



Corporate Strategic Choice of Selection Methods and Management Selection Decisions in Flourmill Nigeria PLC

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Abstract: *This study examined corporate strategic choice selection methods and management decisions in Flourmill Nigeria PLC. The study espouses the blend of interpretivist and positivist approaches, since they all complemented each other to achieve triangulation and all have important parts to play in management selection process. The research strategy employed for this research is case study which is the use of an organisation: since the researchers are observing selection process. Structured observation, also known as systematic observation was used for observation and recording of behavior and the sample of the study mainly consists of the size of the management staff. There exists 40 management staff in Flour Mills Nigeria Plc and the response rate was a total of 35 management staff. Data analysis consists of descriptive and inferential statistics which were carried out principally with the aid of computer using SPSS version 22.0 package. The results demonstrate that, the corporate strategic choice selection methods espoused by Flourmill Nigeria PLC match their management selection decisions. Based on the findings, the study concludes that, corporate strategic choice of selection methods is significantly linked to management selection decisions, and recommends amongst others that, the management of Flourmill Nigeria PLC should implement procedures, policies, laws and legislations that require the organisation to make use of more formal and well defined selection procedures and strategy.*

Keywords: *Corporate strategic choice selection methods, Flourmill Nigeria PLC, Management decisions*

INTRODUCTION

The selection process is concerned with identifying, attracting and choosing suitable people to meet an organisation's human resource requirements, goals, objectives and culture (Beardwell & Holden, 1997; Armstrong, 2000; Roberts, 1997). They are integrated activities, and 'where recruitment stops and selection begins is a moot point' (Anderson, 1994). Nevertheless, it is useful to try to differentiate between the two areas: Armstrong (2000:226) describes the recruitment process as a positive one, 'building a roster of potentially qualified applicants', as opposed to the process of selection. Thus, a useful definition of recruitment is 'searching for and obtaining potential job candidates in sufficient numbers and quality so that the organisation can select the most appropriate people to fill its job needs' (Dowling & Schuler, 1990); whereas

selection is concerned more with 'predicting which candidates will make the most appropriate contribution to the organisation- now and in the future' (Hackett, 1991).

Selection is an important part of any organisation. Selection performs the essential function of drawing an important resource- human capital- into the organisation. The success of later human resource efforts, such as recruitment, training, and compensation depends wholly on the quality and nature of the selection process (Barber, 1998). Selection takes the process to the next stage, and as Bolton (1997:59) suggests, can be defined as: The activity in which the organisation uses one or more methods to assess individuals with a view to planning, concerning their suitability to join that organisation.

Human resource management practices notably recruitment and selection have been described as a means of achieving competitive advantage especially now that the world has become a global village. Therefore it is important to carry out a more detailed research on the activities of human resource managers in both private and public sectors. The aim will be to know why HR practices and policies have not been fully integrated into most organisations policies. A comparative study into the HR in the developed countries and Nigeria would be a great step in resolving the problems faced with the selection procedure. A well detailed research into selection process is required over a considerable period of time considering the importance of recruitment and selection in the Human resource functions as it affects organisational performance.

Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study is to examine the corporate strategic choice of selection methods and management selection decisions in Flour Mills Nigeria Plc.

The specific objectives of this research are:

1. To identify the nature of the selection process used for management selection decision in Flour Mills Nigeria Plc.
2. To critically evaluate the problems facing Flour Mills Nigeria Plc in the use of the selection process.
- 3.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Profile of Flour Mills Nigeria PLC

Flour Mills Nigeria Plc is a publicly owned manufacturing company which was established by an Act of Parliament on 29th September, 1960 then it was known as Flour Mills Nigeria Limited and was incorporated Plc on November, 1978 (Flour Mills Nigeria Plc Catalogue, 2005). This Act of 1960 established five demanding objectives for the Mill as follows:

- 1 The maintenance and provision of good flour milling.

- 2 To endorse good contract milling in Nigeria.
- 3 To promote sales of buck cement handling.
- 4 To support high quality production of blending fertilizer.
- 5 To act as first-class provider of food and beverage in Nigeria.

The Mills' functions are derived from its' objectives as stated above and from subsequent amendments of the Act. Several studies have been conducted on the activities of Flour Mills Nigeria, dating back over thirty years. The first by Andersen Consulting Nigeria which was undertaken in 1969 followed almost a decade later by McKinsey International Incorporation in 1977/78. The Pius Okigbo Panel undertook its research seventeen years later in 1994/95, and most recently in 2000 Swiss Engineering Coy-Buhler, Ag, Uzwil Switzerland conducted a study (Flour Mills Nigeria Plc Catalogue, 2005). These are reputable international consulting firms and Buhler is a major global technology partner of food processing, which have commented negatively and positively on the selection process employed by Flour Mills.

