further test. This test is normally a two days course at an Army

Development and Selection Centre (ADSC). Here candidates will undergo a thorough medical examination, physical assessment tests, and fitness checks to determine the suitability for an Army career. (www. armedforces. co. uk, 2011)

At the end of the two days course, candidates will be informed whether they are success or not, hence, if successful candidates can be given a place in any of the trade they wish to undertake, a Phase 1 training, which is a 14 weeks course, designed to give candidates all the required skills to be a soldier. At the first day of training, recruits will formally enlist in the British Army, and Phase 2 specialised training will begin at the Army Training Regiment, Pirbright, Surrey. (www. armedforces. co. uk, 2011)

3. 1 Methods of Selection

Selection is the process of identifying the suitability of applicants from a given pool of candidates. The main reasons of carrying out selection are: (Dessler, G. 2011)

- To gather relevant information about jobs, applicants and organisations in order to ensure a better quality decisions.
- To change information and predict future behaviour
- To facilitate cost-benefits for the investment made in an employee
- To check, recruit and place job candidates in the best interests of organisation and applicants. (Dessler, G. 2011)

3. 1. 1 Reliability

For employers to ensure that selection has been free of any kind of bias the reliability of the tests has to be demonstrated. Reliability refers to the logical

coherence of scores collected by the same person when tested over time on the same test. If test outcomes are not consistent, it will be unethical to take any measures on the basis of the test. It shows the extent to which similarities or differences in scores could be associate with errors. Dunnette (1966) has identified four sources of errors. (Mathis, R. L. and Jackson, J. H. 2007)

1. Errors due to inadequate sampling of contents indicating that the items for the two tests may have been slightly different.
2. Errors due to chance response tendencies indicating guessing or random responding to the items.
3. Errors due to changes in the testing environment indicating the effect of physical conditions such as light, temperature, time of the day.
4. Errors due to the changes in the person taking the test indicating the influence of health, fatigue, mood, and practice. The different types of reliability can be found in the appendix sections. (Mathis, R. L. and Jackson, J. H. 2007)

3. 1. 2 Validity

This is the most important requirement of a test. Validity means degree to which a test measures what it claims to measure. A test with a high validity means it is nearly comparable to the test's objective. A test with a weak validity means it does not measure what it intend to measure. As a results, there is no prove to use the test outcomes for their primary objective. There are different ways to establish the validity of a test. The different types of validity can be found in the appendix sections. (Legge, K. 2004)

3. 2 Ability Tests

These are designed to measure individual's capabilities to carry out a task in a specific and unique manner. There are many different types of ability test; (Milmore, M. 2003)

3. 2. 1 Cognitive ability tests

This measures a person's thinking, memory, reasoning, verbal and numerical capabilities. This can be used to show applicants knowledge of terminology and concepts, word fluency, comprehension, spatial orientation, conceptual reason, general and mutual ability. Organisation should ensure that these tests determine cognitive abilities than a job related. (Armstrong, M. 2009)

3. 2. 2 Physical Ability Tests

This measures what a person can do with his/her strength, endurance, and flexibility. For example 1, the British Armed Forces uses this type of test to assess new recruits to ascertain the suitability for a career in the Army. (www. thearmedforces. co. uk, 2011)

Another Example 2 is Ford Motor Company, where line workers regularly lift and carry equipment, climbs ladders and performs other physical tasks. (Mathis, R. L. and Jackson, J. H. 2007)

Another example 3, Township Fire Department also uses physical ability test (PAT) in assessing potential applicant and highlighted the importance of physical fitness of fire fighters. (Armstrong, M. 2009)

Example 4 Portland police bureau uses this to determine the suitability of professional police officers. (Armstrong, M. 2009)

3. 3 Personality Tests

This is a unique mixture of individual characteristics that can affect how an individual interacts in his/her work environment. As a result, a large number of organisations use different personality tests that determine the extent to which applicants' characteristics suits specific job criteria. (Torrington, D., Hall, L., and Taylor, S., 2008)

