



An Exploration of the Use of Online Technology to Improve the Recruitment and Selection Process at a TVET College

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Abstract

Sourcing talent in a competitive labour market with a short supply of skilled labour is a difficult task for the human resource team and senior managers at the TVET College in this study. The purpose of this study is to explore the use of online technology to improve the recruitment and selection process at the College. The current approach to recruitment and selection was identified and the effectiveness of the recruitment sources used by the College in relation to its cost and reach was analysed. A comparative analysis of the current approach to recruitment and selection and the current trends in e-recruitment in terms of technological advancement was undertaken. The study also makes recommendations regarding the integration of e-recruitment tools to enhance the process. A phenomenological, qualitative research paradigm was adopted. The findings revealed the deficiencies and negative perceptions of the participants with regards to the current approach to recruitment and selection. Current trends revealed that the Internet eliminates the deficiencies identified in the traditional approach and is becoming the preferred way to attract candidates with scarce skills and has several benefits (speed, reduced administrative burden, reduced costs and global reach). Findings also revealed that potential applicants may have limited or no access to the Internet, or that some applicants may not be as technology savvy to be able to complete online applications. Thus, the traditional methods of recruitment and selection cannot be totally replaced; hence the recommendations to adopt a hybrid approach to source a wider pool of candidates.

Key words: recruitment; online technology

1. INTRODUCTION

People are the most important asset of any organisation. The ability of the organisation to maintain its competitive edge and to be able to grow largely depends on the high quality of its employees (Teoh, *et al.*, 2013:124). Therefore, it is imperative that the Human Resource (HR) Department and management select and place the best candidates in critical positions. The use of online technology to attract a wider pool of quality applicants is gradually replacing the traditional methods of recruitment and selection. Studies show that online recruitment is growing at a rapid pace, is making the

recruitment and selection process more efficient and is part of the recruitment and selection practices of many companies globally. Given that online recruitment is a relatively new and contemporary phenomenon, research on the topic is in its infancy. This research study sought to add to the relatively limited body of literature on the use of online technology to improve recruitment and selection processes. More specifically, the research explored the use of online technology in the context of improving recruitment and selection processes at a Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in KwaZulu-Natal.

1.1 Background to the study

Tong and Sivanand (2005), as cited in Tong (2009:281), state that conventional recruitment methods used by organisations consist of word of mouth referrals, using newspapers, classified advertisements, and others; and as global competition persists and industries are becoming more skill intensive, the recruitment of talent workers becomes essential, and attracting the right applicants at the right time (just-in-time) is becoming more challenging. The use of traditional recruitment methods is no longer effective in attracting a sufficient pool of skilled applicants (Tong, 2009:281). Labour market shortages have resulted in a more competitive recruitment market. The engineering industry is known for having high turnover rates, thus creating vacancies which are costly and difficult to fill. Attracting suitably qualified lecturers, especially with scarce skills, is an on-going challenge for TVET Colleges. In order for the TVET College under study to deliver on the Department of Higher Education and Training's (DHET) mandate to create a skilled and competent workforce it will require a workforce of the highest calibre. It is recommended that lecturers in the engineering faculty should have the relevant professional qualifications, preferably be trade tested artisans with relevant industry experience, and keep abreast with technology. The greatest challenge faced by HR and management is sourcing potential candidates of this calibre from its limited pool of applicants, since the College does not offer market related salaries as compared to what industry offers. After much difficulty in attracting applicants, job offers are declined by the best candidates due to uncompetitive salary packages. The dilemma experienced by managers lies in sourcing lecturers to facilitate practical components of the curriculum in a workshop environment. The paper-based system employed by the College is lengthy, fails to attract suitably qualified candidates and also fails to offer the organization any consistency when it comes to screening hard-copy applications. The process is labour intensive, an administrative burden and applications are slow to process, with the screening of applications extending well beyond normal office hours. Often, high volumes of applications are received for one post but most do not meet the minimum requirements. If applicants do not meet the criteria, posts have to be re-advertised. This translates into financial loss for the College, and adds further delays and frustration to the process. The organisation needs to review its approach to recruitment and explore innovative ways to improve and make the recruitment process more efficient to attract potential employees.

1.2 Problem statement

The TVET College in this study uses a paper-based approach to recruitment and selection which does not attract a large pool of suitably qualified candidates. The process is lengthy and manual screening of applicants is inconsistent. The challenges faced by management lie in their inability to:

- Source an adequate pool of quality applicants whilst keeping HR costs at a minimum
- Effortlessly match applicant Curriculum Vitae's (CV's) with the requirements of the post
- Filter through CV's with ease within the required time-frames.

The resultant effect on management in not being able to source or select the best candidate for the post translates into:

- Poor classroom delivery, which compromises teaching and learning
- Students being lost to competitors. This results in financial loss to the College and a decrease in Government subsidies
- Increased costs for human resource development and training for lecturers.

The rapid expansion of the TVET sector in terms of student enrolments has also resulted in increased teaching loads for lecturers and high student-to-lecturer ratios, thus compromising the quality of teaching and learning. The purpose of this study is to explore the use of online technology to improve the recruitment and selection process, to attract quality lecturers for engineering posts, and to make recommendations to explore other avenues to reach a wider pool of candidates with scarce skills.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of this research study is to explore whether e-recruitment can improve the overall recruitment and selection process at the TVET College. The study is being conducted to ascertain whether the online strategy will enhance the recruitment process by reaching out to a wider pool of potential candidates as compared to the traditional recruitment of external candidates, and also to improve and enhance the selection process. In this study, a phenomenological, qualitative research paradigm will be used. Data will be obtained by conducting semi-structured interviews with a selection of individuals from the HR Department and other role-players involved in the recruitment and selection process.

1.4 Research objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- To identify the processes of the current approach to recruitment and selection at the TVET College under study.
- To assess the effectiveness of the recruitment sources used by the TVET College in this study in terms of its reach and cost.
- To compare the traditional paper-based approach to the current trends in recruitment and selection in terms of technological progress.
- To make recommendations regarding the integration of an e-recruitment tool to enhance the recruitment and selection process at the TVET College in this study.

1.5 Research questions

The following research questions have been derived from the objectives:

- What are the current processes of recruitment and selection at the TVET College under study?
- How effective are the recruitment sources used by the TVET College in this study?
- What are the current trends in recruitment and selection as compared to the traditional paper-based approach?
- What recommendations can be provided to the organisation with regards to the integration of e-recruitment tools to improve the recruitment and selection process?

1.6 Significance of the study

The significance of this study is to focus on the phenomenon of online technology and the manner in which it can improve the recruitment and selection process at the TVET College by reducing costs and attracting a wider pool of quality candidates. As TVET colleges evolve into becoming the main providers of further education and training and

offer a varied range of courses, there is an increasing need for new staff. According to the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013:12), the most important priority of DHET is to expand TVET colleges, making them the “cornerstone of the country’s skills development system”, and to make them the preferred institutions for school leavers. The DHET objective to deliver on Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr B.E. Nzimande’s mandate, will thus see a drastic increase in student enrolments at TVET colleges.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Anon (2013:97), recruitment is the process of attracting potential individuals to the organisation. Organisations adopt various recruitment channels in their recruitment process. According to Sinha and Thaly (2013:142), sourcing is the use of various channels to allow potential employees to apply for vacancies. Widely used sources for recruitment include advertisements in local or national newspapers, campus recruitment, employee referrals and recruitment agencies. Sinha and Thaly (2013:148) state that every recruitment channel has benefits and limitations and selecting an appropriate channel depends on the job position, the company resources and the recruitment budget. Robbins (1997:264) explains that “the greater the skill required or the higher the position in the organization’s hierarchy, the more the recruitment process will expand to become a regional or national search.” In order to attract a wider pool of applicants, organisations will need to become more creative in using alternate sources. Robbins (1997:264) states that selection decisions prove to be more challenging in a competitive market with tight labour markets where organisations have to compete for top talent. At TVET Colleges, it is not uncommon for there to be many challenges in attracting lecturers with scarce engineering skills. Qualified engineering lecturers are much sought after. Hence, the statement by Robbins (1997:264) holds true that “the greater the skill required, the more the recruitment process will expand to become a regional or national search.” It is up to the organisation to adopt innovative sources and techniques to attract ideal candidates and to improve the selection process to ensure that the correct employees are selected.

