

## Effect of Recruitment and Selection Methods on Employee Performance in the Public Service of the Gambia

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### Abstract

This study assessed the effect of the recruitment and selection methods on employee performance in The Gambia public service institutions. The public service institutions selected for the study were in two categories: core civil service and non-core civil service. The study covered staff members on Officers Cadre and above in these institutions which have a total population of 272. The entire population was covered by this study as the sample. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. The primary data were collected by using a combination of both questionnaire and in-depth-interviews. Besides, secondary data sources such as textbooks, journal articles and government publications were also consulted. The data analysis was done with the assistance of the version 14 of the STATA Statistical Package. In overall, the study showed the relationship between performance and recruitment methods is inverse and not statistically significant (correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) = -0.002,  $p$ -value = 0.98) and the relationship between selection methods and employee performance was found to be positively related ( $r$  = 0.07,  $p$  = 0.28). The study concluded that if a proper assessment of the recruitment methods is considered by the public institutions, employee performance would improve by more than 50 percent.

**Key words:** Recruitment; Selection; Public Service; Employee Performance

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

It is a convenient point to take off by placing emphasis on the fact that people are inalienable commodities of organisations. They give valuable perspectives and attributes to organisational life and if sourced and managed properly, can be one of the best sources of competitive advantage for an organisation (Chew & Horwitz, 2004). Human resources management assumes a strategic role, by fostering organizational effectiveness and guaranteeing growth and competitiveness, enabling the maintenance and development of its competitive advantages (Oliveira, Sousa, Silva & Santos, 2021). Accordingly, the assurance of continuous organizational growth depends on the ability to recruit and select the best fit for all the job categories. Experience also shows that hiring based on best-fit always produce a positive impact on the performance of the organisation and the success of an organisation is directly connected to the performance of those who work for the organisation. It is therefore important that conscious efforts are exerted into human resource planning. A further argument in academia has it that for the organization to develop and sustain competitive advantage, proper recruitment and selection methods are critical (Djabatey, 2012). Consequently, proper recruitment and selection become imperative to individual and overall organizational performance.

Therefore, as the societies prospered and employment opportunities rose, there has been an increasing need to understand how to assess the applicant knowledge, skills, abilities and other factors (KSAOs), how to determine which methods are most suitable for applicants, how to attract the most qualified ones to apply and how to select those with the highest potential to perform and good fit

with the recruiting organization (Potočnik, Anderson, Born, Kleinmann & Nikolaou, 2021). According to Cooper *et al.* (2003), recruitment is an important function of human resource practitioners. The choice of recruitment methods by any organization is influenced by two things, available resources to the organization and the dynamic nature of its environment (Adu-darkoh, 2014). In making effective and efficient recruitment strategy, the organisation must decide on: “Whom to recruit”, “Where to recruit”, “What recruitment sources to use”, “When to recruit” and “What message to communicate” (Boxall, Purcell & Wright, 2007). CIPD (2009) expressed it that effective recruitment is pivotal to the organisational performance. Recruiting effectively depends on finding the people with the right skills, qualification, and expertise to deliver organisational objectives and the ability to make a positive contribution towards the values and aims of the organisation. In other words, the success in recruitment depends on the ability to attract applicants with required Knowledge, Skill, Ability and Others (KSAOs).

Imperatively, Gambians with different qualifications, work experiences, and cultural backgrounds normally apply for job openings at The Gambia public service anytime such vacancies are declared. Interestingly, most Gambians have strong conviction that recruitment and selection processes in The Gambia public service are not always conducted on merit-based but rather products of socio-political inclinations and networking over time. Hence, there is the need to assess recruitment and selection methods by looking at how effective the process has been and the impact on employee performance. Answers are provided to the following research questions:

- What are the existing recruitment and selection methods in The Gambia Public Service?; and
- How effective have the Recruitment and Selection methods been in The Gambia Public Service especially in impacting the performance of employees?

The study is guided by the following research assumption:

Recruiting and Selection Methods have no Effect on the Performance of the Employees of the Public Service.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

### 2.1 Human Resource Management

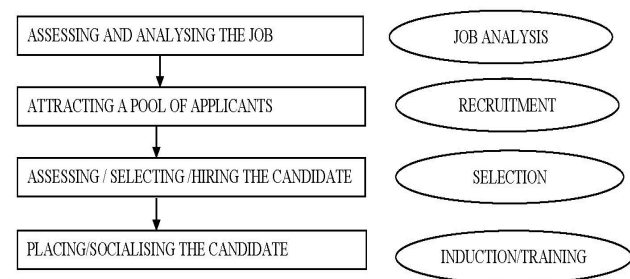
Human Resource Management (HRM) is the responsibility of all those who manage people. When HRM was conceived in the 1980s, it was being used as a synonym to what used to be called Personnel Management (PM). It has been argued today that PM is a traditional approach of managing people in an organisation that focused mainly on employee welfare and labour relations. HRM, on the other hands, is a modern approach of managing people and their strength in the organisation and it moves further

by focusing on acquisition, development, motivation and maintenance of human resource (HR) in the organisation. Basically, HRM is concerned with all aspects of how people are employed and managed in organisations. It is that part of management that is concerned with people at work and their relationship within the organisation. In the words of Boxall (2003), it is all those activities associated with the management of employment relationship in the organisation. Watson (2010) defined it as the managerial utilization of the efforts, knowledge, capabilities and committed behaviour which people contribute to an authoritatively coordinated human enterprise as part of an employment exchange (or more temporary contractual arrangement) to carry out tasks in a way which enables the organisation to continue.

HRM is the function within an organisation that focuses on recruiting, managing, and providing direction for the people who work in the organisation. HRM applies not only to industry and commerce but to all fields of employment, including the public sector, to achieve efficiency and justice neither of which can be pursued successfully without the other.

#### 2.1.1 Staffing and Staffing Process

Staffing as one of the key areas of HRM is the process of acquiring, deploying, and retaining a workforce of sufficient quantity and quality to create positive impacts on the organisation’s performance. It has to do with attracting and selecting the “right” person with the right Knowledge, Skills, Attitude and Others (KSAOs) into the organisation to perform the right functions (Herbert, Tim & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2019). Once the manpower need assessment is conducted staffing process follows. One of the most important functions that a manager has to do is to look out for people who can fill vacant positions and perform efficiently towards achieving the organisation’s goals and objectives. Staffing process has four components as presented below.