The Concept of Selection Process

According to (Robert, 1997; Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2006; Torrington *et al.*, 2008), selection is primarily concerned about matching people to specific jobs. Selection is also strategic, in that a range of activities should be undertaken to find people to fill a role. Therefore, it is important that organisations adopt a systematic approach to selecting its employees. This approach forms the nature of the selection process which is strategic in nature and consists of the following methods of selection: the classic trio which are application forms, interviews and references then the supplementary selection methods which are bio-data, work sample tests, psychometric tests and assessment centres (Torrington & Hall, 1998; 2005).

According to IRS (1997; 2004) "Effective selection process is the foundation of any successful Human Resource strategy". Sparrow and Hiltrop (1994) and Beardwell and Claydon, (2007) suggested, strategic integration envisages selection as a powerful organisational mechanism for aligning the nature of the selection process and behaviour of employees with its corporate strategy. In consistent with the above view, Iles and Salaman (1995: 207) state that:

The selection process for the senior and lower management staffs is an ongoing process and has a key role in the success of any organization. The nature of this selection process comprises of the following activities: sorting, short listing, choice of selection method e.g. interview and the selection decision. Smith and Robertson (1993:1) and Torrington *et al.* (2005:141) emphasise these points by stating that:

Selecting the right person for the job can be of enormous importance. A company can be dragged to its knees by the weight of ineffective staff, which decades of ineffectual

selection methods have allowed to accumulate. Effective selection brings benefits to the employing organisation and its employees.

An organisation succeeds with the nature of its selection process if it's still practicing the traditional approach which has its roots in the psychometric model where organisational effort is directed at defining the sort of person who will perform a particular job effectively and assessing applicants against defined personal attributes in order to establish a person/job fit (Newell & Rice, 1999). More recently, evidence has pointed to significant developments in the selection process particularly in terms of its central focus and sophistication (Millmore, 2003). At one level it is argued that the nature of selection has become strategically driven (Sparrow & Pettigrew, 1988), where a premium is placed on selecting employees against organisational rather than job-specific criteria (Bowen *et al.*, 1991; Wilkinson & Redman, 2006).

Research by Bowen *et al.* (1991:35) led to the development of an alternative model of selection with a strategic thrust based on "Hiring for the organisation and not the job" and illustrated how it was used by manufacturing companies to recruit managers. Beaumont and Hunter (1992: 222) uncovered strong evidence that selection was being used strategically to bring about a more flexible workforce that was necessitated by the organisation's competitive strategy. According to Bolton (1997) the basis for selection should be the job description and person specification. If constant reference is not made to these documents throughout the selection process it is easy to forget that what is required is not to select the 'best' person but 'the best person for the job'; in other words, the one who most exactly fits the characteristics outlined in the job description and the person specification (Bolton, 1997).

The ultimate goal of selection is usually expressed as 'to choose the best person for the job' and the fulfilment of this goal depends largely on the amount of information gathered, evaluation of the gathered information and assessment of the candidate (Foot & Hook, 2005). The aim of selection in every organisation is to find such a person who matches the job description or requirements set in the job specification, has had satisfactory references, where future predictions indicate their success in the position and who has expressed sufficient interest in the position at interview to indicate that they wished to be offered the position (Torrington & Hall, 1995).

Rosemary *et al.* (2006) in trying to distinguish between recruitment and selection suggested that selection is all about evaluating and deciding on the individual's suitability for a particular job. Although the evidence, based on these cases, of selection being practiced is significant, there is equally a substantial literature base that doubts about how wide spread this practice might be. For example, the conclusions of Lundy and Cowling (1996: 69) and Scholarios and Lockyer (1996:173) point to the selection process being conducted in a much less strategic and

sophisticated way. There are also a number of concerns about the methodologies employed from which evidence of the nature of selection has been deduced. Storey (1992: 90) states that: the greater investment in selection is being incorrectly interpreted as a strategic approach when it represents no more than the rational response to changing labour market conditions that constitute the normal diet of everyday, traditional selection practice.

There may be some debate at the conceptual level as to what constitutes the nature of selection. Is it simply about “careful” selection as suggested by Borucki and Lafley (1984: 69) or does the term “strategic” incorporate a wider range of environmental and stakeholder influences as argued by Lundy and Cowling (1996). What is imperative, however, is that any study intending to search for evidence of the nature of the selection process must make clear how the concept is being interpreted in order that the problems and recommendations of these practice can be established (Millmore, 2003). The next section presents the best practice model and an explanatory framework of the strategic nature of the selection process which is partially adopted by Flour Mills Nigeria Plc as its nature of selection. The model took a look at the selection criteria and choosing appropriate selection methods.