2.1 Current practice of recruitment and selection at the TVET College in this study

Steen, Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2009:150) states that human resource policies guide human resource management and the manner in which organisations fill vacant posts. The recruitment and selection process at TVET Colleges is guided by the objectives as stipulated in the DHET recruitment and selection policy (DHET, 2015:5). Recruitment and selection is underpinned by the principles of fairness, confidentiality, equity, professionalism, prevention of nepotism, favouritism and unfair discrimination, development and empowerment of people within the DHET in order to retain and assist them to reach their maximum potential, transparency, consistency, efficiency and representivity (DHET, 2015:5). All appointments for staff in TVET institutions are processed by the DHET Human Resources Management and Administration Directorate; and the post for advertising must be an existing funded vacant post within the 63% personnel wage bill for the College. Recruitment follows the process of conducting a needs analysis to evaluate the nature of the vacant post, and completing an HR request form (accompanied by the job description and job specification of the post) by the relevant campus manager. The need for lecturers is determined by increasing student enrolments and termination of employees (resignations, retirement and death). The HR department must first ensure that the post exists on the establishment and is funded by DHET before it is advertised in the national newspapers. The minimum window period for applications, irrespective of the advertising source being used, is 14 days including the date of publication of the advertisement. All advertised posts should be filled within a period of 120 days, unless exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise, (DHET, 2015:6). Applicants apply for the vacant post by manually completing the public service application form (Z83), attaching a comprehensive CV, covering letter and certified copies of all relevant

documents and qualifications. Applications can be posted to the College or applicants can personally drop off their applications by placing it in a CV box provided. As outlined in the policy (DHET, 2015:7), the aim of the selection process is to ensure that the right person is selected for the post, the assessment process is credible, consistent, fair and open. “A holistic approach must be adopted taking into consideration the candidate’s curriculum vitae, assessments, interviews, presentations and referee reports, Human Resource Plan and Employment Equity Plan of the Department” (DHET, 2015:7).

The policy (DHET, 2015:8) emphasises that “the selection committee must be representative and members shall be chosen for the value they could bring to the decision-making process rather than sectoral representation.” Any dissatisfaction or irregularities with the selection process must be reported by the recognised trade union representatives to the HR department within 3 working days after the interviews. The members of the selection committee are obliged to sign a declaration of confidentiality and are guided by the job requirements of the advertised post. Candidates should be given an indication of any form of assessment that will be conducted. Interviews are conducted by the same selection committee as duly appointed, referred to above. The interview process and candidate ratings must be recorded and minutes must be archived as prescribed by the policy (DHET, 2015:9). The pre-interview meeting takes place at least 30 minutes before the interviews where the selection committee must agree on a set of questions as per the job profile (DHET, 2015:9). The chairperson will request panel members who have a vested interest to recuse themselves from the process and a confidentiality form is signed by all panellists and observers before the interview. A job offer can only be made after a recommendation to appoint the top ranking candidate is approved by the relevant Appointing Authority. A written job offer indicating the job description, remuneration package and conditions of service to the successful candidate follows. cursory observations of the current approach to recruitment and selection at TVET Colleges indicate that it is a long drawn process and very similar to Holm’s description of the traditional recruitment and selection process (2010:93):

“Traditional recruitment, which uses formal sources like job advertising, starts with the identification of required applicants, their location and placement in the labour market, and proceeds with activities to attract and persuade qualified applicants to apply. Job applications are then received, screened, and sorted, leading to the drawing up of a shortlist. The process ends with communicating the pre-screening results to applicants.”

2.2 Overview of current trends in recruitment and selection

As technology and the Internet have advanced, recruitment is no longer constrained by distance and time (Tzu-Hsuan, 2011:2). With relevance to this study, the following two recruitment trends identified by Robbins (1997:264) are applicable:

- The use of alternative sources to increase the diversity of applicants, and
- The use of the Internet as a recruiting device.

The so-called “recruiting revolution” emerged in the mid-1990 with the introduction of the Internet as a recruiting tool (Parry and Wilson, 2009:656). Parry and Wilson (2009:656), predicted that “the recruitment industry’s future is on the net”. Studies show that the growth in online recruitment has been phenomenal and is part of the recruitment and selection practices of many companies (Baron and Bartram, 2006:3). It is being widely used by employers and job seekers globally. More and more, organisations are using the rising trend of e-recruitment to attract top talent (Tzu-Hsuan, 2011:3).

2.3 E–Recruitment

In this study, the concepts e-recruitment, the Internet, and online recruitment will be used interchangeably. Ghazzawi and Accoume (2014:164) define e-recruitment as a process of attracting and recruiting potential employees by means of the Internet. Galanaki (2002), as cited in Khan, Awang and Ghouri (2013:48), describes e-recruitment as a process that begins by advertising vacancies online, either on a corporate or recruitment vendor's website, followed by applicants applying online for the vacancies by posting their CV's online electronically, using e-mail or e-forms. Studies reveal that to date, e-recruitment has been adopted by 94% of Global 500 firms as compared to 29% in 1998 (Khan *et al.* 2013:48). The studies reveal that the number of job-seekers using the Internet is increasing and e-recruitment is a growing field. The findings of Khan *et al.* (2013:54) also support previous studies indicating that the Internet has become widely used as an e-recruitment tool. However Khan *et al.* (2013:54) maintain that a gap still remains where the newspaper is equally popular as a recruitment source. This then raises the question of whether e-recruitment should replace the traditional approach to recruitment. Many organisations today still use the traditional method and advertise vacancies in the newspaper. However, in conjunction with the advertisement, job seekers are directed to the company's website for additional information and to apply online. This practice suggests that the Internet is still a widely accepted and popular recruitment tool.

2.4 E-recruiting tools, technologies and platforms

As indicated by Merrell (2011) e-recruiting encompasses various recruiting tools, technologies and platforms, namely: career websites, job boards, social media and the use of search engines. The findings of a paper presented at an international conference by Florea (2013:344-352) suggest that HR can develop an effective recruitment program through the Internet, to manage the highly competitive and lengthy process of finding skilled personnel. The Internet has opened up new avenues for institutions looking to employ top talent with scarce skills. A study by Girard and Fallery (2011:146) distinguish the following three main aspects of Web 1.0, which brought about tools to provide access to databases of competencies, allowing companies to communicate on a large scale:

Job boards can be used to source candidates through resume mining or by posting vacant positions on the job board. The e-recruiting industry includes large job boards like Monster and Career Builder as well as smaller niche job boards and job board aggregator sites (Merrell, 2011). This platform offers job vacancies to a large audience at little cost.

Career websites: The most common and simplest approach to e-recruitment by large organisations is the use of their own company websites to advertise jobs and to submit applications online. A user-friendly website should include a link to career information from the company's home page. Provision should also be made to acknowledge receipt of the applicant's application.

Recruitment systems: Parry and Tyson (2008), cited in Girard and Fallery (2011:145) explain that the use of career websites and recruitment systems has several benefits, namely, "cost reduction, efficiency gains, improved service to clients, and improved strategic orientation." Girard and Fallery (2011:144) explain that the development of new "social and sociable" media technology called "Web 2.0" offers companies and recruiters new perspectives." Coupled with this phenomenon we see the Net Generation, also known as Generation Y (born between the late 1970s to the mid-1990s) entering the workplace, which cannot be ignored by organisations (Girard and Fallery, 2011:147). Girard and Fallery (2011:147), state that the Net Generation has the ability to multi-task and be more active due to their close interaction with technology. A survey conducted by Potentialpark in 2011 (Broughton, Foley, Ledermaier and Cox 2013:1) supports

the theory of Generation Y where, of over “30,000 graduates, students and early career professionals” almost 100% of survey participants preferred to interact with employers online, with 48% preferring LinkedIn and 25% Facebook. The most widely used Web 2.0 tools in the recruitment framework are blogs, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace and LinkedIn (professional) as well as virtual worlds and video platforms.