**Figure 1**  
**Staffing Process**

Source: Generated by Researchers

#### a. Job Analysis

A job analysis involves studying and analysing a job so as to obtain the relevant information about the specific duties and actions involved in a particular job so as to be able to know the caliber of person that can occupy such a position. In the words of Cherrington (1995), job analysis

is the study of job in an organisation and the analysis of its activities that the job holder has to perform; the tools, the equipment and the work aids to be used, and the working condition under which the activities are carried out. According to Rahman and Nower (2020), job analysis organises data such as duties and KSAOs required for a specific position. The strategic job analysis process should include environmental analysis or job scan, a focused internal analysis, preparing for future job, conducting gap analysis, evaluating effectiveness and establishing validity of procedures (Rahman & Nower, 2020). The sources of data for job analysis mainly include though not limited to job incumbent, job supervisor, previous job holder and so on. Furthermore, employees are a good source of data as their opinions make the system acceptable and plausible. Various approaches can be used to gather data and these include direct observations, interviews, work diaries, logs, questionnaires, critical incident and panels.

To open the staffing process, it is imperative to constitute an all-encompassing work team to carry out staff needs assessment so as to assist the organisation in determining its true needs and making more comprehensive decisions about staffing. Evaluating both human and other relevant resources can help departments realistically determine their true capacities for human resource expansion (Wilson, Dalton, Scheer, & Grammich, 2010). The outcome of the staffing needs assessment leads to the beginning of the job analysis process, which is the first step for any effective staffing process. Once a job analysis is conducted, it becomes clear to the department concerned and the organisation as a whole what a particular job requires in terms of job content (Job Description) and person specification; thus, beginning the effective process of identifying and attracting suitable applicants for an existing particular vacancy in an organisation. This gives rise to two important documents and these are (i) Job Description (ii) Person Specification

#### (i) **Job Description**

Once job analysis is thorough, a job description (JD) is prepared whereby the job tasks, duties, and responsibilities are articulated or clearly outlined. This is why it is basically defined as the main product obtained from the job analysis process. It gives a detailed breakdown of the actual activities, actions and relationships a job entails. This includes a broad statement about the purpose, the scope of the component tasks and duties which make up a particular job. It does not say anything about the person who wants to occupy the position. Mainly, there are three constituents of a job description: (1) the job purpose, (2) the major job duties and responsibilities, and (3) the conditions under which the job activities are carried out. It covers the following: Job title and the section where he will be working; the basic task and responsibilities; the authorities surrounding the position; the physical working conditions surrounding the position/job, e.g. physical nature of the job (like field work, in door or out-door job);

the social working conditions (e.g. is it a job isolating the employee from others, sex, age of employees who can perform the job); the economic working condition (that is the package surrounding the job including other fringe benefits in addition to salaries); lastly the opportunities and challenges of the particular job (e.g. is it a job that exposes employee, the opportunities can also be in terms of promotion and training).

Furthermore, it is a very essential tool for organisational performance as it aims at summarising report that identifies, defines, and describes the job as it is actually performed. Therefore, performance cannot be assessed in the absence of a very clear JD. It is also one of the basic HRM tools that increase both individual and organisational effectiveness as it helps the job holders to understand duties and responsibilities required of them, the relative importance of their duties, and the important contributions of their positions to the mission, goals and objectives of the organisation (Armstrong, 2009).

#### (ii) **Person Specification**

Person specification came on the heels of a job description. In other words, it is written based on the job description. It stresses the personal qualities and attributes, experience, knowledge, background, and other relevant factors desirable of the ideal person for the job. Its purpose is to identify the job roles and determine the agreed criteria to be used in selecting the candidates suitable for the job or who will perform the job duties and responsibilities competently (Hsu, 1993). This provides a consistent and objective set of standard for all the candidates and a structured means of assessment. The person specification is done with the use of some particular key aspects amongst which is the competences which are rooted in cluster of knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics (KSAOs) (Campion, Schepker, Campion & Sanchez, 2020).

#### **b. Recruitment**

Basically, recruitment involves reaching out to the people who may want to occupy a vacant position. In the words of Hsu (1993), it is the process of identifying and attracting a competent pool of applicants from within and outside the organisation for possible employment. Furthermore, according to Beer, *et al.* (1984), recruitment process does not only seek to identify and attract the quantity and quality of human resource the organisation needs to achieve its strategic goals, but it also means of improving the composition of the workforce that has an ultimate fit with the organisation's needs and prevailing culture. The ideal recruitment effort will attract a large number of qualified applicants who will take the job if it is offered. It should also provide information so that unqualified applicants can self-select themselves out of job candidacy; that is, a good recruiting program should attract the qualified and not attract the unqualified. This dual objective will minimize the cost of processing unqualified candidates (Kumari & Malhotra, 2013). The process of

identifying and evaluating the prospective candidates is either from within or outside the organisation. Each of these two main sources of recruitment (internal and external) has diverse methods influenced by different factors. Researchers have found that in addition to the ownership pattern, company size also influences the recruitment method (Kotey & Sheridan, 2004). Study conducted by Abbasi, Tahir, Abbas and Shabbir (2020) has also established that making right recruitment decision is very helpful in the selection of the right candidate for the job. With the help of the appropriate recruitment structures, the human resource management department will be capable of choosing the right candidates. Cardiff's research conducted on Taiwanese firms has shown that medium-sized firms tend to use "direct applications" more frequently than small firms for entry-level recruitment. Large organisations utilize more frequently "transfers", "job rotations", and "employee referrals" than the small and medium-sized companies for managerial, professional, and entry-level positions. Compared to small firms, "promotion-from-within", the internal recruitment method, is also used more often by large firms for filling vacancies at managerial and professional levels. This may be a reflection of the respective size of internal labour markets and that a greater variety of recruitment methods are used by larger organisations.

Internal recruitment method includes promotion from within, employee transfers and job rotation and which generally speaking enhances "employee engagement" which is understood to be heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organisation, manager, or co-workers that in turn influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work (Gibbons, 2006).