The Best Practice Model

There are no one-size-fits all on how to undertake selection. Prescriptive texts telling how it ‘should’ or ‘must’ be done are plentiful. (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2002) inferred that sophisticated selection has been identified as part of the best practice associated with the HRM approach. Professional bodies issue codes of practice: for example the Nigerian Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development don’t issue codes on selection procedures and this makes the nature of the selection process in Nigerian organisations poor, unlike in the UK where the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development issues a code on selection procedures, and the UK Equal Opportunities Commission publishes Fair and Efficient Selection (Newell & Scarbrough, 2002). The best practice model presents the selection of managers as an ordered, logical sequence of events. Figure 1 is based on such guidance and illustrates the different recommended stages in the best practice model which shows the nature of the selection process. A brief look at the recommended practice for each of these major stages, before examining why there is often such a gap between best practice and actual practice in relation to selection (Newell & Scarbrough, 2002). The Best Practice Model is illustrated in Figure 1:

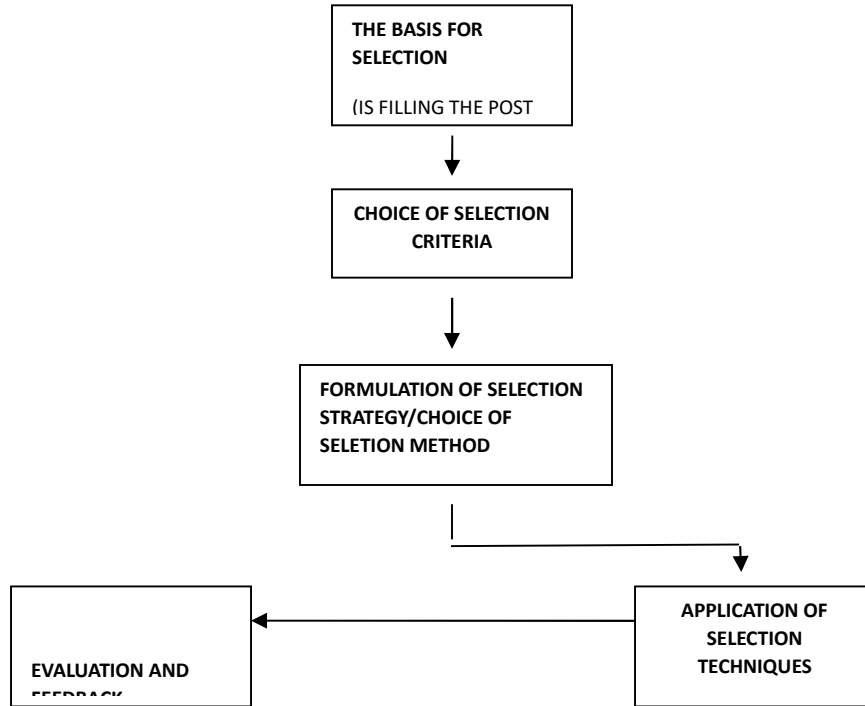


Figure 1: Recommended Stages in the Best Practice Model

Source: Adapted from Newell and Scarbrough (2002:19)

Assuming that the post is to be filled (or created) rather than work being reorganised, choice of selection criteria could be the first step. So that the organisation knows what it is looking for, a job description and person specification is needed to define the selection criteria. The starting point for this is job analysis. There are a number of techniques that can be used for undertaking job analysis, but essentially, they all require the collection of systematic data about the particular job (Torrington & Hall, 2005). A job description is produced after analysis which facilitates the identification of the kind of skills, qualities and attributes which would lead to successful performance of the job as described, leading to a profile of the 'ideal person' for the job.

This brings about the use of an effective and efficient selection method for the selection of senior and lower managers which forms salient features of the selection process and they are:

1. The application details (forms, CVs and letters),
2. The interview, and
3. Selection tests, where applicable, and other supporting evidence, such as references. The relationship between these features can be shown diagrammatically as follows in Fig. 2:

