

Recruitment & Selection Practices in Manufacturing Firms in Bangladesh

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Recruitment and selection is one of the most important functions of human resource management (HRM). The present study aims at exploring differences and similarities between the public and private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh with respect to recruitment and selection practices, sources of recruitment, and selection devices. Data collected from twenty six public and thirty four private sector manufacturing firms show that the overall status of recruitment and selection practices of the private sector firms is significantly better than that of the public sector firms in Bangladesh. Some implications are also offered for the enhancement of the recruitment and selection practices of the public and private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh.

Introduction

Recruitment and selection are conducted to get the right persons for the right jobs of an organization. After the completion of recruitment, selection process starts. Recruitment can be defined as the set of activities an organization to attract job candidates who have the capabilities and attitudes needed to assist the organization accomplish its goals (Glueck 1978). It is the process of encouraging people to apply for actual or anticipated vacancies of the organization. The ultimate goals of recruitment are to attract and retain the interest of right candidates, and the projection of a positive image of the organization to those who come in contact with it (Weeratunga 2003 block 6:6). The success of recruitment depends upon its ability to create a large pool of competent applicants. There are numerous sources of recruitment which may be categorized into two - internal and external (Aswathappa 2008:150). The internal sources of recruitment are present employees, employee referrals. External sources of recruitment are the professional associations, newspaper advertisements, campus recruiting, unsolicited applicants, management consulting firms, and internet.

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Byars and Rue (1997:172) defined selection as “the process of choosing from among available applicants, the individuals who are most likely to successfully perform a job”. It is the process of gathering all necessary information about applicants and using that information to decide which applicants to employ. Once an adequate number of qualified applicants are identified through proper recruitment, the selection process begins. Selection is one of the most important functions of HRM because wrong selection of employees hampers organizational performance enormously (Dessler 2007:194). Employee selection in a country is influenced by the perception, fairness, favouritism, and internal and external pressures (Aswathappa 2008: 186, Khan & Taher 2008: 110). Selection process differs from organizations to organizations. An ideal selection process comprises some steps such as (Decenzo & Robbins 1999: 169) filling up application forms, initial screening, preliminary interview, employment tests, written examination, comprehensive interview, background examination/ reference check, medical examinations, and job offer.

Research on Recruitment & Selection Practices

The recruitment and selection process determines the decisions as to which candidates will get employment offers.

The aim of this practice is to improve the fit between employees, the organization, teams, and work requirements, and thus, to create a better work environment (Tzafrir 2006). Sophisticated recruitment and selection system can ensure a better fit between the individual’s abilities and the organization’s requirement (Fernandez 1992). Hunter and Schmidt (1982) concluded that employment stability can be achieved through a selection procedure based on ability. Katou and Budhwar (2007) also found that recruitment and selection was positively related to all organizational performance variables such as effectiveness, efficiency, innovation, and quality. Quang and Thavisay (1999) in a study on the public sector firms of Lao found that recruitment and selection practices of the surveyed firms were interfered by the respective ministries. They opined that management succession planning should be impartial and transparent. Another study (Huang 2001) on HR practices of Taiwan unearthed that recruitment and selection took the highest percentage of time (14.6%) spent by HR departments in Taiwan. Huang (2001) also identified recruitment and selection as the 4th most important function of HRM in achieving organizational objectives whereas training and development, compensation and benefits, and HR planning were identified as the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd most important functions of HRM respectively. Ariyabuddhiphongs (2003) studied recruitment and selection practices of 205 manufacturing companies of Thailand. The study showed that walk-in applicants (or via web-site) and newspaper advertisements were the two most effective

and frequently used methods of recruitment in Thai manufacturing companies. Although job samples were considered as the most effective method of testing, written examination was the most frequently used method in Thailand. Moreover, structured panel interview was the most preferred and effective method of interview in Thai manufacturing companies. Tanova and Nadiri (2005) analyzed the recruitment policies and practices of Turkey. They observed that contrary to the existing literature and theoretical suggestions, small businesses in Turkey were more likely to rely on employment agencies as formal recruitment sources to fill managerial positions. Chatterjee (2007) uncovered that public sector employees of India had more formal job descriptions than that of private sector. He added that organizations of India strongly depended on formal labour market in the case of recruitment whereas recruitment from higher learning institutions was a very common phenomenon in the case of professional cadres. Placement agencies, internet, and newspapers were found to be the most popular sources of recruitment in the Indian context.

Structured panel interview was the most preferred and effective method of interview in Thai manufacturing companies.

