

Influence of Staff Recruitment and Staff Retention Strategies on Job Performance in Selected Tertiary Education Institutions in Sierra Leone

Paul Komba Ngauja^[1], Prince Emmanuel Norman^{[2]*}

^[1]Department of Teacher Education, School of Education,

Njala University, Bo Campus, Bo, Sierra Leone

^[2]Chief Research Officer/ Deputy Director General, Research, Technology and Innovation Development, Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI),

PMB 1313, Tower Hill, Freetown, Sierra Leone

ORCID: 0000-0002-0150-8610 (Prince Emmanuel Norman)

Abstract. This study investigated the influence of staff recruitment and staff retention strategies on job performance of six tertiary educational institutions in Sierra Leone using the survey research design. A total of 266 questionnaires were administered to administrative staff of six tertiary educational universities in Sierra Leone. Findings revealed that coefficients of criteria-based selection, and search committee significantly ($p < 0.05$) increase staff job performance by 0.28 and 0.24 units, respectively. Moreover, training significantly ($p < 0.05$) increases staff job performance by 0.40 units, whereas stress from overworking and other sources significantly ($p < 0.05$) decrease staff job performance by -0.43 and -0.57 units. The coefficients of selection without interview, selection through interview, personal contacts, selection by ratification, administrative influence, and referred by other agent show that a unit increase in these parameters causes a nonsignificant ($p > 0.05$) increase in staff job performance by 0.27, 0.24, 0.05, 0.35, 0.41 and 0.04 units, respectively. The coefficients of applications leading to selection, multiple combined approaches, personal influence and others (advertisement leading to selection and interviews) reveal that a unit increase in these factors causes a nonsignificant ($p > 0.05$) decrease in staff job performance by -0.09, -0.06, -0.18, and -0.19 units, respectively. Findings suggest that, in designing and instituting recruitment and selection criteria quality should not be compromised. This study recommends that universities should constantly evaluate their selection methods on the basis of their validity, impartiality, scope of usage, and cost and utilize robust retention strategies for enhanced job performance.

Keywords: recruitment, selection, retention, human resource, tertiary educational institution, job performance

Introduction

People vitally contribute to organizational life through their perspectives, values and attributes, which if effectively managed, can be of considerable benefits to the organization. This has led to the increasing relevance given to the people aspect of organizational wealth and human resource (Djabatey, 2012). The development of people, their competencies, and the process development of the total organization are the fulcrum of human resource management (Djabatey, 2012). It is worth noting that progressive growth of an institution is contingent upon its ability to recruit and select high quality personnel at all levels.

Recruitment involves the identification and attraction of potential candidates from within and outside an organization for commencement of evaluation for future employment of selected right calibre candidates identified (Daniel, 2009). Recruitment and selection provide an opportunity for an organization to present itself in a favourable light (University of Ireland, 2006). However, most recruitment and selection processes exhibit inherent subjective

* Corresponding Author: pnorman@wacci.ug.edu.gh / norman.prince64@gmail.com

judgement. According to Djabatey (2012), a successful job appointment produces results that favourably impact the wider aspects of organizational life, while a poor one exhibits damaging effects far outside the organization in which it is made. Thus, treatment of job applicants in a professional and positive manner more probably leaves them with a positive view of the organization, whether successful or not (University of Ireland, 2006).

The present study is based on the Human Capital, Resource Based View and Equity Theories. The Human Capital Theory (HCT) has the central idea that people are fixed capitals just like machine because they have skills and useful abilities that have genuine cost and yields profits (Teixeira, 2002). The premise in this theory is that people and their collective skills, abilities, experience, and their ability to deploy these in the interests of the employing organization, are now recognized as making a significant contribution to organizational success and also constituting a significant source of competitive advantage (Armstrong, 2006). The Resource Based View Theory (RBV) of Barney (1991) opines that sustainable competitive advantage is attainable when firms have a human resource pool which cannot be imitated or substituted by rivals. The theory suggests that firms should constantly evaluate their workforce to ensure that they have the right people with the right skills in the right places to ensure sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 2001) and when this is not the case, firms should make-up for the shortfall by utilizing appropriate recruitment and selection criteria. According to Ekwoaba *et al.* (2015), technology and capital can be acquired any time, for a price, by a firm, but it is difficult to acquire a ready pool of highly qualified and motivated employees. Therefore, in order to be differentiated, institutions need to be very careful with the recruitment and selection process. According to the principles of the Equity Theory (ET), the best recruitment and selection criteria in an organization is that which portrays the firm as Equal Opportunity Employer (Adams, 1963).

