

Employee Selection Process: An Approach for Effective Organizational Performance



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ABSTRACT: This paper is aimed at examining the relationship between employee selection process and organizational performance. Adopting a proportionate stratified random sampling technique, 255 employees were profiled amongst ten (10) banks in Lagos State. Guided by the Human capital Theory, data gathered by this cross-sectional survey was analysed through standardized multiple regression. Three selection process variables – applicant interview, cognitive ability test, and personality questionnaire - were regressed on organizational performance. A preliminary investigation revealed the absence of multicollinearity in the correlation matrix. The ANOVA table indicates that the proposed model is significant, $F(3, 251) = 68.446, p < 0.001$. Applicant interview made the most unique, and statistically significant contribution to the prediction of organizational performance. This outcome empirically supports that employee selection process cannot be jettisoned when measuring organizational performance. This paper showcases a unique deviation from extant literature which had used market share value, customer base, financial strengths, annual returns, and so forth as parameters to measure organizational performance. Hence, theoretically, this outcome bridges the lacuna that exist in organization performance literature. Practically, the paper suggests to industry experts that the best talents needed to achieve organizational excellence are preferably selected through interview. Apart from the expensive nature of stratified random sampling, this paper is limited by its inability to differentiate between in-person interview and virtual interview. Future study may consider the various forms of interviews to strengthen the outcome of this paper.

KEYWORDS: Employee Selection Process, Organizational Performance, Applicant Interview, Cognitive Ability Test, Personality Questionnaire, Lagos State.

INTRODUCTION

Employees are distinct in that they bring their own viewpoints, attitudes, and qualities to the workplace. When managed correctly, this human capital has a huge positive influence on organizations [1]. The fundamental goals of human resource management are the development of individuals, their talents, and the process that involves the growth of the entire firm [2]. In terms of recruitment and selecting procedures, the strategies used to attract and pick individuals in their various companies varies [3]. The selection process is how firms choose the candidates they consider worthy for any vacant position within the organization [4], [5]. The selection process differs from one company to the next, from one position to the next, and from one nation to the next. Recent technical advancements, globalization, societal trends, and organizational changes have introduced new hurdles to employee recruitment and selection [5], [6]. It appears that the only way to achieve expected performance is through effective recruiting and selection methods [4].

Selecting applicants is time-consuming and costly in terms of appointing the right individual for the job [7]. However, since organizations exist not to be charitable, but also to generate a profit [8], matching the right person with the right job, especially in key positions, becomes critical to organizational performance [3], [9], [10]. This implies that the company must plan strategically for its short, medium, and long-term growth [11]. Several methods on how to improve organizational performance have been developed [5]. In order for a business to remain competitive, the specific approach utilized changes with the type of job [12]. Similarly, for a company to remain relevant and vibrant, its selection practices must evolve with contemporary trends [13]–[15]. All of these difficulties need ongoing investigation.

In Nigeria, unabated selection malpractices have revealed that detailed and proper departmental policies and procedures are lacking in organizations [16]. Consequently, this affects organizational objective, mission, and vision. Due to wrong recruitment and selection process of employees, studies revealed that some organizations had suffered unexpected litigations [8]. Apparently, these organizations fail to carefully consider what skills, competencies and traits are required of candidates for vacant posts before

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advertising. It should be noted, however, that virtuous and holistic selection practices would appear to eliminate the concept of garbage-in and garbage-out [1]. This is because employees are seen as the face of any firm [17]. As a result, every employer is expected to be committed to clear objectives with regards to selection practices. Banks may face hazards like as liquidation, litigation, high staff turnover, poor profit, forcible merger and acquisition, voluntary or early employee retirement, low consumer patronage, and so on in the absence of defined policies with regards to selection procedure [18], [19]. As employee selection play a central role in ensuring the best skills are present in the banking sector, flawed appointment processes can undermine the development goals as well as slow down the transformation process. Thus, to achieve its full vision, the banking sector must improve on its ability to select staff more effectively. This means that both human resource departments and managers themselves must enhance their skills in performing this crucial function.

The goal of this study is to highlight the effect of selection procedures on organizational performance. Some studies have used market share, profitability and annual returns to measure the performance [20]–[22]. Other studies also combined both recruitment and section procedure in their research [9], [12], [23]. This paper focuses only on the relationship between selection process and organizational performance. This is a unique deviation from extant literature which have used other parameters to measure organizational performance. This paper advocates that success of every organization integrally starts from carefully selecting the employees that drive its course. Available literature has shown that the success of the enterprise is directly linked to the effectiveness of employees [9], [24], [25]. It is against this background that it becomes imperatively important in this study to bridge this research gap by exploring the impact of employee selection practices on organizational performance. Hence, the following hypotheses were developed:

H₁: Applicant interview relates positively with organizational performance.