External recruitment methods include use of employment agencies, Recruitment Consultants, employee referrals, advertisements in the Media, government agencies, direct applications (Applicant Initiated Applications), targeting schools and colleges and Executive Search Consultants (Head-Hunters). It is an approach that gives additional options to internal recruitment as the latter may not always yield adequate qualified applicants, particularly if the organisation is growing fast or going through fast technological changes. Besides, organisations are motivated by different reasons to recruit externally. According to Mathis and Jackson (1992), these include compliance with equal opportunity requirements; inject 'new blood' into the life of the organisation; gain a competitive advantage over competitors and provide an inexpensive way of acquiring skilled employees, particularly when there is an immediate demand for scarce skills.

Conversely, Mathis and Jackson (1992) said heavy reliance on external recruitment may also lead to the hiring of employees who do not 'fit' the organisation's culture. Additionally, external recruitment may be costly

in terms of management, time and other resources. It is imperative to know however that the process of recruitment ends where the process of selection begins.

#### **c. Selection (i.e Screening)**

This is the third component of staffing process and it involves a series of steps taken to choose the best-fit for the job. It starts with the evaluation of applications received and ends up in taking hiring decisions and making recommendations for selection. The process includes the following: evaluation of application forms, initial screening interview, selection tests, substantive interview, reference checks, medical examinations, selection decisions, and feedback and job offer. Every phase of the process tests the expanded knowledge of the candidates about the organisation, considering their background, skills, abilities, and motivation, which is used to influence the final hiring decision. The steps are not static as they vary from organisation to organisation, but in general terms, they are meant to eliminate potential underperformers and identify best-fits (DeCenzo & Robbins, 1996).

#### **d. Placement (Induction)**

This is the final component of staffing process. It can also be called "Orientation", "Joining", "Socialisation", "Matching". This final component is an important management function because for all the above efforts to be fruitful they must be put on a right track via placement. This is necessary because the organisation is interested in the productivity levels and also in retaining the hired employees. Placement has to be managed because both the individual and the organisation have different expectations to be satisfied. For instance, the individual expectations may include wage level, a challenging job, a job where he can grow, and a good social working environment, among others while those of organisation may include such targets that the individual should possess the skill he claims he has, make the skill available, comply with the rules and regulations of the organisation, cooperate with other workers, and protect the image and the properties of the organisation, among others. If the placement is not properly managed, it may give rise to problem of poor productivity, labour turnover, frustration and confusion or rather induction crisis. The purpose of placement is to help the new employee and the organisation to accommodate each other. Sections 02106 (a & b) of The Gambia Government General Orders (GOs) are clear on this.

#### **2.1.2 Performance Management**

Performance management is a continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and workgroups and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organisation (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021). A relatively recent description of the concept by him is the process by which managers influence other members of the organisation to implement

the organisation's strategy. Kagioglou, Cooper & Aouad (2001) described it as a closed-loop control system which deploys policy and strategy and obtains feedback from various levels to manage the performance of the system. They further described it as a process in which managers work with their employees to set objectives, measure and review results, and compensate performance to improve worker efficiency and influence business success. These descriptions are in line with Aguinis' (2019) definition of PM as "a continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organisation". These definitions indicate that PM is the process by which managers influence members of the organisation by working with them in setting objectives, measuring, reviewing, developing, compensating and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organisation to achieve organisational objectives through the effective and efficient use of resources.

A highly effective performance management system is one that is designed on and facilitates actions that give autonomy to individuals within their span of control; reflect cause and effect relationships; empower and involve individuals; create a basis for discussion, and thus support decision making for continuous improvement (Lebas, 1995). Such a system will clearly spell out the organisation's values and objectives, define individual objectives and connect them to the organisational objectives, review performance regularly, relate pay to performance and provide training and counselling (Armstrong & Baron, 2000). An ideal PM system should reflect organisational strategy which should be communicated and deployed through performance measurement. In that case, performance metrics would be shaped by the mission, vision, and strategy of the organisation (Abu-Suleiman, 2006). According to Aguinis (2019), in an ideal performance management system, evaluation should cover all employees on all major job responsibilities including performance spanning the entire review period and giving feedback on outcomes of the evaluation. The system must be acceptable and fair to all workers based on a standard by which performance is evaluated consistently across people and time.

According to Lebas (1995), PM precedes and follows performance measurement, in a virtuous spiral. It brings about the context for measurement. As corroborated by Brown, O'Kane, Mazumdar & McCracken (2019), Brown (2005) mentioned that organisations introduce PM (and/or measurement) for any of the following purposes:

- To provide information on organisational effectiveness and efficiency and on employee effectiveness and efficiency;
- To improve organisational effectiveness and efficiency, employee effectiveness and efficiency, employee levels of motivation, the quality of employee

training and development and to improve customer service;

- To link employee pay with perceptions of their performance and to raise levels of employee accountability;
- To align employee objectives with those of the organisation as a whole and to focus employee's attention on areas deemed to be of greatest priority; and
- To facilitate the implementation of an organisation's mission and/or strategy.

It follows that the performance of employees needs to be managed to increase both employee and organisational efficiency and effectiveness. A PM system provides the media for the alignment of the organisation's strategy to the individual objectives of employees. This facilitates measurement of performance which is crucial to performance appraisal and providing information on the extent of goal achievement. Thus, for public institutions to realise their visions, the performance of their employees must be managed. When an ideal PM system is implemented, definitions of jobs and required KSAOs must make it easy for the organisation to attract and identify the best-fit for the job. Such a system enhances employee motivation, self-esteem, engagement, commitment, competence, intention to stay in the organisation, differentiates between good and poor performers, and makes administrative actions fairer and more appropriate (Aguinis, 2019).

## 2.2 Theoretical Review

Recruitment and selection practice involves numerous but sequential activities and sub-activities of staffing. This wide range of activities and sub-activities have given rise to various theoretical perspectives that have been used to help the academy to understand the nature of such activities and various phenomena within which to discuss the process and help practitioners successfully manage the process. Various scholars have identified a significant number of theories that can explain recruitment and selection practices.

