

Employee Selection Issues in Medium-Sized Hotels in Ghana

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— *Review of* —
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ABSTRACT

The study examines hiring managers' attitudes regarding selection methods, vital skills sought in new employees in medium hotels in Ghana. Data for the study was collected from four hundred and thirty (430) employees working in the various departments of the selected hotels by the use of questionnaires while selected frontline supervisors were interviewed. The results of the study revealed that, applicants' resumes, interviews and references were the most frequently used selection methods. Secondly, lack of fair employment policies constrains employee selection. It is recommended that, there is the need for discussion on creative human resource approach and programs to increase employee commitment in the hotel industry of Ghana. Also the performance of hotel employees could be enhanced if employers used effective and fair selection procedures. A new model for selection has been proposed for Medium hotels that extend human resource practices theory in the area of selection. Implications for management are included.

Keywords: Selection; Interview; Tourism; Resume; Medium Hotels, Skills

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism businesses have grown significantly in Ghana since the early 80s. These phenomena can be attributed to the fact that the country is endowed with numerous tourists' attractions. As a result, World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Development Plan designed a fifteen (15) years tourism development plan for Ghana. The main objective was to achieve economic growth in the tourism sector. Thus, the National slogan, "Ghana, the Gateway to West Africa". The country is said to have attracted the highest number of business travellers to Africa and the third largest foreign exchange earner, behind cocoa and gold (Ghana Tourist Authority, 2006).

Secondly, tourism has also moved to the centre stage of government policy, and is being promoted at districts, national and international levels. For instance the World Travel and Tourism Council postulate that, the tourism sector contributes 9% to the global GDP. It is further expected that, within the next ten years the tourism sector will grow by an average of 4%. Moreover, by 2022, it is anticipated that tourism will account for 328 million jobs and international tourists would increased.

Thus, the contribution of tourism to the development of Ghana's economy makes hiring and retaining qualified employees very important. Attracting suitable, motivated, trained and qualified employees into the hotel industry is difficult. These challenges become more intense as new hotel businesses emerge due to the conducive business environment Ghanaians enjoy. Yet many organizations continue to use outdated methods in less service-

oriented organizations for hiring purposes Barron (2008). Nevertheless, little or limited studies investigate selection procedures in the tourism industry in Ghana even in terms of answering the major question ‘what selection method and skills hiring managers use and look out for when hiring employees in medium sized hotels in Ghana.

However, internationally hotels are engaging in fierce drives and battles with their competitors for recruiting and selecting the best and brightest new hires. Furthermore, due to the increasing importance of employees in driving competitive advantages, Collins & Smith (2006) argue that mistakes in selection have potentially catastrophic consequences for organizational success and survival.

Therefore, individual employees must possess the requisite mixture of skills, aptitudes and motivations that will enable them to compete efficiently and create competitive advantage in their given job environment.

Though, there is a depth of research with regard to the importance of selection and organizational performance, current empirical findings have focused on disjunctive but theoretical interesting models. Thus, a surge for more pragmatic demands from selection practitioners for a more generally applied comprehensive review of selection methods is being advocated for (Rynes 1993; Murphy 1996; Herriot and Anderson 1997). However, except from some notable studies ((Fish, 1999; MacHatton et al.,1997) selection process in the tourism and the hospitality sector have rarely been specifically defined or investigated.

Similarly, the hospitality and tourism industry has experienced relatively small number of mainstream human resource (selection) research compared to other organizations and the researches have drawn on theories that explain individual reactions Laurson & Forson (2012). The empirical works that exist tend to be theoretical or have lumped selection issues with other human resource functions without a clear and solid understanding of what constitutes selection methods and procedures that hiring managers, academics and other practitioners will hang on for conceptual discussion.

However, hotel employees in Ghana are expected to work as professionals in order to measure up to international standards. Hotel managers therefore need to focus on key selection methods to enable them attract high quality employees to render quality services. Qualified employees who demonstrate high service skills are likely to generate high levels of customer satisfaction.

Therefore, the present study examines hiring managers’ approach towards selection methods and skills sought among employees in selected medium-sized hotels in Ghana.

The following research questions are raised.

- 1) What selection techniques/methods do employers use to hire applicants for job positions in medium sized hotels in Ghana?
- 2) What skills do employers value most during the selection process in the medium hotels in Ghana?

Hypothesis 1: Applicants’ experience with the various selection methods intentionally or unintentionally in the selected hotels will influence performance.

Hypothesis 2: Applicant’s experience with various selection methods does not influence performance.

In addition, research into this area has been strongly advocated by (MacHatton, Dyke and Steiner,1997) have identified the selection process as the most important challenge facing the hospitality industry whereas Bowen (1996) argued that employee recruitment and selection is a leading sub-theme to research in hospitality and tourism.

In summing up, this article aims to develop a theoretical model that is practicable for successful selection techniques in the tourism sector. Through this contribution, it is hope that the debate on selection methods in the tourism sector will not only be enhanced in academic discussion, but will also provide practical insights for hiring managers in dealing with the challenges of selection issues.

The paper is structured as follows. The first section discusses the existing academic literature with respect to human resources (selection) methods globally, while the Second section discusses the methodology. Section three discusses the result. The forth section deals with discussion and the fifth section conclusions, implications, limitations and future research directions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Selection methods have traditionally been considered as unbiased predictors of applicants' suitability and subsequent job performance Schmitt et al.(1992). Moreover, Ryne & Gilland (1993) examines applicants reactions to selection procedures and found that reaction to selection decision may have various effect on the organization, applicants decision making and litigation. In addition, Appaw & Dehlor (2010) stated that, selection methods are not measures and predictors of job performance because the effectiveness of the assessment method itself is dependent on principles. The true variance in a candidate's behavior can be identified by the selection method and this is predictive of future job behavior Guion (1998). However, the methods essentially do not have any effect on job performance; the recruiter observes and evaluates the candidate behaviour and assessed the effectiveness of the method and projects the candidates behaviour in future in the organization. Besides, the applicants' true conduct can be secluded due to error in using particular selection method Braton (2011).

