



Professional's Recruitment and Selection Practice in Construction Companies

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to assess the professionals' recruitment and selection (RS) practice and its impact on performance of construction companies in the context of Ethiopian construction industry. Questionnaire survey, semi-structured interview and document analysis were used to collect the data. The practice was evaluated using descriptive analysis and multiple linear regression was used to analyze effect of the practice on performance of the companies. The findings indicate that the RS practice needs improvement to enhance innovation and creativity, efficiency, retention of professionals, and motivation. The challenges that affect effectiveness of the RS practice are high turnover rate of experienced professionals, lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of the dominant recruitment method; i.e., recruiting through referrals, and clients' strict contractual requirements of key personnel's profile. Considering the findings, an improvement framework with three pillars was developed. Pillars of the improvement framework are harmonizing the RS with the industry practice and aligning it with organizational strategic goals, integrating improvement mechanisms to the RS dimensions, and instilling continual monitoring and controlling as integral part of the practice. The findings and the improvement framework would provide valuable guidance for the construction companies aiming to improve their RS practice.

Keywords: Construction Companies; Human Resource Management; Recruitment and Selection.

1. Introduction

The performance of the construction companies and overall productivity in the construction industry is associated with the human resource (HR) development in the industry (Mengistu & Mahesh, 2019). Having competent professionals is imperative for any organization to gain a competitive advantage (Iype, 2018), and this is highly associated with effectiveness of the human resource management (HRM) practice (Adu-darkoh, 2014; Ekwoaba et al., 2015; Selase, 2018; Gode, 2019; Karim et al., 2021). The main goals of the recruitment and selection (RS) process are to find, attract, and choose the ideal candidates to fulfill the requirements of

HR in a company (Karim et al., 2021). Naturally, the professionals in the industry have a range of educational backgrounds and personality types, attitude, aspiration, and aptitude (Adu-darkoh, 2014). Therefore, selecting the best personnel who will work successfully and efficiently must be done through a systematic process (Dosumu et al., 2021).

There is a plethora of studies conducted in different countries indicating the relationship between recruitment practice and company performance in other sectors (Anyango, 2018; Gamage, 2014; Kanu, 2015). Similarly, there are studies in Ethiopia indicating the impact of recruitment practice on private banks and the public sectors (Alemayehu & Deressa, 2019; Gode, 2019). However, compared to other sectors, HRM practice and associated challenges in the construction industry (CI) have not been extensively researched focusing on the RS practice and the impact on the overall performance of the construction companies (Karim et al., 2021). In the CI, effective RS practice is crucial for ensuring job site productivity, maintaining work quality, and meeting other requirements (Wolters & Burleson, 1996). Many construction companies lack clear employment or recruitment practice and rely on recommendations; also referred to as referral method (Afolabi et al., 2018). This poor practice results in a loss of resources, time, and company failure (Carbonell et al., 2020; Dosumu et al., 2021; OH & MI, 2016). Therefore, companies need to have a sound RS plan to attract applicants, ensure the impartiality of the selection process, improve the efficiency of the hiring process, and assess the effectiveness of RS practice.

Studying the impact of professional's RS practice on the performance of construction companies holds significant importance. Firstly, the CI is a significant contributor of the national socio-economic development; hence, enhancing the operational efficiency of construction firms could positively impact the nation's economic development. This emphasizes the importance of refining HR practice within the CI to strengthen overall economic growth. Secondly, HRM is among the determinant of companies' success (Kuvaas, 2006). Understanding the relationship between RS and companies' performance is crucial. Such insights empower the upper management to identify areas needing improvement and implement tailored strategies for enhancing RS practice, thereby strengthen foundation of the construction companies for sustained growth and competitiveness. Given this understanding, this study is aimed at assessing the professionals' recruitment and selection practice, the associated challenges and the impact on performance of construction companies in the context of Ethiopian construction industry.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Professionals' Recruitment and Selection Practice

Recruitment and selection practice refer to the processes and methods used by organizations to attract, generate a pool, identify, and evaluate candidates for the job vacancies (Adu-darkoh, 2014; Melanthiou et al., 2015; Anyango, 2018; Susanto & Andriana, 2019; Karim et al., 2021). Effective RS practice are essential for construction companies to build a talented workforce that aligns with their goals, culture, and values (Anyango, 2018; Dosumu et al., 2021). Professionals' RS practice vary across companies (Iype, 2018) and industries. Hence, considering nature of the

industry, construction companies have to adopt a strategic and deliberate approach to attract and hire the best talent. Efficiency of construction companies is significantly intertwined with the capabilities of their personnel (Tam et al., 2021). This indicates, maintaining competitive advantage and sustain operations in the demanding construction market, need improving employee recruitment practice (Ahmed et al., 2013). Different dimensions related to professionals RS have been identified by previous studies (Gode, 2019; Dhabuwala & Pitroda, 2021; Dosumu et al., 2021). The common dimensions that help to ensure effective RS include setting strategies, recruitment criteria, recruitment sourcing, selection process, and regular evaluation of effectiveness of the practice to ensure continual improvement. Discussion of these dimensions is covered in the subsequent paragraphs.