### 2.2.1 The Human Capital Theory

This is a core principle in the human capital theory. It argues that people have inborn abilities, behaviour and personal energy which made up the human capital they bring to their work, (Armstrong, 2006). Given the above, it is the Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Others (KSAOs) that make value for the organisation. Again, it is the individuals who produce, retain and use knowledge and skill to create intellectual capital (Armstrong, 2009). The individual knowledge is enhanced by social capital, which is the interaction between them to generate organisational capital which is the institutionalised knowledge. Since it is KSAOs of individuals that create value, exploring best recruitment and selection strategy should be a priority to be able to attract, retain, develop and maintain the human capital they represent (Armstrong, 2009). The human

capital theory sees people as resources and emphasises that investing in people brings valuable returns. According to Armstrong, the human capital theory has a close link to the Resource-Based View (RBV) of firms by Barney (1991). People and their collective skills, abilities and experience, coupled with their ability to deploy these in the interests of the employing organisation, are recognised as making a significant contribution to organisational success and also constituting a significant source of competitive advantage (Armstrong & Baron, 2000; Armstrong, 2006).

Critics expressed it that for human resources to be a source of sustained competitive advantage, they must provide value to the organisation. Researchers like Hashimoto (1981) pointed out that the firm-specific Human Capital Theory provides an examination of the conditions under which human value creation is impossible. The theory argues that when both the demand for labour is homogeneous (employees are perfectly substitutable) and supply of labour is also homogeneous (all employees and potential employees are equal in their productive capacity), there is no difference in terms of individual contribution to the firm. This clearly makes it impossible to create value through investment in human assets; because both the demand for labour is heterogeneous (firms have different jobs which require different skills) and the supply of labour is heterogeneous (individuals differ in both the types and level of their skills) (Steffy & Maurer, 1988). Thus, there is a variance in individual's contribution value to the firm. Although both a theoretical rationale for how human capital resources increase firm value and techniques for estimating this increase in value have been put forward (Boudreau, 1983; Boudreau & Berger, 1985); however, conceptualising the value human capital resources has always been elusive.

### 2.2.2 The Resource-Based View of Firms

It is the premise of this theory that a lasting competitive advantage is only possible when the organisations have human capital that cannot be imitated by the competitors. The theory advocates for constant evaluation of the workforce by the organisations to ensure person-job and organisation fitness at all times for sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 2001).

According to Boxall (1998), recruiting and retaining best-fit give the organisation a human capital advantage. However, Boxall noted that a difference should be established between 'human capital advantage' and 'human process advantage'. The 'human capital advantage' is as a result of employing people with competitively valuable knowledge and skills, quite a lot of which is implicit. The 'human process advantage' allows the organisation to build human capital, the process of which is highly difficult to imitate; example cross-departmental cooperation. Furthermore, for an

organisation to be differentiated there will be a definitive need for proper recruitment and selection processes to be followed. Considering recruitment as an essential tool to achieve the overall business goal should be a priority to every organisation (Boxall & Purcell, 2008); because the new employee is always active, ready to learn new things and easy to adapt to the new environment. Again, recruitment may sometimes be costly, but this theory believes that it is better to find the right person directly through the recruitment process than having them trained as training and development can be quite costly. This has been one of the ways to align HR strategy with the competitive strategy. Furthermore, for successful job performance, organizations must aspire to hire candidates who have the required KSAOs; proper recruitment, screening and selection procedures are expected to produce the best-fit for the job and the organization (Catano, *et al.*, 2010).

However, despite the positive statements about the Resource-Based View of the Firm, the critics are of the view that these models have relatively little usefulness to them (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994), because the models mainly focus on the environmental determinants of organisation performance and have very little about determinants over which the manager has influence. The Resource-Based View of the firm (Barney, Wright & Ketchen, 2001) sees competitive advantage from a different angle with the environmentally-focused strategic management paradigm (Porter, 1985); the former emphasizes the links between the internal resources of the firm, its strategy, and its performance. That is, the resource-based view of competitive advantage, firm-focused, while models of strategic analysis such as Porter's have an industry environment focus. However, this theoretical discussion lacks emphasis on which specific resources are capable of serving as sustained competitive advantages, and in what circumstances resources are likely to generate a sustained competitive advantage.

### 2.2.3 Equity Approach

It is a good point to take off by stating that in striving towards ensuring equal employment opportunity (EEO), the organisations should inculcate into their recruitment and selection systems equal employment opportunity policies (EEOPs). Straw (1989) identified three levels of equal opportunity policies which in his view should be incorporated into organisations' recruitment policies: equal opportunity as equal chance (non-discriminatory); equal opportunity as equal access (fair procedures); and equal opportunity as an equal share (outcomes and positive action). Furthermore, from the early 1970s personnel experts argued that guidelines could promote equal opportunity. According to Froehlich and Hawver (1974), the new personnel guidelines and procedures which place "emphasis on the validity of the decision-

making process - that is, on ensuring that the best-fit is recruited, selected, hired, placed, trained, transferred, promoted and retained. This is in tandem with the focus of the Civil Rights Act, the governmental enforcement agencies, and the Supreme Court of USA backed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) personnel guidelines in their missives to employers and best practices lists (Anderson 1996; Dobbin et al. 1993).

The core of the equity theory which is diversity and fairness in recruitment and selection processes is reiterated by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, as cited in Baron (2011), the factsheet on good employment practices and diversity management in the workplace that, organisations ought to ensure that recruitment and selection processes are fair and diversity-friendly. Care must be taken drafting job advertisements to avoid discriminating and stereotyping in terms of content and should be purposely done to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds. Organisations should make business case for diversity be seen as an opportunity and strength rather than a threat and diversity management programmes like training and taskforces, may improve opportunity for women and minorities (Kalev, *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, developing diversity policy requires inclusive thinking by management to ensure attainability of transparency, fairness and addresses different needs while its implementation is being monitored to avert potential bias.

