The Influence of Recruitment and Selection on the Performance of Employees in Research Institutes in Kenya

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Abstract: *This study sought to establish the influence of recruitment and selection on the performance of employees in research institutes in Kenya. There is growing evidence that human resource management practices can play an important role in attaining high quality workforce. Recruitment and selection has been specifically singled out as a major human resource management practice that can have an influence on the level of employee performance in organizations. Research institutes in Kenya have been facing performance challenges and there is need, therefore, for them (Research Institutes) to attract and retain high caliber personnel. The quality of employees recruited by research institutes in Kenya is viewed as a possible intervention. The overall objective of the study was to determine how recruitment and selection influence employee Performance in research institutes in Kenya. The study adopted the null hypothesis that recruitment and selection do not influence employee performance in research institutes in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive and correlation research designs while the study population was drawn from all Government owned research institutes formed under the Science & Technology Act. Cap 250. The target population was drawn from the research institutes that were within Nairobi county and its environs. The study adopted stratified sampling technique while the sample size was 256 employees. The study used questionnaires to collect data while Cronbach's alpha was used to test the validity and reliability of the instruments. A statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze quantitative data while data was presented using statistical techniques such as tables, bar-graphs and pie charts. The results of the study revealed that the correlation between employee performance and recruitment and selection were highly significant at 0.374 (P=0.000). The study recommended that research institutes strictly adhere to job specifications when filling vacant positions.*

Keywords: Recruitment, Selection, Employee performance, Human resource management, Practices.

1. Introduction

The general theories of recruitment as highlighted by Cole (2002), Armstrong (2008) and Dessller (2006) pinpoint the fact that employees need to have a fit-in culture in order to survive in a new job environment puts pressure on the recruitment team to cultivate the organization culture that enhances good performance. Recruitment strategies by organizations should be tailored towards specific positions to be filled. These strategies in the modern global environment include advertisements in electronic and print media, agencies and services, schools and colleges/universities forum, professional associations and internal resources. All the strategies will produce particular employees with varying performances (Ndlovu *et al*, 2003).

Melum (2002) indicates that the common process by most organizations when carrying out recruitment will include a behavior-based interview which can help to some extent in predicting subsequent performance of employees better than lets say situational interviews. Nwabuzor and Anyamele (2002) observes that the theory of recruitment is a scholarly body of work about how people can most effectively be persuaded to apply for a job. Under normal circumstances, an increase in the pool of applicants will improve an employer's opportunities in selecting exactly the right people for job vacancies. Both sides of the application process should and do concern themselves with "fit". Studies conducted by Kamoche and Kamoche (2004) shows

that applicants will be attracted to the organization to the extent they see it as a good match for them, or what in the literature is known as " Person-Organization (P-O) "fit". Potential applicants make an initial assessment of the likely P-O fit through what they understand of the employer's culture.

Recruitment is central to any management process and its failure can increase difficulties for any organization including an adverse effect on its profitability and inappropriate levels of staffing or skills (Soliman, 2000). Gupta (2006) observes that selection can be conceptualized in either choosing the "fit" candidates or rejecting the candidates, or a combination of both. Selection process assumes rightly that there are more candidates than the number of job openings available (Prasad, 2005). The basic idea in selection process is to solicit maximum possible information about the candidates to ascertain their suitability for employment and given the fact that there are factors which affect the seeking of such information (Graham, 1996).

Armstrong (2009) observes that candidates can be selected using different methods in order to assess their suitability for a certain role. These methods include; individual interviews, interviewing panels, selection boards, and assessment centres. Despite a well-drawn plan on recruitment and selection and involvement of qualified management team, recruitment processes adopted by organizations can face

significant obstacles in implementation. Theories of HRM may therefore provide insights on the best approaches to recruitment although organizations will have to use their in-house management skills to apply generic theories within specific organizational contexts.

