

# Manpower Procurement Programme in Private Hospitals: Procedures and Problems

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## Abstract

Private hospitals are privately owned and run a business enterprise which employs human resources to provide health services so as to achieve their goals. In procuring such manpower, they adopt various strategies in their recruitment and selection processes and procedures. However, these processes and procedures vary according to the size of the hospitals and do not always conform to standard procedures. This is particularly the case in small private hospitals. In this study, it was found that medium and large private hospitals adopt manpower procurement procedures that largely conform to established standard while small private hospitals do not.

**Keywords:** Manpower Procurement, Private Hospitals, Nigeria

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Private hospitals are taken to mean hospitals not owned and entirely controlled by government. In other words such hospitals are regarded as private enterprises that are owned and run by private individuals or groups of individuals that exhibit all the features and characteristics of private companies including profit maximization. This implies that like all other private enterprises, they try as much as possible to reduce operational costs and maximize their revenue.

Individuals who establish private hospitals need the services of others (including medical and health professionals) as employees to make the establishment operate and succeed. They engage the employees through recruitment channels of their choice personal contact or established recruitment and selection processes taking pains to ensure that they select the best candidate. This is not easy. Experience shows that in the process, interviewers sometimes vary in their views and decisions on the conditions for selecting the best candidate because they somehow lack the skill to pick out the most promising and suitably qualified candidates in the circumstance: Some who succeed do so by sheer chance.

The measure of success which any hospital can claim to achieve in the direction of human talent selection depends, to a large extent, upon its ability to ensure adequate fitting of the candidate to the job through effective recruitment and systematic selection techniques in the case of prospective manpower, and the effective utilization of available talent in the case of those already in employment. The key factor in effective recruitment and selection of manpower, in private hospitals is adherence to established procedures and processes that conform to best practice.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to examine the manpower procurement programme in private hospitals. But the specific objectives are;

1. To examine the process of recruiting employees in private hospitals.
2. To examine the procedures for selecting prospective employees in private hospitals
3. To determine the extent to which these processes and procedures conform to established principles or best practice
4. To identify the inherent problems in the process and procedure for recruiting and selecting the employees.

## 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Answer will be sought in this study to the following questions;

1. What steps are taken in the process of recruiting employees in the private hospitals?
2. What are the procedures for selecting prospective employees in private hospitals?
3. To what extent do these process and procedure conform to established principles or best practice?
4. What are the inherent problems in the process and procedures for recruiting employees in private hospitals?

## 1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was restricted to ten selected private hospitals in Enugu metropolis. Three small sized hospitals, four medium sized hospitals while the remaining three were large sized hospitals. Thus, the focus was on manpower procurement programmes which centered mainly on recruitment and selecting techniques in private hospitals.

## 2.0 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

With respect to manpower procurement in private hospitals, the salient issue to be examined is management policies in respect of procurement and employment or, rather, recruitment Akinwale (2007) views procurement as a general term which refers to obtaining the personnel required to fill the existing vacancies in an organization. The procurement process involves recruitment and selection. To make manpower procurement effective, human resources planning is involved. According to Nwatu (2005) this involves the determination of the quality, number, experience and qualification of people needed to man the organization. Procurement process involves recruitment, selection, placement, orientation and induction. But we are more concerned with recruitment and selection in this paper.

Recruitment can be defined as the first step in the process of filling a vacancy in an organization (Ozuh, 2006). It ranges from passive voluntary act of the applicant walking into the organization to enquire about vacancies to the more dynamic effort of the company executive taking the initiative to reach out for applicant by advertising vacant position in their organization and calling for applicants. In other words, recruitment is not limited to formal, planned, systematic effort on part of the employers to attract suitable candidates/applicants into their organizations; the informal unsolicited and voluntary behavior on the part of the applicant to look for jobs is equally as valuable part and parcel of it all (Orwell, 2006). It is essentially concerned with preparation of job description and job specification, definition of terms and conditions of employment, determination of sources of candidates, advertising the existing vacancies and sifting applications and short listing.

According to Anderson (2008) recruitment is finding potential job applicant and getting them to apply. The objective of recruitment is to produce a short list of candidates who are worth interviewing. Put in another prospective, the goal of recruitment is to create a large pool of individuals who are available and willing to work.

On the other hand, selection is the process of seeking out the suitable candidate from among the pool of applicants (Hanson, 2000). It involves picking for hire, a subset of potential employees from total set of applicants available for hire at any given time (Gurion, 2003). In other words, it is the process of choosing from a number of available applicants a smaller number to be hired for a given job. According to Nebo (2001) the selection process involves a procedure through which the management determines the applicants that best meets the qualifications and have the greatest aptitude for job. The objective of the selection process is to sort out and eliminating those adjudged unqualified to meet job and organization requirements.