Finding competent workers is a critical organizational challenge (Atkinson and Storey, 1994), with the difficulty centering on recruiting and selecting employees with the correct qualifications to help achieve organizational goals (Priyanath, 2006). This challenge is compounded by the lack of systematic method for recruiting and selecting employees. A systematic recruitment process involves identifying vacancies, job analysis, job description, person specification and advertising (Gamage, 2014). Unlike the informal process for recruiting and selecting employees, a systematic selection process involves the recruiting process, gathering information about qualified applicants, evaluating the qualification of each applicant and making decisions about employment (Gamage, 2014).

In Sierra Leone, dearth of knowledge exists on the influence of staff recruitment and staff retention strategies on job performance. Understanding of the influence of staff recruitment and staff retention strategies on job performance is imperative as the success of an organization is directly linked to the performance of those who work for that institution. Thus, under-achievement can be attributed to workplace failures, since recruiting the wrong people or failing to anticipate the costliness of fluctuations in hiring needs result in poor human resource planning (Djabatey, 2012). It has also been opined that building and sustaining competitive advantage of an institution necessitates recruitment and selection of sufficient candidates with appropriate qualifications and skills that constitute proper staffing (Djabatey, 2012). Therefore, this study assessed the influence of staff recruitment and staff retention strategies on job performance.

Methodology

Study Area

The study was conducted in cities and towns where the tertiary institutions are located countrywide (Figure 1). Njala University is Sierra Leone's major institution for training in

Agriculture, Education, Health, Natural Resources Management, Technology, Social and Environmental Sciences at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The constituent institutions of Njala University include the former Bo Teachers College (BTC) at Torwama, the School of Hygiene and Paramedical School at Korwama, in Bo. Bonthe Technical Institute (BTI) is an affiliate institution. Currently Njala University is operating on two campuses, namely, the Bo Campus and the Njala Campus. As an autonomous institution, Njala University has eight schools/faculties including Agriculture, Education, Environmental Sciences, Social Sciences, Community Health Sciences, Technology, Forestry and Horticulture as well as a School of Postgraduate Studies. At the moment, schools operating on the Bo Campus are Education, Social Sciences and Community Health Sciences. Njala Campus houses the Schools of Agriculture, Environmental Sciences, Technology, Forestry and Horticulture.

Eastern Technical University (ETU) is located in Kenema. Kenema is the largest city in the Eastern Province. The city is the capital and administrative center of the Kenema District. Kenema is a major diamond trade center and serves as the economic and financial center of Eastern Sierra Leone. Kenema lies 298 km east-south-east of the nation's capital Freetown.

Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology (EBKUST) is located in Magburaka about seven miles from Makeni, Northern Sierra Leone. This institution has branch campuses in Makeni and Port Loko. The EBKUST is a coeducational Sierra Leonean higher education institution.

The University of Sierra Leone (USL) is situated in Freetown. Freetown is the capital and largest city of Sierra Leone. It is a major port city on the Atlantic Ocean and is located in the Western Area of the country. Freetown is Sierra Leone's major urban, economic, financial, cultural, educational and political centre. The USL is a public University in the neighbourhoods of Mount Aureol in Freetown, Sierra Leone. It comprises Fourah Bay College (FBC), Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM), and the College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences (COMAHS). The restructured University of Sierra Leone is superintended by a Vice-Chancellor and Principal who is the chief academic and administrative head of the university and a Registrar.

Milton Margai Technical University (MMTU) is situated at Goderich. Goderich is a town on the outskirts of Sierra Leonean's capital Freetown. The college was established as a Polytechnic in 2001 by an Act of Parliament which merged the Milton Margai College of Education (MMCE), the Freetown Technical Institute (FTI) and the Hotel Tourism Training Institute (HTTI) as one educational institution, resulting in the establishment of three campuses - Goderich Campus, Congo Cross Campus and Brookfields Campus.

The Freetown Polytechnic (FP) comprises the Freetown Teachers College (FTC) and the Government Technical Institute (GTI). The FTC is located at Kossoh Town, 19 km away from the heart of the Freetown city. It is a non-residential college for both staff and students, while GTI is located at Kissy Dockyard. The map of Sierra Leone showing the various locations of the tertiary education institutions studied is shown in Figure 1.