Taher and Arefin (2000) examined the recruitment and selection (R and S) process of Bangladesh Open University (BOU). They emphasized on proper R and S because it constitutes the most important features of HRM

and the cost of improper R and S is also very high. Finally, they recommended that BOU should set a full-fledged HR department with experienced and competent people, formulate HR plans, and introduce computerized HR system to improve the R and S process of BOU. A similar study (Ahmed, Khan & Uddin 2004) assessed the recruitment and selection practices of Square Pharmaceuticals Ltd (SPL). SPL practiced both internal and external sources of recruitment. About 60% positions of SPL (which were mainly field level positions) were filled externally through newspaper advertisements. The rest of the positions were filled internally by employee referrals, and references of reputed personnel and senior management. It did not use internet for this purpose. SPL used different tests such as written test, communication skill test, interview, alcohol/drug test, medical check up, reference check, and skill test in selecting right people for the right posts. Ernst and Young, and Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2007) conducted a survey on HR practices of more than 50 organizations selected from industries (mainly from the private sector) such as Pharma and Healthcare, FMCG, IT, Telecom, Manufacturing, Finance, NGO, Textile/Garments, and Conglomerates. The survey revealed that an 'Extended family' culture in Bangladesh influenced recruitment and employers preferred hiring through known contacts. The survey also unfolded that newspapers continued to be the most commonly used source of recruitment. Uddin, Habib and Hassan

(2007) depicted a comparative scenario of recruitment and selection practices of two public and the private sector companies of Bangladesh such as Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) and Wartsila respectively. They found that the sources of recruitment used by Wartsila were circulation of internal memo (existing employees / internal recruitment), previously received applications (unsolicited applicants/walks-in), and newspaper advertisements. On the other hand, the sources of recruitment used by BPDB were direct recruitment, promotion, and apprentices. In the case of selection, Wartsila, at first, used to prepare a short list then they formed an interview board. Applicants had to fill up employment application forms before interview. The selection process of Wartsila comprised panel interview, physical examination, reference and character investigation, joining and placement. On the other hand, the selection process of BPDB comprised written examination, interview, practical examinations and tests, and physical examination. Khan (2007) categorically mentioned that the public and the private sector institutions of Bangladesh failed to discharge their duties properly due to defective recruitment and selection of employees, politicization of promotion and posting, low compensation, and ineffective training.

Objectives of the Study

- a) To explore the differences and similarities between public and private sector manufacturing firms of

Bangladesh with respect to recruitment and selection practices.

- b) To put forward policy implications for improvement of the recruitment and selection practices of the surveyed firms.

Hypothesis of the Study

Hypothesis 1: H_0 = There is no difference between the public and the private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh with respect to recruitment and selection practices.

Sample

A sampling frame of 155 public and private sector manufacturing firms was prepared comprising 64 public sector manufacturing firms (running) under all the six state-owned manufacturing corporations (GOB, Ministry of Finance 2007) such as BCIC, BSEC, BSFIDC, BFIDC, BJMC, and BTMC, and 91 private sector manufacturing firms (CSE Annual Report 2007) listed under Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE). Various established approaches are used in determining the sample size such as using a census in the case of a small population, imitating a sample size of analogous studies, using published tables, and using formulas to calculate a sample size (Israel 2003). For the present study, the published table method was used in the determination of the sample size. Israel (2003) developed the table by using the formula of Yamane (1967), which is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample size for ± 5%, ± 7%, ± 10% Precision Levels Where Confidence Level is 95% and p = 0.5

Size of Population	Sample Size(n) for Precision(e) of		
	±5%	±7%	±10%
100	81	67	51
125	96	78	56
150	110	86	61
175	122	94	64
200	134	101	67

Source: Adapted from Israel 2003: 3

Table 1 shows that a sample size is feasible and valid at different precision levels. From the field survey it was found that the total population for the present study was 155 that fall within the population range of 175 in the table. Considering the sample size to be determined at 10% precision level, it can be seen that the sample size for the present study came to 64 within the predetermined population range of 175. Since the study was directed to assess the comparative status of recruitment and selection practices of the public and private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh, the stratified random sampling technique was applied here to get a representative sample size. In selecting samples from both the sectors (stratums) the present study also used ‘proportionate allocation method’ (Kothari 1990: 63). Therefore, the following overall sample size was obtained for the present study.