As the literature seems to indicate, apart from the traditional sources used to attract quality candidates, TVET colleges may have to use other innovative, online sources to target Generation Y entering the workplace. This generation of job-seekers, also known as the Net Generation, are young professionals, graduates fresh out of university with fresh ideas. Not only are they techno-savvy but have the ability to multi-task. Sinha and Thaly (2013:143), states that many United States employers use SNS, for example, Facebook and Twitter, to screen job applicants, as such sites allow individuals to post and share personal information. A reason to use SNS's to screen employees is that employers may want to verify that the information provided by applicants is correct. As an emerging field, there is limited literature and research focusing on SM in an HR context. According to Jacobs (2009), as cited in Sinha and Thaly (2013:143), SNS have certain advantages over traditional human resource tools, such as being accessible without costs, and are perceived to be reliable sources by users. Even though SM can provide additional supplementary information on potential candidates, is quick, cost effective and targets a wider pool of candidates; issues of privacy and ethics cannot be ignored, also the point at which social media should be used in the recruitment and selection process. Employers may even open themselves up to charges of discrimination. Accuracy and reliability of information posted on such platforms is questionable and can be misleading. These are gaps that are yet to be addressed and resolved by future research.

2.5 The process of e-recruitment and e-selection

Dhamija (2012), as cited in Ghazzawi and Accoumeah (2014:164), states that e-recruitment, also known as online recruitment, involves the use of online technology, mainly websites, to assess, interview and hire employees. Online recruitment assists the organisation to tap into greater intellectual capital by reaching out to new and diversified target markets (Ghazzawi and Accoumeah, 2014:165). This could be a viable option for the TVET College being researched since it will have access to a variety of sources to attract greater applicants when using online recruitment. The selection process ensures the correct fit between the individual, the job and the organizational goals and objectives. According to Ghazzawi and Accoumeah (2014:165), this alignment ensures employee commitment to the organisation and greater productivity, as higher levels of job performance are achieved.

2.6 Benefits and drawbacks of e-recruitment

Khan *et al.* (2013:48), state that e-recruitment is proving to have more advantages than the conventional methods of recruitment; it is speedy and improves the overall recruitment process. Khan *et al.* (2013:48-49), provide the following strengths of e-recruitment as a recruitment tool as being reduced costs, wider pool of applicants, recruitment cycle shorter, attracts better quality applicants, addresses niche markets and attracts passive job-seekers.

2.7 The potential for e-recruitment to improve the recruitment and selection process

Reflecting on the review of current literature and the developments and current trends in recruitment and selection, improving the recruitment and selection process at the College would most probably entail:

- Standardising its HR processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness by moving towards adopting a technologically driven approach to recruitment and selection

- Reviewing the sifting and shortlisting process to filter applications and reduce the high volumes of applications received that do not meet the minimum requirements
- Reducing the cost of recruitment by exploring the use of other, creative recruitment sources
- Improving the quality of the talent recruited into the organisation by making recommendations to explore the use of e-recruitment tools to attract a wider pool of applicants.

Previous research in this field has revealed that the implementation of an online recruitment system has the ability to address these challenges. According to Ventura and Bringula (2013:152) “online recruitment, as a fundamental business process, is the removal of complex and unnecessary paper works and the introduction of streamlined workflow systems, reliable database applications, and efficient communication channels between job seekers and managers”, and having the ability to reduce recruitment costs and to improve the efficiency of the recruitment process. Recruitment and selection is a component within the function of the organisation’s Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS). HRIS offer technological support and have the ability to make the recruiting process much simpler, faster, track and reduce costs and attract more qualified applicants. An added advantage is that it eases the administrative burden of recording applications, filing hardcopies of CV’s and the manual task of sifting and pre-screening applications. However, the system must be user-friendly to ensure that users do not experience difficulties and challenges during the application process. By utilising a HRIS the College can accept online job applications and CV’s. The system stores all applicant information in a database which also expands the pool for future recruitment. The advantages of having a technologically supported system is that the candidate information stored in a computerised system can be matched against the requirements and specifications of the job. The HRIS can be set up with the minimum criteria for the vacant post, in a manner that only suitably qualified applicants may apply, to ensure best fit with the organisation having the capacity to reduce the time it takes for HR personnel and managers to sift through CV’s and weed out less qualified applicants. An automated search, filtering CV’s, and matching the input criteria with stored CV’s results in a shortlist of candidates. Following the completion of online applications by applicants, information can be reviewed simultaneously by HR and managers before interviews are scheduled. Even though this method has the ability to speed up the recruitment process, control mechanisms must be implemented to maintain confidentiality of the information provided by applicants, and to safeguard the integrity of the process. Passwords and user rights will have to be set up for all users.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sekaran and Bougie (2013:95) state that “research design is a blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data, based on the research questions of the study.”The research design, classified in terms of its purpose, enables the researcher to address the research questions in a manner which is appropriate, efficient and effective. Studies can be exploratory, descriptive or causal in nature and depends on the stage to which knowledge about the topic has advanced (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013:96). Exploratory research relies on secondary research (review of literature), or qualitative approaches to data gathering (interviews, focus groups or case studies). The results of exploratory research are “typically not generalizable to the population” (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013:97). Sekaran and Bougie (2013:97) state that descriptive studies are “designed to collect data that describe the characteristics of persons, events or situations.” It can be quantitative or qualitative in nature. Descriptive studies are more structured than exploratory studies and describe the characteristics of a population through the use of surveys or observations. Causal studies test whether one variable causes another to change where the researcher is “interested in delineating one or more factors that are causing the problem” (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013:98). An exploratory research design was adopted for the purposes of this study. Semi-

structured interviews, comprising of open-ended questions, allowed the researcher to understand, grasp and explore the underlying meaning of the research topic. The research design was appropriate since open-ended questions are exploratory in nature, allowing the researcher to identify the specific experiences of participants. Respondents were allowed to provide any information or feedback, thus giving the researcher an opportunity to gain more insight into the topic. An exploratory study allowed the researcher to explore areas of recruitment and selection that required further and more in-depth investigation to understand the process more thoroughly, ultimately leading to informed recommendations to improve the process. The rich data obtained from the interviews with participants indicated important trends and opinions for further research.

3.1 The research philosophy

Selecting the research methodology involved decisions about the research paradigm and approach. The two broad research paradigms are the positivist (quantitative) and phenomenological (qualitative) paradigms (Anon, 2012:56). Quantitative research involves the “use of numerical measurement and statistical analyses of measurements to examine social phenomena” (Anon, 2012:56), which can be observed and measured. Quantitative research uses large samples and deals with hypothesis testing. Data is specific and precise (Anon, 2012:20). Emphasis is placed on objectivity, reliability and replication of findings. Qualitative research is concerned with generating theories and involves an in- depth analysis of data such as words, for example from interviews, and uses small samples. In this study a phenomenological, qualitative research paradigm was adopted to gain insight about the phenomenon in its context and to identify the essence of the experiences of participants. The focus of this study will be to understand the extent to which the current approach to recruitment and selection at the TVET College can be improved with the introduction of online technology. The ability of the Internet to assist TVET Colleges in enhancing their recruitment and selection practices and lowering costs has prompted this study to explore and document the phenomenon, the reasons for adoption, the challenges encountered and recommendations for adoption. An inductive approach (bottom-up approach) that sees ideas, concepts, patterns and themes emerging from the interview data, was adopted. The qualitative approach is relevant to this research as the study deals with subjective data produced by the minds of the interviewees and is presented in language rather than numbers. There is a correlation between the research method and the intent of the study to understand the experiences and perspectives of participants with regard to the current process of recruitment and selection, and some fundamental reasons why the process should be improved with the use of technology. The construct of this study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- What are the current processes of recruitment and selection at the TVET College under study?
- How effective are the recruitment sources used by the TVET College in this study?
- What are the current trends in recruitment and selection as compared to the traditional paper-based approach?
- What recommendations can be provided to the organisation with regards to the integration of e-recruitment tools to improve the recruitment and selection process?