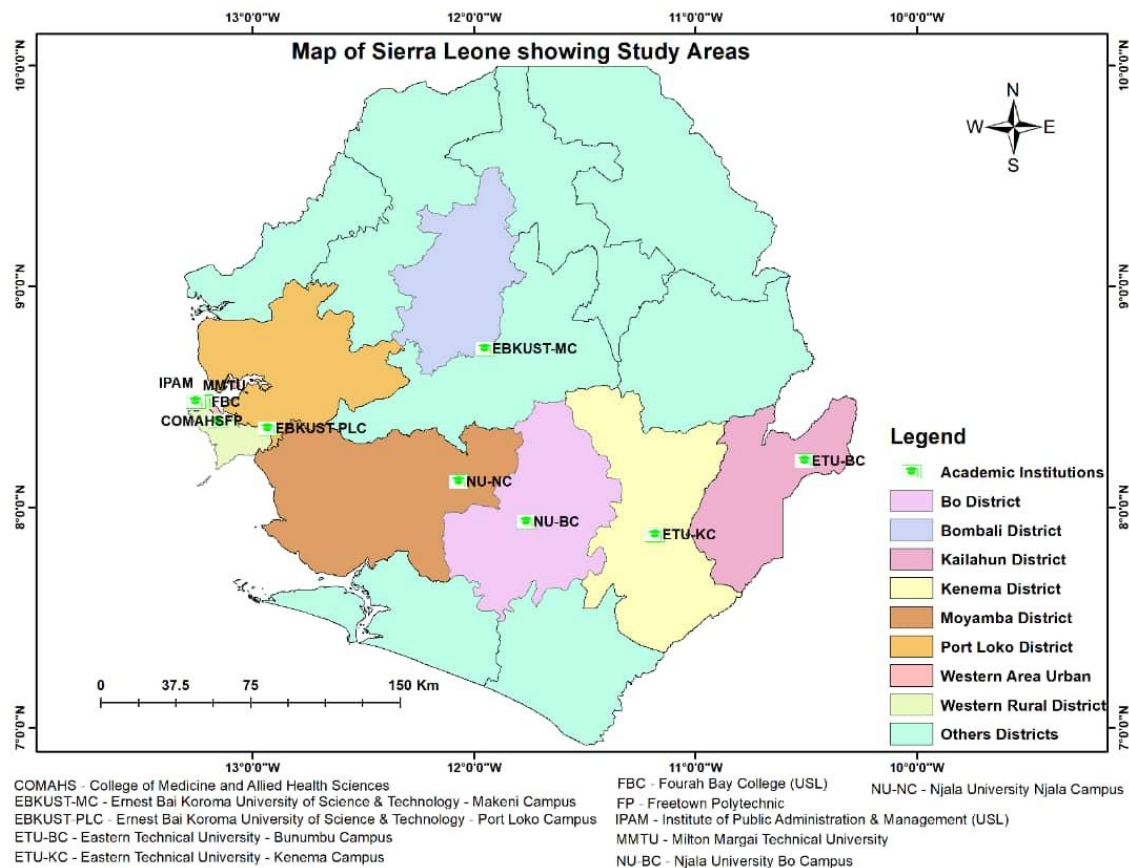


Figure 1. Map of Sierra Leone showing locations of tertiary education institutions studied

Study Designs, Research Instrument, Sample Population and Sample Size

The survey research design using structured questionnaire research instrument was used for data collection. The research population involved six tertiary educational institutions in Sierra Leone. The population of the study comprised employees from tertiary education institutions in Sierra Leone who were purposively selected based on the focus of the research. For the purpose of regional representation, at least one tertiary institution was selected from the four regions of Sierra Leone. The study population constitutes 326 subjects, of which, 266 respondents were selected from six tertiary education institutions in Sierra Leone (NU, USL, EBK, MMTU, FP, and ETU) using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula (Table 1). The vice Chancellors and Principals, Deputy Vice Chancellors and Registrars were purposively selected, while the categories were done using simple random technique for the study.

Data Analysis

The data were coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program version 20. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The statistical relationships between staff recruitment strategies (independent variables) and staff job performance (dependent variable); and between staff retention strategies (independent variables) and staff job performance (dependent variable) were determined through regression analysis. The total variations in staff job performance explained by the various independent variables were evaluated through the coefficient of determination (R^2) (Steel & Torrie, 1980).