Recruitment and selection strategies need to be designed considering the organizational strategic goals and characteristics of the industry. In the context of human resource planning, recruitment strategies are the mechanisms used to select and hire professional employees at different levels within an organization (Guerry, 2012). It includes articulating the methods, plans, or approaches to attract and develop a pool of potential candidates for the intended job position (Ghosh & Geetika, 2007; Madia, 2011). It should address job analysis and role definitions (Ashraf, 2017; Khatbeh et al., 2020; Prien et al., 2009; Ramadevi et al., 2016), sourcing channels, employer branding (Monteiro et al., 2020), diversity and inclusions (Soman, 2021), candidate experience (Gupta & Mohan, 2019; Miles & McCamey, 2018), candidate assessment (Ullah, 2010), onboarding and retention (Hadi & Ahmed, 2018; Dominic et al., 2020), compliance and legal considerations (Matolo et al., 2019), and feedback and continuous improvement (Jørgensen et al., 2007; Moldovan, 2020).

The essential initial step in the process of RS is the establishment of clear and comprehensive recruitment criteria. Recruitment criteria are a set of requirements that the candidate is expected to have to effectively exercise the roles and responsibilities in a particular job (Hsiao et al., 2011). The common criteria are: specific educational qualifications (Ahmed et al., 2014; Naveed et al., 2017), work experience (Yockey, 2019; Oswald-Egg & Renold, 2021), and particular attributes that the company might expect from the potential candidates, i.e., communication skill (Ahmed et al., 2014; Manap et al., 2018), problem-solving abilities (Robledo et al., 2012; Karam et al., 2020), and technical skills (Ayalp, 2016; Naveed et al., 2017). Weightage of the criteria and the preference varies across the industry and size of the companies depending on nature of the job. Specifically in the construction industry, companies are expected to deploy professionals that meets the respective contractual requirement of the project set for the key personnel (FPPA, 2011; FIDIC, 2011). The construction companies lack the freedom to hire project professionals based on their preference. Hence, they should consider the contractual requirement and strategic HR development plan of their company in selecting appropriate candidates.

In RS process, the companies may use internal sources or external sources or a blend of both. While the internal sourcing is the practice of filling the vacant positions from the company's

existing employees, the external sourcing is the process of filling the vacant position from outside the company (Xu et al., 2015). Appropriate recruitment sourcing is crucial for effective selection of professionals (Reshetnikova et al., 2019). The companies may adopt different methods while using external sourcing approach such as advertising the vacant positions in a newspaper, partnering with employee agencies, utilizing e-recruitment platforms, conducting campus interviews and using referral method (Muduli & Trivedi, 2020; Reshetnikova et al., 2019). The external sourcing approach help to attract candidates with diverse background who possess educational qualifications, the necessary skills and the relevant work experience with fresh perspective for the available position (Sobočka-Szczapa, 2021). The choice of recruitment sourcing is affected by various factors such as time for hiring and the available budget, labor market conditions, the nature of work position that needs to be filled, the stage of the company's development and the specific HRM approach being used.

Selection of appropriate candidate from the pool of applicants for a given position is a crucial process in RS (OH & MI, 2016); where the goal is matching individual's knowledge, skills and experience with the job requirements (Dipboye, 2018; Karim et al., 2021). There are common methods that allows the RS team to make informed decision such as evaluation of applications, reference checks, interviews and tests (Adu-darkoh, 2014; Dhabuwala & Pitroda, 2021; Karim et al., 2021). The preference of these selection methods is affected by the expertise of HRM, cost considerations, time constraints, and the specific requirements of the vacant positions (Farndale et al., 2018). However, application of the methods should consider the company's context and the required outcomes of the selection process.