Globally, tourism and hospitality businesses are seeking new growth opportunities and using sophisticated selection methods to hire new staff to perform in order to achieve organizational goals in the midst of environmental challenges. Organizations that are able to attract and hire qualified employees will be in a position to outperform their rivals (Michael et al;2001, Woodruffe,1999).Therefore, hiring competent people into hotels is of paramount importance to every hotel organization and this is dependent on effective selection procedures. In addition, various scholars argued in the strategic human resource management literature that, organizations are made up of sets of human beings; and may probably accomplish optimal levels of performance by harmonizing employment systems to the unique set of characteristics related with the responsibilities tied to these roles (Collins & Smith, 2006; Lepak & Snell, 1999). Also, (Baron et al; 2001) posit that, there are a multitude of philosophies regarding how best employees can be managed and could result in potentially wide array of HR systems within single industry and within individual organizations. Although this does not directly link to selection methods, this body of literature implies that, there may be wide array of alternative selection systems that hotel organizations can explore to hire employees with the right knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that is required to drive maximum performance in various hotels in Ghana. In addition Schmitt et al. (1992) and

Guion (1998) found that, selection methods have traditionally been regarded and researched by many scholars as neutral predictors of applicant suitability and consequently job role performance.

Conversely, selection techniques do not only perform a single function of predicting future job performance but have other functions. For instance, Rynes (1993) stated that, potential employees experience with various selection methods in diverse ways forms the first impressions of the organization directly and from these experiences, the applicant may take crucial decisions on job choice. Besides, applicant experiences of an organization's selection procedure will influence their views about the organization in general, thus a function of establishing a viable psychological contract between the employer and potential employee Herriot (1989) and exposing applicants to the culture and management style of the organization Wanous et al. (1992). As such, internationally hospitality and tourism organizations are using wide range of sophisticated selection methods and it varies from country to country Dehlor (2010). Moreover, Dickinson and Ineson's (1993) found that, biodata has been employed as a screening device at the initial substantive stage of employee selection distinguish between potential long and short-stay employees for new hotels. In addition, Ash (2001) examines the effect of biodata on selection and found that choosing applicants based on age, qualification, experience, matching with the job requirements, job analyses will enhance performance. The emphasis on selection therefore is on the optimal fit between the person and the job. Though biodata has strong validity Hunter and Hunter (1984) and Bliesener (1996) argued that, they are not often used, probably because applicants need biodata inventory and may not have any connection with the job provided the item are related to the job skills (Stones & Jones, 1997, Pearlman & Stoffey, 1993, Smither et al; 1993).

Furthermore, according to the CRE's investigation (1991) and (Kelliher and Johnson, 1997) interviewing continues to be the preferred selection method in the UK hospitality and tourism industry. Dickinson and Ineson (1993) mentioned that, interviewing is a unique method used at operational level. MacHatton et al (1997) found that, 90% of organizations used interview as the selection method because the cost is moderate, not time consuming as compared to assessment centers and high acceptability to interviewees and interviewers (Barclay, 2001; Berger and Ghei, 1995). In addition, Paraskevas (2000) research on Greek hotel sector selection techniques and found that, behavioural and situational interviews are the preferred selection methods employed in hotel organizations. The effectiveness of some of the selection methods as predictor of future job performance, for instance MacHatton et al (1997) found that structured and unstructured interviews and reference checks achieved the highest ratings.

On the other hand, research into selection processes in organizations, Boodeau (2001) found that, interviewing is generally alleged to be unreliable as a predictor of jobholders' performance in reality. Consequently, it is essential to obtain pragmatic evaluation of the process from all applicants, together with successful and unsuccessful candidates.

Besides, interview which is a critical element of the process of selection in large organizations still remains subjective though it could merge with other psychometric measures where suitable (Bowen et al., 1991)). The costs involved in developing and managing structured interviews is very high hence the moderate level of usage (Heneman & Judge, 2006) but most applicants prefer interviews to other selection instruments (Posthumous et al; 2002) and whether interviews are structured or unstructured applicants may react negatively if they are not given the opportunity to be interviewed (Hausknecht et al., 2004). The validity and reliability of interviews have been disappointing also there are

ethical issues about selecting 'appropriate', and rejecting 'inappropriate', candidates for employment Gold (2007). In addition, Kravitz et al. 1996, Rynes & Connerly (1993) examines applicant reactions to various selection test and procedures. For instance, Rynes & Connerly studies covers 390 job seekers used thirteen selection procedures and found positive reaction to references and methods like simulations and business related tests.

Furthermore, Psychometric and honesty tests were rated low while reference checks were found to be mostly used in US as selection tool for university graduates and reference checks, initial interviews, application forms are mostly used in United Kingdom (Hodgkinson et al; 1995), and application forms in Australia Carless (2007). Also verification of reference from past employers, public men, police are carried out to safeguard against possible falsification by applicants and tracking of past performance Buam (2007).