Knowing full well that today's organisations are prone to constant changes, it is prudent to hire candidates who are ready and willing to accept change, adapt to innovative ways of work and always ready to learn new things. Additionally, as the changing forces in the labour market are quite eminent, it is wiser to hire candidates who fit both the job and the organisation. These candidates can only be sought through proper recruitment and selection processes. Because of the foregoing, this study is anchored on equity theory which underlines the principle of fairness that undoubtedly leads to hiring the best fit, thus improving performance. It is premised on the principle that the best recruitment and selection criterion in the organisation is that which portrays the firm as an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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### 3. METHODOLOGY

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This section discusses the methods and procedures adopted to collect the data required for the study. These are presented under the following sub-headings: area of study, population of the study, sampling techniques and sample size, and questionnaire administration.

#### 3.1 Area of Study

This study was conducted in six selected public service institutions in The Gambia. The selected institutions were Public Service Commission (PSC),

Personnel Management Office (PMO), Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST), Ministry of Youths and Sports, Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation (SSHFC), and Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA).

#### 3.2 Population of the study, Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Public service traditionally comprises the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) providing necessary support to the government. These were stratified into core civil service and non-core civil service and this stratification serves the purpose of the selection for this study. In the first place, the Personnel Management Office (PMO) and the Public Service Commission (PSC) were purposively selected for the study because of their peculiarities. The PMO was selected because it is the office responsible for the management of the human resource for the entire Civil Service. It advises PSC on personnel matters such as, though not limited to promotions, appointments, benefits, leaves, dismissal etc. The PSC, on the other hand, was selected because it is within its mandate to approve for PMO to make appointments, promotions, dismissals, etc. in offices within the public service (except in the case of institutions of higher education or public agencies). It is also the responsibility of PSC to provide the overall management and efficiency of the public service, review the terms and conditions of service of persons holding office in the public service, and prescribe the terms and standards of entrance and promotion examinations and establish standards and guidelines for the public service, among others.

In addition to the PMO and PSC, other MDAs were stratified into core civil service and non-core civil service and two Ministries (MoHERST and MoYS), representing the core civil service, were randomly selected using balloting method. From the non-core civil service institutions, The Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA) and Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation (SSHFC) were also randomly selected using the balloting method.

The PMO has a total population of 84; Public Service Commission (PSC) has 25 employees; the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST) has a total population of 65 while the Ministry of Youth and Sports has 26 employees (both representing the core civil service); and Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA) and Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation (SSHFC), representing the non-core civil service have 794 and 368 employees respectively.

This study targeted staff on officers cadre and above, and there were 35 personnel of such officers at PMO; 6 at PSC; 31 at MoHERST and 20 of such staff in MoYS. There were 121 in GRA and 59 in SSHFC, all totalling 272. Table 1 below shows questionnaire administration

and retrieval based on the sample size. This sample size excludes the Principal Officers such as the Minister, Permanent Secretaries, Chairman, Managing Director,

Commissioner-General (as may be applicable) who were sampled for interview.

**Table 1**  
**Questionnaire Administration and Retrieval**

S/ N	Ministry/department	Sample size	No. of questionnaire administered	No. of questionnaire retrieved	Rate of retrieval
1	PMO	35	35	31	88.6%
2	PSC	6	6	5	83.3%
3	MoHERST	31	31	17	54.8%
4	MoYS	20	20	13	65%
5	GRA	121	121	111	91.7%
6	SSHFC	59	59	56	94.9%
Total		272	272	233	85.7%

Source: Field Work, 2020

#### 4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section covers the effect of R&S on employees' performance in the public service institutions of The Gambia. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods with the assistance of version 14 of the STATA statistical package.

##### 4.1 Demographic Distribution of Participants

The data on the distribution of respondents by Gender show that 67.4% of the respondents were male and 32.6% were female. This indicates that there are more men within the ranks of officers than women in the selected public institutions. The breakdown of the age distribution of the respondents shows that 11.6% of the respondents were within the age bracket of 20-30 years; 25.8% of them were within the age bracket of 31-40; 44.6% were between the age of 41-50; 17.6% of them fall into age bracket of 51-60 while only 0.4% which is only 1 respondent was found to be a retiree as per the Gambian standard which is above 60 years of age. With this analysis, it can be concluded that most of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 31-40 and 41-50 showing that the workforce is young which is promising.

The data on the marital status of the respondents show that 85.8% of the respondents were married; 12.0% of the respondents were single; and 2.2% of them were divorcee. On the educational level of the study participants, 41.0% of the respondents are holders of bachelor's degree in different fields while 39.2% are holders of Master's degree in various disciplines. There is 17.2% of the respondents with a Diploma and only 0.4% of them hold Doctorate (PhD) Degree. Finally, 2.2% of the respondents hold Other Qualifications. Because of the foregoing, it is logical to conclude that the participants have an acceptable level of higher academic qualification (Bachelor and Master's degrees) to be able to work in the Public Service. This study revealed that 26.6% of the participants came from the Core Civil Service and 73.4% came from the Public Service. The detail of this is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Distribution of Demographic Variables of the Participants**

Variable	n (%)
Gender	
Female	76 (32.6)
Male	157 (67.4)
Age (Years)	
20-30	27 (11.6)
31-40	60 (25.8)
41-50	104 (44.6)
51-60	41 (17.6)
>60	1 (0.4)
Marital status	
Single	28 (12.0)
Married	200 (85.8)
Widowed/widower	0 (0.0)
Divorcee	5 (2.2)
Highest educational qualification	
Diploma	40 (17.2)
Bachelor	95 (41.0)
Master	91 (39.2)
PhD	1 (0.4)
Others	5 (2.2)
Name of institution	
Core Civil Service	62 (26.6)
Public Service	171 (73.4)
Category of Staff	
Management Staff	102 (43.8)
Senior Management Staff	131 (56.2)
Length of service (years)	
1-5	39 (16.7)
6-10	56 (24.0)
11-15	48 (20.6)
16-20	38 (16.3)
21-25	27 (11.6)
26-30	14 (6.0)
31-35	9 (3.9)
>35	2 (0.9)

Note: Number of respondents

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

The distribution of participants by category as shown in Table 2 shows that 43.8% of the respondents were Management Staff and 56.2% were Senior Management Staff. This shows that majority of the participants in this study were Senior Management Staff who participated



in decision-making. Also, there were 16.7% of the respondents whose services fall between 1-5 years; 24.0% of the respondents served from 6-10 years; 20.6% of the participants have served between 11-15 years; 16.3% of the respondents fall under 16-20 years; 11.6% of them served between 21-25 years; 6.0% of the respondents served for 26-30 years while 3.9% of them fall under the service of 31-35 years and finally, 0.9% served above 35 years. This shows that Public Servants especially the study participants have “affective commitment”, and strong emotional attachment to their respective organisations.