2. Statement of the Problem

Research institutes in Kenya plays an important role towards the realization of vision 2030. This is because research has been singled out as the driving force and the Government, therefore, lays a lot of emphasis by supporting various projects being undertaken by research institutes (GOK, 2012). In order to remain relevant and achieve their goals, research institutes have undertaken various HRM practices including recruitment and selection. In undertaking this practice (Recruitment and Selection), research institutes aim to attract and retain skilled employees who can help them achieve their goals. In addition to this, research institutes have developed an HR strategic plan which provides road maps on how they can achieve their goals. Among the issues being addressed in their strategic plans is the recruitment and selection of skilled employees. However, from the year 2008 to 2012, research institutes in Kenya have faced performance challenges. This has been attributed by the fact that they have not been able to achieve their desired results. Specifically, the performance contracting results for the financial years 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 respectively indicate that although they did well, they fall short of what was anticipated of them despite the fact that the Government increased their budgetary allocation (GOK, 2010). Among the best performing research institutes were Kenya Agricultural Research Institute and Kenya Forestry Research Institute with a performance index of 2.86 and 2.83 respectively. On a scale of 5, this was considered to be slightly above average. On the other hand, Kenya Medical Research Institute and Coffee Research Foundation had a performance index of 2.49 and 2.48 respectively and this was considered to be slightly below average. Recruitment and selection is, therefore, viewed as a possible intervention. There is not much information that is available on the role of recruitment and selection on the performance of employees in research institutes in Kenya. This study, therefore, sought to explore how recruitment and selection influence employee performance in research institutes in Kenya.

2.1 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to determine how recruitment and selection influence employee performance in research institutes in Kenya

2.2 Methodology

The study adopted descriptive and correlation research designs. Kothari (2001) observes that a descriptive research design is used when one wants to get information on the current status of a person or object. Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) on the other hand indicate that correlation research design is basically concerned with assessing relationships among variables. The study population was all employees in the selected cadres of all Government owned research institutes formed under the Science and Technology Act. Cap. 250. These institutes include; Kenya Agricultural

Research Institute, Kenya Forestry Research Institute, Coffee Research Foundation, Kenya Sugar Research Foundation , Kenya Industrial and Research Development Institute, Kenya Medical Research Institute, Kenya Marine Fisheries Research Institute and Tea Research Foundation with a total population of 986. The target population on the other hand consisted of research institutes within Nairobi County and its environs. They included; KARI, KEFRI, CRF, KIRDI and KEMRI with a total population of 760. The study adopted a sample size of 34% which translated into a sample size of 256. Stanley and Gregory (2001) indicate that a sample size of at least 30% of the population is generally acceptable. Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data while secondary data was collected through published reports. Kothari (2008) observes that collecting data through the use of questionnaires saves time. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of measures in the questionnaire. All variables were found to be reliable and valid since they ranged above 0.7. A statistical package for social science (SPSS) was used to analyze quantitative data while a linear regression model $Y=\beta_0+b_1x_1+b_2x_2+b_3x_3+b_4x_4+b_5x_5+\varepsilon$ was used to describe the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. A t-test was also conducted to ascertain if two sets of data were significantly different from each other. Normality test was used to test for the normality of the dependent variable Y. The study, therefore, conducted Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests to test the normality of the dependent variable Y. In addition, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was also conducted to analyze the amount of variation within each sample relative to the amount of variation between samples. Quantitative data was presented through statistical techniques such as tables, pie-charts and bar-graphs while qualitative data was presented descriptively. t-test was used to test the significance of the influence of independent variables x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4 and x_5 at 5% level of significance. For the hypothesis to be accepted or rejected, comparison was made between the critical t values and the calculated t values. If the calculated t was greater than the critical t, then the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Response Rate

A total of 256 questionnaires were distributed to the target population. This consisted of KARI, KEFRI, CRF, KIRDI and KEMRI. The number of questionnaires distributed included KARI with a total of 112, KEFRI with a total of 66, CRF with a total of 34, KIRDI with a total of 20 while KEMRI had a total of 24. Out of the 256 questionnaires distributed, a total of 184 were returned which represents a response rate of 71.9%. This response rate was satisfactory to draw conclusions from the study and was, therefore, representative. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting, a rate of 60% is generally good while a response rate of above 70% is excellent. This is also the same position taken by Babbie (2010) who also asserts that a response rate of above 70% is deemed to be very good. Table 1 shows the distribution and response rate of questionnaires from the respondents.