3.2 Target population

A population “is a group of potential participants to whom you want to generalise the results of a study. It is only when the results can be generalised from a sample to a population that the results of research have meaning beyond the limited setting in which they were originally obtained (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell 2005:55).” The study population consisted

of HR personnel, senior managers, subject matter experts (SME's) and trade union representatives involved in the recruitment and selection process at the TVET College. The size of the target population amounted to 25 individuals.

3.3 Sampling strategy

There are two types of sampling techniques:

Probability sampling – Probability sampling is based on random selection and elements of the population have a known chance of being selected.

Non-probability sampling - In non-probability sampling the probability cannot be specified. Elements do not have a known chance of being selected. Non-probability sampling is non-random, subjective and purposive in that the researcher may select the sample using criteria other than those associated with randomness of selection. Non-probability sampling is used when undertaking an exploratory, qualitative study, which does not have the objective of generalising the findings to the population from which the sample will be selected (Anon, 2012:79). For this study, the non-probability sampling technique was used. To ensure that the sample was credible, primary data collected through semi-structured interviews were conducted with the HR personnel and stakeholders involved in the recruitment and selection process at the TVET College in this study. The sample was representative of the key role-players in the process and was not selected randomly. Participants were purposively selected because of their expertise. Since a qualitative approach to research was undertaken, a purposive sample size comprised 9 respondents. Hence they were likely to generate valuable data for the study.

3.4 The research instrument

A research instrument is a measuring tool designed to gather data on the research topic from participants in the study. Examples of research instruments include questionnaires and interview guides. For the purpose of this study, primary data was obtained by conducting semi-structured interviews with a selection of individuals from the HR Department and other role-players involved in the recruitment and selection process. Semi-structured interviews were conducted on the basis of a loose structure defining the areas to be explored. An interview guide with a list of open-ended questions and useful prompts was used to gather data. Open-ended questions provide rich qualitative data and will encourage free and open responses without any prompting by the interviewer. Probing was used to obtain clarity on vague responses or elaborations on incomplete responses. One of the benefits of a semi-structured interview is the ability of the researcher to probe interviewees and ask follow up questions based on their responses. Therefore, not every question needs to be explicitly stated. Interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder (with the respondents consent) and were later transcribed.

3.5 Pilot study

A pilot study identifies areas that may require revision and correction, and helps to refine both the instruments and data analysis procedures to better achieve the research objectives, and to review the choice of statistical tools and computer programmes. (Anon, 2012:51). In this study, the pilot study process entailed creating a draft interview guide and then conducting face-to-face semi-structured interviews with two interviewees. The pilot study process was designed to emulate the envisaged actual data collection process. The draft interview guide was pre-tested with two respondents as a pilot study. The pilot study also served to test the validity of the questions and assess the reliability of the data to be

collected. The responses obtained from the pilot study were used to further refine the interview questions and to improve and finalise the interview guide.

3.6 Data analysis

For this qualitative study, a thematic analysis of the data collected from the semi-structured interviews aimed to make valid inferences from the subjective views of participants. The analysis of qualitative data concentrates on meanings expressed through words and analysis conducted through the use of conceptualisation (Anon, 2012:136). Braun and Clarke (2006:6) describe thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail.” The analysis of qualitative data will see patterns emerging enabling the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions from the discussions.

3.7 Validity and reliability

Patton and Cochran (2002:11) state that “both the researcher and the users of the findings should be confident that the findings reflect what the research set out to answer, rather than reflecting the bias of the researcher, or a very atypical group.” Patton and Cochran (2002:11) further emphasise that the skills and training of the interviewers is crucial for maximising validity and reliability. Interviews were conducted thoroughly to ensure reliability and validity of this study (that is, ‘trustworthiness’). The information captured by this study can be deemed credible and valid since the researcher had captured what is really occurring in the context of recruitment and selection at the TVET College.

3.8 Limitations of the study

The following limitations of the study have been identified:

- Samples are small and not necessarily representative of the broader population, so it is difficult to know how far the results can be generalised. However, this study did not place emphasis on the generalisability of findings obtained.
- The volume of data makes analysis and interpretation time-consuming. This could have resulted in human error in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. In order to prevent occurrences of human error in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the large volume of data, the data collection, analysis and reporting processes were allocated sufficient time during the research. Subsequent to data being collected, the iterative process of qualitative research was adhered to in order to ensure trustworthiness.
- Interviews were recorded, thus causing respondents to be cautious about the type and extent of information that they divulged due to confidentiality issues. The presence of the interviewer could also have affected the interviewees’ responses. These issues could have resulted in interviewees not being forthcoming with their responses. In order to mitigate this potential risk, the researcher informed all participants that all data collected would be kept confidential and that their participation in the research would be anonymous. The duty of the researcher, in terms of ensuring that no harm comes to participants was also communicated to participants.
- Costs incurred had to be paid by the researcher since no funding had been granted for the purposes of conducting the research. Invariably, the availability of funds is a limitation on most research studies and cannot be avoided. In this study, however, the researcher invested funds in order to collect and analyse sufficient data.

3.9 Ethical considerations

One must not lose sight of the ethical issues of participants in the study. The researcher had to ensure that all research was ethically sound and safeguarded the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of all the research participants. The research had to conform to the following ethical considerations:

Ensuring participants have given informed consent: All participants were well informed of what the study entails and freely consented to participate in the study, without being coerced or pressurised. Participants were also informed that participation in the research was completely voluntary and that they could decline at any stage. Consent forms were given to participants to complete before the commencement of the research. They were also informed that the interviews will be recorded and later transcribed. Participants were free to reject the interviews being recorded at any time.

Ensuring no harm comes to participants: Respondents were ensured of their right to protection from any harm. Respect of human dignity and the ethical rights of all participants were upheld at all times.

Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity: It is essential to protect the identity of the individual from whom you collect information. Respondents were ensured of their right to privacy and to remain anonymous. Participants were not identified from the results of the interviews. Participants were also ensured that their recorded interviews and transcripts of their interviews will not be left lying around in notebooks or unprotected computer files.

Ensuring that permission is obtained: A letter seeking permission to conduct the research was forwarded to the Rector of the College. Written permission to conduct the research had been granted by the Rector. Research activities were to be scheduled in consultation with the College and participants.

4. RESULTS

The findings from the primary data revealed that the current practice does not deviate from the DHET policy. On a positive note, the organisation is complying with the policy; however, the policy also restricts the organisation from incorporating innovation and flexibility into their recruitment strategy. Participants from the HR department have emphasised this limitation as one of their greatest challenges as the policy is prescriptive and the College is compelled to comply with the process as stipulated, for example, the policy only speaks to the use of print media to advertise vacant posts. No provision is made for the use of e-recruitment. The process is completely devoid of technological support. The College cannot compile their own internal policies and procedures as long as DHET is the employer. Any recommendations to review the policy or to move towards an e-system will have to take place in consultation with the DHET.

4.1 Challenges experienced with the current approach to recruitment and selection

In outlining the current practice of recruitment and selection at the College, of particular concern was the numerous challenges and dissatisfaction with the processes as elicited in the views and experiences of the respondents. The findings presented under the sub-themes below, describe the respondent's experiences with regards to the flaws in the process.