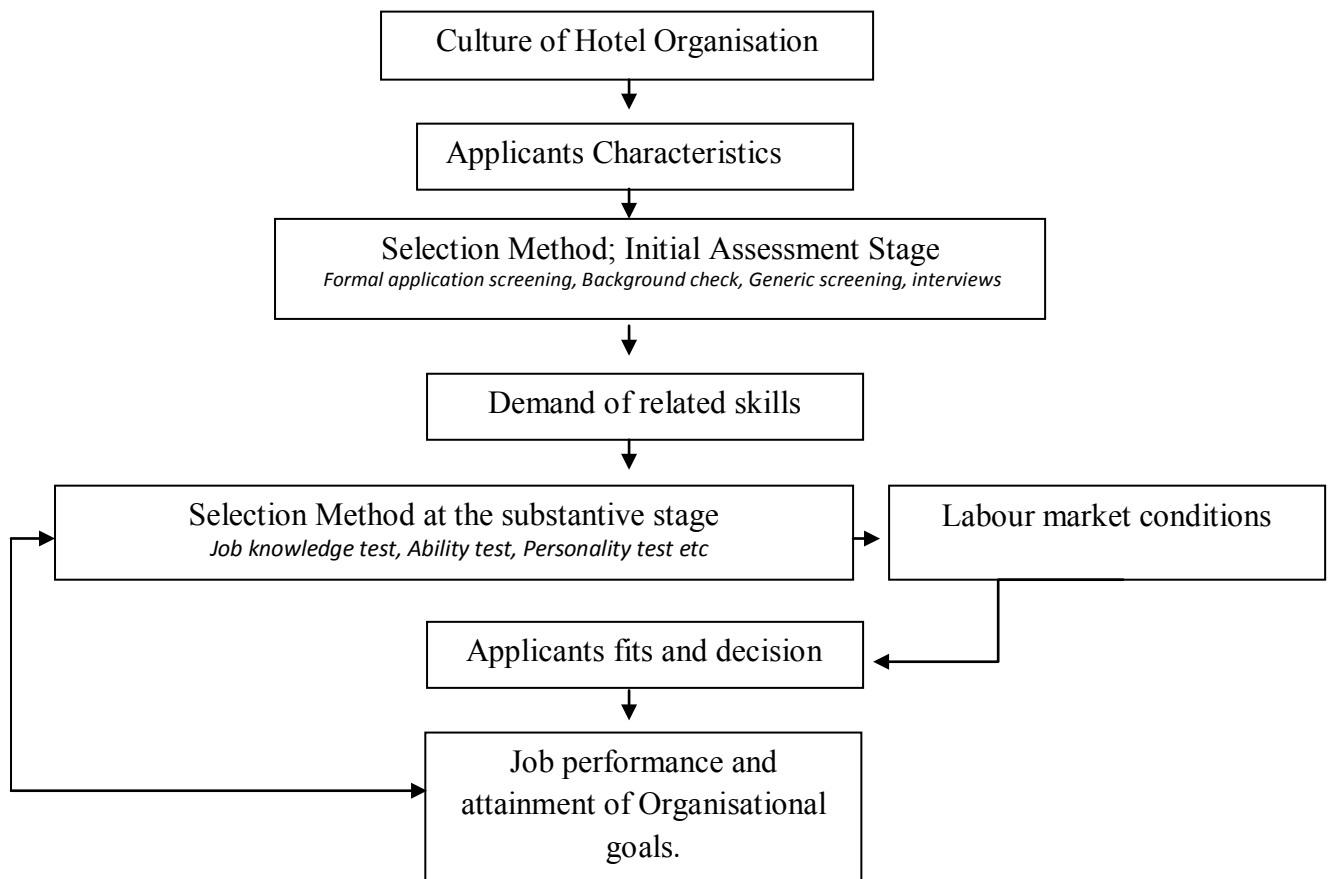
Moreover, another selection method 'personality tests', which ensure a match between the personality type of the applicant and the job, are in low use in most organizations. While 'performance tests' and work samples have a high degree of reliability and validity in predicting job performance Schmitt & Chan (1998), these tests are expensive to conduct (Heneman & Judge (2006). Cognitive ability tests are very effective hiring strategies Ryan & Tippins (2004). Though 'ability tests' are the most effective way to predict job success, only between 15% and 20% of organizations uses this type of test (Rowe et al., 1994) and job knowledge tests may be inappropriate for an entry-level position if it is not needed at the time of hiring (Schmitt & Chan, 1998).

Nevertheless, to state that selection methods have only a single property of predicting job performance prospects in organizations in future is to dismiss other potential functions of selection methods beyond predicting future job performance. For instance applicants' experiences of an organization's selection procedure could influence their views of the organization in general and established psychological contract between the employer and potential employee Herriot, (1989) and exposing applicants to the culture and management style of the organization Wanous et al. (1992).

Furthermore, previous scholars proposed various models to highlight the influences selection procedures could have on organizations. Two of these models will be discussed due to their relevance to the study. Anderson and Ostroff model (1997) found that, there are five domains that influence the various selection methods initiated during the pre-entry socialization process a concept termed 'socialization impact'. They argue that, socialization impact will occur whether or not an organization intends the impact on candidates or have knowledge about its effects. For instance, job advertisements convey some information to the candidate, and will thus begin to generate certain expectations of the organization, job contents and status of the organization. Multi-day assessment centre will expose the candidate to extensive contact with other members of the organization who are acting as assessors, thus the exercise is likely to expose the applicants to work role demands. Moreover, interview discussions will certainly persuade candidate expectations and attitudes and such experiences can bring to bear a longer-term effect on applicant's behavior on on-the-job. It may extend and extrapolate their experiences at an assessment centre to begin to 'frame' their behavior once employed by the organization. In addition Arvey and Sackett (1993) postulate that, the perceived fairness of the selection process can be influenced by the content of selection (job relatedness, skills and ability coverage, thoroughness of knowledge, ease of faking the answers and invasiveness of questions. According to them, there is the need to understand the system development process, the administration of the selection procedures (consistency, confidentiality, opportunity for reconsideration and prior

information) and the organizational context (selection ratio) yet these determinants are not outline and how they can be combine to form perception of fairness(Gilliland,1993).