To remain competitive and maintain reputability, companies need to evaluate effectiveness of their different practices and ensure continual improvement; in the RS perspective this helps to ensure that the right candidate is selected to meet the company's requirement and meet strategic HR development plan. The common metrics that can be used to evaluate the RS practice are: evaluating the dominantly used strategies, i.e., referral method effectiveness (Van Hoye, 2013), offer acceptance rate, retention rate (Mohd Kasmuri et al., 2020), and time-to-fill, quality of hire, suitability and reliability of source of hire (Sommerville, 1996). Appropriate evaluation of the RS effectiveness allows construction companies to continually refine the approaches, align with the strategic HR development plan and remain competitive in the ever-changing business environment.

2.2. Challenges of Professionals' RS Practice

The RS practice is affected by different challenges such as demand fluctuations- work volume fluctuation (Jayawardane & Gunawardena, 1998), competitive nature of the construction market (Edwards & Kleiner, 2002), shortages of relevant skills (Mengistu & Mahesh, 2019), high professionals' turnover rate (Glebbeck et al., 2014), and poor reputation management that affects the overall HRM practice (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001; Cravens & Oliver, 2006). These challenges are interrelated and some of the them calls for industry level intervention which need concerted effort

of the stakeholders. At company level, developing effective RS strategies, HR development and retention initiatives, adopting technology and coping with the dynamism of the industry are important mitigation strategies. Similarly, collaborating with professional associations, industry association and higher education institutes can help to attract and retain qualified candidates.

2.3. Impact of the Professionals' RS Practice on Companies' Performance

Several studies conducted in various industries indicate that companies performance is associated with capacity and efficiency of their professionals (Breugh, 2013; Isaac & Christopher, 2016; Shmailan, 2016; Iype, 2018; Inayat & Jahanzeb, 2021). When the practice is implemented ineffectively, it can lead to the hiring of employees who lack efficiency, innovation, and creativity skills. Consequently, employee motivation may suffer, prompting professionals to seek opportunities elsewhere, thereby increasing turnover rates. These factors directly or indirectly impact companies' performance. This implies, the relevant KPIs to evaluate impact of RS on the companies' performance are direct and indirect. The common relevant KPIs includes innovation and creativity, efficiency, employee retention, and motivation (Głodzinski, 2021). While innovation and creativity, and efficiency are direct to measure company performance, employee retention, and motivation are indirect to evaluate company performance. Construction companies rely on key professionals, who have detail knowledge and skills on the field, to stay competitive with respect to technological advancements and fostering innovation (Al-Thehli & Ahamat, 2019). Retaining talent is crucial for maintaining competitiveness and success within companies (Das Lahkar & Baruah, 2013; Kyndt et al., 2009). Encouraging employees through motivation is vital for employers seeking to enhance both individual and company's performance. By improving morale and skill development, employers can effectively cultivate a more engaged and productive workforce (Sandhya, 2011).

2.4. Mechanisms to Improve Professionals' RS Practice

Improving RS practice needs integration of different improvement mechanisms into the RS dimensions. The common improvement mechanisms are defining clear job requirements, creating detailed job descriptions, standardized recruitment processes, using competency-based assessments, and implementing continuous feedback and improvement. Defining job requirements for each work position is crucial to ensure that candidates are well-suited for their roles (Chungyalpa & Karishma, 2016). This includes specifying the essential skills, qualifications, experience, and certifications necessary for success in the role (Bowen et al., 1991). Clearly outlining these requirements helps employers attract candidates with the right qualifications and increase the likelihood of hiring individuals who can excel in their respective roles.

Creating comprehensive and accurate job descriptions need to be an integral part of the practice for companies seeking to build successful and efficient teams. As highlighted by Siddique (2007), a well-designed job description serves as a crucial foundation for the entire RS process. Clearly outlining the roles and responsibilities associated with a particular position would help companies to set a clear benchmark for the skills, qualifications, and attributes they seek from the potential candidates (Bowen et al., 1991). This not only assists in attracting individuals whose

capabilities align with the demands of the role but also aids in filtering out candidates who might not be suitable matches. Furthermore, a well-defined job description provides a framework for evaluating candidates during interviews, serving as a reference point to assess their suitability for the position. This promotes an objective and consistent evaluation process that ultimately leads to the selection of candidates who possess the right competencies and can seamlessly integrate into company's operations.

Standardization of the RS would help to reduce subjectivity and bias that influence effectiveness of the practice and ensure fairness and equitability of the practice. The standardization can be achieved through integrating structured resume check, assessment tests, interviews, and reference checks (Nikolaou & K. Oostrom, 2015). This empowers the construction companies to ensure their commitment to diversity and equity by ensuring that every candidate is evaluated fairly, based on their experiences, skills, and potential contributions to the company. Competency-based structured assessments framework help to evaluate the candidates against predefined criteria directly related to the roles and responsibilities of the position (Akhuly & Gupta, 2014). Through creating a platform for candidates to share their thoughts and impressions, companies can gain insights about the strengths and weaknesses of their RS practice. Collecting the feedback from candidates is important to utilize the information as an input for improvement. The companies need to devise strategies to integrate the improvement mechanisms into the RS dimensions to improve effectiveness of their RS practice.