The paper-based approach: The respondents have cited many drawbacks of using a paper-based approach to recruitment and selection. 67% express common concerns. The flaws that have been identified can be detrimental to the operations of the organisation. Sifting large amounts of CV's has been burdensome, especially relating to jobs that are not scarce. Due to fatigue arising from screening the high volume of hard-copy applications received for entry level posts

(PL 1), the current system fails to maintain consistency in the sifting process. The manual process is labour-intensive and the screening of applications extends well beyond the normal working hours. It is an administrative burden, is tedious and frustrating and can lend itself to human error. If quality in the process is compromised and a mediocre appointment is made, it subsequently compromises the core function of teaching and learning. The findings reveal that there is a need to ease the administrative burden of receiving, recording and screening high volumes of hard-copy applications received for entry level posts. The DHET recruitment and selection policy is rigid in that it does not make provision for the use of innovative tools to enhance the recruitment and selection process. The policy also does not make provision for the high volume of CV's received, the time it takes to manually screen applications, or the provision for overtime when screening extends beyond normal working hours.

Managing talent in the organisation: Using technology to manage the volume and quality of candidates through screening and filtering of suitable applications makes it possible to preserve the time and expertise of senior managers and HR, and it is important especially to source quality candidates for urgent posts that may arise in the future. Hence it is imperative that a credible database of quality candidates be maintained by the HR department. However, the task of maintaining a database has become demanding for the TVET College under study. 50% of the respondents are of the opinion that the Excel database used by the College is not a credible source to select candidates from. The maintenance of a database of potential candidates depends on the vigilance of the HR data capturing. However, the findings have revealed that this is not consistent, as the database is not updated regularly. It is open to human flaws and backlogs. It is well known to the HR unit that the ideal model of database maintenance is the real-time capturing of new candidates, as well as setting out clearly defined fields on the application forms and reliably transferring them to an electronic spreadsheet. This assists in filtering information and generating profiles of candidates for posts, as required. The very process of maintaining a credible database relies on the availability of an experienced HR staff member, as the post of an administrator itself constitutes a cost.

Just-in-time (JIT) recruitment and selection: Sourcing the best candidates with unique skills exactly when you need them is a difficult task. More often than not, the HR department is faced with an overwhelming volume of unsuitably qualified candidates for the vacant post or with a limited pool of qualified candidates who are not available or interested due to unattractive salary packages. Hence, the traditional approach to recruitment is no longer the best approach. 67% of the respondents agree that the number of CVs received for posts and the need for processes (sifting, shortlisting, and interviews), results in long lead times. The need to draw in multiple role players to create inclusivity results in negotiating suitable times such that all role-players are available. The fact that the College appointment committee approves the candidate means that the process is subject to the availability of the relevant members, who are not always available. Delays can also arise where the DHET has to approve and sign off the appointment. Sifting of posts that are not considered scarce can generate CVs that can result in many hours of screening. The typically inconsistent quality of CVs, results in time being consumed in interpretations and sometimes disputes. The findings from the analysis indicate that the lengthy process to recruit, select and place a candidate impacts negatively on the operations of the organisation. This can be identified as a high risk for the college particularly in areas of scarce skills. We find that classes sometimes sit up to several weeks without a lecturer and the absence of lecturers in class compromises teaching and learning and impacts learner performance. The findings also reveal that the needs analysis is skewed and the absence of an HR manager at the College has hurt the institution immensely because there is no structured approach and even from a strategic perspective, there is a lack of planning and accountability in the department which delays the process of appointing lecturers in critical posts. The temptation by role-players to compromise the process for several reasons,

including their perception of this activity being a secondary role, or their campus time constraints prevent lecturers from being appointed just-in-time. JIT recruiting is a pull-based strategy of providing managers with candidates that exactly match their needs, when they want them, in the amount they want, in real time. JIT recruiting has a primary focus of tapping into candidate CV's, LinkedIn profiles, etcetera and contacting, qualifying, and delivering candidates only in direct response to a hiring need.

Ethics and professionalism in recruitment and selection: The College is committed to maintaining high standard of ethics and professional conduct in HR and recruitment and all members of the selection committee are expected to be advocates of promoting best practices in the institution to establish an atmosphere of trust.

Much effort is applied in ensuring transparency in procedural issues as it should. The integration of staff representatives and unions, as well as relevant divisional stakeholders, makes the system seem procedurally transparent and fair. However, the likelihood of human error borne of frustration or tedium owing to long drawn out processes and poorly trained or poorly motivated committee members, fairness is sometimes compromised. At rare times, the human factor of nepotism and favouritism is alleged to have played its role, where committee members have assisted in leading processes towards certain outcomes. The findings from the study express the respondents concerns around the integrity of the process. Members of the selection committee are obliged to sign a declaration of confidentiality as stipulated in the DHET recruitment and selection policy (2015) and are guided by the job requirements of the advertised post. The findings reveal that the integrity and confidentiality of the process is compromised often where members of a selecting committee divulge information relating to confidential processes, wherein they had sworn confidentiality. What are the sanctions for members who fail to maintain confidentiality and integrity of the process? Presently, there are no sanctions as no disciplinary action is taken. As a result, what is the motivation for people to conduct themselves above board at all times? This is a high risk that needs to be addressed by the College. The acceptance of walk-in applications also poses a risk for the College as it could lead to accusations of nepotism. Failure to enforce ethical behaviour and principles of integrity in HR practices leaves the College void of ethical direction and a lack of direction for integrity in the overall process of recruitment and selection.

4.2 Working within a microcosm

The second theme identifies the recruitment sources used by the College (from the interview data) and assesses its effectiveness in terms of cost; and limitations with regard to reaching out to a wide pool of quality candidates with scarce skills. Data collected from the interviews revealed that the College utilised three channels to source candidates: the Excel database, local print media (Newcastle Advertiser) and national print media (Sunday Times). The findings of the data indicate that for scarce skills applicants are few. The database of walk-in applicants was used to urgently source lecturers for Boilermaking and Fitting and Turning posts (PL1). The database only generated four CV's for two posts. Of the four CV's, all the candidates met the minimum criteria to be interviewed for the posts. Thus the yield ratio for the database was 100%. The cost of hire per post was zero as there are no cost implications to source candidates from the database. An advertisement in the local print media (Newcastle Advertiser) was used to source applicants for two PL1 Boilermaking lecturers. Eleven CV's were generated for two posts and of the eleven, only six candidates were shortlisted (met the minimum requirements) to be interviewed. The advertising cost incurred was R 1532.20 and the cost per hire was R 766.10. The yield ratio was 55%. An advertisement in the local print media (Newcastle Advertiser) was used to source applicants for PL1 Electrical engineering lecturers. Seven CV's were generated for one post and of the seven, only one candidate was shortlisted to be interviewed. The yield ratio was 14%. The advertising cost incurred was R 1881.00. An

