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Exploring the use of Interviews as Effective Tool for Recruitment in an Organization

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Abstract

Interviews are integral part of the recruitment processes of every organization. Different formats are usually activated depending on the preference of the organization to get the right candidates to hire. Considering the fact that these interviews have been used over the years, the question as to whether the interviews have been an effective mechanism to help organizations the get the right caliber of personnel to recruit is another matter.

Studies conducted on the use of interviews as effective tool for recruitment in an organization have not been able to draw a direct link between performance at the interview and job output. Human resource practitioners cannot fathom how exceptional performance during interview process

cannot be translated into an extra-ordinary job performance. However, venturing to unravel the direct correlation between interviews and job performance requires conscious effort to draw a line between different scenarios of the interview formats. The article therefore seeks to review the different types of interview formats commonly adopted in a bid to get the right personnel top help the organization to achieve its desired objectives.

It must be emphasized however that, going forward organizations need to design different formats in line with the benefit of hindsight to get the right candidates for employment.

Keywords: Interview, Recruitment, Organization, Human Resource, Performance, Empliment, and Interview Format

Introduction

As espoused by Bril *et al* (2018) and Gokalp *et al* (2020)^[10] every organization thrive on effective human resources that could be marshaled to achieve the set goals of the organization. The vision and mission of every organization is captured under strategic planning which is carried through by human resources to propel the organization to its destination. In a bid to obtain outstanding human resources, it is prudent to develop a mechanism or a system of recruiting the best candidate. Recruitment is the process of matching candidates to the needs of the organization. The concept of recruitment can also be viewed as the process of creating a reservoir of qualified candidates to perform the work of the organization. It must be noted however that, the human resources must be in tune of the needs of the organization, as the competence or capabilities of the human resource should be clearly articulated to help the organization hire the qualified candidates to achieve business goals.

Using interview for job placement can be traced back to the ancient times when rulers, managers, leaders, and other people of power would gather information about people through conversations to help evaluate potential candidates and make decisions about their roles. Notwithstanding, the modern concept of interview started around the 19th century (Brown, 2020)^[5]. The word interview originated from the French word “entrevue” meaning “to see each other” or “encounter” (Espedal, 2022)^[7]. Thus, two or more parties engaging in a conversion for a particular purpose (Knott *et al.*, 2022)^[15]. According to Fox (2009)^[8], an interview is “ an important data gathering technique involving verbal communication between the researcher and the participant”. Fox (2009)^[8] further indicated that interviews can take an unstructured form where applicants are allowed to talk freely about their interest, or a structured form where responses of participants are restricted to direct questions. Other interview types include situational interviews, behavioural interviews, stress interviews, technical interviews and video or phone interviews (Indeed Career Guide, 2023)^[12]. Interviews can be of different formats including individual interview

formats which involve one interviewer and one candidate; group interview which many applicants are interviewed at the same time such as a question for discussion is thrown on board for a group to discuss while observers assess performances of contributors; panel interview where two or more interviewers assess an individual candidate; multiple round interview where multiple interviews are conducted to evaluate the performances of an individual; informational interview where a candidate interacts with a professional working in a company he is preparing to join; and lastly, a computer-assisted interview where series of questions are provided on a screen for candidates to respond.

During the industrial revolution, the practice of conducting structured interview gained prominence when various organizations began with the use of interviews to select candidates for job placements. An American businessman and an inventor, Thomas Edison, was famous to use interviews to assess potential employees for job positions (Marshall, 2015) ^[17]. He used formalized and the modern process of interviews to inquire information from people about their competency and suitability for a particular job. It is noted that, while interviewing people for research assistant position at his laboratory, Thomas Edison would order a soup for his applicant and check whether the applications would add salt or pepper to the soup before tasting. Those who would do that before tasting would automatically fail for the interview as Thomas Anderson wouldn't want people who would prefer assumptions (Stillman, 2022) ^[30]. The use of interview then became an integral part for selection process in various fields such as academia, business, private sector, and government sector. In the modern system, interview has taken different forms including face-to-face interviews, panel interviews, zoom, skype or google meet interviews and many more. No matter the form and mode, the purpose remains the same as to gather information, evaluate candidates and make informed decisions in different contexts.