#### 4.2 Participants’ Demography and Performance

As per the relationship between demographic variables and employee performance, the mean score of performance for the male is better than that of the female although the relationship is not statistically insignificant with p-value (0.398). The categorical variable age has shown a decrease in employee performance as the employee gets older. For example, the score of employee performance at a younger age is better than the older age and the p-value (0.006) for the relationship between age and employee performance was statistically significant.

Interestingly, unmarried employees as indicated in Table 3 tend to perform better than those that are married. This intimates that married people have divided attention compared to those that are not married. This shows a consistent pattern as divorcees also perform better than those that are married although, the p-value (0.059) for the relationship between marital status and performance was not statistically significant. The categorical variable highest educational qualification has also shown an interesting pattern; even though the p-value (0.692) is not statistically significant, the presentation of the mean score revealed that diploma holders in the public service perform better than degree holders. However, in general, the distribution shows that the higher the education, the better the mean score for employee performance.

As presented in Table 3, the mean performance of employees in the core civil service is better than those in the non-core civil service. This may be attributable to relaxation or none implementation of the control measures for staff. It also shows a lack of mechanisms to measure the performance of the employees in the public service in general. Though the relationship between the name of the institution and employee performance has an insignificant p-value (0.971). On mean score between employee performance and category of staff is negligible as it has a p-value (0.971). However, averagely, the statistics shows that the management staff do better in terms of performance than the senior management staff. The categorical variable length of service has shown a consistent pattern indicating the relevance of work experience in any job. Interestingly, it has revealed that employees perform better during their first 5 to 20 years. However, employee performance decreases as they

continue to stay on the job because age would certainly reduce productivity and confirmed below. Importantly, the relationship between the length of service and employee performance is statistically significant with a p-value (0.220).

**Table 3**  
**Relationship Between Performance and Selected Demographic Factors**

Variable	Mean ± SD	P-value
Gender		
Female	2.9665 ± 1.0615	0.398
Male	3.0874 ± 1.0025	
Age (Years)		
20-30	3.3703 ± 0.8010	0.006
31-40	3.3015 ± 1.0164	
41-50	2.9886 ± 1.0412	
51-60	2.6010 ± 0.9668	
>60	3.2727 ± 0.0000	
Marital status		
Single	3.4740 ± 0.9351	0.059
Married	2.9860 ± 1.0210	
Widowed/widower	-	
Divorcee	3.14550± 0.6190	
Highest educational qualification		
Diploma	3.1390 ± 1.1480	0.692
Bachelor	2.9350 ± 1.0370	
Master	3.1210 ± 0.9411	
PhD	3.1820 ± 0.0000	
Others	2.8 000 ± 1.1122	
Name of institution		
Core Civil Service	3.3900 ± 0.8490	0.002
Public Service	2.9239 ± 1.0521	
Category of Staff		
Management Staff	3.0508 ± 1.0505	0.971
Senior Management Staff	3.0458 ± 1.0021	

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Note: mean refers to the average score for the relationship between the variables

#### 4.3 Effect of Recruitment and Selection Methods on Employees’ Performance

Recruitment and selection are core part of an organisation’s overall resourcing strategies, which aim at identifying and securing human resources needed for an organisation to survive and succeed in the short to medium and long-term (Elwood & James, 1996). The data collected measure the impact of recruitment and selection on performance. Table 3 revealed that with the application of the identified recruitment and selection practices “there has been consistent improvement in the performance of employees. Although this is the highest percentage among all the responses in this category, only 34.3% of the respondents simply affirmed this and 13.3% strongly agreed with the variable. The findings further disclosed that knowledge and skills are not a challenge in the public service as 36.5% and 14.2% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that employees have good knowledge and skills of the job to deliver quality service. This conforms to the distribution of the educational qualifications of the participants as in Table 1. Based on the findings, assessing the effect of recruitment and selection methods

on performance is something that is yet to be introduced.

Furthermore, findings disclosed that there has been some high level of creativity and innovation among the employees to solve problems and enhance effectiveness and efficiency within the context of law as simply agreed to by 32.6% of the respondents and strongly agreed to by 12.0% of them. A total of 33.5% of the respondents agreed that employees have been able to perform in all key areas of responsibilities and assignments and 10.7% strongly agreed. A total of 33.0% and 12.0% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that employees have been able to perform well professionally and competently such that they always give attention to details. With respect to whether there has been a person-job fit and person-organisation-fit, 40.8% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed while 32.2% agreed and strongly agreed and a whole of 27% of them were undecided. The direction of responses here is clear that these are missing in the service. As many as 31.2% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed to the

assertion that employees are good in time management such that high percentage of tasks are completed on time and in high quality. Only 34.8% of them agreed and strongly agreed to this and a whole sum of 24% could not decide.

On whether employees have not been engaging in any transaction or action that is in conflict with the execution of their official duties”, 45.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed with this statement while 31.8% agreed and strongly agreed. This is as good as to say public servants are engaged in transactions that conflict with the execution of their duties.