Example 6, the Finish Line, a large retail chain specialising in sporting products, offers job applicants a web-based test which evaluates their personal tendencies and test scores are use to group individuals for the hiring decision. (Mathis, R. L. and Jackson, J. H. 2007)

Another example 7 is Blockbuster and Sports Authority also uses similar tools in their pre-employment screening. (The Economist, 2011)

Example 8 a California – based technology firm also found that the use of personality tests enhanced the selection decision made in the company. (Financial Times, 2010)

3. 4 Assessment Centres

This consists of various selection techniques, and group selection methods which are considered as a major element, as with work simulation programs and presentation. Assessment centres are used to assess, in depth, a group of broadly similar applicants, using a set of competencies required for the post on offer and a series of behavioural statements which indicate how these competencies are played out in practice. Example 5, Cadbury Schweppes. (Beardwell, J., and Claydon, T. 2007) Example, Energis utilises a series of assessment centres.

3. 5 Honesty tests and Drug test

Many organizations formerly employed polygraph tests, or lie detectors, to evaluate job applicants, but this changed with the passage of the Polygraph Act in 1988. This act prohibited the use of polygraphs in employment screening for most organizations. A new technique known as the honesty paper-and-pencil tests was born. This typically ask candidates directly about their attitude towards theft or their past experiences with theft. (Noe, R. A., et al 2004)

For example 9, Nordstorm, the large department store chain, uses Reid Survey to screen for violent tendencies, drug use and dishonesty. (The New York Times, 2010)

As with theft, there is a growing perception of the problems caused by drug use among employees. For example 10, Fortune 1000 chief executives cited substance abuse as a significant problem in their organization. (Noe, R. A., et al 2004)

3. 6 Polygraphs

This is more generally and incorrectly termed as the “ lie detector” which is a mechanical device that measures a person’s heart rate, galvanic skin responses and breathing rate. The ideology of this device is that if a person answers a question wrongly, the body’s physiological responses will “ show” that a person gave an incorrect response through the polygraph’s recording machine. They play a vital role in criminal investigations and background checks. For examples 11, companies such as Pick n’ Pay, KFC and First National Bank all uses the polygraph to assess the trustworthiness of potential candidates. (Brown, C. (2010)

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3. 7 References and Biographical Data

References are information that an employer gets from other people who know the applicant, either through friends or previous employer. The evidence on the reliability and validity of reference checks suggests that these are, at best, weak predictors of future success on the job. One major reason for this is that most reference letters are so positive that it is difficult to differential applicants. (Van den Brink, et al, 2010)

For example 14, Northwestern Bell's district manager of management employment notes " They all say, ' This is the greatest individual the world have ever seen, the next president, at least'..... It is not always accurate. (Noe, R. A. et al, 2004)

For example 15, Intuit Corporation tries to get around these problems by requesting references in bulk – sometimes asking for as many as 12 letters of reference. The evidence on the utility of biographical information gathered from candidates is far more accurate. The biographical information form also provides a written document that the organisation can verify via outside checks. (Pollitt, D. 2007)

For example 16, APCOA Inc. conducts a battery of checks depending on the position, and such investigation may include driving records, credit history and criminal record. (Ordanini, A., and Silvestri, G. 2008)

3. 8 Problems with using test

There are a number of problems associated with using tests.

