Personnel selection in private companies in Albania

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Abstract:

     This is a qualitative research design presenting results from a study done in Albania during May-June 2015 in the field of the recruitment process and selection of private companies running big businesses in the capital of Albania, Tirana. The aim of the study is to explore the way how private companies do recruitment and selection. 18 private companies were subject of in-depth interviewes of the human resource units or the person dealing with recruitment and selection in the company. Results show that recruitment and selection done is an early practice in Albanian private companies, but there is a great interest in getting to know more about the job candidate. There are many difficulties from companies in finding good, potential and qualified personnel, that recruitment is administered in diverse ways and that some companies tent to use assessment tools to make better selection. As a conclusion there are means of recruitment and selection in private companies in Albania but it is early to speak about professional administration of the process. Recommendation upon recruitment and selection administration and techniques from the psychologists' point of view are given relevant to further studies regarding importance and usage of assessment tools matching the potential job candidate to the job.

Key words: recruitment, personnel selection, qualified personnel, assessment tools, job candidate, private companies, human resource units, potential candidate.

INTRODUCTION:

Recruitment process and personnel selection is still vague as a process studied in Albania. That is due to the late raise of the private sector in 1991 and to the lack of exploring this area from the psychologists' screen. Only a few studies regarding recruitment process stages and procedure have been screened from the economists' organizational behavior point of view. Raising the question how personnel is recruited from private companies regarding recruitment procedure, competence assessment of job candidates and techniques used to assess the recruit have been in the centre of attention in this study.

The challenge of selecting the right people by many organizations is a real fundamental error (K.Byrne, 2003) because of the failed techniques such as written application, tests or interviews which do not reveal what the job candidate real person is. It is recommended that the first step that should be done during recruitment must be establishing objectives. Are objectives established in the recruitment processes from private companies (J.Breaugh, 2009)? However recruitment and selection is much more than choosing the person, it even underlies the aquisition, management and reward of the staff as a central core of the human resource unit by supporting and supervising the work of the new employee (R.French and S.Rumbles, 2010).Even the selection tools are an important part of the recruitment process, (A.M.Ryan and N.T.Tippins, 2004) no matter which are used they all require to evaluate the context-specific factors such as: number of candidates hired relative to the number of candidates who applied, hiring cycle time,costs of a selection error like cost of replacement, error and lost opportunities.

Findings in a field study (Dougherty et al, 1994) showed that during the interview which is the common selection tool in many recruitment processes, the interviewer's first impressions from examining job candidate application forms and test scores tend to be positively they are linked to the use of a positive

style during interview, a favourable orientation toward the job candidate contributing in extending the job offer.

Thus the importance of this research is the establishment of the first scenarios of studying the way how recruitment procedure is conducted undergoing these objectives:

-exploring the importance that private companies give to vacant places and new personnel;

-describe characteristics and criteria that companies have regarding the profile of the possible candidate for the vacant job;

-explain the impression techniques impact of candidates;

-describe the stages and tools private companies use during recruitment and selection;

-describe the administration of recruitment and selection in terms of tools and administrator.

Some psychometric evidence was studied regarding the selection procedural justice scale referring to the perceived fairness of the methods used (Talya W. Bauer, 2001). Although this is not part of the study it is of high interest to know whether applicants react by complaints for the decision of their failure in selection or not. How is personality related to job performance as Michael G.Anderson noted in "Personality assessment in personnel selection" as it determines preferences, temperaments, behavior, influencing job performance determining whether one job candidate has a natural inclination for job duties and will enjoy the job or how other characteristics such as education ability or experience influence play an important role.

There are many advantages and disadvantages of using tools in selection but what is important is the care in using tests based on criterion-results reference, review technical data and have reliable and valid data.

Recruitment tools used all over Europe are similar but they differ in standards, (Tixier, 1996) at the same time

employers need to be more open minded as to how recruiters across Europe make judgment on anyone's application.