advertisement in the national print media (Sunday Times) was used to source applicants for a PL4 Campus Manager. Forty two CV's were generated for one post and eleven candidates were shortlisted to be interviewed. The yield ratio was 26%. The advertising cost incurred was R 53 682.60. An advertisement in the national print media (Sunday Times) was used to source applicants for another PL4 Campus Manager. Thirty three CV's were generated for one post and thirteen candidates met the minimum requirements to be shortlisted for the interviews. The yield ratio was 39%. The advertising cost incurred was R 53 682.60. Even though the database has a 100% yield for candidates for Boilermaking and Fitting and Turning lecturers (PL1), the pool is very limited for scarce skills. We are limiting ourselves by working with what we have on the database and not necessarily quality candidates. Recruitment of candidates where the fields are scarce results in compromising requirements in a desperate search to fill urgent posts, or costly and time consuming re-advertisements. If databases of walk-in applicants are outdated, over-used, or not updated for a significant period (as in the case with the College), the pool of available candidates may not be as suitably qualified. This compromises the quality of the appointment. An important question to ask is: Is my database giving me quality candidates? If it is not it means that the organisation's advertising is ineffective as well as its sourcing channels. The database should serve two purposes and that is to 1) source quality candidates and 2) inform the HR department about the effectiveness of advertising posts. An advertisement for two Boilermaking posts in the local print media has a yield ratio of 55% which is not ideal but acceptable. However one might argue that for two posts, only six candidates are suitably qualified to be interviewed. We are working with a very limited and localised pool which may not necessarily be quality candidates. Boilermaking and Fitting and Turning are considered to be scarce skills. Most suitably qualified candidates with appropriate experience are located within industry. They are reluctant to join the TVET sector due to uncompetitive salaries. Those willing to join the TVET sector are the younger, newly qualified graduates who lack experience or the older candidates who have opted for early retirement. Electrical engineering is not considered to be a scarce skill within the College sector because the College receives a lot of applications for entry level posts. However, the local print media has a yield ratio of only 14% and the cost is quite considerable for local advertising. It is safe to assume that the local print media is not widespread and does not reach the relevant target market of jobseekers. The College is working within a microcosm (on a much smaller scale) because the pool is too small and applications for posts are limited to a localised pool of candidates, not yielding quality candidates. Looking at scarce skills, our current methodology to attract suitably qualified candidates fails us. In assessing the effectiveness of the Colleges' recruitment sources one also has to take a different angle in saying that the cost of recruitment needs to be assessed against how much the organisation needs to do post-appointment to get the candidate to the required standards to deliver quality teaching and learning. For example, if the College recruits people without professional qualifications there's a huge cost to the college to get the person professionally qualified. The HR department also has to schedule workshops for assessor, moderator and facilitator training to get lecturers to the required standard. Additionally, for those lecturers that are appointed and do not have trade certificates, where they have never worked in industry, the College has to find funding for them to be practically trained so that they are up to date with industry developments and when they are in their classrooms or in a workshop they are able to demonstrate to the students the correct way of doing things. This cost of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is also a huge cost because if a lecturer does not have a trade qualification he/she needs to be placed for an extended period of time in industry. The HR department now has the additional cost of a replacement lecturer because apart from funding the lecturer requiring WIL and paying his salary whilst he/she is in industry, the College will have to fund someone to replace him/her within the institution - and these are all the post-appointment costs, being overlooked, the implications of

not finding the right people when you need them. Whilst it might be more cost-effective to use our database or to advertise locally, it's probably hurting the College recruitment budget to train and develop staff post-appointment.

4.3 A comparative analysis between the paper-based approach to recruitment and selection and e-recruitment

The third theme identifies the current trends in recruitment and selection in terms of technological progress (literature) and compares it to the paper-based approach (Objective 3). In determining whether technology would improve the current recruitment and selection process at the TVET College, it was reasonable to determine (from the primary data) whether there are any current deficiencies or challenges in the process and whether any form of technological assistance exists. It is significant that with the current process the major challenges experienced by the respondents relates to the administrative burden of a paper-intensive model to receive, record and screen high volumes of CV's (56% of respondents), the use of outdated databases having the inability to yield quality candidates (56% of respondents), delays in processes resulting in long lead times (78% of respondents), and the integrity of the process which can be compromised (78% of respondents). Referring to the challenges cited by the respondents under the first theme, it is significant that 78% of the respondents have indicated their frustration with the time that it takes to recruit, select and appoint candidates and with issues of confidentiality, integrity and fairness of the current process as a whole. The above experiences need to be viewed within the context of the stipulations and time frames of the DHET recruitment and selection policy (2015). The selection process must take into account the provisions as stipulated by the policy. It is thus expected that the Selection Committee adhere to issues such as ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are party to the process and time frames by which tasks would have to be completed.

4.4 Drivers to pursue e-recruitment

The fourth theme identifies the respondent's perspectives of the acceptable uses of e-recruitment tools to improve the current process of recruitment and selection at the TVET College and identifies challenges in adopting the system (Objective 4). 78% of the respondents recommended the use of online recruitment to reduce costs, 78% recommended its use to reduce the administrative burden, 67% recommend the use of e-recruitment as it employs better tools for the recruitment team. It is significant that 100% of the respondents agree that the use of e-recruitment tools will attract a wider pool of applicants. 89 % recommend the use of online recruitment to attract top talent and to reduce the recruitment time. The reasons for the adoption of e-recruitment elicited from the interviews with the respondents indicate that the e-approach has a relative advantage due to certain factors and that is: the expectation that the method reaches out to a wider pool of job seekers, it targets the right people, is cost effective, has the ability to create a talent database for future use and reduces the time to hire.

Perceptions of the acceptable uses of e-recruitment tools: 22% of the respondents believe that social media is an unreliable source to screen potential candidates as the information provided is not a true reflection of who they really are. However one might be of the opinion that social media is a reliable source to screen candidates since more often than not people tend to reveal themselves in terms of how they respond to chats, how they respond to images and information posted on social networking sites. It would provide a good indication of whom the organisation is liaising with. 33% of the respondents support this reasoning, however, 33% of the respondents firmly believe that social media should be used to spread the word to alert candidates of vacant positions and should not preclude the use of the College website as the core recruitment tool. The primary data indicates that a shift is being made towards modern and innovative e-recruitment tools like social media (LinkedIn and Facebook) due to various factors like quality, cost, availability, time and for

screening and selection purposes. 22% of the respondents recommend the use of video platforms as a pre-interview tool to weed out unsuitable candidates as a measure to save time and cost. The findings of the research indicate that the use of social media, the corporate website and video platforms are the preferred e-recruitment tools. However, what is significant is that the respondents emphasise the use of such e-recruitment tools to a certain extent only in the recruitment and selection process, and not as an alternative to replace the traditional methods, for example, the use of social media to spread the word to reach a wider pool, or to screen candidates by viewing their profiles, the use of video platforms as a pre-interview tool.

Challenges identified in adopting an e-recruitment system: Inherent in the data gathered from the respondents were the organisational specific concerns and challenges regarding the adoption of e-recruitment at the TVET College. Even though e-recruitment has several advantages over the traditional methods, the organisation faces major challenges which will have a significant effect on the adoption of the method. The complexity and difficulty of setting up a recruitment page on a corporate website is a stumbling block for the College as there is a lack of experienced IT professional to design and set up the website. The IT infrastructure is inadequate and does not support the College vision to use the website as a core recruitment base. Where online application forms are to be used to apply for vacancies, unless the application form is simple and uncomplicated, many less computer-literate candidates might be discouraged from applying or give up halfway when faced with a complicated online application form. Complicated and poorly designed websites will fail to attract quality candidates. Also, many worthy candidates might not be SM networkers and hence might never be reached.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Objective 1: To identify the processes of the current approach to recruitment and selection at the TVET College under study. The findings from the primary data revealed that the College adopted a traditional approach to recruitment and selection. Recruitment follows the process of conducting a needs analysis, advertising the vacant post in the print media, receipt of hard-copy applications which are manually sorted and recorded, constitution of the selection committee, sifting and shortlisting in terms of agreed criteria. The selection committee members and the shortlisted candidates are given notice for the interviews. Following the interviews, reference checks are conducted before an offer can be made to the successful candidate. The process lacks technological support and a trend of hard-copy applications prevails. However, the process is consistent in terms of upholding the DHET recruitment and selection policy (2015) which governs the process at all TVET Colleges. The primary findings also elicited that 67% of the respondents have a negative perception of the recruitment and selection process, especially with regards to the frustration and time delays resulting from administrative tasks of sifting and shortlisting high volumes of hard-copy CV's for entry level posts. 50% of the respondents are of the opinion that the excel database used by the College is not a credible source to select candidates from and does not generate quality candidates, as it is not updated regularly and is open to human flaws and backlogs. 67% of the respondents stated that the need for processes (sifting, shortlisting, and interviews) results in long lead times and the delays in having lecturers recruited timeously compromises teaching and learning and learner performance. Most significantly, challenges were also experienced in terms of maintaining consistency in the sifting process. The findings have revealed that the traditional sifting process is open to interference.