133

Table 1: Response rate

Name of the organization	Total number of questionnaires distributed	Total number of questionnaires completed and returned	Response rate per organization
KARI	112	87	77.70%
KEFRI	66	37	56.06%
CRF	34	23	67.60%
KIRDI	20	17	85%
KEMRI	24	20	83.30%
Total	256	184	

Table 1 shows that all organizations had a response rate of above 50% and hence the conclusions drawn from the study are representative. KIRDI had the highest response rate of 85%. This was closely followed by KEMRI at 83.3%, KARI at 77.7%, CRF at 67.6% while KEFRI had a response rate of 56.06%.

3.2 Employee Performance

Employee performance in research institutes in Kenya is very critical because it determines whether they are to achieve their objectives or not. Employee performances also tend to enhance their corporate image.

3.3 Factor analysis for employee performance

The dependent variable which was employee performance in research institutes in Kenya had a total of eight (8) items in which six (6) were confirmed valid and were, therefore, retained for subsequent analysis. However, two (2) items that is, the cost of work performed has some degree of control over costs and the employees in the organization are encouraged to appraise themselves were excluded from subsequent analysis since they had a factor loading of below 0.4. This information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Component Matrix for Employee Performance

Item	Extraction
Work performed by employees in the organization is of high quality	0.456
Employees in the organization usually meet deadlines while accomplishing their tasks	0.608
The cost of work performed has some control over costs	0.325
The employees in the organization achieve their specified targets	0.611
The rate of absenteeism in the organization is low	0.447
Employees in the organization are creative and innovative	0.427
Employees in the organization are encouraged to appraise themselves	0.199
Employees in the organization are aware of the organizational objectives, mission statement and vision	0.627

After the factor analysis was conducted, the reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha based on the items that were confirmed in order to ascertain the measure of the degree to which a research instrument would yield the same results of data after repeated trials (Devellis, 1991). Employee performance had a total of eight items, but two were dropped and a new reliability co-efficient determined as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Reliability Co-efficient for Employee Performance

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.795	6

3.4 Normality of Employee Performance in research institutes in Kenya

Following the descriptive analysis, normality of the dependent variable was conducted. For inferential analysis to be done such as correlation, regression or related linear techniques, the dependent variable should have a normal distribution. In case the dependent variable is not normally distributed, then normality has to be sought for before proceeding with any further analysis (Anthony et al, 2007; Annette, 2002; Alan, 2003). Thus, employee performance was subjected to normality test to check if the data was normally distributed or not. The testing of normality of employee performance in this study was conducted using Kolmogorov Smirnov test and Shapiro Wilk test. The test was done such that given H_0 and H_1, with $\alpha=0.05$, the rule of thumb according to (David, 2012: Rencher, 2002) is that reject H_0 if p-value is less than α or else fail to reject H_0: where;

H_0: The data is normal
H_1: The data is not normal

Table 4: Checking for normality of employee performance

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Employee performance	0.9862	183	0.069	0.9853	183	0.06

