



A Study on Recruitment Strategy using Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in Service Industry

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ABSTRACT

This research looks at the effectiveness of recruitment methods based on Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in the service industry. The core research was to see how recruitment based on improve efficiency, consistency, and performance in the organization. The research was descriptive, and it collect primary data from 200 service industry workers from various service sectors with a 5-point Likert scale structured questionnaire. Statistical analysis methods including Percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha, chi-square test and Pearson's correlation analysis were used to analyse the data. There was a high positive relationship found between SOP implementation, analytical tools and organizational hiring performance. In service sectors having SOP for recruitment helps in minimizing bias and ensures efficiency of recruitment process and increases efficiency of hiring. The research concluded that recruitment strategies with an increased use of analytics positively impact the organizational performance in the service industry and recommends that there should be constant improvements in recruitment methods with increased usage of analytical tools.

Key Words: Recruitment Strategy, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), Service Industry, HR Analytics, Recruitment Effectiveness, Analytics Recruitment.



INTRODUCTION

The Service organizations contribute greatly to economic growth as they provide employment to people and assist in the progress of the organization. At present competitive nature of the business leads organizations toward implementing appropriate strategies in recruitment of personnel to maintain employees in the organization. SOP in recruitment help organizations to be standard, fair and consistent in their hiring process and using SOP supports good communication, minimize subjectivity in selection, aids in decision making and provides quality results. Then, application of analysis tools and technology in the service recruitment leads effective results, since all hiring process are being based on the analysis and evidence and proper talent management takes place. Hence organizations providing services are implementing the systematized recruited structure. The present study aim at establishing how recruitment using SOP is effective, it focuses on finding out the recruitment efficiency of service organizations and how organization's hiring performance is obtained through appropriate strategy.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The Workforce of today is competitive and rapidly changing service environment, organizations are increasingly looking towards standardized processes in recruitment to ensure their capability to recruit and retain effective talent. Various organizations implement the use of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in the recruitment process so that the process is standardized, transparency is increased, and hiring is effective and efficient. Many organizations face issues of urgent needs for recruitment, high attrition levels, working pressures and improper control systems and therefore cannot follow the recruitment processes diligently. In many instances, even the HR professionals or the hiring manager might be unaware or may not be well-trained for the need to adhere to the procedures involved in recruitment SOP. Therefore, there are inconsistencies when screening of candidates is involved, when evaluations during interviews are performed and also when making decisions regarding the selection of the candidate as well as regarding maintaining proper records. Many organizations even today do not involve adequate traditional ways of recruitment, which are effective for improving efficiency in the recruitment process.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recruitment approaches in the service sector have significantly evolved due to increasing application of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), digital hiring system and structured recruitment system. Modern companies do not aim only for quick filling of vacant positions, but also for more consistent, transparent and effective candidate selection.

Armstrong (2020) structured recruitment approaches aid to fair and consistent candidate selection. The author further emphasized that formal recruitment practices facilitate effective work among HR department and top management and minimize confusion among recruiters.

Dessler (2020) Recruitment is one of the most significant HRM functions as the success of an organization largely depends upon selection of the right people. The SOP based recruitment procedures streamline the procedures to acquire, screen, interview and select applicants.

Breaugh (2017) reported that systematic recruitment procedures help the organizations to gain access to well qualified candidates more easily compared to informal hiring process. The recruitment planning and effective communication followed by structured interview procedures lead to efficiency in recruitment and cost saving.

Phillips and Gully (2018) examined modern human resource approach such as strategic staffing and recruitment planning in service sector. According to them service sector now highly relies upon digitally available recruiting tools, applicant tracking system and structured SOP's in order to effectively handle bulk applications.

Sharma and Verma (2020) to analyze the effect of SOP in recruitment processes of service organizations and reported the importance of SOP based recruitment as it reduces time taken during recruitment process, better coordination among departments and it also makes the entire process very organized.



RESEARCH GAP

A significant number of studies have contributed a great deal to recruitment strategies, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), recruitment analytics, and the use of technology in hiring processes in organizations. The authors have suggested the use of transparency, consistency, and data-driven decision-making in the current recruitment environment. However, most of these studies do not assess the overall effectiveness of recruitment strategies that are based on SOP in service organizations. Often research of the above mentioned nature does not use empirical analysis that incorporates a multitude of measures including recruitment efficiency, SOP implementation, analytics recruitment, analytics tools, employee talent improvement, and organizational hiring performance simultaneously. There is also limited evidence to suggest how structured procedures accompanied by the adoption of analytics methods in recruitment would impact recruitment quality and organizational hiring performance in service organizations. In addition, previous studies offer little empirical validation for the implementation of SOP in recruitment effectiveness. It also reveals a lack of detailed research in the implementation of the processes including inconsistency of the recruitment process, low employee compliance to the SOP and lack of integration of analytics tools with recruitment system.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To Analyse and explore the challenges in implementing SOP on recruitment strategy in service industry and assess its impact on recruitment effectiveness and organizational performance.
- To Identify the critical challenges/ barriers faced by HR in recruitment operation in service industry.
- To Assess effects of partial and non-compliance on company performance and turnover rate.
- To propose recommendations of implementing, monitoring and effective utilization of recruitment SOP in service organizations.
- To study the part of HR technology and the software for recruitment procedure to help maintain the standard procedures.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was employed to study the influence of recruitment using SOPs in the service industry. The study sought to explain how the use of Standard Operating Procedures for the recruitment process could lead to a recruitment process that was consistent, transparent, objective and qualitative for the service organization. A sample of 200 employees was used in the study. The respondents for the study were both employees and HR managers, who had direct or indirect involvement with recruitment practices and had knowledge of recruitment processes followed by the organization. Data were collected, edited, coded and then analysed by using the Statistical package like MS Excel and SPSS. The analysis included percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Chi-Square test and Pearson Correlation analysis. The study provided meaningful understanding of how SOP based recruitment could enhance the quality of recruitment, objectivity and transparency in the recruitment process, hence enhancing the organization's efficiency in the service sector.