3. Research Methodology

In this research, a mixed-method was employed, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data, in which the data was collected using questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was prepared in eight sections, one section covering information about respondents, five sections addressing the different dimensions of RS practice, and the other three sections covering the challenges, impact on the companies' performance and the improvement mechanisms respectively. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale from Very Low to Very High to indicate level of the practice, the challenges, impacts and appropriateness of the suggested potential improvement mechanisms. The survey targeted professionals with a minimum of three years of experience, considering their knowledge on the companies' RS practice. Data was collected through a combination of printed and online questionnaires, as well as interviews with construction professionals. Purposive sampling was utilized to select construction professionals and HR managers within grade one construction companies, specifically targeting high-ranking individuals with relevant expertise. A total of 103 duly completed responses were received, yielding a response rate of 53.7%, which was considered sufficient for meaningful data analysis. The respondents included HR managers, construction managers, project managers, construction engineers, and office engineers.

The distribution of respondents reflects a well-balanced representation across various professional roles, experience levels, and positions within the construction companies. Position

wise 20.4% were office engineers, 4.9% were project managers, 7.8% were construction engineers, 18.4% were construction managers and 48.5% were HR professionals. The balanced proportion of HR respondents indicates adequate representation of the actual HR practitioners. From the perspective of work experience: 30.1% had above 16 years, 41.7% had 11-15 years, 18.4% had 7-10 years, 7.8% had 4-6 years, and 1.9% had 3 years of experiences. Regarding company experience, 5.8% had above 20 years, 37.9% had 16-20 years, 34.0% had 11-15 years, 19.4% had 6-10 years, and 2.9% had less than 5 years of experiences. Overall, the distribution highlights a range of insights where 71.9% of the individual respondent and 77.7% of the companies had over a decade of experiences. This mix of the respondents' profile underscores the quality and reliability of the data for analyzing RS practice of the construction companies.

In analyzing the quantitative data, descriptive and inferential statistics were employed using IBM SPSS version 27. In the interpretation of the descriptive statistics results, ranges were established for the mean score where 1 to 1.80 is very low, 1.81 to 2.60 is low, 2.61 to 3.40 is average, 3.41 to 4.20 is high, and 4.21 to 5.00 is very high. The range was calculated by subtracting the lowest value from the highest value on the scale ($5 - 1 = 4$), and then dividing this range by the number of intervals on the scale ($4/5$). This calculation yields an interval width of 0.8 for each of the five Likert scale values. In addition, qualitative data was collected through examining company documents such as job descriptions, the commonly used qualification criteria, and recruitment guidelines to understand the overall RS practice of the companies. These qualitative data were analyzed through thematically focusing on the framed research constructs.

4. Analysis and Discussions

4.1. Recruitment and Selection Practice

The RS practice was assessed through five dimensions: recruitment strategies, recruitment criteria, recruitment sourcing, selection process and evaluation of the practice. The subsequent subsections delve into the analysis and discussion of these dimensions.

4.1.1. Recruitment Strategies

The analysis results summarized in Table 1 indicates that the implementation of identification of the various attributes required to perform the job effectively, i.e., the knowledge, skills, abilities, and others, is high with a mean score of 3.68. This reaffirms result of previous study, identifying job-related attributes is among the commonly implemented variables (Dosumu et al., 2021). Though results of the other variables indicate that the performance is in the average range, relatively the implementation of strategic plan for candidate sourcing is found to be the lowest with the mean score of 3.05. The interviewees also reflected that the performance of construction companies is poor in terms of recruitment strategies; they do not have clear career path and succession strategies. Previous studies reflect similar performance which shows persistence of the poor performance in terms of the HRM practice (Shalla & Mengistu, 2023). The variables under this dimension are related to the long-term human resource development plan that need to be addressed in RS strategies. This dimension is the base for the other dimensions that focus on the process: recruitment criteria, recruitment sourcing and selection, hence, giving it the due attention would help to be effective on the overall RS practice.