Thus, Table 4 indicate that using both tests of normality that is Kolmogorov Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk tests, the p-value for both tests is greater than 0.05, thus the study failed to reject H_0 and a conclusion made that employee performance variable was normal in distribution and as a result subsequent analysis was be done. Figure 1, shows a histogram of the dependent variable fitted with a normal curve, the figure shows that employee performance was approximately normal with a mean of 17.47 and standard deviation of 4.538. The quantile- quantile (Q-Q) plot and the detrended Q-Q were also established and are illustrated on Figures 1&2. The Q-Q plot is an excellent way of observing whether data deviate from normal, while the detrended Q-Q plot is useful for spotting outliers (David, 2012; Brian 2005).
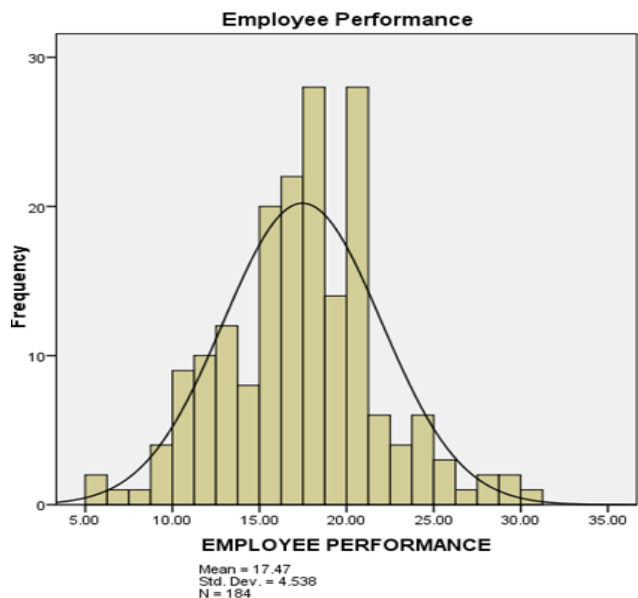
Figure 1: Normality of Employee Performance

According to David (2012), for a variable to be normally distributed, most of the cases should lie on the theoretical quantile line. From figure 4, the normal Q-Q plot of employee performance had most of its cases lying on the 45^0 line, thus the observed values of employee performance in research institutes in Kenya are in conformity with the hypothetical distribution and hence normally distributed. Further, the detrended Q-Q plot in Figure 2 affirmed the normality of the data.
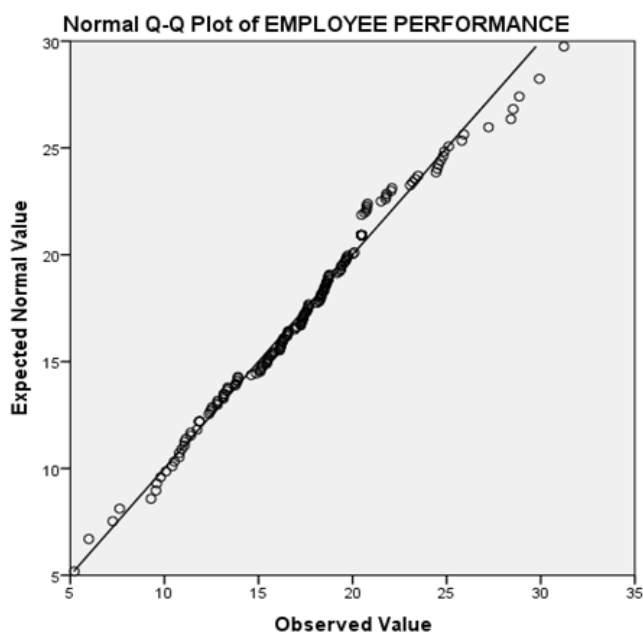

Figure 2: Normal Q-Q plot of Employee Performance in research institutes in Kenya with theoretical quartile line