## 2.1 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

After conducting job analysis, writing job description and deciding the qualifications needed for job, the human resource manager will go into fourth step in the recruitment process which is recruitment proper. The human resource department seeks, finds and attracts qualified applicants either internally or externally. Internal sources consist of other employees in various departments in the organization. When recruitment is to be made from internal sources, adverts are placed on the organizations notice boards and memos are circulated to heads of departments (Ewurum, 2007).

External sources include people from outside the organization. External applicants can be reached by placing job advertisement or using consultants/agencies, etc. A standard recruitment procedure entails the following steps;

- i. Preparation of job description
- ii. Preparation of job specification
- iii. Advertising of vacancies
- iv. Collection of application forms
- v. Invitation of candidates for interviews.

The practice of stimulating and attracting candidates from either the external or internal organizational environment depends on the recruitment policy of the organization, different factors are taking into consideration in the formulation of recruitment policy. This involves:

- i. Organizational policies:-These are usually in line with the objectives and value of the organization.
- ii. Government policies: - are policies developed by the government which should be followed by all employing organizations and businesses
- iii. Recruitment cost: - This serves the associated costs in filling the vacancies.
- iv. Recruitment needs: - This also is function of the skills and attributes required for the role.

After seeking, attracting and finding a pool of applicants, the next step is the selection process which is the procedure through which the management determines the most suitably qualified and competent applicant for the job. Selection represents semi-final stage of decision-making in the procurement process (Whittle, 2007). Ewurwu (2007) posit that selection process has as its objectives the sorting out and elimination of those judged unqualified to meet job and organization requirements. He further stated that selection involves matching candidate qualification, against the job requirements. The objectives of the individuals are assessed against the requirements of the role in order to ensure that the right person for the job is employed. Ugbaja (2009) states that

the commonest way of doing this is to select individuals who have the necessary skills, abilities and personality competence to successfully fill specific vacancies in the organization. The selection process model is thus

- i. Reception in employment office
- ii. Initial screening
- iii. Application forms or blank
- iv. Tests
- v. Face- to- face interview
- vi. Reference checks or Reference's reports
- vii. Physical examination
- viii. Offer of appointment/Rejection letter.
- ix. Medical test/examination

Thus, the end of recruitment and selection processes is the offer of appointment to selected or successful candidates.

## **2.2 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESSES IN PRIVATE HOSPITALS**

Studies have shown that the recruitment and selection procedures/processes in private hospitals do not always conform to time-honoured management principles and procedures. It has been found that there is distinction between recruitment and selection processes as well as deviation of their procedures from established standards of recruitment and selection procedures. These processes and procedures vary according to the size of the private hospitals.

According to Eze (2005) in small private hospitals, the standard recruitment procedures are not always followed. Most recruitment are carried out through informal or personal contacts. Vacancies are seldom filled from internal sources. For external recruitment, vacancies are seldom advertised in the national dailies but are pasted on the hospitals notice board hanged on the wall. The notice usually specifies the qualifications and age requirements, and insists that applicants bring letters of commendation from referees.

However, in medium and large private hospitals, the standard recruitment procedures are followed. Vacancies are filled through internal and external sources after being advertised through formal media (Ola, 2004). Job description and job specification are published. Application forms are collected and sifted while potential applicants are short-listed for interview.

The selection process in small private hospitals also does not follow standard procedures. All candidates are interviewed by the same person (usually the medical director). Selection tests and medical tests are not compulsory, but in medium and large hospitals the standard process is always followed. Agu (2003) found that in such hospitals initial screening, application forms or blanks, face-to-face interviews, reference checks, tests, physical examinations and medical tests are involved.

Thus, it could be argued that while standard recruitment procedures and selection process are not strictly adhered to in small hospitals, they are observed in most medium and large private hospitals.

## **2.3 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROBLEMS IN PRIVATE HOSPITALS**

The first problem that confronts MDs in private hospitals when a vacancy occurs is to decide whether or not the job is necessary and should be retained; and, if it is, whether to re-allot the whole or part of it to other workers in the department, to meet, may be the changing needs of the hospital. He also chooses between filling the position form within the hospital by means of promotion or transfer, such a critical decision and action cannot be taken unless a clear idea of the work that is currently done. Job analysis is the basis of that information and a mistake in job analysis leads to wrong decisions or decisions based on misguided information. A major difficulty in job analysis lies with the MDs, particularly when he lacks the technique to carry out the analysis properly. MD not versed in management does not know how to break up the job into tasks or job elements. Faulty job analysis starts a chain of unfavorable and misleading of accurate job analysis results in wrong assessment and bad decisions about candidates.