In contrast, Contingency theory Lawrence et al. (1967) suggests that, there is not a single best recruitment and selection systems and not all of the potential systems will be ideal for every type of employee. Thus, bias can arise in the selection process when the type of information collected on each applicant varies Thomas et al. (1994). The proposed alternative selection model is presented below:



Proposed Alternative Selection Model for the Tourism (Hotel) Sector

Various proposed models highlight applicants' reactions that have direct effect on applicants decision making but and it is not clear on other issues. In general the culture of the hotel organization and the applicants characteristics, the selection method at the initial assessment stage and labour market conditions will influence the skills demanded and may lead to the type of test at the substantive stage that will predict if the applicants are fit for the job in the organization and take decision hence perform jobs with the requisite skills as such attainment of organizational goals.

3. METHODOLOGY

Convenience sampling technique was employed to select four hundred thirty (430) respondents from ten (10) medium hotels which comprises six (6) medium hotels from Accra

the capital of Ghana and four (4) from Ho the capital of Volta Region. The selected hotels are registered with Ghana Tourists Authority. From the 430 respondents Ten (10) were HR managers and twenty (20) were frontline supervisors and 400 hundred were employees selected from the various hotels. They were randomly selected and contacted through human resource (HR) departments of the selected hotels. The intension of the survey was communicated to them and all agreed to participate. The survey instrument were delivered to the HR departments and frontline officers agreed to assist in administering to the employees in the various sections. Front line officers were interviewed.

The questionnaire designed consists of two parts. Part 1 consisted of 14 questions that sought to measure employees' views on initial screening during the initial and substantive assessment stage in the selected hotels. Part 2 of the questionnaire asked for managers' opinion on selection methods, criteria used in assessing job applicants and skills they were looking for.

Different formats were used to gather the responses. Some items required an answer on a five-point likert scale ranging from 5= very effective,4= effective 3= Neutral,2= Not Effective and1= Not Very Effective others respondents were asked to provide 'Yes' and 'No' answers, indicating whether or not they made applications, have gone through interviews before being hired. This mixed formats can be used in research (Rogg et al., 2001; Vandenberg et al., 1999). Instrument validity tests were performed piloting the survey questionnaires in other hotels. The questions on the survey appeared to measure what they were intended for.

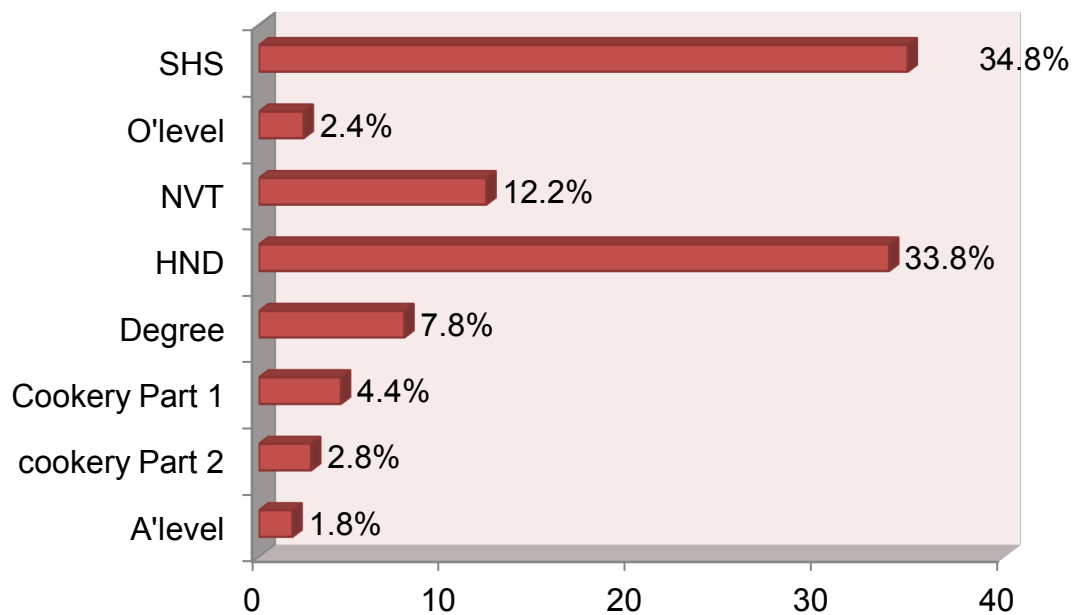
The lists of skills was derived from past studies (Kavanagh & Drennan,2008) and (Heneman & Judge, 2006) and was modified.

Data was analyzed using SPSS Version 18. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, inferential statistics were used. These techniques allow additional factors to enter the analysis separately so that the effect of each can be estimated.

4. RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Approximately 50.2% of the respondents were females while the remaining 49.8 were males. Majority of the respondents were under 45years old. This allows for equal responses from both genders.

Figure 1: Educational Level of Respondents

The respondents had varying qualifications as depicted above. It is evident from the table that majority about 34.48% and 33.8% of the respondents were from SHS and HND and other hospitality related qualifications respectively.