In the detrended normal Q-Q plot in Figure 2 , most data points appears to be clustered around the horizontal zero (0) line. The plot indicates that there were no outliers in the sense that there were no cases more than ± 0.32 standard deviation away. According to Garson (2012), cases more than ± 1.96 standard deviations away are outliers at the 0.95 confidence level. Therefore, the dependent variable was found to be normally distributed and subsequent analysis was carried out.
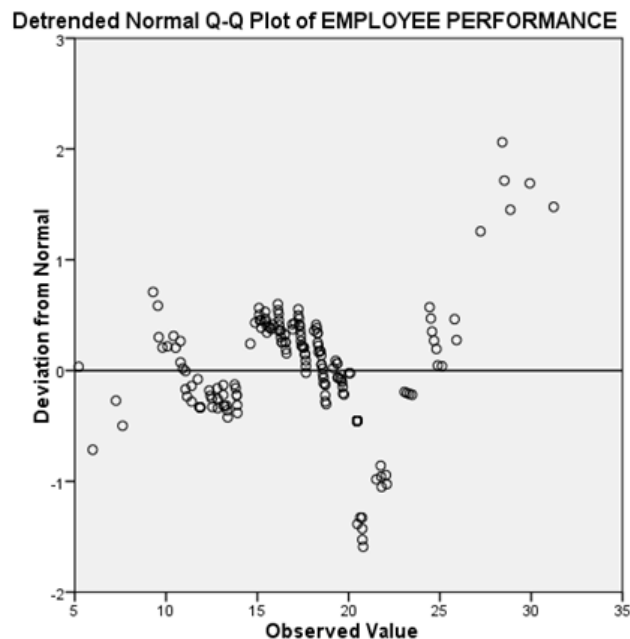

Figure 3: Detrended Normal Q-Q plot of Employee Performance

4. Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection is a critical component of the human resource management function since it enables research institutes to acquire staff it requires in order to achieve their objectives. Organizations exist to achieve certain goals through people who are acquired through recruitment and selection.

4.1 Factor Analysis for Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection as an independent variable had a total of Eleven (11) items. All the items in the variable were confirmed valid since their factor loading values were more than 0.4. They were, therefore, retained for subsequent analysis. This information is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Component Matrix for Recruitment and Selection

Item	Extraction
The organization recruits immediately positions are declared vacant	0.401
The organization fills vacant positions from internal and external sources	0.593
The organization has a policy which guides in recruitment activities	0.671
The staff are made aware of an existing vacancy or vacancies	0.497
The employees are involved in making decisions regarding recruitment of staff	0.659
There is transparency in the short listing of job candidates	0.601
All Divisional/Departmental heads are involved in the selection process	0.584
Only candidates with the relevant skills are considered during the selection process	0.620
The organization does not encourage the influence of external factors during the selection process	0.492
The organization takes into account affirmative action during the recruitment and selection of staff	0.627
The organization acknowledges all application letters as a sign of seriousness on its part	0.491

Recruitment and selection had a total of eleven items and all of them were confirmed valid and had an acceptable reliability co-efficient of above 0.7 as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Reliability coefficient of Recruitment and Selection

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.828	11

4.2 Recruitment and Selection Pearson correlation computation

Based on the results in Table 7, the correlation coefficient (P) between employee performance and recruitment and selection was found to be 0.374 at (P=0.000). These results indicate that according to the study, there was a highly significant linear correlation between the two variables (Recruitment and selection and employee performance). This implies that the relationship between the two variables is very close. This supports the argument by Rynes*et.al*(2000), Shippman*et.al* (2000) and Lievens*et.al* (2002) who indicate that the way organizations conduct recruitment and selection will either improve the performance of employees or not. They argue that if recruitment and selection is conducted in an objective and professional manner, then it is likely to improve employee performance. Bowles and Gintis (2002) and Osborne (2005) indicate that personality type appears to have a major impact on performance and this will depend on the qualifications of employees. They argue that the effectiveness of recruitment and selection will determine whether organizations will get the right persons who are ready to deliver, Shury *et. al* (2008) indicate that the caliber of employees obtained during the recruitment and selection process will determine whether they will perform or not.