Table 2. The Overall Sample Size of the Study

Sector	No. of Units
Public	26
Private	38
Total Sample Size	64

Data Collection, Analyses & Measurement

Questionnaire survey method was used to gather data in the present study. The questionnaire had three sections. First section was composed of an eight-item questionnaire on a 5-point Likert type scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .76$) framed to assess the status of recruitment and selection practices of the firms. Second and third sections included ‘yes/no’ type questions related to the sources of recruitment and the selection devices respectively. To assess the validity of the scale of the present study, content validity was used. It is a “subjective but systematic evaluation of how well the content of a scale represents the measurement task at hand” (Malhotra 2007: 286). For this purpose, the contents of the questionnaire were prepared with the help of leading literature, models, theories, and texts pertaining to the subject and questions of research. After necessary modifications, the content validity of the scale was approved by a panel of experts. As HR managers are the most competent persons to provide data related to any HRM practice such as recruitment and selection (Huselid & Becker 1996,

Tzafrir 2006), the structured questionnaire was sent to the HR managers of the surveyed manufacturing firms. Finally, 60 useable questionnaires were obtained for the study (26 from public sector and 34 from private sector). To analyze the data, this study used descriptive (mean, standard deviation) and difference inferential statistics (Leech, Barrett & Morgan 2005: 4) such as t-test, F- test. All statistical calculations were carried out by SPSS.

The most common approach used in measuring HRM practices (such as recruitment and selection) is additive approach (Edgar & Geare 2005). The present study used this approach in measuring the status of recruitment and se-

lection of public and private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh. The HR managers of the surveyed firms were asked to indicate, using an 8-item scale, the extent each practice takes place in their firms. The responses are then added together and the expectation is that a higher figure indicates better status of recruitment and selection practices.

Results

Status of recruitment and selection practices of the public and the private sector manufacturing firms was assessed by 8 items ($\alpha = 0.76$). Table 3 shows the sample size (*N*), mean (*M*), standard deviation (*SD*), and standard error of the mean of the items.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of the Items Assessing the Status of Recruitment & Selection Practices

Item	Type of the Organization	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1 Recruitment policy	Public	26	5.00	.000	.000
	Private	34	4.68	.878	.151
2 Large no. of applicants are encouraged for any vacancy	Public	26	4.35	1.018	.200
	Private	34	3.74	.864	.148
3 Job analysis guides recruitment	Public	26	2.31	1.320	.259
	Private	34	4.74	.666	.114
4 Rigorous selection process	Public	26	4.62	.571	.112
	Private	34	4.74	.666	.114
5 Selection is fair	Public	26	3.88	.952	.187
	Private	34	4.38	.604	.104
6 Line & HR manager participate in selection	Public	26	4.58	.578	.113
	Private	34	4.79	.770	.132
7 Spending considerable time in selection process	Public	26	4.42	.578	.113
	Private	34	4.68	.684	.117
8 Focusing on applicants' psychological attributes in selection	Public	26	3.46	.859	.169
	Private	34	4.44	.613	.105

With respect to the means of the items, differences between the public and the private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh were observed. To determine whether these differences were statistically significant, independent-samples *t*-test was carried out for every item. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Independent-Samples *t*-test for Items Assessing the Status of Recruitment and Selection Practices

Item	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
1 Recruitment policy	Equal variances assumed	15.370***	.000	1.875	58	.066
	Equal variances not assumed			2.149**	33.000	.039
2 Large no. of applicants are encouraged for any vacancy	Equal variances assumed	1.173	.283	2.513**	58	.015
	Equal variances not assumed			2.458	48.893	.018
3 Job analysis guides recruitment	Equal variances assumed	30.037***	.000	-9.306	58	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-8.582***	34.677	.000
4 Rigorous selection process	Equal variances assumed	.394	.533	-.735	58	.466
	Equal variances not assumed			-.750	57.174	.456
5 Selection is fair	Equal variances assumed	23.254***	.000	-2.471	58	.016
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.332**	39.888	.025
6 Line & HR managers participate in selection	Equal variances assumed	1.123	.294	-1.202	58	.234
	Equal					

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	variances not assumed			-1.248	57.989	.217	
7	Spending considerable time in selection process	Equal variances assumed	.150	.700	-1.519	58	.134
		Equal variances not assumed			-1.554	57.376	.126
8	Focusing on applicants' psychological attributes in selection	Equal variances assumed	3.403*	.070	-5.156	58	.000
		Equal variances not assumed			-4.933***	43.255	.000

Note. * $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

Item 1 Recruitment Policy: In the case of recruitment policy, equal variances were not assumed since $F = 15.370$, $p < .01$. Accordingly, t -test was run. It was found that in respect of maintaining formal recruitment policy, the difference between the public and the private sector was statistically significant ($t = 2.149$, $p < .05$). Thus, it can be inferred that in a maintaining formal recruitment policy, public sector firms ($M = 5.00$) are in a significantly better position than the private sector firms ($M = 4.68$).