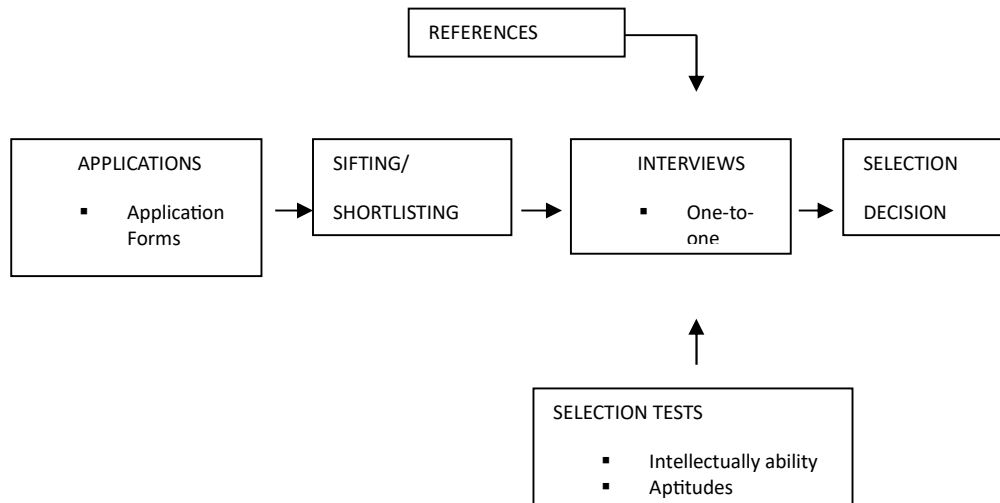


Figure 2: Features of the Selection Process

Source: Adapted from Cole (1997: 149).

A selection process has 'validity' if a clear relationship can be shown between the selection process itself and the job for which the individuals are being selected. Thus, an important part of selection is job analysis. This implies that, a selection process may be 'validated' after it has been implemented by conducting a job analysis and showing the relationship between the selection process and the job. A job analysis is usually conducted prior to, and is often used in the development of selection processes. Even in times of high unemployment, selection is very much a two-way process, with the candidates assessing the organization as well as the other way round. From the organization's point of view, selection is just a 'selling' operation (Cole, 1997). Flour Mills Nigeria Plc employs a strategic selection process to ensure that they have the right people in the right jobs, to help achieve the Mills' mission and strategic direction. The corporate strategic choice of selection methods are further summarized below:

Corporate Strategic Choice of Selection Methods

There are a variety of selection tools available to organisations, ranging from the more traditional methods of interview, application forms and references, through to the more sophisticated techniques of bio data, aptitude tests, personality questionnaires, assessment centres, psychological testing etc. Iles (1999: 232) does not advise that one selection method be used alone. He suggests a combination of two or more methods. According to Heraty and Morley (1998: 29) and Beardwell and Claydon (2007) each method of selection has its advantages and disadvantages. Its reliability and validity determine the degree to which a selection technique is perceived as effective or perhaps sophisticated. Crook (1993: 55) defines validity as the extent to which a selection procedure (such as an interview) measures what it claims to measure, and predictive validity as the extent to which a selection procedure predicts accurately subsequent performance on the job. A selection procedure with a high predictive validity predicts very accurately which candidates will subsequently perform well, or perform badly, in the job (Crook, 1993). Various

selection methods will be considered such as application forms, testing, group selection interviews, references, psychological/personality tests, handwriting analysis and assessment centres.

Application Forms

Applications are reviewed to identify applicants meeting the minimum qualifications listed in the job description. Applicants who do not meet the minimum qualifications are notified by mail and applicants who do meet the minimum qualifications proceed to the short listing process and examination process which involves testing and other assessments (www.dot.state.co.us/CHRM/selection.asp)

Short Listing

Key responsibilities of each job are outlined in the job description and the qualifications, including education, experience, knowledge and skills, are listed. Once a competition has closed, all applications received are reviewed in relation to the posted qualifications and a short list of candidates are established (Flour Mills Nigeria Plc Catalogue, 2005).

Examination: Testing and Other Assessments

Assessment center use a combination of simulations, interviews and tests to measure the performance of a group of candidates against the skills and behaviors required for a particular job (Murray, 2005). Assessment centres can improve the predictability of selection processes when well designed with a clear job description and person specification in mind. They are useful as one element of effective recruitment. They are also valuable when there are many good candidates and the consequence of inappropriate recruitment is expensive or carries business risk (CIPD VIEW, www.cipd.co.uk)

However, for the position of manager, short listed candidates will be scheduled for testing. The most common type of testing used in Flour Mills is software application, such as MS Word and Excel etc. This is done for all managerial and clerical positions at the senior and lower level. Other types of testing may be administered, as required, for different positions (www.jibc.bc.ca).