Table 1. Sample population and size of respondents of the various institutions that participated in the Study

Respondents	Institutions						Total population	Sample size
	NU	USL	EBKUST	MMTU	FP	ETU		
Vice Chancellor and Principal	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	6
Deputy Vice Chancellor	2	3	1	3	1	1	11	11
Registrars	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	6
Deputy Registrars	5	3	1	1	1	2	13	13
Deans of Schools/ Directors	20	30	5	5	5	5	70	50
Heads of Departments	35	40	20	4	6	5	110	90
Other Administrative Authorities	30	50	10	5	10	5	110	90
Total	94	128	39	20	25	20	326	266

Note: NU=Njala University, USL=University of Sierra Leone, EBKUST= Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology, MMTU=Milton Margai Technical University, FP=Freetown Polytechnic, and ETU=Eastern Technical University

The fitted regression model for influence of staff recruitment strategies on staff job performance is:

$Y = 3.23 + 0.27X_1 + 0.24X_2 - 0.09X_3 + 0.28X_4 - 0.06X_5 + 0.24X_6 + 0.05X_7 + 0.35X_8 - 0.18X_9 + 0.41X_{10} + 0.04X_{11} - 0.19X_{12}$, where Y = response variable (staff job performance); X = explanatory variables: X₁, X₂, X₃, X₄, X₅, X₆, X₇, X₈, X₉, X₁₀, X₁₁, and X₁₂, = selection without interview (SelWI), selection through interview (SELECTIONTI), applications leading to selection (ALS), criteria-based selection (CRITERIABS), multiple combined approaches (MCAPPROACHES), search committee (SEARCHC), personal contacts (PCONTACTS), selection by ratification (SELECTIONBR), personal influence (PI), administrative influence (ADMINI), referred by agent other (RBATO), and others (advertisement leading to selection and interviews), respectively.

The fitted regression model for influence of staff retention strategies on staff job performance is:

$Y = 3.24 + 0.40X_1 - 0.13X_2 + 0.13X_3 - 0.43X_4 + 0.04X_5 + 0.08X_6 + 0.09X_7 + 0.10X_8 - 0.01X_9 - 0.57X_{10}$, where Y = response variable (staff job performance); X = explanatory variables: X₁, X₂, X₃, X₄, X₅, X₆, X₇, X₈, X₉, and X₁₀, = training, mentoring, conducive work environment (CWENV), stress from overworking (SFMOW), coaching, show of appreciation with compensation (SOAWC), institutional positive culture (IPC), make employees feel valued (MEFV), attractive salary and compensation (ASCOMPENSATION), and others (skill improvement, retirement benefits, provision for promotion, early payment of retirement benefits, good social cohesion, pay salaries on time, advance studies while working, increase salary scale, building more staff quarters, continuous professional development), respectively.

Results

Tables 2 and 3 show the summary of the fitted or estimated linear regression model by the method of least square and regression analysis of variance, respectively. The staff job performance is used as dependent variable and staff recruitment strategies (constant, selection without interview, selection through interview, applications leading to selection, criteria-based

selection, multiple combined approaches, search committee, personal contacts, selection by ratification, personal influence, administrative influence, referred by agent other, and others including advertisement leading to selection and interviews) as independent variables. The coefficients of determination (R^2) values indicate that 11.4% of variation in staff job performance was due to constant, selection without interview, selection through interview, applications leading to selection, criteria-based selection, multiple combined approaches, search committee, personal contacts, selection by ratification, personal influence, administrative influence, referred by agent other, others (advertisement leading to selection and interviews) (Table 2). The coefficients of criteria-based selection, and search committee show that staff job performance will increase by 0.28 and 0.24 units, respectively, holding other factors as constant (Table 4). These coefficients are significant ($p < 0.05$) at 5% level of significance. The coefficients of selection without interview, selection through interview, personal contacts, selection by ratification, administrative influence, and referred by other agent show that a unit increase in these parameters causes an increase in staff job performance by 0.27, 0.24, 0.05, 0.35, 0.41 and 0.04 units, respectively, holding other factors as constant. These coefficients are nonsignificant at 5% level of significance. The coefficients of applications leading to selection, multiple combined approaches, personal influence and others (advertisement leading to selection and interviews) show that a unit increase in these factors causes decrease in staff job performance by -0.09, -0.06, -0.18, and -0.19 units, respectively, holding other factors as constant. These coefficients are nonsignificant at 5% level of significance. The results indicate that the type of recruitment strategies influence staff job performance to varying degrees.