However, looking at the percentile margin in general, the recruitment and selection practices applied by the public service have not improved performance in general because even if the percentages for both “agree” and “strongly agree” are added together would still be less than 50% of the total responses in most cases. The statistical table below explains it in details:

**Table 4**  
**The Effect of Recruiting and Selection Methods on Employee Performance**

Variable	Strongly disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Undecided n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly agree n (%)
There has been a higher-level employees' responsiveness (e.g. based on some files treated, revenue generated, client and peer feedback).	21 (9.0)	47 (20.2)	53 (22.8)	79 (33.9)	33 (14.2)
There has been consistent improvement in the performance of employees.	29 (12.5)	54 (23.2)	39 (16.7)	80 (34.3)	31 (13.3)
Employees have good knowledge and skills of the job to deliver the quality of service.	26 (11.2)	45 (19.3)	44 (18.9)	85 (36.5)	33 (14.2)
Each employee shows expected performance by successfully performing all assigned tasks on scheduled and on budget.	29 (12.5)	60 (25.8)	47 (20.2)	64 (27.5)	33 (14.2)
There has been a high level of creativity and innovation among the employees to solve problems and enhance effectiveness and efficiency within the context of the law.	32 (13.7)	50 (21.5)	47 (20.2)	76 (32.6)	28 (12.0)
Employees have been able to perform in all key areas of responsibilities and assignments.	29 (12.5)	56 (24.0)	45 (19.3)	78 (33.5)	25 (10.7)
Employees have been able to take ownership of tasks and figure out how to get things are done.	31 (13.3)	44 (18.9)	51 (21.9)	80 (34.3)	27 (11.6)
Employees have been able to perform well professionally and competently such that they always give attention to details.	33 (14.2)	44 (18.9)	51 (21.9)	77 (33.0)	28 (12.0)
Employees are good in time management such that a high percentage of tasks are completed on time and in high quality.	28 (12.0)	68 (29.2)	56 (24.0)	53 (22.8)	28 (12.0)
There has been a person-job fit and person-organization fit.	41 (17.6)	54 (23.2)	63 (27.0)	53 (22.8)	22 (9.4)
Employees have not been engaging in any transaction or action that is in conflict with or infringes on the execution of their official duties	43 (18.5)	63 (27.0)	53 (22.8)	57 (24.5)	17 (7.3)

Note: Number of respondents

Source: Fieldwork, 2020.

#### 4.4 Correlation Between the Variables

The results of the correlation test used to establish the relationship between recruitment methods and selection practices and employee performance is presented in Table 5. The relationship between performance and recruitment is inverse and not statistically significant (correlation coefficient (r) = -0.002, p-value = 0.98), indicating that the recruitment methods used by the public service institutions have not improved employee performance. It shows that the more the Gambia Public Service continues

to apply the current recruitment approach, the lower the employee performance would be. The findings further revealed that if a proper assessment of the recruitment methods is considered by the public institutions, employee performance would improve by more than 50 percent as there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between employee performance and assessment of Recruiting methods (r = 0.64, p = <0.001).

Consequently, the responses on the relationship between selection practice and employee performance is positively

related ( $r = 0.07$ ,  $p = 0.28$ ). As per the above interpretation of the correlation, this positive relationship between the selection practice applied by the public service and the employee performance is negligible and not significant. This is also an indication that the current selection methods used in public service can only improve employee performance by somewhat 7 percent. Fairly, there are many moderating effects between both recruitment and

selection methods (independent variables) and employee performance (dependent variable). For example, both the recruitment methods and the selection practices may be right and all the approaches are applied consistently, yet, performance cannot be improved. This is sure because other moderating factors between the predictor and response variable must be in place to ensure improved performance. The details of the analysis are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**  
**Correlation Between the Variables**

Variable	Recruitment	Selection	Assessment	Factors	Performance
Recruiting					
Selection	0.49 (0.001) ***				
Assessment	0.11 (0.09) *	0.17 (0.01) *			
Factors	0.12 (0.07)	0.10* (0.14)	-0.31 (0.001) ***		
Performance	-0.002 (0.98)	0.07 (0.28)	0.64 (0.001) ***	-0.34 (0.001) ***	
Challenges	0.03 (0.63)	- 0.03 (0.60)	-0.45 (0.001) ***	0.52 (0.001) ***	-0.45 (0.001) ***

Sources: Fieldwork, 2020

Note: Reported in Parenthesis are the p-values; \*\*\*significant at 1%; \*\* significant at 5%; \* significant at 10%.

#### 4.5 Relationship Between Recruitment and Selection Methods and Performance

This section discusses the relationship between the predictor and the response variables by using the multiple linear regression analysis as presented in Table 6. Accordingly, there exists the same negative relationship between recruitment methods and employee performance in public service. For example, for variable Assessment, it has regression coefficient = -.092, 95% CI: -.297, .765\*\*\*. Similarly, challenges have similar significant value as it has regression coefficient = -.194, 95% CI:

-376, .113 adjusting for other predictor variables such as selection and assessment methods, factors as well as challenges in the regression model. Similarly, the linear regression analysis has shown that recruitment, selection and assessment methods are independent of one another, thus, their inclusion in the model does not change the magnitude and direction of their respective estimates. This comparison can be cross-examined with the correlation analysis in Table 5. The estimates and their corresponding 95% confidence intervals for the rest of the variables are also as presented below.

**Table 6**  
**Relationship Between Performance and the R&S Methods (Multiple Linear Regression)**

Variables	Coef.	St. Err.	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf	Interval]	Sig
Recruitment	-.092	.104	-0.89	.376	-.297	.113	
Selection	.01	.083	0.12	.908	-.155	.174	
Assessment	.624	.072	8.72	0	.483	.765	***
Factor	-.103	.098	-1.06	.29	-.296	.089	
Challenge	-.194	.092	-2.11	.036	-.376	-.013	**
Constant	2.627	.432	6.08	0	1.776	3.479	***
Mean dependent var		3.048		SD dependent var		1.021	
R-squared		0.453		Number of obs		233.000	
F-test		48.735		Prob > F		0.000	
Akaike crit. (AIC)		541.371		Bayesian crit. (BIC)		562.077	

\*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*  $p < .1$  (Note: Reported in Parenthesis are the p-values; \*\*\*significant at 1%; \*\* significant at 5%; \* significant at 10%).

St. Err.: standard error. Sources: Fieldwork, 2020

#### 4.6 Mean, Variability and Internal Consistency of Methods

Table 7 presents the mean, variability and internal consistency of methods/tools used by the public service. This shows the reliability of the methods/tools used

in this study. Out of 272 administered questionnaire, 233 responses were received and internal consistency of the responses obtained from the respondents for all the methods/tools are more than half of the universal acceptable standard (50%).