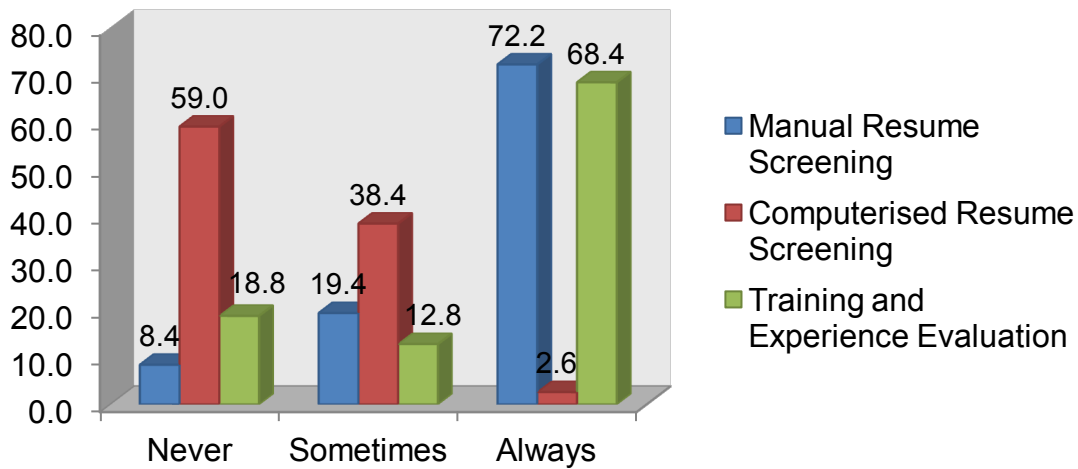
In addition, 7.8% of them also hold degree while 4.4% and 2.8% of them also hold cookery part one and two respectively.

The results shows majority more than half of the respondents do not have tourism or hospitality related qualification. This implies that, there is lack of qualified personnel employed for the jobs in various hotels; precisely qualified personnel are often not employed at the industry.

Initial Screening and Assessment

The first research question ‘to determine how employers in the selected medium hotels assess and screen their applicants’. The findings are presented in figure one below:

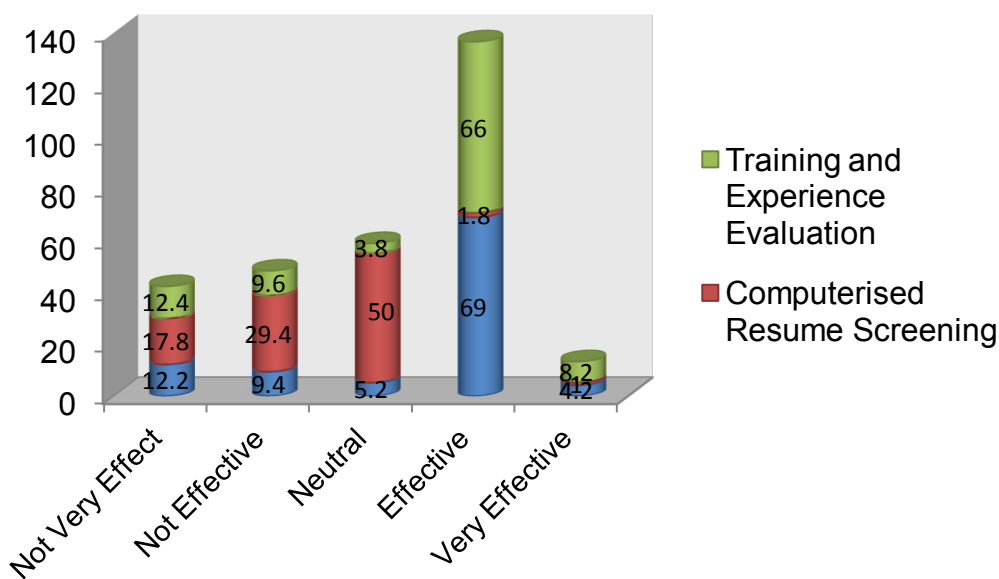
Figure 2: Initial Screening and Assessment of employees in the Selected Medium hotels in Ghana.



The study highlights the initial screening and assessment of employees into the selected Medium hotels in Ghana.

From the figure 2 above it can be inferred that 72.2% of the time manual resume screening method was always used. The training and experience evaluation method was also used with the response rate of 68.4%. On the other hand, computerized resume screening which is an advanced method of screening was never used in some of the selected hotels with the response rate of 59% while about three (3) of the selected hotels agreed that it was sometimes used with a response rate of 38.4%. This implies that majority of the hotel employers prefer manual resume as the most important criteria during the initial screening stage of applicant.

Figure 3: Assessment of effectiveness of the Formal Application Selection Methods Used in Medium Hotels.



On the issue of how effective the initial screening method was, it was indicated in figure 3 that manual resume screening, training and experience evaluation methods were found to be effective supported by high percentages of 69 and 66 respectively. Moreover, computerized resume screening method was identified not to be effective. This implies that the selected medium hotels only concentrate on manual selection method.

Table 1: Level of Importance of Initial Screening Criteria in the Medium Hotels

| Criteria | Percent | Criteria | Percent |
|--|---------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Resume | 46 | Employees Way of Delivery | 18 |
| Contacting the applicants past institution | 14 | College GPA | 9 |
| Recommendation/cover Letter | 40 | Reference | 55 |
| | | Determining the Level of Experience | 18 |

As shown in table (1) above, references were more important than the applicant's academic background. It was also identified that a good reference check on the applicants influences the selection of the applicants supported by a response rate (55%). Other managers also attached importance to references from previous work places stating that it was a way of checking applicant's delivery of service, improving their performance and determining their level of experience. Resume was ranked second and recommendation letter was ranked third while the overall college GPA was the least important.

Table 2: Importance of Selection Methods at the Substantive Assessment Stage in the selected Medium hotels.

The Use of Testing Types and other assessment in the Selection Process in the Selected Medium Hotels

| Selection Methods | Never | Sometimes | Always |
|---|-------|-----------|--------|
| Knowledge Test(Job knowledge Test) | 88.0 | 9.2 | 2.8 |
| Psychological Test | 81.4 | 13.6 | 5.0 |
| Performance/Work Sample Test | 86.6 | 8.6 | 4.8 |
| Ability Test | 86.6 | 11.8 | 1.6 |
| Motivational/ attitude, interest, values and preference inventories | 87.6 | 9.8 | 2.6 |
| Integrity /Personality test | 92.0 | 7.2 | 0.8 |
| Personality test and Simulation | 84.4 | 11.8 | 3.8 |

As shown in table 2 above psychological test was used in the selected hotels during the substantive assessment stage in the selected medium hotels with a response rate of 13.6 percent. The results from the table indicates that, above 80% of the time one could infer that all the above listed testing and assessment types (knowledge test, performance/work sample test, ability test, motivational/ attitude, interest, values and preference inventories, integrity test and Personality and simulation) were not priority test used by hotel employers

during the selection process. This implies that most of the employees in the selected medium hotels in the country do not go through appropriate testing before being selected to fill vacant positions in the selected hotels.