Table 2. Regression model summary for influence of staff recruitment strategies on staff job performance

R	R square	Adjusted R square	SE	Change statistics				
				R Square change	F change	Df1	Df2	Sig F change
0.338	0.114	0.072	0.786	0.114	2.683	12	250	0.002

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant, OthersC, SELECTIONBR, RBATO, ALTS, SEARCHC, CRITERIABS)

Table 3. Regression analysis of variance (ANOVA) for staff recruitment strategies (independent variables) and staff job performance (dependent variable) of respondents

	Degree of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	12	19.904	1.659	2.683	0.002
Residual	250	154.545	0.618		
Total	262	174.449			

Table 4. Regression statistics for influence of recruitment strategies on staff job performance

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients			95% Confidence interval for B	
	B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower bound	Upper bound
(Constant)	3.23	0.23		13.85	0.000	2.773	3.692
SelWI	0.27	0.39	0.05	0.69	0.490	-0.496	1.032
SELECTIONTI	0.24	0.15	0.10	1.60	0.111	-0.056	0.542
ALS	-0.09	0.23	-0.03	-0.41	0.683	-0.544	0.357
CRITERIABS	0.28	0.11	0.16	2.51	0.013	0.060	0.502
MCAPPROACHES	-0.06	0.16	-0.02	-0.38	0.706	-0.371	0.251
SEARCHC	0.24	0.11	0.15	2.27	0.024	0.033	0.457
PCONTACTS	0.05	0.31	0.01	0.15	0.882	-0.558	0.649
SELECTIONBR	0.35	0.86	0.03	0.41	0.684	-1.343	2.046
PI	-0.18	0.35	-0.06	-0.50	0.618	-0.874	0.520
ADMINI	0.41	0.33	0.15	1.25	0.214	-0.238	1.057
RBATO	0.04	0.45	0.01	0.09	0.928	-0.848	0.929
Others	-0.19	0.82	-0.01	-0.23	0.822	-1.810	1.438

Note: SelWI=Selection without interview, SELECTIONTI=selection through interview, ALS=applications leading to selection, CRITERIABS=criteria-based selection, MCAPPROACHES=multiple combined approaches, SEARCHC=search committee, PCONTACTS=personal contacts, SELECTIONBR=selection by ratification, PI=personal influence, ADMINI=administrative influence, RBATO=referred by other agent, Others (advertisement leading to selection and interviews)

Tables 5 and 6 show the summary of the fitted or estimated linear regression model and regression analysis of variance, respectively. Table 5 shows the summary of the fitted or estimated linear regression model by the method of least square. The staff job performance is used as dependent variable and staff retention strategies (training, mentoring, conducive work environment, lower stress from overworking, coaching, show of appreciation with compensation, institutional positive culture, make employees feel valued, attractive salary and compensation, and others such as skill improvement, retirement benefits, provision for promotion, early payment of retirement benefits, good social cohesion, pay salaries on time, advance studies while working, increase salary scale, building more staff quarters, continuous professional development) as independent variables. The coefficients of determination (R^2) values indicate that 12.5% of variation in staff job performance was due to constant, mentoring, conducive work environment, lower stress from overworking, show of appreciation with compensation, attractive salary and compensation, make employees feel valued, training, coaching, institutional positive culture, and others (skill improvement, retirement benefits, provision for promotion, early payment of retirement benefits, good social cohesion, pay salaries on time, advance studies while working, increase salary scale, building more staff quarters, continuous professional development) (Table 5). The coefficients of training shows that staff job performance will significantly ($p < 0.05$) increase by 0.40 units, whereas stress from overworking and others (specify) significantly decrease staff job performance by -0.43 and -0.57 units, respectively, holding other factors as constant (Table 7). The coefficients of conducive work environment, coaching, show of appreciation with compensation, institutional positive culture, and make employees feel valued show that a unit increase in these parameters causes an increase in staff job performance by 0.13, 0.04, 0.08, 0.09, and 0.10 units, respectively, holding other factors as constant. These coefficients are nonsignificant at 5% level

of significance. The coefficients of mentoring, and attractive salary and compensation show that a unit increase in these factors causes decrease in staff job performance by -0.13, and -0.01 units, respectively, holding other factors as constant. These coefficients are nonsignificant at 5% level of significance. The results indicate staff retention strategies influence staff job performance to varying degrees.