Often, vacancies need to be filled in a hurry and time spent on job analysis can seem like a luxury when the pressure is on to get started. However, to design an appropriate process, it is vital that you have a thorough understanding of the requirements of the job (Murray, 2005). Though the assessment centre method has weaknesses, it is however arguable that most organisations preferred using the tool or the method. According to the CIPD survey, 47% of employers surveyed had used assessment centres in some way as a method to select applicants. One of the strengths of assessment centres is that they allow a broader range of selection methods to be used in the recruitment process (www.cipd.co.uk). The main advantages of running an assessment centre is that it greatly increases the chances of finding a suitable candidate and reduces the risk of making the wrong decision. Research demonstrates that they are a more accurate predictor of performance than most traditional selection methods, including interviews, (Murray, 2005).

Interviews

Candidates who have successfully completed testing, if required, are invited to attend a panel interview, which is led by the hiring supervisor in most cases the human resource manager, line manager or head of the department. Interviews are predominantly behavioural-based, meaning that candidates are asked to draw on their specific experiences in responding to questions pertaining to the job. For some positions, the selection process may include a second interview (www.jibc.bc.ca).

References

References feature as a popular tool in the selection process, despite the fact that their predictive ability is in the region of 0.26 (against a perfect prediction of 1.0 (Crook, 1993) during the selection process, candidates are asked to provide employment references. References will be checked for those candidates who are still being considered at this stage of the selection process. References are only contacted with the candidate's permission (www.jibc.bc.ca/about/jobs/selectionprocess.htm).

Management Selection Decisions

The supervisor of a position vacancy makes the hiring decision. Typically, supervisors interview each of the candidates on the referral list. However, a supervisor is not required to interview each of the candidates before making a hiring decision. A review of each candidate's resume and an interview with the candidate who is deemed the best fit for the position is sometimes sufficient to make a hiring decision (www.dot.state.co.us).

Having selected the best candidate for the job, the next stage is to ensure that the new recruit is successfully integrated into the organisation through a well planned induction programme.

The nature of the selection process in Flour Mills Nigeria Plc follows the process partially and this is the first objective of this study. This aspect of the best practice model has come under some scrutiny lately as organisations increasingly are emphasising broader organisational requirements rather than simply job-related ones (Newell & Scarbrough, 2002). The reality of selection is often very different from the best practice model, some of the key differences are: The missing out of stages in the flow chart, use of irrelevant (that is, not job-related) criteria, use of informal rather than formal methods, use of arbitrary selection filters and non-valid tests and the use of untrained recruiters acting on subjective judgement and personal prejudices (Newell & Scarbrough, 2002). These are realities that pose great problems to the nature of selection in Flour Mills Nigeria Plc. The stage that is most frequently omitted is the formulation of selection strategy and choice of selection method thus corporate strategy poses a great problem to the nature of the selection process. As seen in Figure 3 by an explanatory framework of the selection process (Millmore, 2003).

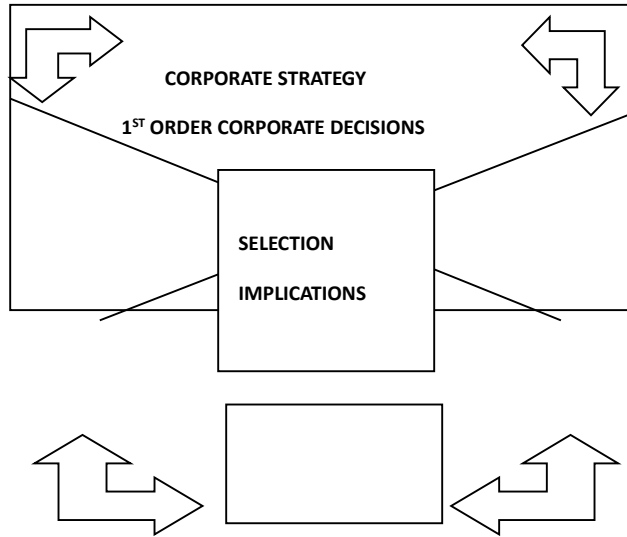


Figure 3: The Selection Process: An Explanatory Framework
Adapted from Millmore (2003: 92).

Selection Model

The selection model will help Flour Mills Nigeria Plc to recruit the right person, with the right skills and abilities for the right job, first time, every time, develop efficient and effective practices that can be used by anyone involved in selection to ensure a consistent approach throughout the organisation, plan for the future by merging the corporate strategy to the human resource plan (www.capitalquality.co.uk). Figure 4 depicts the selection model.