H₂: Cognitive ability test relates positively with organizational performance.

H₃: Personality questionnaire relates positively with organizational performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Selection

Scholars and human resource professionals have described selection in many ways. Selection is defined as the process of identifying and striving to attract job prospects who are competent and capable of efficiently filling gaps in work roles [26]. A study described selection as the process of determining which persons would best match certain tasks in the institutional setting, taking into consideration individual variations, job needs, and the organization's internal and external contexts [27]. On the one hand, selection can mean selecting a person from a pool of applicants who, in the selector's judgment, meets the requisite standard of performance [1]. On the other hand, selection is based on individual distinctions amongst humans, i.e., qualities range widely from person to person, with each individual possessing unique features and talents [28]. Essentially, selection is a forecast of the future based on human variations, job needs, and the institution's internal and external environments. Selection necessitates understanding of the task or work at hand, as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to do the job successfully [10].

Other research [3] sees selection as a systematic effort to identify the most suitable candidates to fill an identified vacancy [3]. This author is of the view that selection is a very important process which requires planning and objectivity belief that organization performs better with the people who make it up. A study contends that selection is the process of choosing from the pool of potential employees available based on organization's requirements [8]. Organization's requirements will include the need to take account of the expectations of existing employees, for example, the new employee will find acceptance with existing employees [29]. Selection is a crucial function of public personnel administration [3]. One thing that stands clear from the above is that selection is usually made from among many applicants that have applied for positions and meet the organization requirement.

Employee Selection Process

The purpose of selection is to match people to work [28]. It is the most important element in any institution's management of people, simply because it is not feasible to optimize the effectiveness of human resource by whatever method, if the quantity or quality of people is less than the institution's needs. In the twentieth century, selection was primarily concerned with matching people to specific jobs. However, in the twenty-first century the importance of flexibility and the rapid pace of change makes it more important to look at matching work in the wider context [6]. It has now become necessary to look beyond the skills for the specific job in hand in assessing people, and to look at the potential range of matches for the person [4]. Such matches include culture, personality, and movement in and out of the institution while interacting with a wider range of potential colleagues [30]. Selection involves matching the requirements of a job with attributes of candidates. This paper discusses only three forms of selection methods. They are discussed subsequently.

Applicant Interview

Recent research posit that interviews are the most frequently used selection technique, and it is very unusual for candidates to be appointed without interviews [31]. Interviews may either be structured or unstructured [32]. The unstructured interview generally takes the form of a free-ranging discussion, sometimes with the interviewer using a set of

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favourite questions but giving the interviewee free rein to answer in a general way [33]. The structured interview obtains specific information about the criteria and the answers are scored against a consistent scoring range [33]. The structured interview may be a situational or behavioural interview [34], [35]. In situational interviewing candidates are presented with a future hypothetical situation and asked to explain how they would deal with it. The answers are assessed for evidence of relevant ability. In behavioural interviews, the questions are aimed at drawing out past examples of behaviours, linked to specific competencies [35]. Extant research shows that behavioural interviews are a more effective form of structured interview [36]

Cognitive Ability Tests

Cognitive ability tests are widely used in the field of psychology and human resources to assess an individual's mental capabilities such as their problem-solving skills, critical thinking, memory, attention, and reasoning abilities [37]. These tests are designed to measure a person's aptitude and potential for learning and performing complex tasks [38]. Cognitive ability tests, also known as intelligence tests or IQ tests, provide valuable insights into an individual's cognitive functioning [39] and can be administered to a wide range of age groups, from children to adults. These tests are typically standardized [40], meaning they are developed and validated using a large sample of individuals representative of the population [41]. The scores obtained from these tests are then compared to the normative data to evaluate an individual's cognitive abilities .

There are various types of cognitive ability tests that assess different aspects of cognitive functioning. Literature documents. e.g., [42] some common types such as:

Verbal Reasoning Tests: These assess an individual's ability to understand and manipulate concepts presented in written or spoken form. These tests typically involve solving problems using language-based information.

Numerical Reasoning Tests: These evaluate an individual's ability to understand and work with numbers, mathematical concepts, and numerical data. These tests often involve tasks such as data interpretation, numerical calculations, and logical reasoning.

Abstract Reasoning Tests: These measure a person's ability to identify patterns, recognize relationships, and solve problems using non-verbal and abstract stimuli. These tests are often presented in the form of diagrams, symbols, or shapes.