METHODOLOGY:

This qualitative research design was undertaken during May-June 2015 with the aim of deepening into understanding upon describing, explaining and exploring the way how recruitment and selection happens in the Albanian private sector. The lack of other studies in the relevant field was a key factor in grasping needed information and trying to yield with important findings in order to know how and further know where to intervene.

Individual in-depth interviews were undertaken with engaged units or persons of recruitment and selection in the private companies who had more than 10 employees working in the capital of Albania, Tirana. The interview form was based on the concept of interview used by J.Davidson, 2011 in his study regarding SME's and adapted to the purpose, target group and reality in-house and referring to the design as used by Van der Meree, 2002 in the study "psychometric testing and human resource management". The sample selected by convenience consisted in 30 companies, the administrators of whom were recruited by mail and telephone asking for the possibility of interviewing the unit (human resource unit) or person dealing with recruitment and selection of new staff ensuring privacy of all data and that the study has a social nature. 18 out of 30 companies accepted to be part of the study, others were justified from the lack of time and work burden. Subjects to the study were asked for the last vacancy they have had in their companies. From 18 subjects, 10 were Female and 8 were Male.

Table 1-Sample characteristics

Characteristics	Number
Gender	
Female	10
Male	8

Last vacancy announced

Sales agent	5
Plastic moulds operator	1
Design/graphician	3
Promotion presentator	1
Hidro Engineer	1
Store manager	1
IT	1
Group leader in telesetting/marketing	1
Technical control inspector	1
Economist	2
Scientific Researcher	1

The sample is selected to present diversity. Data below show details regarding the nature of the company, number of employees and positions of the person that is being interviewed from the author. Names of all companies have been coded.

Table Nr 2

Participating private companies

Code	Type of company	Nr of employees	Decision-maker in selection
A	Franchise-clothes	10	Business Administrator
B	Telecommunication service	400	HR unit
C	Software program for banks	10	Business Administraror
D	Tailoring industry	121	Business Administrator
E	Engineering	100	HR Unit
G	Plastic production, personalization	12	Business Administrator
H	Office store	22	Business Administrator
I	Marketing and distribution	750	HR unit
J	Coffee production	15	Business Administrator
K	Telemarketing, telesetting	110	HR unit
L	Confection industry	40	Business Administrator
M	Automobile assessment and certification	140	HR unit
N	Tv Shopping	25	Business Administrator
O	Private Education	120	HR unit
P	Shoe store	12	Business Administrator
Q	Promotion and marketing	16	Business Administrator
R	Administration of stores in rent	20	Business Administraror
S	Internet service	12	Business Administrator

In-depth interviews were used as according to Jacqueline Davidson research study on SME's. The interview was adapted in relevance with the reality of situations happening in Albania

and consisted in a set of opened questions divided into three parts: the first part asking for some key information of the company, the second part asking for the last vacant position which is already filled by the new staff and the third part consisting of questions referring to the satisfaction of the employer for the last newcomer in the company.

Face-to-face interviews done in quiet work environment of the subjects lasted for 30-45 minutes. After taking the subjects consent they were all audio registered, transcripted and coded using Macro through Microsoft Word for further details of the study. The study analyzes details of situations where private companies have human resource units or whether recruitment and selection is done directly by the administrator of the company. Comparison between these two subgroups offered many details in this study.

RESULTS:

1. Difficulty in personnel selection regarding the business needs

Whatever the nature of the business, the number of employees in the company or the maturity of the private companies in the market, the business needs to employ new personel are clear. Subjects reporting on the importance of their companies in the market consider the difficulties they meet in hiring new personnel as superior to the financial challenges they face.