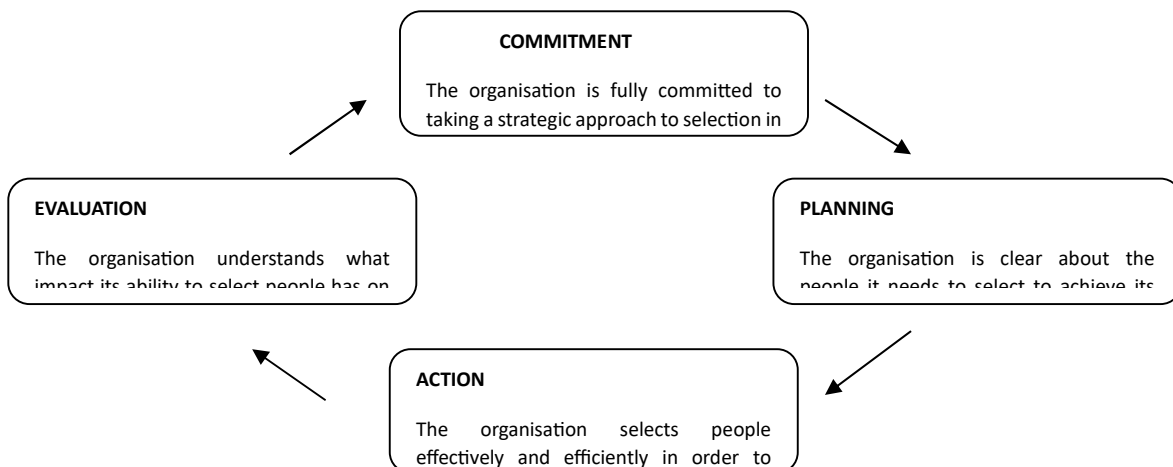


Figure 4: Selection Model

Source: www.capitalquality.co.uk.

The model in figure 4 is set out to develop, demonstrate and assess the strategic corporate choice of selection methods. Based on the review of literature, the following conceptual framework was designed:

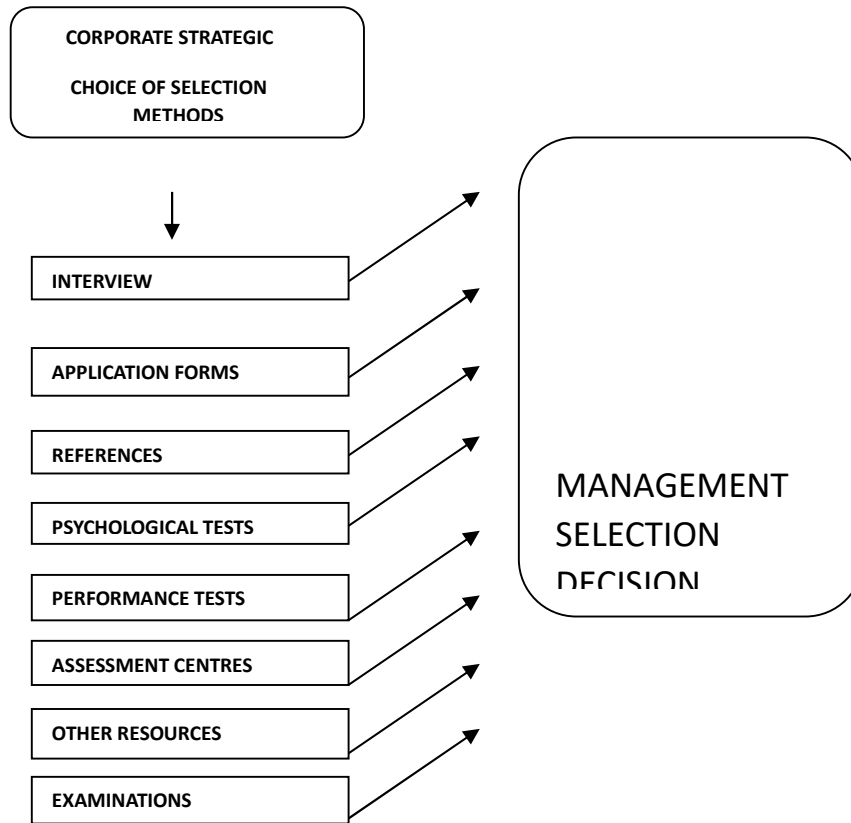


Figure 5: Conceptual Framework of Corporate Strategic Choice of Selection Methods and Management decisions.

