April 2023

Critical steps in recruiting librarians in academic libraries

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Critical steps in recruiting librarians in academic libraries

By

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Abstract

The study investigated the critical steps in recruitment librarians in academic libraries. The process includes planning, advertisement, interview, screening, selections and placement of recruited librarians. Schema of the critical steps of recruitment process of librarians was also adopted.

Keynotes: Recruiting, librarians, academic libraries

Introduction

Academic libraries are a part of higher education institutions that assist both the faculty and students' research at the universities as well as the curriculum of the institution. An academic library is defined as a library or library system developed, managed, and supported by a university to meet the information, research, and curriculum needs of its students, faculty, and staff (Dictionary of Library and Information Science 2011). According to Ugah (2008), readers choose to use information sources that demand the least amount of effort to access, which can only be done by librarians. The more accessible information sources are, the more likely they are to be used.

A librarian is a profession concerned with acquiring and organizing collections of books and related materials in libraries and servicing readers and others with these resources. The principles that librarians contribute are essential to the long-term sustainability of scholarship (Sinotte,2004). According to Whitmire (2002), it is a given that librarians work in all departments of an academic library and offer a wide range of services to users. Academic librarians must possess the following qualifications. According to the American Library Association (ALA) (2002), a Ph.D. in library and information science, an MLS from a school

accredited by the ALA, a master's degree in library science (MLS), and a four-year undergraduate degree in library science. Similar to that, the Librarian's Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) (2014) states that in order to become a librarian and be recruited in the public sector, a candidate must possess at least a first degree in library and information science or a first degree in another subject with a master's in library and information science, as well as certification from the LRCN, proof of scholarly publications, ICT proficiency, and other requirements.

The university's ability to teach, read, and conduct research depends on the recruitment of librarians. For university libraries, recruitment is a crucial component of human resource management. According to the (2011) edition of the Dictionary of Library and Information Science, recruitment is the process of luring qualified librarians to work in a library system by posting a notice and position description in the relevant journal of library and information science, to electronic mailing lists for libraries, and by making the opening known at job fairs and through word-of-mouth. In a similar development, recruitment is the process of locating and luring prospective employees from both inside and outside a library in order to start interviewing them for future positions. The goal of recruitment is to place the right individual at the right time and place, which is essential to the success of the library. According to Alsar (2012), a successful recruitment process revolves around selecting the best librarian for the position, and it has an impact on the library's productivity, user's satisfaction, and reputation in the area where the university is located. She goes on to list other important phases and measures for the recruitment of librarians which includes planning, advertising, interviews, screening, selection, placement, and induction processes.

Planning

In university libraries, planning is the first and most important step in the recruitment of librarians (Ekwoaba, 2012). Planning is done to make sure the right librarians are available to advance the library. Planning includes all procedures requiring ongoing environmental scanning and assessing the availability of librarians to be used when and when needed. Samson (2013) defines planning as the act of creating strategies, establishing goals, and specifying the tasks and

timelines necessary to achieve the goals. According to Mathias and Jackson (2004), planning entails deciding on a recruiting plan and guidelines by knowing the source to use, the person to recruit, and the process by which the recruitment would be carried out.

In a study on effective succession planning that Rothwell (2010) looked into, it was revealed that the planning process for hiring librarians begins with a job analysis and a prediction of demand and supply. Armstrong (2016) looked into a study on strategic human resource management, and it was concluded from the study that planning is the process for making sure that an organization's human resource needs are identified and plans are established to meet those needs. In a related development, Firoiu (2003) said that organizing and recruiting of librarians enables a university library to target both potential employees and management organization expectations. According to De Cenzo and Robbins (2013), a detailed examination of planning activities reveals that human resource use is essential to maximizing their efficacy and efficiency, which in turn leads to higher productivity and happier, more developed workers.

Planning is a core human resource management process that seeks to prepare libraries for their current and future workforce needs by ensuring the right people are in the right place at the right time. An organization that implements its human resource planning effectively is likely to prosper in a competitive environment. Studies showed about 80 % of the middle sized and larger companies now perform human resource planning before the commencement of recruitment (Alsar, 2012). The evaluation of the quantity and kind of librarians needed at various levels in various sections of the university library constitutes the forecasting of manpower demand. According to Ekwoaba (2012), planning needs to be connected to the library's overall strategy in order to facilitate the recruitment process effectively. One of the procedures to make this happen is through advertising.

Advertisement

One method of attracting qualified librarians who want to apply for employment openings in the library has been advertising. Public announcements in newspapers, on radio and television, online, and through other media including pamphlets, banners, billboards, and posters are just a few of the ways that librarians job might be advertise. The job posting is a component of a larger recruitment effort to find appropriate candidates for a position as a librarian. As a result, the advertisement should encourage qualified applicants to submit applications while warning those who are not qualified that their applications would be rejected. The advertisement must enable readers to determine whether or not they are qualified for the specific position. According to Whiddett and Kandola's (2000) opinion, library management should select the most effective method for informing individuals about the job when it comes to that specific opening. In the same vein, Saiyadain and Monappa's (2013) investigation on the employee recruiting process at a public university in Nigeria, the likelihood of unqualified applicants is decreased by a well-thought-out and well-executed job announcement.