Table 1. Recruitment Strategies

Items	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Rank	One sample T-test
Identifying various attributes required to perform the job effectively (the knowledge, skills, abilities, and others)	3.68	.660	.065	1	.001
Ensuring the recruitment process is in compliance with legal and ethical standards	3.37	.840	.083	3	.001
Setting a strategic plan to determine where and how to source candidates	3.05	.994	.098	5	.621
Establishing recruitment metrics	3.23	.843	.083	4	.006
Ensuring the hiring process aligns with the organizations vision and mission	3.40	.784	.077	2	.001

4.1.2. Recruitment Criteria

The variables in this dimension includes educational background, work experience, problem-solving ability, communication skills, technical skills, and contractual requirements. The results summarized in Table 2 indicate that the mean scores range from 3.40 to 4.09.

Table 2. Professionals' recruitment criteria

Items	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Rank	One sample T-Test
Identifying relevant educational background	3.84	.814	.080	3	.000
Determining general and specific work experience	4.09	.742	.073	1	.000
Considering problem-solving ability	3.40	.662	.065	7	.000
Considering pertinent communication skills	3.53	.802	.079	6	.000
Identifying distinctive knowledge of technical skills	3.86	.780	.077	2	.000
Considering the extent of satisfying contractual requirements	3.67	.648	.064	4	.000
Balancing contractual requirements with organizational needs	3.59	.633	.072	5	.000

Except considering problem-solving ability, all the mean scores are in the high range. Determining general and specific work experience received the highest mean score of 4.09, indicating it is the most commonly used criterion. This result reaffirms findings of the previous studies (Evarist et al., 2024; Manap et al., 2018; Short et al., 2014; Yockey, 2019). The interviewees emphasized that the reason for such practice is highly associated with contractual requirement. The document analysis revealed similar issues; construction companies are not free to deploy professionals having less years of general and specific experience than the contractually required.

4.1.3. Recruitment Sourcing

The analysis results indicated in Table 3 show that among the various recruitment sourcing's examined, the practice of filling vacant job positions from external sources have the highest mean score of 3.96. On the other hand, using internal employees to fill existing vacant positions resulted in the lowest mean score of 2.74.

This is supported by feedback from interviews, indicating a prevalent trend of low internal recruitment practice and companies predominantly look for external workforce to fill vacant positions. While this approach may introduce fresh perspectives and adopt a diverse organizational culture, it could also potentially reduce employee motivation. By overlooking internal talent, potentially leading to feelings of disengagement and reduced morale among the workforce. Thus, while external recruitment can inject innovation, it is crucial for companies to strike a balance and recognize the importance of nurturing talent from within to maintain a motivated and committed workforce.

Table 3. Recruitment Sourcing

Items	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Rank	One sample T-test
Planning an efficient recruitment sourcing	3.48	.827	.081	2	.000
Employing internal staffs to fulfil the existing vacant job positions	2.74	1.029	.101	5	.011
Identifying effective communication channels for internal sources	2.86	1.129	.111	4	.225
Practice of filling the vacant job position from external sources	3.96	.851	.084	1	.000
Identifying effective communication channels for external sources	3.30	.873	.086	3	.001

Identifying effective communication channels for both internal and external sources received moderate mean scores of 2.86 and 3.30, respectively. These results indicate that the utilization of communication channels for both recruitment sourcing practices is at average level. Overall, the results indicate the average performance in strategic planning and effective communication channels in recruitment, with a clear preference for external recruitment sourcing.

4.1.4. Professionals’ Selection Practice

Analysis of the data summarized in Table 4 indicates that selecting individuals based on their skills, knowledge, and experience have the highest mean score of 3.57. As pointed out earlier, in the context of construction industry, this is associated with contractual requirement which mainly focuses on evaluating the criteria and checking the credentials. The other variables showed average performance: ensuring that the selection process is tailored to the specific vacant position with the mean score of 3.25, utilizing selection practice that contribute to build a competitive workforce with the mean score of 3.24, ensuring that the organization secures the most qualified candidate with the mean score of 3.22 and implementing a well-structured selection process with the mean score of 3.10. These variables focus on the selection system. The interviewees underscored the need to establish robust system than barely focusing on evaluating criteria and checking credentials.