**Table 7**  
**Mean Variability and Internal Consistency of Measurement Tools (Cronbach Alpha)**

Variable	Mean (SD)	Internal Consistency (%)
Recruitment Methods	2.89 (0.59)	76.3
Selection Methods	3.32 (0.81)	65.9
Assessment	2.65 (0.90)	90.7
Factors	3.23 (0.74)	85.4
Impact	3.05 (1.02)	95.3
Challenges	3.42 (0.90)	91.3

SD: Standard deviation; Mean indicates the total mean of the aggregate score of all the constructs of a given indicator and values of the standard assignment.

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

**Table 8**  
**Robust Relationship between R&S Methods and Employee Performance (Multiple Linear Regression)**

Variables	Coef.	St. Err.	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf	Interval]	Sig
Recruitment	-.137	.11	-1.24	.215	-.355	.08	
Selection	.031	.085	0.37	.714	-.136	.199	
Assessment	.585	.078	7.54	0	.432	.738	***
Factor	-.125	.098	-1.27	.204	-.318	.068	
Challenge	-.226	.099	-2.27	.024	-.421	-.03	**
1b. Education Level	0	.	.	.	.	.	
2. Education Level	.152	.15	1.01	.312	-.144	.447	
3. Education Level	.105	.144	0.73	.467	-.179	.389	
4. Education Level	-.092	.189	-0.49	.625	-.465	.28	
5. Education Level	-.117	.396	-0.30	.768	-.899	.664	
1b. Civil Status	0	.	.	.	.	.	
2. Civil Status	-.212	.17	-1.25	.213	-.546	.122	
4. Civil Status	-.01	.246	-0.04	.969	-.495	.476	
1b. Sex	0	.	.	.	.	.	
2. Sex	.144	.112	1.29	.2	-.077	.365	
1b. Age Cat	0	.	.	.	.	.	
2. Age Cat	.327	.195	1.68	.094	-.057	.711	*
3. Age Cat	.136	.188	0.72	.471	-.235	.508	
4. Age Cat	-.294	.219	-1.34	.181	-.725	.138	
5. Age Cat	-.032	.204	-0.16	.876	-.435	.371	
Constant	2.854	.524	5.45	0	1.822	3.886	***
Mean dependent var		3.041		SD dependent var	1.018		
R-squared		0.502		Number of obs	232.000		
F-test		.		Prob > F	.		
Akaike crit. (AIC)		534.018		Bayesian crit. (BIC)	585.719		

\*\*\* p<.01, \*\* p<.05, \* p<.1

St. Err.: Robust standard error

Sources: Fieldwork, 2020

NB: In using multiple regression where parameters are estimated using OLS, one of the key assumptions to be fulfilled is that the dependent variable is continuous or normally distributed. The performance variable satisfies this condition.

#### 4.7 Test of Assumption

This section presents the tests of hypotheses that recruitment and selection processes and practices adversely affect the performance of the employees of the public service.

Assumption:

Recruitment and Selection Methods have no Effect on the Performance of the Employees of the Gambia Public Service.

The information on Table 5 have shown that the correlation test meant to determine the relationship

To ascertain if the effect will remain the same even after controlling for the individual characteristics of the respondents, controls such as age, education, marital status, and gender were included in the regression model. The results still show a positive relationship between performance and assessment and a negative relationship between performance and challenges. Hence, even after controlling for the individual differences, the sign and statistical significance of the effect of assessment and challenges on performance remain the same as was found with the pairwise correlations and multiple regression results. This is shown in table 8 below.

between recruitment and selection methods and employee performance found out that the recruitment and employee performance are negatively related and not statistically significant (correlation coefficient (r) = -0.002, p-value = 0.98); while the relationship between Selection practice and employee performance is positively related (r = 0.07, p = 0.28). This therefore partly failed to reject the hypothesis that the recruitment and selection processes and practices adversely affect the performance of the employees of the Public Service. Table 5 is repeated hereunder.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Even though the findings revealed some high level of creativity and innovation among the employees to solve problems and enhance effectiveness and efficiency within the context of law, the relationship between performance and recruitment is inverse and not statistically significant. Thus, the more the Gambia Public Service continues to apply the current recruitment approach, the lower the employee performance would be. From findings, if a proper assessment of the recruitment methods is considered by the public institutions, employee performance would improve by more than 50 percent. On the other hand, the findings revealed a positive relationship between selection practice and employee performance but also negligible and not statistically significant. The results still show a positive relationship between performance and assessment and a negative relationship between performance and challenges. Hence, even after controlling for the individual differences, the sign and statistical significance of the effect of assessment and challenges on performance remain the same.

The negative relationship between the independent variables (recruitment and selection) and the response variable (performance) goes to show a parallel relationship between the predictors and the response variable; this will continue to exist as long as the same recruitment and selection process remains in public service. Therefore, the review of the current process is urgently desirable. The recruitment and selection approaches used in Public service have failed to reducing shirking and enhancing retention of quality staff since there is high attrition rate, especially in the Core Civil Service; Public service should work on the recruitment and selection approaches because if they are not well carried out, the hired staff will not be the best-fit thus, leading to demotivation, poor performance, attrition etc. Civil service should introduce a comprehensive performance management system. Appraisal should be done thoroughly instead of targeting only those on probation for the purpose of confirmation

It is hereby recommended that:

- Mixed-method approach be enforced in both recruitment and selection as job levels and target audience differ and in fact time changes faster than a blink of an eye. Depending on the level of the vacant position being filled, combination of different recruitment methods and different selection approaches must be used for the process to be worthwhile. For example, when recruiting for positions with supervisory roles, a diverse recruitment approaches like advertisement in the media targeting locals and e-recruitment system targeting the Gambians beyond the shores of The Gambia should be utilized;

- Recruitment and selection policies be put in place where they are not available and where they exist, the authorities should strictly adhere to them;

- That initial screening interview and pre-employment selection test that are rarely utilized must be reconsidered

if only to help in confirming individual submission and give the employer the opportunity to have firsthand touch with the applicant. Additionally, backgrounds and reference checks as well as psycho metric tests are recommended to be used by the public service to rule out respondents submitting fake certificates and wrong people making their way into the public service; and

- There is need to introduce a thorough, regular and comprehensive performance management system that will cover all employees rather than only those on probation for the purpose of confirmation.

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