Interviews

An interview is a conversation where questions are asked and answers are given. An interview is a face-to-face interaction between interviewer and interviewee. If conducted carefully and properly, it observes and appraises the suitability of the candidate to perform the job successfully. In common parlance, the word "interview" refers to a one-on-one conversation with one person acting in the role of the interviewer and the other in the role of the interviewee. An interview is based on the in-depth conversation which probes the areas of information that cannot be obtained by other steps of a selection process. Eruvwe and Omekwu (2020) defined interview as conversation where questions are asked and answers are given. In a common

parlance, the word interview refers to an interviewer and an interviewee. Golhar and Deshpande (2013) opined that an interview is used to achieve a well planned recruitment process. Thus, the objective of an interview is to assess a possible candidate to see if he/she has the skills and intelligence suitable for the workplace. With the use of interviews, library management gets an opportunity to meet the applicants directly. The library management could use oral interview, telephone interview, structured interview, face to face interview, behavioural interview to achieve their recruitment process.

Screening Process

All applications must be screened to determine which prospects deserve a second look and which ones do not. The selection committee must decide whether the full board or a subcommittee will conduct the initial screening of applications and resumes by eliminating candidates who are obviously unqualified for further consideration, or whether a subcommittee will conduct preliminary interviews and choose a small number of finalists for consideration (Samson 2013). Selecting people with the necessary credentials to fill positions within an organization involves screening. Selection is much more than just choosing the best candidate. It is an attempt to strike a happy balance between what the applicant can and wants to do and what the organization requires (Ikwesi, 2010). Bratton and Gold (2012) opined that screening can be carried out manually or by using computerized curriculum (CV) screening. He further buttress that manual screening requires recruiters to screen CVs and academic credentials themselves and manually search for competencies matching the selection criteria. Foot and Hook (2011) carried a study on fundamentals of human resource management, it was deduced from the study that manual screening should be carried out by at least two individuals in order to increase objectivity and decrease the effect of individual biases. Bratton and Gold (2012) reported that computerized

screening is done by software which screens the CVs searching for key words matching the selection criteria and separates suitable CVs from unsuitable ones. Also, Nel et al. (2007) carried a study on the recruitment and selection of in-school administrators in Saskatchewan, it was reported that screening panels have to be careful not to discriminate against applicants with potential. Their decisions should be guided by short-listing criteria that is developed against the job requirements stipulated in the advertisements.

Selection Process

An organization can start the selection process once candidates have been identified. Ikeanyibe (2009) claims that selection is a step in the recruiting process whereby an organization selects from among many applicants those who are thought to be the greatest fit for the position. According to Turner (2010), any organization's success rests on its capacity to place the appropriate individuals at the appropriate time and location. According to Byars and Rue, who were referenced in Absar (2012), selection is the process of selecting from a pool of applicants those people who are most likely to carry out a task successfully. In a similar vein, Rothwell (2010) characterizes selection as a similar process that entails management nominating for positions in order to assess how prepared internally sourced candidates are to fill current demands. Selection panels must take care to avoid discriminating against candidates who have promise, as Nel et al. (2009) warn. Shortlisting criteria that have been devised in comparison to the specified job requirements in the advertisements should serve as their guide. Pilbeam and Corbridge (2006) asserted that selection entails using the right procedures and processes in order to choose, hire, and induct a competent individual or people for recruitment in academic libraries. Osterberg (2014) also looked into recruitment and selection procedures benchmark study, and it was found in the study that a variety of selection techniques, including performance

during interview, skill demonstration, understanding the jobs, defining requirements for recruitment, years of applicant ship of librarians, recommendation letter from an influential person, etc., are applied to eligible candidates in order to reduce the pool of suitable candidates.

Job Placement

The process of placing librarians in jobs involves balancing their qualifications, work experience, and abilities. Similar to that, librarian placement is the process of appointing a new employee to a role within their purview where they have a decent probability of succeeding (Dessler, 2010). He goes on to describe placement as choosing the position to which a candidate is to be recruited. In an organization, employee placement is crucial since it influences the worker's performance and also improves job performance. According to Kumar and Sharma (2001), placement is the choice of the position to which a candidate is to be recruited.

According to Mathis and Jackson (2006), placement refers to finding the correct job for a candidate, and an employee's fit with his position will influence the volume and caliber of labor. Academic libraries, which should manage staff performance for success, heavily rely on their librarians, according to Brand and Bax (2002). Effective placement is a fantastic approach that is endorsed for outstanding personnel management. According to Dessler (2010), poor employee placement can result in decreased organizational efficiency, higher attrition rates, challenges to organizational integrity, and the failure to achieve personal and professional goals.

Induction Training

This is provided to newly appointed librarians as soon as they start working. This kind of training is absolutely necessary for newly recruited librarians in order to guard against costly

errors. The general aims, scope, programs, issues, policy, and organizational structure of the library are made clear to incoming employees. For newly recruited librarians, introductory training is also essential to help them build their confidence and perform better in order to satisfy expectations. Depending on the circumstance, the time frame may range from a few days to a few weeks. According to Mehay (2001), effective induction programs can boost output, lower staff turnover in the short term, and also play a crucial part in helping new librarians adjust to the libraries in terms of behavior, attitudes, and organizational commitment.