1. (Brown, G. T. L. 2008)

2. In most cases, tests may not always be fair as there may be an element of racial, social and sexual bias in the questions and scoring system. For instance, some cultures may be unused to 'working against the clock'. (Hao, Z., and Liden, R. C. 2011)
3. Validation procedures take a lot of time, but yet still are essential to the use of tests. Issues such as the use of web testing, new types of tests, like emotional intelligence tests, are being developed without sufficient validation. (Tulip 2002)
4. The criteria used in defining good job performance are usually inadequate, hence such criteria are subjective and to some extent for the mediocre correlations between job performance and test results. (Collings, D. G., and Wood, G. 2009)
5. Most tests are job specific and unique. Therefore, when the job for which the test is used changes, then the test can no longer be said to relate with job performance in the same manner. (Mathis, R. L. and Jackson, J. H. 2007)

4. 1 Government Policy and Legislation

The final standard that any form of selection method should adhere to is the law. Legislation has a vital role in the recruitment and selection process especially in preventing discrimination on the grounds of disability, sex, race and age. (Noe, R. A. et al, 2004)

The Civil Rights Act of 1991, an extension of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 – protects individuals from discrimination based on race, colour, sex, religion, and national origin with respect to hiring as well as compensation and working conditions. There are three major differences between the two Acts.

(CIPD, 2010). One recent example 12 can be seen at Coca-Cola and this is highlighted in the “ Competing by Meeting Stakeholders’ Needs” box; (Lavigna, R. J, and Hays S. W. 2004)

Sex and Race DiscriminationThe Sex Discrimination Act (1975) was introduced to protect people and made it unlawful to discriminate based on sex or marital status either directly or indirectly in the field of employment. However, the Race Relations Act (1976) also prohibits employers from discriminating individuals on the grounds of race, colour and nationality. (Torrington, D., Hall, L., and Taylor, S., 2008)

Age Discrimination – In the UK, age discrimination was introduced in 2006 and makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate based on age in recruiting, promotion and training. (Noe, R. A. et al, 2004) Examples 13 of companies sued under this act include CBS Inc., McDonnell Douglas, Northwest Airlines, Disney, and Martin Marietta. (Noe, R. A. et al, 2004)

5. 1 Selection Interviews

An interview is a discussion between an employer and a potential candidate for the benefit of both parties to get to know each other for the purpose of filling a vacant position within a company. There are two major reasons for conducting an interview; as an initial screening, and to ascertain that the individual has met minimum qualifications required, and then an in depth interview with HR staff. (Singh, P. 2008)

5. 2 Types of selection interviews

5. 3 Structured Interviews

This conducted by using standardised questions for all candidates to ensure comparisons can be done easily. It provides the opportunity for the interviewer to design relevant questions and also to facilitate a standardised interviewee evaluation. It is useful in the initial screening process because many applicants can be effectively evaluated and compared. (Valentinis, L., et al 2009)

5. 3. 1 Behavioural Interview

The interviewers often use an experiential type of structured interview. This is a method in which the interviewer will give applicants a job scenario (in which he/she will be looking for certain skills be it multi tasking, flexibility, diplomacy, patience, marketing tactics, and so on) and ask for the candidates opinion in exact steps. (Holtbrugge, D., et al 2010)

Example, AT&T and Accenture have been using behavioural interviewing for about 15 years now, and because increasing numbers of employers are using behaviour-based methods to screen job candidates, understanding how to excel in this interview environment is becoming a crucial job-hunting skill.

Example 17, Capital one uses tests that assist in the evaluation of important behavioural and cultural-fit job criteria. (Mathis, R. L. and Jackson, J. H. 2007)

Example Century 18, Theatre also made use of this test and finds it to be saving them money and resources. A recent study indicated that “ past behaviour” structured-type interviews are better at identifying achievement

at work than are situational interviews, hence showing the efficacy of this interview strategy. (Mathis, R. L. and Jackson, J. H. 2007)

For example 19, the Struder Group consulting firm, after working with a multitude of health care firms across the nation, identified the use of behavioural interviews as a positive practice in organisations. (Gump, S. E. 2006)

5. 3. 2 Competency Interview

This type of interview is similar to the behavioural interview except that the questions are designed to provide the interviewer with something to measure the applicant's response against. Competency-based interviews are structured, with questions that relate directly to the essential criteria and competencies required for the post. Using competencies as a benchmark to predict job candidate success is useful because interviewers can identify the factors needed in specific jobs. (Doherty, R. (2010)