Objective 2: To assess the effectiveness of the recruitment sources used by the TVET College in this study in terms of its reach and cost. The findings established that recruitment at the TVET College is typified by newspaper advertising, and in urgent, unforeseen cases, the college database of walk-in applicants are considered for entry level

posts (PL1). The stale database of walk-in-applicants is not a credible source and does not yield quality candidates. The findings of the data indicate that for scarce skills, applicants are few and the College is working within a microcosm (on a much smaller scale) because the pool is too small and applications for posts, especially entry level posts) are limited to a localised pool of candidates. Local print media is not widespread and does not reach the relevant target market of jobseekers. In relation to the costs of advertising, the sources are not yielding quality candidates since too few applicants meet the minimum requirements of the post. The College has displayed a tendency to advertise posts requiring higher level skills (PL4) nationally to attract a wider pool. However, the obvious advertising cost in relation to its reach is quite expensive, especially when engaging the national newspapers. The desperate need to fill urgent posts where the fields are scarce, results in compromising the requirements of the posts or costly and time consuming re-advertisements. It was also found that the implications of not hiring quality candidates results in huge post-appointment costs, incurred by the College to get candidates to the required standard of competence. These additional costs place considerable strain on the HR training and development budgets.

Objective 3: To compare the traditional paper-based approach to the current trends in recruitment and selection in terms of technological progress. A comparison between the current process of recruitment and selection at the TVET College and the current trends (literature) used in industry revealed that a wide gap exists with regard to technological progress. The traditional approach adopted by the College is characterized by the receipt of large volumes of hard-copy applications and the College barely uses any technology to assist the process. A striking difference between the traditional approach at the College and the current trends, underscored by the negative experiences of the respondents, lies in the speed and ease at which the information is administered during the recruitment and short-listing phases. Additionally, traditional methods have no way to test a candidate's personality and eligibility for the post apart from the criteria of the job whereas online methods have the ability to filter and screen applications using pre-determined criteria and administer selection tests.

Objective 4: To make recommendations regarding the integration of an e-recruitment tool to enhance the recruitment and selection process at the TVET College in this study. Significantly, three drivers to pursue e-recruitment stand out. 100% of the respondents suggest the use of e-recruitment tools to attract a wider pool of applicants and 89 % recommend the use of online recruitment to attract top talent, and to reduce the recruitment time. Technology may only be successfully introduced into an organization if members embrace the changes to move towards a technologically assisted process of recruitment and selection. However, despite the respondent's beliefs of the benefits of technology, almost 50% of the respondents cite challenges regarding the implementation of e-recruitment at the College, such as the poor IT infrastructure, staff resistance to change, lack of capacity of human resources, and the complicated and poorly designed website. Respondents also perceive that technology should be used to a certain extent only, to enhance the recruitment and selection process and should not replace the traditional methods. 22% of the respondents believe that SM is an unreliable source to screen potential candidates as the information provided is not a true reflection of who they really are. 33% of the respondents recommend the use of social media for wider reach, to spread the word to alert candidates of vacant positions. The use of the College website as the core recruitment tool should receive priority. 33% recommend the use of social media for screening and selection purposes, to view candidate's profiles and to assist decision-making. Findings from the primary data indicate that 22% of the respondents recommend the use of video platforms as a pre-interview tool to weed out unsuitable candidates to save time and cost.

5.1 Conclusions

Objective 1: To identify the processes of the current approach to recruitment and selection at the TVET College under study. The DHET recruitment and selection policy (2015) guides the recruitment practices at TVET Colleges. It was established that the process is principally sound in terms of the consistent application of the recruitment and selection policy. The current approach to recruitment and selection is in keeping with the sequential steps of the traditional methods, however, the process is characterised by a high volume of hard-copy applications. One must take cognisance of the many challenges and the respondent's negative perceptions of the current process requiring improvement. The negative perceptions of the respondents are indicative of the shortcomings in the current process. Not only is the approach lengthy, but it is an administrative burden to manually screen large volumes of applications. Many inconsistencies arise in the sifting process and confidentiality and integrity is often compromised. It is reasonable to assume that any deficiency constitutes a need. This strengthens the recommendation to lend improvement to the current system, especially in terms of the sifting and shortlisting process, where the perception of deficiencies was the greatest.

Objective 2: To assess the effectiveness of the recruitment sources used by the TVET College in this study in terms of its reach and cost. Currently the South African market is lacking in the area of skilled workers. With a high demand for scarce skills but an unsatisfactory supply, the College will have to use innovative techniques and tools to source lecturers with scarce skills. Currently, the College database has the best yield of candidates for scarce skills. However, the database of walk-in applicants is outdated, over-used, and not updated for a significant period, hence the pool of available candidates may not be as suitably qualified. This compromises the quality of the appointment. The sourcing channels used by the College are costly (especially the national print media) yet fails to attract a wide pool of quality applicants. Advertising in local media is limited and ineffective in sourcing lecturers with scarce skills. Applications for lecturers with scarce skills are few and the College is working with a limited pool to select from. The current sourcing channels are costly but do not yield an adequate supply of quality candidates.

Objective 3: To compare the traditional paper-based approach to the current trends in recruitment and selection in terms of technological progress. Prior to making any recommendations to use online technology to improve the current process of recruitment and selection, it was imperative to obtain a sense of the current trends in terms of technological progress. Traditional methods of recruiting are labour intensive - from formulating the job advert, receiving and recording applications, physically sifting through hard-copy applications and conducting one-on-one interviews. Utilising the extensive tools available to recruit online, simplifies the recruitment process significantly. Online sifting and shortlisting, using pre-determined criteria hastens the time to recruit. E-recruitment transforms the traditional process into one that is automated, streamlined and efficient, and has relevance to the shortcomings in the current process.

Objective 4: To make recommendations regarding the integration of an e-recruitment tool to enhance the recruitment and selection process at the TVET College in this study. It can be concluded from the findings of the study that online recruitment has its benefits and drawbacks; however, the integration of e-recruitment tools enhances the recruitment and selection process and lends integrity to the process by removing issues of nepotism, subjectivity and favouritism. The use of organisational websites is cost effective to advertise vacancies and facilitates the application process. The power of SM, a controversial but growing area, in screening and obtaining a better understanding of a potential employee cannot be ignored. Along with traditional interviews, virtual interviews can play a huge role in determining whether a candidate is suitable for the position, it can reduce costs and save time. The use of video platforms and social media not only weeds out unsuitable candidates and shortens the application cycle but reaches out to a global pool of applicants. In view of the

many challenges cited by the respondents in implementing e-recruitment tools, the College should also take into consideration the extent to which technology be introduced to enhance the process.