Importance of interviews for recruitment process

Interviews have been used for job placements, research studies, media information and many more making it an integral activity for many reasons. Interviews allow employers to evaluate skills, qualifications, and experiences of applicants (Judge *et al.*, 2000) ^[14]. Employers get to know individual expertise and how that expertise align with the requirements of the position by engaging applicants with official conversations (interviews). Again, through interviews, individual's communication skills including ability to articulate ideas, verbal and non-verbal clues and clarity of expressions are known by recruiters (McConnell, 2021; Wehner *et al.*, 2022) ^[19, 35]. Individual's interpersonal skills such as how individuals are patient to listen attentively, build inter-personal relationships and respond appropriately can be assessed during the interview (O'Neil, 2022; Suen *et al.*, 2020) ^[23, 31]. As employers engage, ask questions, and observe responses from applicants, it helps the employers to assess how the applicants can fit to the culture of the organisation (Walters, 2017; Bye *et al.*, 2013) ^[34, 6]. Thus, the interview helps employers to evaluate how the values, attitudes, the behaviour and the working style of applicants will fit with the culture and the values of the organization making employers convinced of the candidates' ability to survive and contribute positively to the progress of the organization. It is also noted that interviews

help employers to get to know the motivation and the commitment of applicants to the roles of the organization (Smith, 2015) ^[29]. As employers solicit information about career aspirations, interest, and reasons for seeking the position, they gain information about the applicant's level of enthusiasm, dedication, and long-term commitments. Interviews can help assess individuals' problem-solving skills and critical thinking abilities (Ventura *et al.*, 2017) ^[33]. Sometimes, scenarios are created during interviews to assess applicant's abilities to respond to problems and critically analysing the problem for the possible ways of solving it. Through scenarios like this, employers can evaluate applicant's analytical abilities, decision-making processes, and how to respond to challenging situations. Lastly but not least, interviews also allow applicants and employers to establish a personal connection for future collaborations (Maurer, 2021) ^[18]. This can contribute to the overall experience of the applicants and then increase their interest in joining the organization or for future career activities. The purpose of the study was to explore the use of interviews as the effective mechanism of recruiting potential candidates for an organization.

Methods

The study adopted analysis and synthesis of the various studies that have been conducted on recruitments. It must be noted however that analysis and synthesis are not separated from each other but co-exist, complementing each other. To begin with, the author analyzes existing approaches of recruitments. To achieve this, theoretical and practical literature were studied. The analyses and synthesis were also mindful of peculiarities of hiring candidates for organization.

Various literatures on different formats of interviews adopted over the years were also reviewed to find out whether the current interview formats address the challenges facing the recruitment processes in an organization.

Though interviews have been used in many years for job placements, there are other sides of it. Some people have argued that interviews tend to be more subjective as assessment may rely on the perceptions as well as the biases of the interviewer (Salazar, 1990) ^[26]. There could be different results from different interviewers on the same process and the same applicant making interview results unreliable. Again, allotted time for interviews may not be enough for applicants to display their full potentials (Boyce and Neale, 2006) ^[3]. As interview times may be constrained, interviewees may not have enough time to display their skills and experiences. Moreover, some aspects of the applicant could be well displayed in other forms of assessments instead of interviews – therefore interviews may not be an ideal way of evaluating the expertise of the applicant in this situation. Applicants who have state flight issues may not perform to their expectations due to nervousness and performances anxieties (Schneider *et al.*, 2019) ^[28]. Interviews may create unnecessary tensions in such candidates which can hinder their performances as they may not be able to present their true abilities. Lastly but not least, interviews can result potential bias which may results from the panels' replacement aggressions, candidates' appearances, personal background, conflict of interest and many more (Norskov *et al.*, 2022; Rivera, 2012) ^[21, 25]. These biases may influence decision-making rather than focusing mainly on skills and qualification of candidates.