Table 4. Professionals’ selection

Items	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Rank	One sample T-test
Selection of individuals based on their skills, knowledge, and experience	3.57	.800	.079	1	.000
Ensuring that the organization secures the most qualified candidate	3.22	.740	.073	4	.003
Implementing a well-structured selection process	3.10	.891	.088	5	.272
Utilizing selection practice that contribute to build a competitive workforce	3.24	.834	.082	3	.004
Ensuring that the selection process is tailored to the specific vacant position	3.25	.860	.085	2	.004

4.1.5. Evaluating Professionals’ RS Practice

Result of the analysis, Table 5, shows that all the items have scored a mean value ranging from 2.97 to 3.35, which falls within the average range. The interview result also shows that, among other factors, only duration of the recruitment process is measured. However, it was noted that the critical aspects such as the sources of successful candidates, the attractiveness of job offers, and the effectiveness of employee referral methods are not adequately assessed. Overall, there is

a clear need for companies to conduct comprehensive assessments of their recruitment practice to address any issues of post-employment and improve future recruitment strategies.

Table 5. Evaluating professionals’ recruitment and selection practice

Items	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Rank	One sample T-test
Measuring the duration that takes to hire suitable candidates	3.17	.830	.082	3	.046
Evaluating how well an individual employee would meet the expectations of their role within an organization	3.35	.737	.073	1	.000
Analysing the sources from which successful hires are coming	3.08	.904	.089	5	.385
Assessing the attractiveness of the job offers to candidates.	3.17	.890	.088	3	.049
Measuring how long employees stay within the company	3.28	.923	.091	2	.003)
Measuring the effectiveness of recruiting employees through referral	2.97	.891	.088	6	.741

4.2. Challenges of Professionals’ Recruitment and Selection Practice

The survey results summarized in Table 6 reveal various challenges perceived by respondents in RS practice within the construction companies. Except the variable ‘weakly organized human resource departments’, the remaining variables are acknowledged as high challenges, with the mean scores of ranging from 3.45 to 4.0. The variable with the highest mean value of 4.02 is ‘turnover rates of experienced professionals.’ The result is supported by previous studies (Letam et al., 2022; Mohd Kasmuri et al., 2020). Respondents in the interview highlighted the common challenges faced during the employment of professionals, citing turnover rates, inadequate measurement of employee referral effectiveness, and shortcomings in employee background checks as the most prevalent and severe issues.

The consistency between interviewee responses and survey findings highlights significance of challenges the companies encounter in their RS practice. Hence, the companies need to implement effective mitigation strategies to address these challenges and secure selection of the suitable candidates through standardizing the HR processes, implementing robust background screening procedures, applying employee retention strategies, evaluate and refining referral programs, and aligning contractual terms with the company’s long-term HR development expectations.

Table 6. Challenges of professionals' recruitment and selection practice

Items	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Rank	One sample T-test
Weakly organized human resource department	2.86	.960	.095	7	.154)
Experienced professionals' turnover rates	4.02	.907	.089	1	.000
Abnormal competitive culture in the construction market	3.53	.838	.083	4	.000
Lack of conducting thorough background checks	3.47	.790	.078	5	.000
Lack of maintaining a positive image (reputation) of the organization	3.45	.905	.089	6	.000
Lack of evaluating effectiveness of recruiting employees through referral	3.71	.788	.078	2	.000
Strict contractual requirement of key personnel	3.65	.776	.076	3	.000
Lack of clear organizational vision and mission	2.73	1.03	.102	8	.000

4.3. Impact of the Professionals RS Practice on Companies' Performance

In analyzing the impact of RS practice on companies' performance, four performance dimensions were considered which includes innovation and creativity, efficiency, retention of professionals, and motivation. Impact of the RS practice on the companies' performance would be manifested through these four performance dimensions relevant to the practice. Impact of the RS practice on these four performance dimensions is evaluated through multiple linear regression analysis. Hence, the performance dimensions are dependent variables and the practice level is the independent variable. The practice has five dimensions; recruitment strategies, recruitment criteria, recruitment sourcing, selection process and evaluation of the practice. Therefore, four regression models are developed: (i) impact of RS practice on innovation and creativity (RS-IC), (ii) impact of the RS practice on professionals' efficiency (RS-E), (iii) impact of the RS practice on professionals' retention (RS-R) and (iv) impact of the RS practice on professionals' motivation (RS-M).

The analysis result is summarized in Table 7. The observed results indicated that the R^2 are 0.478, 0.376, 0.424 and 0.394 for innovation and creativity, efficiency, retention, and motivation respectively. This shows that professionals' RS practice significantly affects the performance dimensions. This reaffirms findings of previous studies. Recruiting and selecting professionals is widely acknowledged as a critical process that demands exceptional attention, as it significantly

influences the performance of any company (Karim et al., 2021). Among the RS dimensions, recruitment strategies consistently emerged as the most influential factor, demonstrating a strong positive relationship with all four performance dimensions.