Table 3: Effectiveness of Selection Methods (Tests) in the Substantive Assessment Stage

| Selection Method | Not | Not | Neutral | Effective | Very |
|---|------|-----------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| | Very | Effective | | | Effective |
| Knowledge Test(Job knowledge Test) | 68.2 | 7.2 | 3.8 | 8.2 | 2.6 |
| Psychological Test | 83.2 | 6.6 | 2.8 | 5.4 | 2.0 |
| Performance/Work Sample Test | 82 | 6.6 | 6.8 | 4.4 | 0.2 |
| Ability Test | 82 | 6.8 | 8.2 | 2.8 | 0.2 |
| Motivational/ attitude, interest, values and preference inventories | 84.6 | 8.6 | 4.4 | 2.2 | 0.2 |
| Integrity Test | 84.8 | 8.8 | 3.6 | 2.6 | 0.2 |
| Personality and Simulation | 84.6 | 10 | 4.4 | 0.8 | 0.2 |

On the issue of the effectiveness, as demonstrated in table 3 above, it was clearly indicated that, only knowledge testing was effective in the selection process while others were not effective. This is supported by high percentage responses of **above 80%**.

Table 4: Binomial Test on Employee Selection method in the Initial Assessment Stage

| Section Method | Category | N | Observed | Test Prop. | Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) |
|------------------------|----------|-----|----------|------------|------------------------|
| | | | Prop. | | |
| Formal Application | No | 70 | 0.14 | 0.5 | 0.00 |
| | Yes | 360 | 0.86 | | |
| | | 430 | 1 | | |
| Testing and Assessment | No | 367 | 0.73 | 0.5 | 0.00 |
| | Yes | 63 | 0.27 | | |
| | | 430 | 1 | | |
| Interview | No | 13 | 0.03 | 0.5 | 0.00 |
| | Yes | 417 | 0.97 | | |
| | | 430 | 1 | | |
| Reference Checks | No | 232 | 0.60 | 0.5 | 0.00 |
| | Yes | 198 | 0.40 | | |
| | | 430 | 1 | | |

The binomial test is performed to determine the significant differences between the responses provided by the respondents on the type of selection procedures adopted by the selected hotels. From the table 4 above 0.86 of the respondents have accepted that formal application for jobs is usually used as a selection procedure. This shows that there are differences between the responses as supported by the significant value of 0.00. The results from the table also shows that a proportion of 0.73 of the responses demonstrated that testing and

assessment as a way of selecting employees were also not used in the selection process. Moreover, a very high proportion of 0.97 of the responses demonstrated that interviews were also employed in the selection of employees in the hotels. However, reference checks were found not to be used in the selection process as indicated by the proportion of 0.60 of the response rate.

Table 5: Relationship between Good Selection technique and Performance in the selected Medium hotels.

Summary Table

| Multiple R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 0.14 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 1.37 |

| ANOVA | | | | | |
|------------|----------------|--------|-------------|------|------|
| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Regression | 17.58 | 3.00 | 5.86 | 3.12 | 0.03 |
| Residual | 933.08 | 496.00 | 1.88 | | |
| Total | 950.66 | 499.00 | | | |

| Coefficients | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|------------|---------|---------|
| | coefficient | Std. Error | t stats | p-value |
| (Constant) | 1.92 | 0.22 | 8.63 | 0.00 |
| Manual resume screening | 0.02 | 0.16 | 0.15 | 0.88 |
| Computerised resume screening | 0.19 | 0.08 | 2.29 | 0.02 |
| Training and experience evaluation | 0.02 | 0.15 | 0.12 | 0.90 |

The table 4 above shows the regression analysis examining the relationship between good selection techniques with employee performance in the selected medium hotels.

The summary table shows 2% of the variation in the employee performance and the selection procedures. This implies that 98% of the time the relationship between selection methods and hotel performance shows that procedures were not effectively followed. The Anova table also confirmed that the test appears to be significant at a p-value of 0.03 and hence it could be concluded that there is a relationship between selection practices and employee performance in the selected medium hotels.

The coefficient portion of the analysis also presents the influences of the various selection procedures on employee performance. The constant value of 1.92 also seems to be at a significant value of 0.00. The coefficient of 0.02 respectively recorded for selection practices like manual resume screening and training experience evaluation appears to be insignificant in influencing employee performance. These are supported by the p-values of 0.88 and 0.90 respectively. However, at 95% confidence level computerised resume screening which is a selection method appears to have a relationship with employee performance at a p-value of 0.02. Nevertheless, the relationship seems to be frail as shown by the coefficient of 0.19.

Employee performance and hotel performance do not seem to depend on selection methods like manual resume screening, training and experience evaluation. Though it appears that resume screening is a practice among most of the selected medium hotels it does not add any value to the selected hotels.

5. SKILLS EMPLOYERS VALUE MOST IN THE OF JOB APPLICANTS AND SELECTION METHOD ADOPTED IN THE MEDIUM HOTELS.

To explore the second research question the skills employers valued most during the selection process and other selection method used mostly, selected frontline supervisors and HR managers were interviewed and questions were also asked on what skills and selection methods employers valued most and how they were effectively used.