Spatial Reasoning Tests: These assess an individual's ability to visualise and manipulate objects in space. These tests typically involve tasks such as mentally rotating objects, completing visual puzzles, or identifying shapes and patterns.

The results obtained from cognitive ability tests can provide valuable information for various purposes. In the field of education, these tests help identify a student's strengths and weaknesses and guide educational interventions [40]. In the workplace, cognitive ability tests are used as a selection tool to assess job candidates' suitability for certain positions or to predict their job performance [37]. Additionally, cognitive ability tests also play a significant role in clinical settings for diagnosing cognitive impairments and intellectual disabilities [42].

Personality Questionnaire

Personality questionnaires are widely used self-report assessments that aim to measure various dimensions of an individual's personality [43]. These questionnaires are designed to evaluate traits, behaviours, attitudes, and patterns of thinking that make up an individual's unique personality profile [44]. They provide valuable insights into an individual's tendencies, preferences, emotional stability, and interpersonal style [45]. Personality questionnaires have been a subject of extensive research regarding their reliability, validity, and applications [44]. Discussed subsequently are some key details about personality questionnaires.

The Big Five Model: The Big Five Model is one of the most widely used frameworks for understanding personality traits [45]. It proposes five broad dimensions of personality: extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness [46]. A recent study explores the broad-bandwidth assessment of the lower-level facets of the Big Five Model [47]. It focused on the development of the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP). The IPIP provides a comprehensive and accessible tool to assess personality traits.

Commercially Available Personality Questionnaires: There are several validated and widely used personality questionnaires available for both research and applied purposes. These questionnaires include the NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI) [48], the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) [49], and the Big Five Inventory (BFI) [50]. On the one hand, the NEO-PI-R and its revised version (NEO-PI-R) are based on the Big Five Model and provide a comprehensive assessment of personality traits. On the other hand, the BFI is a shorter questionnaire that measures the Big Five personality traits [51]. It is designed for ease of administration and has gained popularity in both research and applied settings.

Validity and Reliability: Validity refers to the extent to which a questionnaire accurately measures what it intends to measure [52]. Reliability refers to the consistency or stability of the questionnaire's results over time and across different populations [53]. There is a substantial body of research exploring the validity and reliability of personality questionnaires [54], [55].

Applications: Personality questionnaires have diverse applications across various fields. They are used in psychological research, clinical settings, personnel selection, career counselling, and organizational development [56]–[58].

Organizational Performance

It has been very important for managers to understand which factor influences organizational performance. And thereafter, takes appropriate steps to implement them. Researchers have different yardsticks to measure performance [20]–[22]. A study notes that

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organizational performance is the organization's ability to attain its goals by using resources in an efficient and effective manner [3]. Some other researchers e.g., [1] state that as a concept in modern management, organizational performance suffered from problems of conceptual clarity in a number of areas.

According to others, performance is the degree of achievement at workplace which builds up from employee job [59]. Organizations compete with one another, consciously seeking competitive advantage [60]. This can translate to competitive imitation. A poor performance is an indication that certain practices are not contributing meaningful to the existence of an organization [61]. Whereas, good performance rankings, not only stimulate admiration; they also encourage imitation and competition that tend to erode a favourable position. Organizations seek to emulate the performance successes of others by emulating their organizational forms and practices [60].

METHODOLOGY

Study Participants

Relying on proportionate stratified random sampling technique, employees from ten (10) banks in the metropolis of Lagos state were randomly selected as participants in this study. The paper adopted a non-contrived field experiment wherein investigations are done in the natural environment where work normally takes place [62]. Hence, the questionnaire was administered on banks' employees while they carry-on their official tasks.

Sample size

Given the assumptions of proportionate stratified random sampling techniques [business statistic book], 300 bank employees are expected to respond to the study's questionnaire. Proportionately, 30 employees from each of the ten (10) banks selected. Existing research literature contend that size larger than 30 and less than 500 is appropriate for most research [53], [62]. Research recommends that 'for social science research, about 15 participants per predictor are needed for a reliable equation' [63 p. 72]. Prior studies gave a formula for calculating sample size requirements, taking into account the number of independent variables that you wish to use: $N > 50 + 8m$ (where m = number of independent variables) [64 p. 123]. In this view, the intended sample size of 300 bank employees is adequately sufficient for this study.

Instrument and Data Collection

The study used questionnaire has a means for data collection. The use of questionnaire has proven to be widely used in getting public opinion [62]. Questionnaire items were anchored on a five-point Likert-type scale of (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) to measure the study variables. The research is a cross-sectional survey. Hence, data were collected once. The data were collected between March and June 2023.