Subject "A" says *''Before I started doing business I was told from my business friends that the only problem would be personnel. I was worried sick regarding my insufficient finances needed to take the brand of my store and I never thought that personnel would be such a problem''.*

Subject L reports" *If there could be more qualified people in the market I would have hired 80 not 40. But my 15 year experience shows that to the personnel you should always repeat the same things. There are more lazy people than workaholic ones''.*

Subjects refer to underqualification of today's job candidates, especially the young ones because of some reasons such as:

> -the non-functional trinity of family-school-society;
>
> -the generalization trend of being graduated and not qualified professionally;
>
> -the lack of skills and competence gained from academic curricula being counter-productive affecting the individual to behave like a group and not enforce the individual himself bringing to uniformity;
>
> -individuals self-violation regarding success through ones competences because ''*successful people are born from successful ones*'';
>
> -the raise of new industries asking the usage of technical skills throughout general schools;

The consideration of every job is considered from subjects as a scientific process where the contact with the client asks for a set of knowledge and managerial skills.

I-*"Selling is much more scientific now and the psychology of the sales person to reach the client is really evaluated".*

2. Recruitment administration as an early practice in the Albanian private companies

Study shows that the higher the number of employees in the company, the more organized is the recruitment process differentiated in stages and responsibilities for the unit of human resources (HR). Meanwhile in cases when the employees' number is lower than 40 there is a set of decision-making and responsibilities covered from the legal administrator of the company.

Recruitment as a process described from the Albanian companies with HR starts with the announcement of the news through companies' website, newspapers or local TV's asking to be sent a CV and after the CV selection there is an interview to be held. Meanwhile in companies with no HR unit there is a strong system of belief in verbal recommendation based on

earlier experiences of the job candidate in other companies. There is a trend of using social media like Facebook, twitter and LinkedIn not only for job announcement but even for candidates' investigation. Dependent to social media usage the belief in the information found is however low regarding the fact that *''job candidates looking for job offers through social media are not competent, lazy and wait for the miracle of being employed through internet navigation''.* It remains not clear whether companies with no HR support recommendation of new personnel from the inner staff or not. There is a big contradiction which may need another detailed study regarding the issue. However companies seeking for technical personnel consider recommendation from inner staff as an easier way of finding new personnel because of the lack of thee in the market.

Announcement of job vacancy is related to the job description but there is seen to exist a pre-profile for the candidate to the job seen in gender aspects *''men are more likely to be in technical positions while women in marketing and service sector'',* age, geographical proximity to the job, earlier experience in rival companies describing the companies' strategy to select already trained and experienced staff.

Clearness in recruitment procedure is rather seen in companies with HR units where every stage of recruitment is time scheduled, reported and archived. The recruitment and selection procedure is almost the same for all companies with HR units, but whatever the stages and responsibilities shared the decision-maker is the company's Administrator making this process as intriguing as the recruitment and selection done in the companies with no HR unit.

Recruitment administration is seen to be depending on the size of the company rather than the company importance. None of the companies would evaluate the consultation of an external agent who would assess the recruits personality, skills,

competences or mental health. 3 out of 6 interviewed subjects report to have a clinical psychologist as a HR manager but to none of them is given the chance to assess the recruit as a psychologist. Psychologist background results not to be a criterion rather than a sudden event; whereas the HR manager is seen to be a reporter and documentation manager and not assessing the personnel plan of recruits dealing to further training needs or other issues. Worse, in cases when the job candidate fails no communication is given. On the job candidates' side there is no possibility of complaint regarding their assessing.

3. Usage of assessment tools in recruitment supporting good selection

Recruitment procedure of the companies subject to the study are shown below and it is noted that CV is the form used from all companies and the interview is the most used instrument in all companies, however its content.