Another area of difficulty experienced by practitioners in recruitment and selection of manpower in private hospitals is psychological tests. Various problems surface when psychological tests are left in the hands of untrained and inexperienced users. The administration of tests is mismanaged. Investigations reveal that untrained testes ignore the instructions and extend time for subjects who cannot finish on time, help others solve some problems or allow them to repeat the test several times to enable them improve their scores. Another malpractice is the tendency of keeping subjects on a test for too long. Subjecting testees to a test for a long time generates fatigue which leads to inaccurate results. Difficulties are also experienced in the marking of tests. Some markers tend to be lenient and to accept as correct responses. Others make mistakes by marking correct responses wrong and vice versa. Experience in the field identifies three source of trouble in interviewing viz; the interviewee and interview situation. Some interviewers lack the necessary preparation for interview. They fail to study pertinent document about the application to identify points that needs further probing during interview,

obtain information which is vital to the job but was left out in the document presented by the applicant, nor do they consult the job/man specification to note the facts be elicited from the applicant during the interview. Their failure to prepare denies them chance they have to assess correctly candidate on traits that relate to the criteria for jobs. Others do not have the know how or technique' for conducting employment interview. This handicap often lands them in taking the wrong decision or succeeding by chance.

There are also employer-related problems in manpower procurement in private hospitals. The root of the problem is two-fold. One is the general lack of any real basis for matching the job specification and information obtained from the applicant, assuming that the job/man specification has been properly established. The other is the inability to identify, or the absence of the technical skill for eliciting or identifying the required attributes in the candidate. A vast amount of technical know-how goes into the analysis of the job and job requirement and the testing and evaluation of staff qualification when it comes to matching one against the other, most employers are compelled by lack of technical know-how to rely on their intuition rather than on any systematic means of bringing the gap between job demands and human attributes.

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The study sample comprises of 50 staff of private hospitals taken into consideration. The stratified random sampling technique was applied in selecting the hospitals while the simple random sampling method was applied in selecting the respondents from each hospital. A well-structured questionnaire was used in the data collection. Copies of the questionnaires were given to the selected respondents. But, before administering the instrument, a pilot study was conducted and tested using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient which was 0.82.

The researcher visited the hospitals and administered the questionnaires to the respondents after which the instruments were retrieved. The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. An item mean of 2.5 and above was considered to be reasonable conforming while mean scores below 2.5 was regarded as non-conforming with standard recruitment and selection process and procedures.

### 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

**Table 1: Mean response of recruitment procedures in private hospitals and conformity to standard procedures.**

S/no	Recruitment Procedure steps	SA	A	D	SA	$\bar{x}$	Remarks
1.	Vacancies are advertised in national dailies	5	6	20	19	1.94	Nonconforming
2.	Job description is prepared	20	10	9	11	2.74	Conforming
3.	Job Specification is prepared	20	12	11	7	2.9	Conforming
4.	Application forms are collected	22	18	6	4	3.16	Conforming
5.	Candidate are invited for interviews	24	19	5	2	3.3	Conforming
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>2.8</b>	

Source: Field survey, 2012

From table 1, it could be observed that most of the items as rated by the 50 respondents in comparing recruitment procedures in private hospitals have a high mean score of above 2.5 indicating that some private hospitals' recruitment procedures confirm with standard procedures. This finding agreed with that of Eze (2005) who observed that the recruitment procedures in medium and large hospitals confirm to established standard procedures while those of small hospitals do not. However, most of them do not widely with widely advertising job vacancies in national dailies.

**Table 2: Mean Response of Selection process established standard process in private hospital and conformity with established standard process.**

S/no.	Selection, Process Steps	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Remarks
1.	Initial Screening are conducted	18	24	5	3	3.14	Conforming
2.	It involves application forms (blanks)	18	23	6	3	3.12	- do -
3.	Interviews are conducted	22	24	2	3	3.3	- do -
4.	Reference checks/References reports are required	21	23	3	3	3.18	- do -
5.	Physical examinations are made	20	18	7	5	3.18	- do -
6.	Aptitude and Medical tests are carried out	21	17	5	7	3.0	- do -
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>3.15</b>	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 2 shows that all the items rated by the respondents have a mean score of 3.15 which indicates that the selection process in some private hospitals conform to established standard process. This finding agrees

with that made by Agu (2003) who found that in medium and large hospitals, the selection process is standard and systematic unlike what is obtained in small private hospitals.