However, this interview takes time and sometimes is of more benefit to management-oriented people. However, it is also important that you fit in with the team, and with the employer's culture and style. A competency-based interview is designed to ask you additional questions about your character, soft skills and personal attributes that let both you and the employer determine whether you fit their needs. (Cardy. R. L., et al 2002)

5. 3. 3 Situational interview – In situational interviewing, job-seekers are asked to respond to a specific situation they may face on the job, and some aspects of it are similar to behavioural interviews. These types of questions are designed to draw out more of your analytical and problem-solving skills,

as well as how you handle problems with short notice and minimal preparation. (Dessler, G. 2011)

For example 20, a variation of situational format that is used by companies such as GE and Microsoft is termed the case study interview, which requires a job applicant to find out and correct organisational challenges during the meeting. (Beardwell, J., and Claydon, T. 2007)

5. 4 Unstructured or Less-structured interview

An unstructured interview is one where there may be a script to get the process started, but once the interview gets going the interviewer will start to follow her own points of interest and stop following any script. (Searle, R. H. 2003)

An unstructured interview occurs when the interviewer improvises by asking questions that are not predetermined. A semi structured interview is a guided conversation in which broad questions are asked and new questions arise as a result of the discussion. (Searle, R. H. 2003)

5. 4. 1 Stress Job Interviews

The stress interviewing technique is typically used only for positions in which the job-seeker will be facing stress on the job, and the interviewer wants to see how well you can handle the pressure. The key to surviving stress interviews is to remain calm, keep a sense of humor, and avoid getting angry or defensive. (Ball, F. W., and Ball, B. 2010)

6. 1 Advantages of interviews

The following are the advantages of using interview as a method of selection:

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- Interviews provide opportunities for interviewers to ask probing questions about the candidate's experience and to explore the extent to which the candidate's competences match those specified for the job;
- it enable interviewers to describe the job and the organisation in more detail, suggesting some of the terms of the psychological contract;
- provide opportunities for candidates to ask questions about the job and to clarify issues concerning training, career prospects, the organisation and terms conditions of employment;
- The interviewer may try to stress you in one of several ways, such as asking four or five questions in a row, acting rude or sarcastic, disagreeing with you, or simply keeping you waiting for a long period.
(Armstrong, M. 2009)

6. 2 Disadvantages of interview

- Snap judgments: some interviewers decide whether an applicant is suitable within the first two to four minutes of the interview, and spend the rest of the time searching for crucial evidence to support their judgement.
- Negative emphasis: when evaluating suitability, the unfavourable information regarding a candidate is often more emphasised than the information that favours the candidate.
- Biases and stereotyping: a bias can be describe as a situation where the interviewer favours or select people that they consider to be the same as them based on various personal factors. However, candidates' ethnic names and accents can negatively impact personal evaluations. Also, older candidates are most of the time less likely to be interviewed

and hired compared to younger applicants. (Mathis, R. L. and Jackson, J. H. 2007)

7.1 Conclusions

A year and a half ago, organisations such as investment banks example HSBC, blue chips and consulting firms were competing with dotcoms companies for example Amazon, and Facebook over recruiting the best people. But in the present environment, there are waves of redundancies hence many are grateful that they have a job. However, boom or bust, good recruitment and selection practices are essential.

In conclusions, this assignment agrees with the statement; “ the most efficient solution to the problem of interview is to do away with interview and substitute paper-and-pencil measures” This is because research has demonstrated that interviews are an inefficient method of predicting future success in a job. According to Smart (1983) argues that only 94 out of 1000 interviewee respond honestly in conventional interviews. (Armstrong, M. 2009)

Factors such as poor reliability and validity of test scores are also major problems of interviews. Different interviewers have their own different styles and approaches, inconsistent handling of different candidates, variation in assessment criteria, biases, and errors are all factors that limits the use of interviews as a method of selection. (Armstrong, M. 2009)