Table 3

Recruitment procedure in organization

Org	Clear selection	Application	Interview	Reference	CV	Test	Administrator	Others
A				X				
B	X	X	X		X	X	HR	Psychologist
C		X	X		X			
D			X	X				
E	X	X	X	X	X	X	HR	Recruitment agency
G			X					
H	X	X	X	X	X	?		
I	X	X	X		X	X	HR	Psychologist
J			X					
K	X	X	X		X	X	HR	Psychologist
L			X		X	X		
M	X	X	X		X	X	HR	software
N	X	X	X		X			
O	X	X	X	X	X			
P			X	X	X			
Q			X		X			
R			X		X			
S			X		X			

Lack of reliability in job candidate CV's: CV is the first form of communication from the job candidates to the company but still poor in reliability in most cases considered as a self-evaluation form to attract the company, that is why many companies report the usage of provocative controlling questions during the face-to-face interview.

Interview remains the tool commonly used but not guaranteeing success. All interviews consist in some characteristics such as: being opened in verifying, are informal, have indirect questions, are not structured neither based on a model upon the job description and are likely to be self-presentations. Subjects show appreciation to interview regarded as a good tool assessing candidates, and many times besides showing the candidate trend of impressing others with expressions such as *"I give my soul to my job"*. Some companies report using the Law of the Third followed in meeting the candidate in three occasional places and arranging informal interviews aiming to know in depth the candidate. There is a positive approach to deepen in the consciousness of the candidate, and even though not done professionally by psychologists, the approach generates curiosity and novelty at the same time.

Referring to subjects describing the importance given to first impression it is seen as very important and in most cases following decision making especially in companies without HR unit. *"Almost half of my impression is created in the first four seconds from the door to the chair of the interview room. I strongly believe in my interpretation skill regarding non-verbal communication".*

Companies with clear recruitment procedure acknowledge the risk of the first impression and aim to minimize its effect through the involvement of different actors through the stages of recruitment. *"We prefer job candidates who aim to be equal to our models but we aim to select those who are prone to learn and practice".*

Test as a tool used in recruitment and selection is noted to be applied by written form or computer software. Psychological test is administered in two companies in the form of integrity test and a test for knowing the psychological profile of the recruit. Companies using these forms have many employees and are branch of international companies. These tests are only used for managerial positions. However, test is occasionally intrigued by practical forms of observing the candidate skills and many companies refer to thee as the condition given from the Work Code ''*we test the new personnel during the probation period*''.

Pre-profile of the fit candidate: Subjects claim that they have a clear profile of what they are looking for the vacant job because of the need analysis and job description. Companies ask for qualification, foreign language acquisition, interests, emotional management skills, assessment of candidates acceptability with organizational culture referring to low reliability to job candidates but on the other hand asking for huge responsibilities from them. The ideal profile of the job candidate is not a criterion neither an asset: ideal profile should be personalized from the company. The ideal candidate does not come from the outside but there is a trend to unify in the same shape all employees even through training delivery during the probation period helping the candidate to adjust to the new company and form oneself like the company promotional models.

Conclusions:

The research shows that private companies meet difficulties regarding personnel selection because of problems running from candidates qualification reflected by mismatching academic curricula and skills promptness. Companies own a pre-profile of the adequate candidate for the job vacancy because of running gender issues, age and earlier experience of the job candidate.

Recruitment and selection administration are still early practices in Albania, but there is a positive approach towards knowing more regarding the job candidate profile, experience and even getting to one's consciousness showing the means of the prepared base for studying more the job candidate during recruitment and selection.

Procedures tent to be uniform in companies with HR unit, however decision making for the selected candidate is still in the hands of the Administrator just like in the companies without HR unit. There is a lack of assessment tools and professional administration of the process. However there is a a great interest to know regarding the job candidate interests, communication skills, emotional management reflected even from the employment of psychologists as HR's even though they are not psychologists in the job description.

These results have a relative validity because the sample selection does not generalize all results and findings and a relative reliability because of the views of one author.

Key findings from the research:

-Usage of the term "qualified" does not match with the criteria companies have for the tailor-made qualification they are looking for;

-Usage of recruitment procedure from companies with HR units does not necessarily select the best candidates for the company;

-There is a positive approach towards the inner candidate consciousness which may lead to further more professional tools that are going to be administered.

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