Statistical Analysis

IBM SPSS 27.0 software was used for demography frequencies and standardized multiple regression analyses.

RESULTS

Response Rate

Out of the 300 questionnaires distributed, 27 questionnaires were not returned. This gave a high response rate of 91%. This high response rate is due to the non-contrived field experiment approach adopted by the authors wherein investigations are done in the natural environment where work normally takes place. Hence, it was easier for the bank staff to complete the questionnaire. From the 273 returned questionnaires, 18 questionnaires were not usable due to incomplete responses. Therefore, only 255 valid responses were analyzed. This shows a usable response rate of 93.41%.

Social-demographic characteristics

The social-demographic responses of the participants are analyzed as follows. Table 1 shows a larger proportion of females working in the banking industry (M = 27.1%; F=72.9%). So, with respect to the female participants, 17 (30.4%) males are above 56 years of age. 14 (29.2%) and 23 (8%) males are Master and Bachelor's degree holders respectively. 36 (9.7%) males have above 10 years banking experience. Only 8 (12.7%) males indicated their marital status as single.

**Table 1 Cross-Tabulation
Social – Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

	Gender				Total Count	%
	Male		Female			
	Count	%	Count	%		
Age						
Below 30	11	26.2	31	73.8	42	16.5
30 – 45	32	26.9	87	73.1	119	46.7
46 – 50	9	23.7	29	76.3	38	14.9
Above 50	17	30.4	39	69.6	56	22.0

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Education

Master	14	29.2	34	70.8	48	18.8
Bachelor	23	8.0	115	44.8	138	54.1
Others	32	13.1	37	15.3	69	27.1

Work Experience

Below 2 years	7	1.9	12	3.2	19	5.1
2 – 5 years	30	8.0	90	24.2	120	32.2
6 – 10 years	24	6.4	52	14.0	76	20.4
Above 10 years	36	9.7	122	32.7	158	42.4

Marital Status

Single	8	12.7	55	87.3	63	24.7
Married	57	32.8	117	67.2	174	68.2
Others	4	22.2	14	77.8	18	7.1

Questionnaire characteristics

The questionnaire items were assessed to check any statistical underlying assumptions. The descriptive statistics of the questionnaire items revealed that items were normally distributed ($M = 48.52$; $SD = 9.20$). The exclude cases listwise option in IBM SPSS software was used analysis. Hence, cases of missing data were adequately treated. The skewness and kurtosis of the items mostly fell within the acceptable critical value of $z = \pm 1.96$ [65]. From Table 2, the Cronbach Alpha ($\alpha = 0.91$), which is a measure of internal reliability is above the Threshold. This is an indication of adequate internal consistency amongst the study variables. Research notes that high alpha values indicate strong reliability [66]. This implies that each questionnaire item relatively measured what it intends to measure. Theoretically, this provides support for further statistical analysis.

Table 2 Average Mean, Standard Deviations, and Reliability

Constructs	Items	Mean	SD	Alpha (α)
Applicant Interview	4	48.52	9.20	0.91
Cognitive Ability Test	4			
Personality Questionnaire	5			
Organizational Performance	3			

Standardized Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was adopted because it allows a more sophisticated exploration of the interrelationship within a set of variables [65]. Prior research mentioned that “multiple regression analysis is a statistical technique within the general linear model used to analyze the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables” [53 p. 260]. The multiple regression model for this study is stated as follows:

$$Y = b_0 + M_1X_1 + M_2X_2 + M_3X_3$$

$$\text{Org_Perf} = b_0 + M_1\text{App_Int} + M_2\text{Cog_Test} + M_3\text{Cog_Test}$$

The above equation tends to show the line that best model the data (i.e., line of best fit). The model is used to test if selection process variables – applicant interview (App_Int), cognitive ability test (Cog_Test), and personality questionnaire (Pers_Que) – predicts organizational performance.

The results of the regression analysis indicated that the three predictors explained 45% of the variance ($R^2 = .45$). An inspection of the correlation matrix revealed that all independent variables don't have bivariate correlation. The highest correlation ($r = .5$) is between applicant interview and cognitive ability test. Existing studies contend that multicollinearity exists when the independent variables are highly correlated ($r = .7$ and above) [65]. Further collinearity diagnostic analysis as show in Table 3 revealed that values of Tolerance and VIF (variance inflation factor) are within acceptable thresholds. Literature suggests that the value of Tolerance should not be less than 0.1 and VIF should not be more than 10 (Pallant, 2020). Taken together, issue with regards to multicollinearity is non-existence in the data analysed. The value of Mahalanobis distance was inspected to check for outliers. Prior research suggests using a critical value of 16.27 $P < 0.001$ for multiple regression equation with three independent variables [64]. In the current study, the maximum MAH_1 value is 14.69. In this regard, there are no known outliers in the data.