In maintaining formal recruitment policy, public sector firms are in a significantly better position than the private sector firms

Item 2 No. of Applicants: Equal variances were considered. Accordingly, from the t -test, it was found that there was significant difference between public and

private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh with respect to attracting large number of applicants for vacant positions ($t = 2.513$, $p < .05$). Public sector firms ($M = 4.35$) are in a significantly better position than the private sector firms ($M = 3.74$) with respect to attracting applicants for any vacancy.

Item 3 Job Analysis: Equal variances were not assumed as $F = 30.037$, $p < .01$. Consequently, from the t -test, significant difference was found between the public and the private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh with respect to recruitment based on job analysis ($t = -8.582$, $p < .01$). It can be inferred that the private sector firms ($M = 4.74$) are in a significantly better position than the public sector firms ($M = 2.31$) with respect to conducting recruitment based on job analysis.

Item 4 Rigorous Selection Process: Equal variances were assumed. Accordingly, from the *t*-test, it can be concluded that there is no difference between the public and the private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh with respect to adopting rigorous selection process.

Item 5 Fairness in Selection: Equal variances were not assumed as $F = 23.254, p < .01$. As a result, from the *t*-test, it was found that there was significant difference between public and private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh with respect to fairness in selection ($t = -2.332, p < .05$). It can be inferred that the private sector firms ($M = 4.38$) are in significantly better position than the public sector firms ($M = 3.88$) with respect to maintaining fair selection process.

The private sector firms are in a significantly better position than the public sector firms with respect to maintaining fair selection process.

Item 6 Participation by Line & HR Managers: Equal variances were assumed. Therefore, from the *t*-test, it was evident that there is no difference between the public and the private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh with respect to the participation of line and HR managers in employee selection process.

Item 7 Time Spent in Selection Process: Equal variances were assumed. Accordingly, from the *t*-test, it was inferred that there is no difference between the public and the private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh with respect to spending considerable time in the selection process to find the right person.

Item 8 Focus on Applicants' Psychological Attributes: Equal variances were not assumed since $F = 3.403, p < .10$. So from the *t*-test, a significant difference was observed between the public and the private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh with respect to focusing on applicants' psychological attributes in selection process ($t = -4.933, p < .01$). It can be concluded that the private sector firms ($M = 4.44$) are in a significantly better position than the public sector firms ($M = 3.46$) with respect to focusing on applicants' psychological attributes in selection process.

Sources of Recruitment

Table 5: Sources of Recruitment Used by the Public & the Private Sector

Sources of Recruitment	% of Firms in the public sector	% of Firms in the private sector
Present employees	65	88
Newspapers	100	88
Employee referrals	08	65
Campus recruiting	00	71
Mgt. consulting firm	00	71
Professional associations	00	53
Unsolicited applicants	46	100
Internet	08	79

From Table 5, it is seen that all the surveyed public sector firms used newspapers as a source of recruitment. Present employees and unsolicited applicants were also used by 65% and 46% of the public sector firms respectively. In the same sector, only 8% used employee referrals and internet as sources of recruitment. No public sector firms used campus recruiting, management consulting firms and professional associations as the sources of recruitment. On the other hand, all the surveyed private sector firms used unsolicited applicants as sources of recruitment. Other sources of recruitment were also used by most of the private sector firms.

No public sector firms used campus recruiting, management consulting firms and professional associations as the sources of recruitment.

Selection Devices

Table 6: Selection Devices Used by the Public & the Private Sector

Selection devices	% of Firms in public sector	% of Firms in private sector
Initial Screening	85	94
Preliminary Interview	08	97
Employment Test	73	94
Written Examination	100	94
Comprehensive Interview	100	94
Reference Check	85	79
Medical Examination	100	91

From Table 6, it is observed that written examination, comprehensive interview, and medical examination were used by all the surveyed public sector manufacturing firms. The next preferred selection devices were initial screening, reference check, and employment test respectively in the public sector firms. A small percentage of the public sector firms used preliminary interview. On the other hand, in the private sector manu-

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of the Status of Recruitment & Selection Practices

Type of the Organization	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Recruitment and Selection Practice	26	4.3846	.49614	.09730
public	34	4.8824	.47767	.08192
private				

facturing firms, the most preferred selection device was preliminary interview. Reference check was the least preferred device. All other selection devices were used almost equally by most of the private sector firms.