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

Demographic Profile (Percentage Analysis)

Age Distribution of Respondents

AGE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Below 25	79	39.5%
25-35	68	34.0%



36-45	36	18.0%
Above 45	17	8.5%
Total	200	100.0

The vast majority of respondents (73.5%) are under 35 years old. This shows that the workforce within the service industry is still young and mostly early career professional.

Gender Distribution

GENDER	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Male	121	60.5%
Female	79	39.5%
Total	200	100.0

The majority of respondents are male, accounting for 60.5% of the total sample, while female respondents constitute 39.5%. This indicates a higher representation of male employees in the study.

Educational Qualification

EDUCATION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Diploma/Certificate	54	27%
UG	98	49%
PG	48	24%
Total	200	100.0

There are 73% of undergraduate and postgraduate respondents in the total sample size. This illustrates the highly educated workforce and the significance of academic qualification as one criterion in the recruitment process in service sector

Work Experience Distribution

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Less than 1 year	76	38.0%
1-3 years	47	23.5%



3-5 years	43	21.5%
Above 5 years	34	17.0%
Total	200	100.0

Most respondents have less than 3 years' experience working (61.5%), suggesting that the respondents mostly comprises of early-career individuals in the service industry.

Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

The internal reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated by calculating Cronbach's Alpha (α). The coefficient Cronbach's alpha reflects the degree to which the set of test items is intended to measure the same thing. Generally, an Alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher would be considered acceptable for social sciences research.

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	N of Items	Reliability Level
All Variables (RE, SOP, AR, AT, TI & OIP)	0.953	24	Excellent
Benchmark Reference	$\alpha \geq 0.90 = \text{Excellent}$	$\alpha \geq 0.80 = \text{Good}$	$\alpha \geq 0.70 = \text{Acceptable}$

The entire scale of Cronbach's Alpha all over the variables, consisting of 24 items, achieved 0.953. As it is much higher than 0.90, the reliability scale used in the research could reflect well regarding recruitment efficiency and related issue concerning SOP.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) was computed to examine the strength and direction of linear relationships among the six major dimensions. Interpretation $|r|0.60-0.79 = \text{Strong}$; $\geq 0.80 = \text{Very Strong}$. Significance Level: $p < 0.01$ (Two-tailed).

Pearson Correlation Matrix (All Pairs Significant at $p < 0.01$)

DIMENSIONS		re	sop	ar	at	ti	oip
re	Pearson Correlation	1	.784***	.759***	.774***	.754***	.790***
sop	Pearson Correlation	.784***	1	.831***	.860***	.817***	.850***
ar	Pearson Correlation	.759***	.831***	1	.786***	.771***	.768***
at	Pearson Correlation	.774***	.860***	.786***	1	.775***	.836***
ti	Pearson Correlation	.754***	.817***	.771***	.775***	1	.774***
oip	Pearson Correlation	.790***	.850***	.768***	.836***	.774***	1



All 15 pairwise correlations were statistically significant to $p < 0.01$. The highest correlations are SOP and Organizational Hiring Performance ($r=0.850$) and SOP and Analytics Tools ($r=0.860$), supporting the importance of standardized procedures and analytic tools in organizational hiring performance.

Chi – Square Test

Gender vs Recruitment Effectiveness

H0: There is no significant association between gender and recruitment effectiveness.

H1: There is a significant association between gender and recruitment effectiveness.

Chi – Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32.348 ^a	34	0.549

Interpretation

A Chi-square test was also performed to look at relationship between gender and recruitment effectiveness. The Pearson Chi-square obtained is 32.348 with a p-value 0.549 which is above 0.05; thus, null hypothesis is accepted. This implies there is no significant relationship between gender and recruitment effectiveness.

Age vs SOP Usage

H0: There is no significant association between age and SOP usage for this study.

H1: There is a significant association between age and SOP usage for this study.

Chi – Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	69.398 ^a	57	0.126

Interpretation

Chi square test was used to check for the association between the variables under investigation. The Pearson chi-square obtained is 69.398 and p value is 0.126 (>0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. So, no association exists between age and use of SOP for this study.