From the interview it was identified that, the selection methods used by some of the hotels depends on job requirements needs and type of job position at senior staff level. For applicants applying for managerial position their application and resume are screened and further interviewed by managers face to face while a short practical test is also used for some positions such as being a waiter, barman and cook.

In relation to whether it is an accepted selection method nationally, internationally, it was not possible to ascertain whether these methods are best practices internationally or 'tailored' to medium hotels.

On the issue of the skills sought in selecting junior staff, it was revealed that, emphasis was heavily placed on human relations skills confirmed by almost all the interviewees. Interpersonal skills especially communication skills was also confirmed by four human resource managers and problem solving skills. This finding is in disparity to studies where competences and written communication are considered as a critical skill that employers are demanding in their employees Maes et al. (1997). Work experience, technical skills and leadership skills are also substantiated by three of the frontline managers.

It was also revealed that, majority of the supervisors used a single method to establish a peculiar job related skills they are looking out for in their new hires. They argued that human relations, teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal skills can be demonstrated during the interview process and the written communication are best identified in resume submitted with application letters the new hires present. Other relevant skills could be demonstrated when they are assigned jobs.

Concerning the effectiveness of selection methods, the 'HR Manager' in one of the hotels stated that "everybody is evaluated with the same selection procedure.

Some of the frontline managers also argued that, they even consider interviews more important at the initial screening stage. They confirmed that, face-to-face interactions with the potential employees were more appropriate than what was stated in the resumes while graphology and genetic screening were unpopular methods. It was also identified that selection methods and other policies with respect with selection issues varies from one hotel to the other.

6. DISCUSSION

The study explore hiring managers' approach to selection methods and skills sought in employees in selected medium-sized hotels in Ghana. Although, previous studies

emphasized the importance of recruitment and selection in knowledge based industries, there are various concerns raised on selection issues in the hotel sector. It is interesting to know that during the initial assessment stage manual resume screening, previous training and experience evaluation methods were found to be effective and was a decisive tool for applicants to be short-listed into most of the selected medium hotels while two (2) hotels never screen resumes and only three (3) uses the computerized method during the initial stage. This implies that majority of the hotels employers prefer manual resume as the most important criteria during the initial screening stage of applicants and lay more emphasis on employability skills. For instance, experience, personal attributes and previous job related training skills rather than academic scores. The result is in line with Chan & Coleman (2004) who found that employers considered employees with a positive service mind and commitment to the industry as key factors for success rather than a good educational background. Moody et al.(2002) also state that, hiring managers preferred resume and interview as initial selection methods. Also background checks were conducted to determine the identity of applicant's, thus calling applicants previous work place to check work history, references were verified for employees occupying management positions in all the selected hotels. The popularity of this method, especially in majority of the medium hotels, seems to suggest that managers or recruiters examine their potential employees to prevent selection mistakes. However, there is the need for managers to seek permission from the applicants than assuming that they have the right to do the background check. This confirms Ryan & Tippins, (2004) assertion that, employers used any methods they found suitable to screen their new hires.

Emphasis was also laid on psychological Test/Structured interviews at the substantive stage than the order test types. Thus employers argued, that applicant's skills and composure can be determined at the interview. Thus, employee's performance during interview was very critical during the entire selection process.

On the contrary, though first impressions are critical, personality, attitude and preference inventories are not the most important mechanisms to assess candidates at the substantive assessment stage but psychological test, structured interviews and knowledge testing was effective. This finding is consistent with (Bowen, Ledford, & Nathan, 1991) assertion that employers pay more attention to finding a match between the applicants's than the technical skills of the candidates. Thus applicant-organization fit can predict job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). The results of the study support the hypothesis that, the association between selection methods and hotel performance shows that procedures were not effectively followed. The anova table confirmed that the test appears to be significant at a p-value of 0.03 and hence there is a relationship between selection methods and employee performance in the selected medium hotels. The coefficient portion of the analysis also presents the influences of the various selection procedures on employee performance. The constant value of 1.92 also seems to be at a significant value of 0.00. The coefficient of 0.02 respectively recorded for selection practices like manual resume screening and training experience evaluation appears to be insignificant in influencing employee performance. These are supported by the p-values of 0.88 and 0.90 respectively. However, at 95% confidence level computerised resume screening which is a selection method appears to have a relationship with employee performance at a p-value of 0.02. Nevertheless, the relationship seems to be weak as shown by the coefficient of 0.19. Thus, employee performance and hotel performance do not seem to depend on selection methods like manual resume screening, training and experience evaluation. Though it appears that this a common practice among all the selected medium hotels.

Besides, the skills employers value most in the newly hire employees was good human relation skills. This corroborates Okeiyi et al.(1994) statement that, human relation skills cannot be exaggerated because lack of such skills can be a blockade in the service industry in terms of high productivity. In addition, verbal and listening skills are also relevant because employees in all the selected hotels will certainly interact with guests and excellent service delivery might result in repeat business. In addition, hiring of Senior High School and Vocational training graduates was identified as the main source for hiring for junior staff positions but with few exceptions in some of the hotels. Hiring managers believed that having gone through formal education is a key to success, while competencies such as initiative, which are tied to the applicant's personality, are difficult to develop.

In summary, there is the need to use more sophisticated selection methods in the selected medium hotels. Thus, continued use of limited selection methods is questionable with respect to the level of validity in relation to the selection of candidates from various cultural backgrounds.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The study examines selection issues in selected medium hotels in Ghana. It was identified that, during the initial assessment stage manual resume screening, previous training and experience evaluation methods were found to be effective and were decisive tools for applicants to be short-listed into most of the selected medium hotels. Secondly, at the substantive assessment stage psychological test and structured interviews and knowledge testing were effective. Employers also value human relation, communication and listening skills. Lack of fair employment policies constrains employee selection and high rate of respondents believed that the whole processes have flaws and thus suitable candidates are not selected using appropriate selection procedures.