To test the hypothesis stated earlier, independent-samples *t*-test was run with

SPSS. To be certain about the homogeneity of variances of the comparing groups, *Levene's test for equality of variances* was carried out before *t*-test from which it was found that variances were not equal, $F = 8.762, p < .01$. Accordingly, independent-samples *t*-test was performed. It was observed that there was statistically significant difference (*t*

Table 8. Independent-Samples *t*-test for the Status of Recruitment & Selection Practices

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Recruitment and Selection Practices	Equal variances assumed	8.762	.004***	-3.933	58	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.913***	52.876	.000

Note. *** $p < .01$.

= -3.913, $p < .01$) between the overall status of recruitment and selection practices of the public and that of the private sector manufacturing firms. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected and it can be concluded that the overall status of recruitment and selection practices of the private sector manufacturing firms of Bangladesh ($M = 4.8824$) is significantly better than that of the public sector manufacturing firms ($M = 4.3846$).

Discussion

It is revealed that the public sector firms are in a better position than the private sector firms in applying formal recruitment policies and in encouraging large number of applicants for any vacant position. This is due to the fact that the public sector firms follow government recruitment policies and it is also mandatory for the public sector firms to advertise in newspapers for filling almost every vacant position. No difference is found between the public and the private sector with respect to rigorous selection process, participation of line and HR managers in employee selection, and

spending considerable time in selection process to get the right people. However, the private sector firms are in significantly a better position than the public sector firms with respect to conducting recruitment based on job analysis and fairness in selection, and focusing on psychological attributes of employees such as personality, attitude, values, and integrity in selection. In the case of sources of recruitment, the public sector firms mainly use newspapers, and present employees. Besides newspapers, and present employees, the private sector firms frequently use unsolicited applicants, internet, and management consulting firms, employee referrals, campus recruiting, and professional associations as the sources of recruitment. It is reported that public sector firms use employee referrals and unsolicited applicants only in the case of recruitment of temporary, casual, and 'badli' workers. Though internet has been getting tremendous popularity as a convenient source of recruitment among contemporary job seekers and employers, only 8% public sector firms use internet. It is observed that most of the public sector firms do not

have adequate information technology (IT) facilities; their employees are not familiar with IT literacy either. No public sector enterprise uses campus recruiting, management consulting firms and professional associations as sources of recruitment. The public and the private sector firms use almost every selection devices except preliminary interview which is used by only 8% public sector firms. The overall status of recruitment and selection practices of the private sector firms is found significantly better than that of the public sector firms.

The private sector firms are in a significantly a better position than the public sector firms with respect to conducting recruitment based on job analysis and fairness in selection.

Implications for the Public Sector

- i. Job analysis should be conducted.

The public sector firms should conduct job analysis to determine job description, job specification, and job evaluation. Through proper job analysis, firms will be able to fix up the specific duties and responsibilities of every employee. Job analysis will help in determining skills and knowledge to be possessed by the employees to hold various positions. It will also facilitate in providing effective compensation packages to the employees.

- ii. Fairness in selection process should be upheld.

The public sector firms should maintain fairness in the employee selection through ignoring internal and external pressures. If nepotism and favoritism are patronized in selection then it would be hardly possible for the firms to get and keep right personnel. It should also be remembered that if selection is wrong then all the ventures of HRM shall be foiled.

- iii. Psychological attributes should be focused in selection.

It goes without saying that people are generally hired by the firms on the basis of their competencies and they are fired from the firms for psychological attributes such as personality, attitudes, values and the like. So psychological characteristics of the applicants must be assessed in the selection process because it is easy to give a job but it is so difficult to terminate.

- iv. Different sources of recruitment should be utilized.

The public sector firms should use diversified sources of recruitment in attracting applicants. Beyond newspapers and present employees, they should use internet, management consulting firms, professional associations, campus recruiting, and employee referrals in expanding the pool of available talents.

Implications for the Private Sector

- i. Formal recruitment policies should be adopted.

The private sector firms should adopt formal recruitment policies in a better way. Formal recruitment policies would help the firms in attracting internal and external candidates in filling any vacant position. Existence of formal policies can also improve the transparency and accountability in recruitment and selection. Policies should also be changed in course of time.

- ii. Large number of applicants should be attracted for filling vacancies.

The private sector firms should encourage large number of competent applicants for filling their vacant positions. In case of top and mid level vacancies though it is not always expected, in recruiting entry level positions private sector firms should try to create a pool of capable people from whom it would be easier to get the desired ones.

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