Notwithstanding, interviews can be designed with standardized questions and evaluation criteria to remove some of these biases. Other evaluation methods, such as skills assessments and reference checks can also be employed to help create a more comprehensive and objective assessments of candidates.

Discussion

An academic record and excellent performance at an interview session may reflect one's capabilities as a professional; however, this is not always the case. Although an academic record at interviews may show your performance level, this might not necessarily translate into excellent performance on the job.

In a study conducted by (Rahmah and Syahida 2010) [24] emphasize that competency-based employee interview has significant effects on job performance. Ainom 2003 in establishing relationship between known individual competencies of employee and their performance revealed that competencies are strongly related to performance both as individual and between teams in the organization.

In a related study conducted by Sutherland 2011 aimed at determining the effect of recruitment practice of an organization on the performance of the employees, the study concluded the existence of a positive and strong relationship between competencies and employee performance. Ogbue *et al* in a study titled competency-based interview process and organizational productivity: A study of selected private sector organization in Anambra state of Nigeria, the study revealed that competency-based employee interview model is more effective than the behavioral event or conventional method in terms of effect on employee performance as well as productivity.

The behavioral interview model enables the professionals to gain a deeper understanding on candidate past behavior and in turn predict their future performance. Several studies conducted using the behavioral model and other conventional method has also proven to be effective in terms of employees performance.

Interviews may have positive and negative sides, however, developing the assessment methods can make it a more suitable decision for recruitment processes. In the future, interviews are likely to be influenced by advancements of technology and other recruitment techniques.

With the technological advancements including the increasing use of google meet, zoom, video conferencing coupled with inconveniences of travelling to interview sites and cost of forming the interview panels, there is a possibility of interviews moving to the virtual level (Maurer, 2021) [18]. The virtual interviews (on zoom or google meet platforms) may allow greater flexibility as applicants may not need to travel from far to scheduled places.

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and the technologies that follow it including natural language processing and sentiment analysis, can be used to provide insights and real-time analysis of candidates and their area of expertise (Javed and Brishti, 2020) [13]. The AI could help recruiters to identify patterns and indicators of candidate's suitability giving more data driven decisions on candidates (Javed and Brishti, 2020) [13].

The current interviews are mostly on verbal assessments which tend to be a disadvantage for applicants who may not express themselves well orally. There are other candidates who can express themselves very well but may not have the

proper skills for performances. Advancement of skill-based assessment instead of degrees may help select proper candidates for a particular position (Fuller *et al.*, 2022) [9]. These skill-based assessment may include practical exercises, simulations, or case studies to evaluate candidate's abilities in a more tangible context. This may provide transparent decisions on individual skills and problem-solving abilities. In the future, candidates may be presented with simulated situations in the form of games (gamification – the process of using games mechanisms or elements to non-game contexts to engage users better) to assess candidates' competencies and skills for a particular job position (Kuo and Chuang, 2016; Green, 2021; Meena and Parimalarani, 2019) [16, 11, 20]. The approach may give an informed decisions on the candidate's creativity, adaptability, and resiliency with prompt situations and will also get rid of bias. There is a current trend of using data analytics in recruitment process. This may be done by analysing interview data to identify patterns, success factors and biases (Samtani, 2022) [27]. Moreso, training interviewers on bias awareness and inclusive interviewing technique may be increasing in future. This may include data-driven evaluation to reduce human sentiments (Bergelson *et al.*, 2022) [2]. In the future, it is expected that continuous feedbacks are provided in the interview process making the interview process more transparent and objective.

In conclusion, technology advancement may enhance interview process to ensure transparency and low biasness. While these developments may have the potential to ensure the effectiveness of interview as job recruitment tools, human interactions and judgement may remain very important. Therefore, technology may be used to enhance the interview process rather than replacing it especially the role of human beings to assess the suitability of the candidates.

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