Table 3 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.209	.282		.740	.460					
	App_Int	.531	.053	.546	10.021	.000	.642	.535	.469	.738	1.355
	Cog_Test	.203	.054	.203	3.742	.000	.479	.230	.175	.743	1.346
	Pers_Que	.092	.064	.068	1.452	.148	.029	.091	.068	.985	1.015

a. Dependent Variable: Org_Perf

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To test the hypothesis, the outcome ANOVA revealed that the proposed model, as a whole, reaches statistical significance. For instance, Table 4 showed that the value of ANOVA is $F(3, 251) = 68.446, p < 0.001$.

Table 4 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	180.541	3	60.180	68.446	.000 ^b
	Residual	220.690	251	.879		
	Total	401.231	254			

a. Dependent Variable: Org_Perf

b. Predictors: (Constant), Pers_Que, Cog_Test, App_Int

However, further inspection of the independent variables separately in Table 3 revealed that only applicant interview (App_Int; $\beta = .531, p < 0.001$) and cognitive test ability (Cog_Test $\beta = .203, p < 0.001$) significantly predicted organizational performance (Org_Perf). This outcome shows that personality questionnaire (Pers_Que) is not making statistically significant contributions to the prediction of organizational performance ($\beta = .092, p = 0.148$). In view of these analyses, it can be concluded that applicant interview (App_Int) makes the most unique contribution to the regression model out of the three independent variables. In the same token, applicant interview explains about 22% of the variance in organizational performance. Nevertheless, taken together, the study found that selection process contributes significantly to organizational performance. Therefore, all proposed hypotheses are accepted.

DISCUSSION

This study aims to determine the importance of the selection of employees with regards to organizational performance. The outcome of the first hypothesis, (i.e., applicant interview relates positively with organizational performance), shows a significant positive relationship. That is, employees who passed through the stage of interview before starting their jobs are known to contribute meaningfully well to the success of the organization. The second hypothesis, (i.e., cognitive ability test relates positively with organization performance), was also found to be significant. Only the third hypothesis, (i.e., personality questionnaire relates positively with organizational performance), was found to be significantly positive when analysed as a whole with other independent variables. But was not significant when analysed separately. The outcome of the first and second hypotheses is supported by the study of previous studies which found out that employee selection process has a great influence on their organizational performance [13]. Another study argued that organizational activities depend on the quality of its staff strength [10]. In support, a recent research posit it that contribution of human capital cannot be underestimated in any organization [67]. The employees run the account, production, marketing department and so forth [1]. So, best-fit employees are expected to be selected for each function for effectiveness. Previous studies have found that one-on-one interview and cognitive ability test are effective means of sourcing best-fit employees for available positions in the organizations [68]–[70]. This is not surprising as the outcome of the regression analysis in this study equally revealed that applicant interview has the highest contribution to organizational performance, followed by cognitive ability test.

Literature documents that employee selection stage is a very important stage in picking the best candidates to fill vacant positions [3]. Studies revealed that when employer match employee with the job, there are higher chances that such employee will perform effectively [27], absenteeism will reduce [71], increase organizational commitment [72], [73], and turnover rate will be minimal [74]. These positive behaviours will lead to better organizational performance [1]. Fitri et al., (2021) contend that without effective human capital, an organization will not run adequately, and if necessary measures are not taken into consideration, the organization may even come to a halt. With regards to the outcome of this study wherein applicant interview and cognitive ability shared the largest variance in organizational performance, it can be implied that the banks under review preferred applicant interview and cognitive ability test as their selection when deciding on their workforce.

CONCLUSION

While not undermining the relevance of other selection process (e.g., personality questionnaire), this paper concludes that the initial applicant interview (i.e., preliminary interview) plays an essential role in organizational management. It is a selection process aimed at getting applicants according to the requirements specified by management. In addition, this paper confirms that cognitive ability test is a relatively important selection process because it helps to assess how well applicants can perform the tasks related to the job required. This test can be in the inform of ability testing, technical skills testing, general knowledge testing, and so forth. These selection processes are expected to enhance the performance of any organization because job-fit employees would have been

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selected to work for the organization. Besides the theory contribution of this study, industry experts can be better be guided when selecting applicants for vacant positions.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Apart from the expensive nature of stratified random sampling, this paper is limited by its inability to differentiate between in-person interview and virtual interview. Future study may consider the various forms of interviews to strengthen the outcome of this paper.

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