In a study on human resources development, induction programs, difficulties, impacts, and solutions conducted by Le Phuong Thao (2015), it was discovered that induction is the organizationally supportive introductory stage for new librarians to settle into their job quickly and develop into active, productive workers. According to Abdullah (2011), the induction process is the first stage in acquiring an employee's commitment. It aims to introduce the recruit to the organization and the job as well as the company itself.

Theoretica Fig 1: Conceptual Schema of the critical steps of recruitment process of Librarians (Adapted from Van der Waldt, 2010)
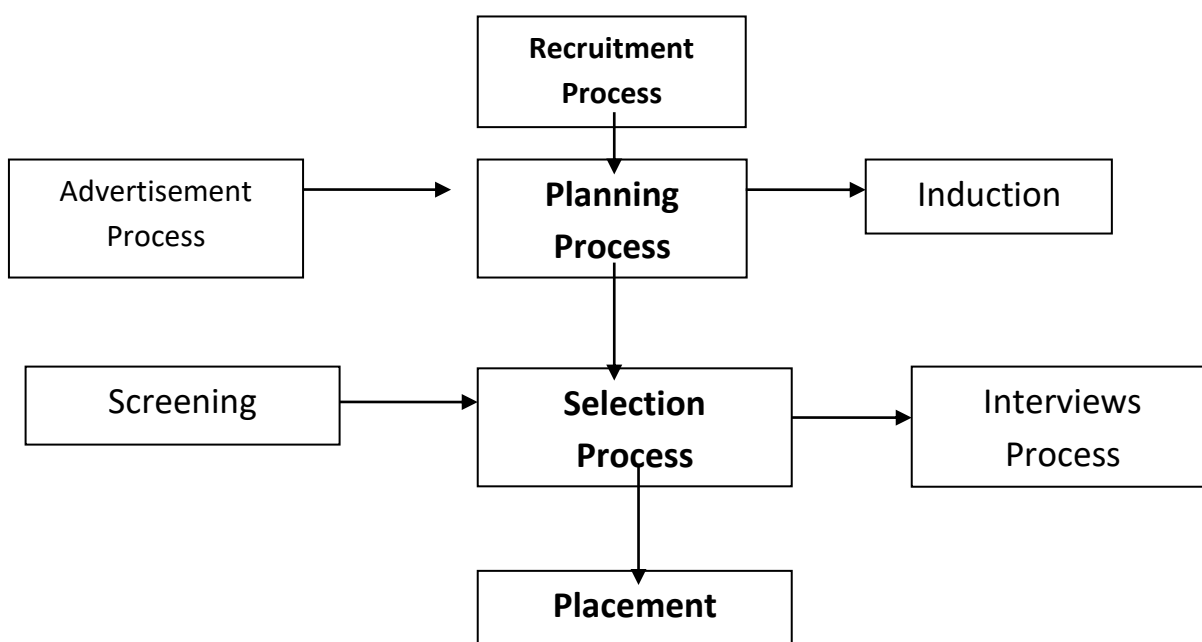
The Macro-Model by Vander Waldt 2013

The macro-model for recruitment was invented by Van der Waldt in 2013. The aim is to strategies librarians planning and provides a process-map depicting the steps from the identification of the need to recruit, up to implementing evaluation and control of recruitment. The model is comprehensive in the sense that it guides functions and activities on strategic, tactical and operational levels. It also integrates the various critical success factors for successful recruitment and selection. These entail several factors: organizational strategy, human resource planning, job analysis, advertising, screening, diagnostic interviews, reference and background checks and security clearance.

Signaling Theory of Recruitment by Michael Spence in 1974

The signaling theory in general can be defined as the means of conveying to employers the possession of job related skills in a market of symmetric information, the signaling theory of recruitment provides a concise knowledge on employee and employer communication of terms, requirements and process of selecting an employee towards employment. Thus, the emphasis here provides a concise knowledge on employee and employer communication of terms, requirements and process of employment. It concludes that the employer would always provide information to guide prospective employees in their interest to secure a job while prospective employees would find employers information helpful in deciding whether to proceed in application process of job or not.

Conclusions

The recruitment process is a major organizational success factor and a key practice in library administration. Top performing libraries invested a lot of time and effort into developing effective recruitment processes. The following are the critical steps in recruiting librarians in academic libraries.

- Planning process is critical to the recruitment of librarians in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

- Advertisements procedures are the most popular and very much preferred source of recruitment in the federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

- Screening of librarians is considered one of the most important stages of the recruitment process in federal university libraries, in South-South, Nigeria

- Interviews are viewed as one of the main recruitment and selection tool used for the recruitment of librarians in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

- Selection is aimed at determining whether potential librarians have the necessary competencies to fill the vacancy

- Induction program is an important process for bringing new recruited librarians into the library.

- Placement is highly significant in the recruitment process of librarians in the federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

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