Experience vs Overall impact & Performance

H0: There is no significant association between Experience vs Overall impact & Performance.

H1: There is a significant association between Experience vs Overall impact & Performance.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32.421 ^a	36	0.640

Interpretation:

A Chi-square test was used to identify the relationship between the variables discussed. The Pearson Chi-square obtained is 32.421 and the value of p is 0.640. Since, $p > 0.05$, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no relation between Experience vs Overall impact & Performance.

KEY FINDINGS

- That the sample, being young (73.5% of respondents are less than 35 years of age, where 39.5% are under 25 years and 34.0% are 25-35) and highly educated (73.0% respondents are educated to UG/PG level) suggests the service industry is relying on a younger educated workforce for recruitment strategies.
- Each of the 6 recruitment dimensions was rated as low-to-moderate (WA: 2.72-3.07) indicating varying employee expectations toward these recruitment factors in the surveyed firms. Recruitment Effectiveness (3.07) and Analytics tools (3.00) received the highest average scores while Training & Improvement (2.72) and Recruitment analytics (2.74) had the largest scope for improvement.
- Chi-square tests shows no significant relationship exists between Gender and Recruitment Effectiveness (=32.348, $p=0.549$) as well as Age and SOP Usage (=69.398, $p=0.126$) and Experience and Overall Impact & Performance(=32.421, $p=0.640$).
- 43.0% of the respondents agreed that recruitment strategy causes employee turn over and 35.5% agree that an analytical-driven SOP can lead to effectiveness of recruitment system.
- The total Cronbach's Alpha of 0.953 with 24 items suggests a high internal reliability of the research instrument, proving that all the dimensions of the effectiveness of analytical-driven SOP-based recruitment are measured accurately and consistently.
- 52.5% of the respondents accepted that their organisation has a Using Standard Operating Procedure for the recruitment and 41.5% agreed that it enables standard hiring decisions.

SUGGESTIONS

Organizations should improve compliance with recruitment SOP by ensuring that each step of the recruitment process is documented appropriately, standardizing the recruitment process, and implementing SOP consistently across all the departments for enhanced transparency, fairness, and uniformity in recruitment processes.

The HR professionals and hiring managers should be provided training programs on a periodic basis for better understanding of SOP compliance, recruitment analytics and technology-based recruiting

The recruitment procedure communications to candidates regarding the procedure, time and evaluation should be improved, so as to boost up the experience and satisfaction of candidates. There should be more automation tools, electronic recruitment platforms used in order to minimize the recruitment period, enhance efficiency.



The business should create a feedback and control mechanism on recruitment performances so that it can constantly monitor and improve the system. Structured interview types, scoring sheets and analytics-supported evaluation should be conducted in order to avoid bias and establish fair judgment.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion drawn in this paper is that recruitment procedures that are aided by SOP are beneficial to increase the efficiency of recruitment within the service industry. The high correlation between the three main recruitment dimensions implies that firms with efficient and objective recruitment systems, using methodical, data-driven recruitment process, could have a stable and efficient recruitment procedure. The importance of SOP in recruitment system, in the sense of minimizing the potential mistakes and reducing the bias in the whole procedure, is also confirmed in this study. It enables standardisation of the hiring processes among the departments. The research further proves that the use of continuous tracking, employee training, automation and improved communication at all stages of recruitment helps to improve the efficiency. The paper indicates that those service organizations which are adopting formal SOP based recruitment systems together with analytical tools and modern technologies would have advantages in recruiting, analyzing and retaining suitable staff. The formal systems with analytical tools and modern technologies would not only ensure the efficiency of the recruitment process but also guarantee future growth, operations and competitive advantages of the organizations within the developing service economy environment.

FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- Longitudinal Research: Subsequent research may also employ a longitudinal methodology in assessing the long term consequences of SOP-recruiting practices on employee performance, retention, and company productivity as well as quality of hire within the services industry.
- Cross Industry Comparative study: Future research may also look into different industry settings like manufacturing, healthcare, banking and investment, IT and Retail Services, and apply SOP-based recruiting procedures and analytics-based recruitment methods to the process, and study its effect in comparison to the different sectors.
- Study of technology and automation: Considering the advancements made in digital recruitment techniques, researchers may evaluate the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning techniques, ATS and recruitment automation in hiring efficiency, screening efficiency and decision accuracy in the future.
- Study of Candidate experience: Future researchers may study the effect of SOP-based recruitment practices from the candidate's perspective in relation to transparency, efficiency, fairness and satisfaction with the entire recruitment process.
- Study of Diversity and Bias Reduction: The contribution of structured recruiting practices and analytics-based hiring techniques toward a less-biased recruiting process and improvement in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in an organizational recruitment process may be researched further.
- Post-hiring evaluation study: Research may also seek to determine the relation between recruitment practices and the subsequent organizational factors like employee performance, effectiveness of training, and productivity, thereby examining the long-term effects of SOP-based recruiting practices, through a study on employee turnover.



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