**Table 3: Mean response of extent to which recruitment and selection processes and procedures established principles or best practice**

S/no	Extent of conformity	SA	A	D	SA	$\bar{x}$	Remarks
1.	The processes and procedures in small hospitals conform to a large extent	-	5	25	20	1.6	Non-conforming
2.	The processes and procedures in small hospitals conform to a little extent	-	10	18	12	1.36	Non-Conforming
3.	The processes in small hospitals do not conform at all	25	15	6	5	3.2	Non-Conforming
4.	The processes and procedures in medium and large hospitals conform to large extent	22	18	6	4	3.16	Non-Conforming
5.	The processes and procedures in medium and large hospitals conform to a little extent	19	21	4	3	3.18	Non-Conforming
6.	The processes and procedures in medium and large hospitals do not confirm at all	-	-	30	20	1.6	Non-conforming rejected
	<b>Grand mean</b>						

Source; Field Survey, 2012

Table 3 indicates that all the items rated by the respondents have a mean score of 2.53 which implies that the recruitment and selection processes and procedures in private hospitals conform to established management principle. However, the ratings for items 3 and 4 show that in private hospitals the process and procedures do not conform at all. But in medium and large hospitals they conform to a large extent. These findings conform to those made by Ola (2003) and Agu (2004).

**Table 4: Mean response of recruitment and selection problems in private hospitals**

S/no.	Problem	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Remarks
1.	Difficulty of deciding to fill vacancies from external or internal sources	18	20	8	4	3.04	Accepted
2.	Inexperience of human resource managers in psychological tests	20	19	6	5	3.08	Accepted
3.	Lack of knowledge on how to conduct interview	19	21	7	4	3.14	Accepted
4.	Inability to match job requirements with candidates qualifications and qualities	21	19	3	8	3.1	Accepted
	<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>3.09</b>	

Source; Field Survey 2012

Table 4 shows that the ratings of respondents on the problems of private hospitals in manpower recruitment and selection have a grand mean of 3.09. The findings shows that these problems include the difficulties of deciding whether to fill vacancies from external or internal sources, inexperience of managers in conducting tests, lack of knowledge of how to conduct interviews and their inability to match job requirements with candidates qualifications and qualities. These correspond with the views of Adewale (2007) and Ugbaja (2005).

## 5.0 THE WAY FORWARD

Some of the problems and abuse of manpower procurement procedures in private hospitals can be resolved systematically. With respect to the psychological tests, this can be resolved effectively or contained by giving testers suitable training. In effect, training should be a pre-requisition for the administration of psychological tests. It ensures that proper presentation of tests and strict adherence to instructions are achieved. In the marking of tests, absolute objectivity in the scoring of psychological tests is essential. Effort should be made to maintain it since a test sets out to measure a dimension as it really is, no room should be created for guess work.

To discourage the practice of guessing, subjects are penalized for wrong responses which are a mark of guessing. Marking should be done by, at least two testers, one cross-checking the work of the other or others. This procedure corrects any mistakes in marking and ensures fairness. With respect to interview problem, training is the answer. The eliciting of relevant information from applicants, the phrasing of questions that draw out the desired, facts, the scrutiny of applicants documents to exact points for further probing during interview and the matching of job information against man specification to determine the profile or job/man specification require a technique acquired through training.

On the part of the employer, the communication barrier existing between employers and experts, that frustrates the selection and placement of suitable talents can be overcome if only the employment authorities



could realize that their power, acquired through success in business, does not carry with it expertise in recruitment and personnel selection.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

The new millennium holds out opportunities for employment especially in the private sector. Efficient effective manning of the organizations cannot be guaranteed unless effective deployments of human resources are assured through systematic recruitment and selection. If employers utilize the facilities for the development of this system in private hospitals to advantage, and practitioners update their techniques and correct their failures, manpower procurement procedures will be efficient.

Small private hospitals adopt their own methods and techniques in recruiting and selecting personal although these are not peculiar. Medium and large hospitals adopt procedures that are nearly in consonance with standard practices. However, it should be pointed out that personal influence is a very strong factor in manpower procurement. Often, the normal process of selection that keeps the door open for competition by candidates and the hiring of the best candidate is modified in favour of the owner or owners of the hospital. This does not make manpower procurement ineffective even though it floats the established standard.

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