5.2 Recommendations

The biggest delays in the process are caused due to the requirements of the process itself, where the request for lecturers has to go for approval, once approval is received the post has to be advertised for a stipulated period, a suitable panel has to be constituted, the panel has to be notified, sifting and shortlisting has to take place and shortlisted candidates have to be notified for the interview. If processes can be standardised, it will speed up the recruitment and selection process, for example, a standard panel for all engineering posts with SME's can be constituted. Online recruitment methods are recommended to allow candidates to be shortlisted, interviewed and placed JIT due to many processes being simplified and enhanced. Electronic applications, sifting and shortlisting will immediately dispense of applications that do not meet the minimum requirements of the post. Also, the College ought to look at its recruitment trends over a few years and identify patterns. If there is a distinct pattern where, for example, the College recruits mathematics and science lecturers regularly, they should continue identifying potential candidates throughout the year, interview them and rank them. This gives the College time to focus on enhancing quality. Quality is not compromised as a resultant need to fill urgent posts. In order to protect public resources and to enhance the performance of TVET Colleges, management should focus on strengthening the ethical and professional conduct of staff members. It is recommended that the principles of confidentiality, fairness and integrity as outlined in the DHET recruitment and selection policy (2015) be realised operationally. All recruitment and selection decisions should be in accordance with transparent and open procedures and should ensure accountability. All HR practices should conform to the principles of consistency, honesty and truthfulness. Coupled with the signing of 'declaration of confidentiality' forms, a review of the DHET policy on recruitment and selection should focus on including a Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct to regulate members' conduct. Failure to comply by any member should result in disciplinary proceedings. Policies and procedures should be adequately enforced. The involvement of qualified and competent stakeholders, knowledgeable about the institution's HR policies, is imperative to ensure greater reliability and integrity of the recruitment and selection processes. If campus managers are to chair processes on their campuses for entry level posts (PL1), the successes of such recruitment should be linked to the performance evaluation of the campus manager and his selection committee members. In this way individuals and collectives take responsibilities of leakages, sloppy work, breach of confidentiality, etcetera. It is also recommended that the College be mindful of potential accusations of nepotism arising from the reliance and acceptance of walk-in-applications. Many South African companies are converting by utilising web-based applications to recruit since bandwidth costs have become more affordable and Internet access has become easier to tap into. Hence, it is recommended that the College explore the possibility of sourcing candidates using the Internet, as it has become more cost-effective, affordable and reduces the time to hire than traditional advertising. Recruitment depends on the nature of talent you are sourcing, in the case of this study; lecturers with scarce skills are highly sought after. Therefore it is recommended that unlimited access to the Internet is pertinent for the success of the College effort to attract top talent. It is important for the HR department to understand its target market before choosing to invest in one media. The use of the Internet to attract scarce skills is gaining grounds especially in the Engineering and Technology sectors. However traditional sources such as print advertising (national papers) are just as popular and the use of the Internet, for higher level positions and to source candidates with scarce skills, can enhance the effectiveness of the traditional methods, save costs and widen the geographical reach. It is recommended that the College advertise jobs online and search online job portals for skilled candidates to be able to tap into wider pools of candidates and attract passive job seekers that

ordinarily may not have been easy to locate. The ability to attract and inject global skills and talent in niche areas into the stale South African market becomes an exciting possibility. It is recommended that the job description should play a vital role in the choice of sourcing channel for the College, for example, for entry level positions (PL1) not requiring scarce skills where high volume of applications are received (for example Mathematics, Science and Electrical), traditional methods of advertising would be effective and would suffice. However, for positions requiring scarce skills where applications are few, for example in the fields of Boilermaking and Fitting and Turning, and for higher level posts requiring managerial skills (for example PL2, PL3 and Campus Manager), modern e-recruitment tools should be used to enhance and widen the search for quality (Internet, social media). The effectiveness of the recruitment process is important when one assesses the costs of making the wrong appointments. It is a recommendation that the College explore multiple channels (print media, LinkedIn, direct contact with passive job-seekers, Facebook) from which to source potential candidates. Each job vacancy should be evaluated using specific metric that can be cross-referenced over time to save costs in the long run as the College will be able to ascertain the effectiveness of its sourcing channels.

It is recommended that the College measure the costs and focus on the channel producing the highest yield of qualified candidates. Coupled with the traditional methods and online methods, the College should also advertise vacant posts in engineering magazines and trade journals to target the correct market of jobseekers with scarce skills. To source quality candidates for scarce skills it is recommended that the College also head-hunt as the top talent is located within industries. However, the recommendation will call for a review of salaries within the TVET sector to be able to attract expertise from industry. It is recommended that relevant technological processes that are tried and tested within the recruitment and selection industry, be accepted as available options that could assist the current recruitment and selection processes in TVET Colleges. However, this recommendation should take into consideration the extent to which technology be introduced. More and more organisations are using web based tools or personality assessment tools for selection purposes. In context of the TVET College, the future will be a best blend of both worlds, traditional interviewing techniques coupled with web based assessment tools, video conferencing as a pre-selection process. It is suggested that a hybrid approach—combining traditional methods and e-recruit be implemented. In view of the challenges cited by the respondents with regards to implementing e-recruitment it is recommended that an approach that is more structured, and on a smaller scale be piloted at the College. An e-system that could automatically screen all applications according to pre-set criteria, produce a shortlist of candidates and capture all CV's in a database for future posts should be piloted for contract staff. The area of sifting and short-listing, which has proved to be that with the greatest deficiencies, should be targeted as the first phase of intervention of technology. By engaging technology on a small scale while reserving the traditional process for permanent employees, the recruitment and selection committees are able to gain confidence by a measured and progressive transfer of technology and develop towards a more comprehensive and integrative technological approach. It is recommended that e-recruitment be adopted to bring integrity into the process. Increased accuracy and increased fairness are also recommended drivers to pursue e-recruitment where CVs can be uniformly filtered in terms of requirements and recommendations, without human errors. There would be less tampering of processes, where preferred candidates slip through the system and are shortlisted for posts wherein they do not meet the minimum requirements. Panellists will not be aware of who is applying and cannot control who is applying. It will ensure that there is no exclusion on the basis of who is applying. Skewed criteria cannot be introduced into the system to influence the outcome of the process. A shortlist of candidates is system-generated. The implementation of an automated system to enhance the sifting process by filtering and screening applications will eliminate the mistakes borne of human error and lend integrity to the process. Any system of e-recruitment at the college ought to take into account a process

that affords unions and senior managers the opportunity to sample and investigate the integrity of the e-system, and participate in transparently setting the parameters with the panel members, when using the programme. A recommendation to the HR department would be to embrace the concept of a HRIS to ease the process of submitting applications and CV's online to save costs and enhance the hiring process. A HRIS will also save many hours sorting through hard-copy applications and will assist in weeding out less qualified applicants. The ease of converting information submitted on application forms into employee files is an added advantage and will assist in mitigating errors. Such applicant information can be stored in a database for future use. The use of a HRIS will organise and manage the recruitment process in a well-defined manner. It will also reduce the time to recruitment, thereby reducing recruitment costs for the College. The College website is highly recommended for online recruitment. However the task of designing and setting up the website should be outsourced to a professional service provider. It is important that there be formalised training of IT personnel who would use the IT system and ensure integrity of the data, including managers of the college recruitment and selection teams, who would have to gain confidence in managing and monitoring such a system. In order to provide Internet access to disadvantaged applicants, a memorandum of understanding between the College and the Department of Labour is recommended to provide online facilities, for example Internet cafés where potential candidates can obtain free access to job advertisements.

5.3 Recommendations for further research

This study draws on Parry and Olivás-Lujan (2011) DOI theory to explain the adoption of this technology, looking at the advantages and disadvantages of using e-recruitment tools, and the factors that affect the organisation's choice to adopt online recruitment or not. Future research needs to address both adoption and success factors to understand the successful adoption of the Internet as a recruitment method. Future research should also aim to investigate the reliability of SM and organisations' reluctance to use SM as an e-recruitment tool. It is recommended that further research adopt a quantitative approach which uses a larger sample of management employees and HR professionals, and may include all TVET colleges in the Province and DHET to add another dimension to the research by obtaining a holistic perspective of the phenomenon. Future research may also undertake a comparative analysis with larger organisations already utilising e-recruitment to measure success rates and best practice.

5.4 Conclusion

Both the traditional and modern methods used for recruitment have their own pros and cons and both methods are widely used to find the best suited candidates. The deficiencies and challenges in the current recruitment and selection process at the TVET College, the current technological advancements and trend of e-recruitment in the recruitment and selection industry that has the ability to fill the existing deficiency, and the positive perceptions with regard to the integration of e-recruitment tools, suggests that technology can assist the recruitment and selection processes at the TVET College. In introducing technology at TVET Colleges, it is however necessary to take serious cognisance of the acceptance of such an initiative. It is thus strongly recommended that a phased in, hybrid approach be adopted, with regular monitoring, so that training and coaching interventions can be timeously made.

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