Table 7. Impact of RS on companies' performance

Reg. ID	C	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	X ₄	X ₅	R ²	Standard Error
		RSt	RC	RS	SP	ERS		
RS - IC	1.026	0.427	-0.121	-0.149	0.23	0.262	0.478	0.474
RS - E	0.147	0.484	0.141	-0.051	-0.083	0.391	0.376	0.629
RS-R	- 0.213	0.437	0.214	-0.225	0.007	0.530	0.424	0.659
RS - M	0.263	0.453	0.207	-0.043	-0.09	0.302	0.394	0.545

RS-IC= innovation and creativity, RS-E= efficiency, RS-R= retention of professionals, RS-M= motivation. RSt= Recruitment strategies, RC= Recruitment criteria, RS= Recruitment sourcing, SP= Selection process= ERS= Evaluating Recruitment and selection. Equation for dependent variable - innovation and creativity (Example); $Y_{RS-IC} = C + X_1RSt + X_2RC + X_3RS + X_4SP + X_5ERS$; Numbers in bold represent statistically significant.

Similarly, evaluating the recruitment and selection practice showed significant positive relationships with the four dimensions. This further emphasizes the importance of systematic and effective professionals' recruitment practices. However, recruitment criteria and sourcing did not show significant impacts on the dimensions, unlike the result of (Ekwoaba et al., 2015). This indicates that while these factors are essential, they may not be as critical as recruitment strategies and performance measurement in driving organizational success.

4.4. Strategies to Enhance RS Practice

Table 8 illustrate the mechanisms to enhance RS practice among which the standardizing recruitment processes scored the highest mean value of 4.38, indicating that the need for consistency in recruitment practice, which would help to ensure that only the qualified candidates are selected without bias and subjectivity. This would lead to a more efficient and effective recruitment process and contribute to better fit job-person and improve employee retention (Breaugh, 2008). Continuous feedback and improvement of recruitment practice also rated with the mean score of 4.24. Continuous feedback loops allow companies to refine their recruitment processes based on past experiences and changing market conditions. Such practices can lead to

better talent acquisition and overall improved performance (Phillips & Gully, 2015). In addition, it will help to standardize the overall practice.

Clearly defining job descriptions and job requirements are similarly found to be vital with the means core of 4.02 and 3.99 respectively. These elements provide clarity to potential candidates about the expectations and responsibilities of the role, which can attract more suitable applicants. Clear job descriptions and requirements help in screening candidates more effectively, reducing the likelihood of turnover and enhancing job satisfaction and performance. Additionally, the mean score of aligning recruitment plans with the organization's mission and vision is 3.91 which is in the range of high. This would help to ensure that new hires are not only skilled but fit to the organizational strategic goals, fostering a cohesive and motivated workforce.

Table 8. Mechanisms to improve professionals' recruitment and selection practice

Items	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Rank	One sample Test (Sign.)
Clearly defining job descriptions	4.02	.714	.070	3	.000
Clearly defining job requirements	3.99	.786	.077	4	.000
Setting dynamic recruitment criteria	3.89	.907	.089	7	.000
Standardizing recruitment processes	4.38	.853	.084	1	.000
Choosing appropriate recruitment method	3.52	.739	.073	9	.000
Competency-based assessments	3.90	.823	.081	6	.000
Continuous feedback and improvement of the recruitment practice	4.24	.913	.090	2	.000
Internship and apprenticeship programs	3.68	.910	.090	8	.000
Aligning the recruitment plan with mission and vision of the organization	3.91	.806	.079	5	.000

In general, the mean scores range from 3.52 to 4.38 which shows all improvement mechanisms are relevant to enhance the RS practice in the context of construction industry. Hence, considering the industry norms and organizational strategic goals, integrated application of the mechanisms would help to establish and maintain effective RS practice. Considering these as an input, improvement framework is developed as indicated in Figure 1. The left side of the improvement framework indicates the need to consider the industry norms and organizational goals that address; aligning the recruitment plan with mission and vision of the organization, effective application of internship and apprenticeship programs, and choosing appropriate methods. The top side indicates the improvement mechanisms that need to be directly integrated in the respective RS dimensions. Job requirements and job description need to be effectively

integrated into one of the RS dimensions that is selection criteria, the selection need to be competence based and all the RS dimensions have to be standardized. The bottom part of the framework indicates the three RS dimensions directly related to the process. Left side of the improvement framework indicates the need to maintain continual monitoring and controlling of both, performance of the RS dimensions and suitability of the improvement mechanisms.