In terms of theoretical and practical contribution there is scarcity of literature on the topic under debate in the tourism sector but with the current literature on selection methods in the human resource literature, this has generated extensive literature on selection activities from global perspective and therefore decreases the research gap in this area. Specifically, various selection methods have been identified that can be used by hiring managers in the hotel industry.

In addition, since other research model indentified various selection methods in other knowledge based organizations and not the tourism sector, this will serve as a starting point and a guide for hiring managers in the tourism sector (hotel) during selection of applicants into their various organizations. The results from using the model can be extended beyond to support the human resource management process.

7.1 IMPLICATIONS

Even though no selection methods can guarantee total effectiveness and validity in relation to its sensitivity and as predictor job performance expectations in the hotel sector, there is the

need to adopt more creative and innovative approach to selection issues in the hotel sector for selection of employees from diverse cultural backgrounds.

In addition, hiring managers may gain from implementing innovative strategies to guarantee that the sector select and retain employees of the highest quality suitable for employment situation that exists within the tourism sector. Furthermore, (hotels) industry also needs to be conscious that long held values are been challenged by new trends and as such adhered to more transparent and sophisticated selection procedures where applicants can challenge the process if they are not satisfied.

Consequently, the time has come for hiring managers to review and or re-evaluate their outdated methods where necessary. By doing that employee skills and performance would be enhanced if effective and fair selection procedures are followed. Furthermore, tourism and other related hospitality institutions have a pivotal role to play in the training and development of future hospitality and tourism employees. Skills development and communication-related courses, interpersonal, human relations and skills demanded from the industry should be included in the tourism related curriculums.

The new model can be used as a guide during selection of applicants because it is different from other previous referenced models in the literature that are not related to the tourism sector. The model developed is an alternative but wholly complementary framework to stimulate and facilitate future empirical research in employee selection in the tourism and hospitality sector.

7.2 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

In respect of the contribution of the article to knowledge, there are several inherent limitations.

Specifically, the sample of ten medium size hotels for the study is quite limited. In addition, the cross-section data was mainly based on employees and employers from selected medium hotels in the tourism sector in Ghana. Replication of this study in different settings using quantitative, confirmatory research could validate the findings and allow for comparison. Moreover, specific research works could be carried out to focus on investigation into the various selection methods/techniques at various tourism and hospitality organizations across Ghana. Such studies might provide answers to debate that are on-going in the tourism and the hospitality industry with regards to HR needs in a competitive tourism and hospitality business environment like Ghana and as such contribute to the human resource management literature and also help policy makers to make informed decisions.

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A (GENERAL)

1. What is your Gender? Male Female
2. Age.....
3. What is your highest educational qualification?.....
4. Which of these Ghana Tourist Board classifications does your Hotel belong to?

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5 -star <input type="checkbox"/> | 4-Star <input type="checkbox"/> | 3- Star <input type="checkbox"/> | 2- Star <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1-star <input type="checkbox"/> | Budget Hotel <input type="checkbox"/> | Motel <input type="checkbox"/> | Guest House <input type="checkbox"/> |
5. What position do you hold in this organisation?
.....
6. To which department do you belong?
.....
7. How many years have you been working with this Hotel?
.....
8. Does your organisation have a Human Resource Department?

| | |
|-----|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
9. Who is in-charge of recruitment and selection in the Hotel?

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Owner | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Outsourced | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Human Resource Dept | <input type="checkbox"/> |
10. What are the main reasons that necessitate recruitment in your organisation?

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| New or potential planned development | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Succession Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Talent Development | <input type="checkbox"/> |

11. Which of these selection procedures does your organisation employ? [Select all that apply]

- Formal Application Go to question 19
- Testing and Assessment Go to question 20
- Interview Go to question 22
- Reference Checks Go to question 25

12. Which of these formal application selection methods does your organisation use and how effective is it?

Keys

- Frequency:** 1 = Never,
2 = Sometimes,
3 = Always
- Effectiveness** 1 = Not very effective
2 = Not effective,
3 = Neutral
4 = Effective
5 = Very Effective,

| Formal Application Selection Methods |
|--------------------------------------|
| Manual Resume screening |
| Computerised Resume screening |
| Training and Experience evaluation |

| Frequency | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

| Effectiveness | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

13. Are all applicants who pass educational and professional selection criteria pooled and subjected to the same set of tests?

- Yes
- No

14. How often does your organisation use these Testing and Assessment types in the selection process and how effective are they? Indicate by circling.

Keys

- Frequency:** 1 = Never,
2 = Sometimes,
3 = Always
- Effectiveness** 1 = Not very effective
2 = Not effective,
3 = Neutral
4 = Effective
5 = Very Effective,

| Types of Testing and Assessment |
|------------------------------------|
| Knowledge test (job specific test) |
| Psychological test |

| Frequency | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

| Effectiveness | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| |
|--|
| Performance/Work sample test |
| Ability test (mental, clerical, technical) |
| Motivational/personality fit inventories |
| Integrity test |
| Role play and simulations |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

15. Which of the following types of interview is employed by your organisation? [tick all that apply]

Behaviour based interviews

(i.e. candidates describe specific examples of their skills)

Situational interview

(i.e. candidates describe hypothetical situations)

16. Do all applicants undergo structured interviews before being hired?

Yes

No

17. Does the interview panel include the Head of the department to which the applicant wishes to be employed?

Yes If yes, how frequent, Always Sometimes Never

No If no, why?

18. What methods are used in obtaining reference (background checks) in your organisation?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

19. How important is reference check in your selection process?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. What are the skills employers' values most in selection of applicants?

Thank you for your participation.

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