Table 5. Model summary for influence of staff retention strategies on staff job performance

R	R square	Adjusted R square	SE	Change statistics				
				R Square change	F change	Df1	Df2	Sig F change
0.353	0.125	0.090	0.778	0.125	3.596	10	252	0.0001

Note: SE=standard error

Table 6. Regression analysis of variance (ANOVA) for staff retention strategies (independent variables) and staff job performance (dependent variable) of respondents

	Degree of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	10	21.786	2.179	3.596	0.0002
Residual	252	152.663	0.606		
Total	262	174.449			

Table 7. Regression statistics for staff retention strategies (independent variables) and staff job performance (dependent variable) of respondents

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients			95% Confidence interval for B	
	B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower bound	Upper bound
(Constant)	3.24	0.17		18.89	0.000	2.90	3.57
Training	0.40	0.17	0.15	2.29	0.023	0.06	0.74
Mentoring	-0.13	0.15	-0.06	-0.91	0.365	-0.43	0.16
CWENV	0.13	0.11	0.07	1.16	0.248	-0.09	0.35
SFMOW	-0.43	0.11	-0.25	-3.98	0.000	-0.63	-0.21
Coaching	0.04	0.12	0.02	0.35	0.730	-0.19	0.27
SOAWC	0.08	0.11	0.05	0.66	0.510	-0.15	0.30
IPC	0.09	0.12	0.06	0.79	0.432	-0.14	0.33
MEFV	0.10	0.14	0.05	0.75	0.454	-0.17	0.37
ASCOMPENSATION	-0.01	0.11	-0.01	-0.12	0.906	-0.24	0.21
OTHERS	-0.57	0.22	-0.16	-2.63	0.009	-1.00	-0.14

Note: Training, mentoring, CWENV=conducive work environment, SFMOW=stress from overworking, coaching, SOAWC=show of appreciation with compensation, IPC=institutional positive culture, MEFV=make employees feel valued, ASCOMPENSATION=attractive salary and compensation, and OTHERS=(skill improvement, retirement benefits, provision for promotion, early payment of retirement benefits, good social cohesion, pay salaries on time, advance studies while working, increase salary scale, building more staff quarters, continuous professional development)

Discussion

Recruitment and selection in any organization is a serious business as the success of any organization or its efficiency in service delivery is contingent upon the quality of its workforce who was recruited into the organization through recruitment and selection exercises (Ezeali & Esiagu, 2010). Findings support the view that it is important for managers to understand the objectives, policies and practices used for selection (Bohlander *et al.*, 2001). More importantly, those responsible for making selection decisions should do it based on adequate informed decisions. Robbins (2005) found that organization's human resource policies and practices represent important forces for shaping employee behaviour and attitudes.

The findings of this study are also in tandem with existing information in the literature that recruitment and selection criteria have significant effect on organization's performance. Huselid (1995) found that recruitment and selection criteria have significant effect on organizational performance due to the provision of large pool of qualified applicants: paired with a reliable and valid selection it has a substantial influence over the quality and type of skills new employees possess. Gamage (2014) noted similar pattern that the recruitment and selection practices determine who is hired, shapes employee behaviour and attitude. Proper designing of recruitment and selection contributes to identification of competent candidates and accurate matching of them to their jobs. Utilization of the proper selection device increases the probability that the right person is chosen to fill a slot. According to Rauf (2007), a positive association exists between the extensiveness of recruiting, selection test validation and the use of formal selection procedures, organizations performance and firm profits. Rauf (2007) also found that sophisticated recruitment and selection procedures are positively related to performance in organizations. Okoh (2005) opined that, not just organizational selection practices determine who is hired, but the use of the proper selection criteria will increase the probability that the right person will be chosen. Thus, selection of the best people for the job with robust retention strategies increases job performance and productivity (Osemeke, 2012). Findings of the present study asserts that training significantly increases staff job performance. However, recruitment of staff with higher levels of educational qualifications will not result in more staff meeting the minimum requirements of their jobs and that the attainment of higher levels of educational qualifications will have no significant impact in this regard (Stoffberg *et al.*, 2023).

Conclusions

This study establishes that criteria-based selection, search committee, and training, significantly increase staff job performance, whereas stress from overworking and other sources significantly decreases staff job performance. Staff recruitment and retention strategies also affect job performance. It suggests that, in designing and instituting recruitment and selection criteria quality should not be compromised. This is critically important since the right type of labour is hard to come by. Furthermore, given that the tertiary education environment is ever changing, the university's management is implored to constantly evaluate their selection methods on the basis of their validity, impartiality, scope of usage, and cost and utilize robust retention strategies for enhanced job performance.

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