Several challenges affect the practice, including high turnover rates, lack of evaluating effectiveness of the dominate method, i.e., referral, strict contractual requirements for key personnel, and the fierce and abnormal competition in the industry. Continual monitoring and controlling would help to set dynamic recruitment criteria and the overall process that would help to mitigate the challenges. Addressing these challenges is crucial for companies to improve their RS practice, which will subsequently enhance their overall performance.

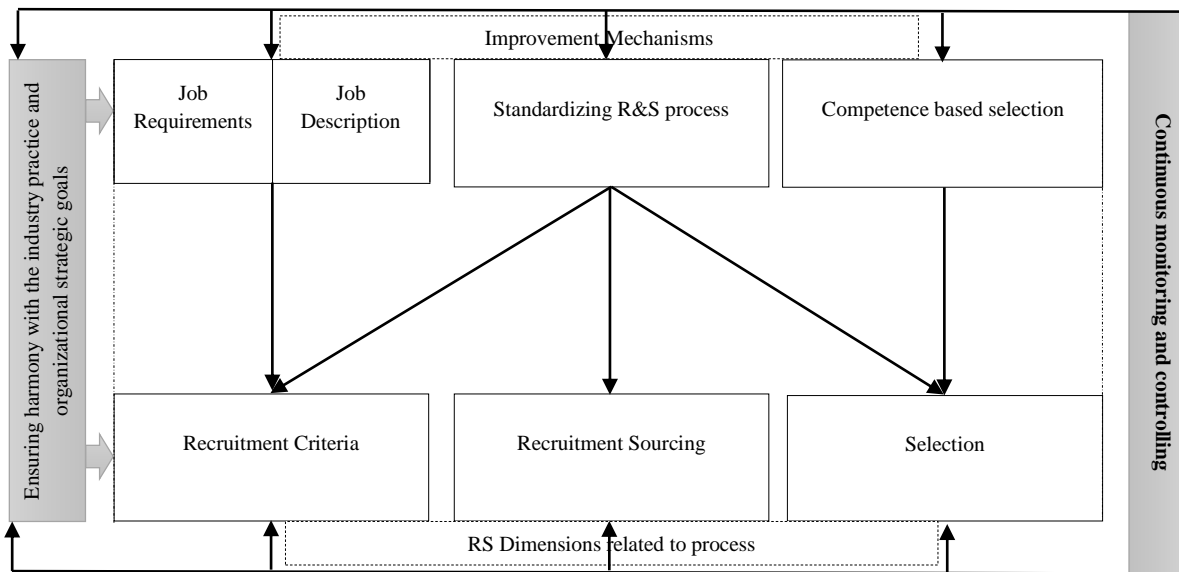


Figure 1. Framework to improve Recruitment and Selection Practice

5. Conclusion

Specific objectives of this study were assessing the professionals' recruitment and selection (RS) practice, identify associated challenges and investigating the impact on the performance of construction companies. The findings indicate that the RS practice needs varying level of improvement in its five dimensions: recruitment strategies, recruitment criteria, recruitment sourcing, selection process and evaluation of the practice. The performance of construction companies is poor in terms of effectively applying recruitment strategies; they don't have clear career path and succession strategies. There is the need to improve the system to ensure the most qualified candidates are hired and retained. The major recruitment criteria focus on general and specific experience related to the position which is contractually imposed as requirement. Similarly, the predominant recruitment sourcing is external recruitment. Internal recruitment sourcing, in particular, is underutilized, which could impact employee motivation and the development of internal talent. The companies have to implement regular comprehensive

assessments of their RS practice to address any issues of post-employment and improve future recruitment strategies through continual monitoring and controlling.

The challenges that affect effectiveness of the RS practice are the high turnover rate of experienced professionals, lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of the dominant recruitment method and the strict contractual requirements to recruit key personnel. The regression analysis revealed that the RS significantly affects the performance dimensions: innovation and creativity, efficiency, retention of professionals, and motivation. Among the RS dimensions, recruitment strategies consistently emerged as the most influential factor, demonstrating a strong positive relationship with all four performance dimensions. Similarly, evaluating the recruitment and selection practice showed significant positive relationships with the four dimensions.

Therefore, the companies need to work on improving the practice to mitigate the challenges and optimize the benefit of effective professionals' RS practice. The suggested pillars of the improvement are harmonizing the RS with the industry practice and aligning it with organizational strategic goals, integrating improvement mechanisms to the RS dimensions, and instilling continual monitoring and controlling as integral part of the practice. The findings and the suggested improvement framework would be important input for construction companies that aims to improve their human resource management, specifically the recruitment and selection practice.

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