Table 7: Recruitment and Selection Pearson correlation computation

		Recruitment And Selection	Employee Performance
Recruitment And Selection	Pearson Correlation	1	.374[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	244	184
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	.374[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	184	184

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.3 Results of the regression analysis on Recruitment and Selection

The model equation $y = \beta_1 x_1 + \varepsilon$ explained 37.4% as measured by the goodness of fit as shown in Table 8. The results indicate that recruitment and selection explained 37.4% of the variation in employee performance. This, therefore, indicate that a moderate relationship exist since it is above the recommended 30% (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This supports the argument by Stewart (2007) who indicates that there exist a relationship between recruitment and selection and employee performance. He argues that if the process of recruitment and selection is not done objectively, then organizations will not get the right people and thus affect the performance of employees. Jancowicz (2009) also indicate that organizations whose performance is

above board are those who ensure that recruitment and selection process is not compromised.

Table 8: Model summary for regression between Recruitment and Selection and Employee Performance

Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.374[t]	.140	.135	4.221

The Analysis of Variance results (ANOVA) indicated that the model of employee performance with recruitment and selection at F value =29.549, P=0.000 explained the variance in employee performance in research institutes in Kenya. The results of ANOVA are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: ANOVA results for Recruitment and Selection and Employee Performance.

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	526.417	1	526.417	29.549	.000[b]
Residual	3242.298	182	17.815		
Total	3768.715	183			

According to the results of the regression, recruitment and selection was found to have a positive influence on employee performance. This is illustrated by the regression results at 95% confidence interval with unstandardized beta coefficient of 12.502 and t-value of 12.598 with a P-Value of 0.000.

Table 10: Coefficients for regression between Recruitment and Selection and Employee Performance

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	12.502	0.965		12.958	0
Recruitment and Selection	0.271	0.05	0.374	5.436	

In supporting the findings of the study on the significance of recruitment and selection on employee performance, previous studies conducted by Stewart and Knowles (2008) indicate that large organizations value what are now termed as acquisition of relevant skills through effective recruitment and selection process. They argue that if recruitment and selection is done objectively, it will have a positive influence on employee performance since it will enable organizations to recruit the best workers. Various strategic plans for research institutes for the period 2010 to 2015 suggest that recruitment and selection of staff shall be done on merit. This involves both internal and external recruitment.

5. Recruitment and Selection Hypothesis Results

There is no significant linear relationship between recruitment and selection and employee performance.

The hypothesis that

$$H_o : \beta j = 0$$

$$H_i : \beta j > 0$$

were tested by comparing the calculated t value and the critical t-value

Table 11: Coefficients for regression between Recruitment and Selection and Employee Performance Coefficients [ab]

	B	t	t-critical
Constant	12.502	12.958	
Recruitment and Selection	0.271	5.436	1.96

Since the calculated t=5.436 is greater than critical $t_{(184-1)}(_{0.05})$ as shown in Table 4.20, the study rejected the null hypothesis that there is no significant linear relationship between recruitment and selection and employee performance in research institutes in Kenya. Therefore, the study accepted the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant linear relationship between recruitment and selection and employee performance.

In supporting this, Armstrong (2008) indicate that if recruitment and selection process is not compromised , then an organization is capable of procuring employees who are committed to the ideals of the organization. He argues that employees who are recruited and selected objectively tend to be more productive. Kloot and Martin (2000) also indicate that recruitment and selection process is a critical component of the human resource management function since it will have a direct effect on employee performance.

6. Conclusion

Although there is evidence of recruitment and selection taking place in all research institutes in Kenya, the employees seems not to be involved in making decisions regarding this aspect. The model summary for recruitment and selection appeared to be insignificant, but was nonetheless retained since it was found to have a positive influence on the performance of employees in research institutes in Kenya.

7. Recommendations

The study recommends that the recruitment and selection process be objective as much as possible. Job specifications should, therefore, be developed and strictly adhered to during the recruitment and selection process. There is also need to have interview panels that are professional and not biased. Research institutes should, therefore, look for better ways of vetting these panels in order to ascertain their integrity.

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