Source: Designed by the Authors, 2023.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study espouses the blend of interpretivist and positivist approaches, since they all complemented each other to achieve triangulation and all have important parts to play in management selection process. The research strategy employed for this research is case study which is the use of an organisation: since the researchers are observing selection process. The case study approach generally calls for the researcher to make choices from among a number of possible events, people, organisations etc (Denscombe, 1998). Flour Mills Nigeria Plc was chosen for this purpose. Structured observation, also known as systematic observation was used for observation and recording of behavior (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The sample mainly consists of the

size of the management staff. There exists 40 management staff in Flour Mills Nigeria Plc and the response rate was a total of 35 management staff.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research instrument yields a response rate of 87.5 percent. The staff can be classified as seasonal, temporary and permanent. The temporary employees are 10 in total; the seasonal employees are 10 and the permanent employees are 15. This classification is based on the criteria used by the Nigerian authorities in classifying the companies in the industrial public sector. Based on question one, Figure 4 shows that Category 1 represents 10 employees (25%) who are temporary management staff, Category 2 represents 10 employees (25%) who are seasonal staff and Category 3 represents 15 employees (37.5%) who are permanent staff.

Question one: Views on the approximate number of management staff

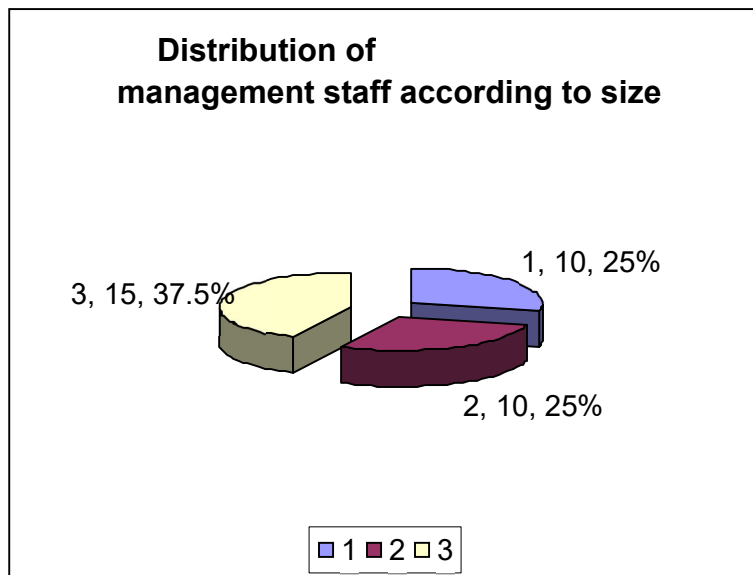


Figure 4: Distribution of Management Staff.

In addition to the classification by size, employees can also be classified according to the nature of managerial responsibility. These are senior managers, Lower managers, human resource team managers, functional managers and others e.g. millers as seen in Table 5.

Question one: views on the approximate number of management staff

Table 1: Distribution of Sample according to nature of Managerial Responsibility

SIZE	NATURE OF MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITY						
	Senior Managers	Lower Managers	Human Resource Team Managers	Functional	Others	Total	Percentage
Temporary	6	1	1	1	1	10	25
Seasonal	2	2	2	3	1	10	25
Permanent	7	3	2	1	2	15	37.5
Total	15	6	5	5	4	35	87.5
Percentage	37.5	15	12.5	12.5	10	87.5	87.5

As seen from the Table 1, the largest managerial responsibility are those of the senior managers (37.5%), lower managers represent 15% then the human resource team managers and functional represent 12.5% and others represent 10%. The respondents in this sample provided the researcher with a good mixture of the managerial responsibilities thus making it a representative sample.

Number of Management Staff

Question two views the total number of management staff comprising of the sample size which increased in the last three years (2006-2008), this means that the selection process was under scrutiny to select the right candidate for the management position. Figure 3.5.2 below shows this data:

Question Two: number of management staff assessed in the last three years

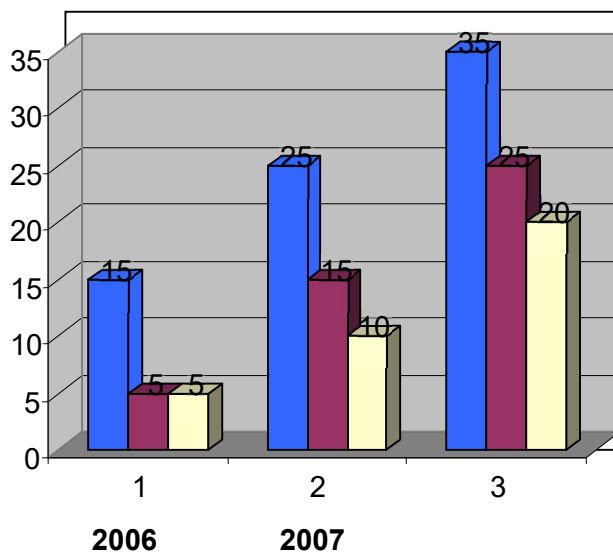


Figure 5: Management staff accessed in the past three years

Key:

NEW

REPLACEMENT

LEFT THE
IOR

Question Three:

From table 3.5.2, 20 respondents (50%) believed that training is very important in the selection process, 3 respondents (7.5%) believed it is important, 1 respondent (2.5%) took a neutral view of the importance of training, 3 respondents (7.5%) said it was less important and 8 respondents (20%) said it was not an important aspect in the selection process of Flour Mills Nigeria Plc. As seen from Table 6:

Table 2: Importance of Training in the Selection Process

Management Staff	Importance of training in the selection process					Total
	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Less Important	Not Important	
Senior manager	10	3	1	1	-	15
Line manager	10	-	-	-	-	10
Human resource team	-	-	-	2	8	10
Total	20	3	1	3	8	35
Percent	50	7.5	2.5	7.5	20	87.5

Question Four:

From Table 2, 23 respondents (57.5%) agreed that training is an essential technique for selection whereas 12 respondents (30%) disagreed.

Table 2: Training as an Essential Technique Used by Management

Management Staff	Is training an essential technique used to select employees		Total
	YES	NO	
Senior manager	15	-	15
Line manager	7	3	10
Human resource team	1	9	10
Total	23	12	35
Percent	57.5	30	87.5

Response to Question two of the semi structured interview

Table 3: Corporate planning as an Important Aspect of the Selection Process

Management Staff	Importance of corporate planning in the selection process		Total
	YES	NO	
Senior manager	15	0	15
Line manager	9	1	10
Human resource team	-	10	10
Total	24	11	35
Percent	60	27.5	87.5

Question two of the semi structured interview revealed that 24 respondents (60%) agreed that corporate planning is an important aspect of the selection process while 11 respondents (27.5%) disagreed. As seen Table 3:

Question Five:

Table 4: Formulation of Selection Strategy in the Selection Process

Management Staff	Is there a formulation of selection strategy in the selection process of Flour Mills Nigeria Plc		Total
	YES	NO	
Senior manager	5	10	15
Line manager	1	9	10
Human resource team	-	10	10
Total	6	29	35
Percent	15	72.5	87.5

From Table 4, respondents (15%) said Flour Mills Nigeria have a selection strategy in the selection process while 29 respondents (72.5%) disagreed saying Flour Mills Nigeria Plc lack a formulation of selection strategy for the selection of its management staff.

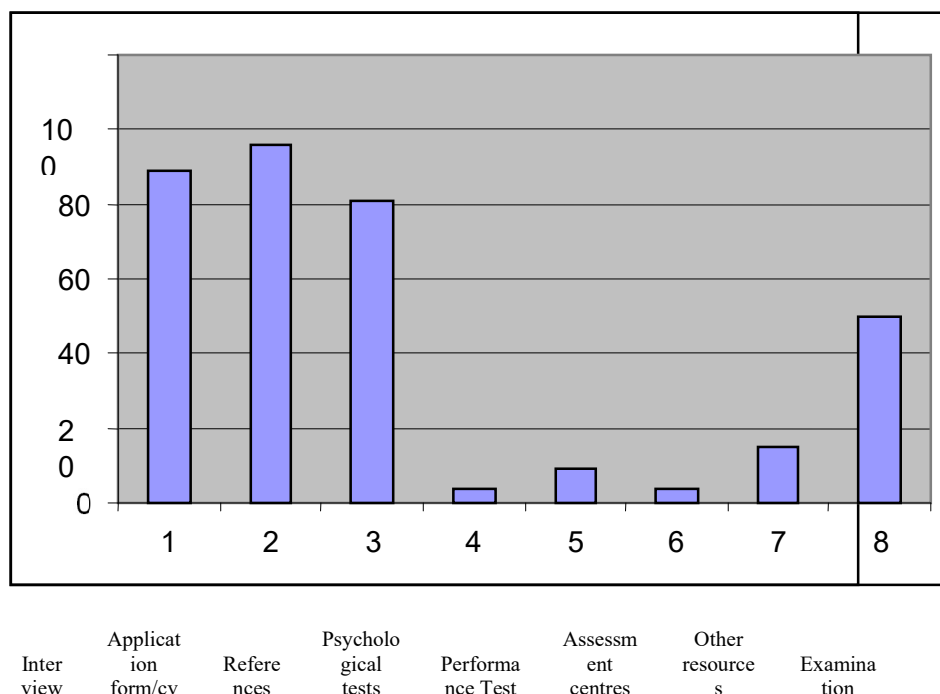


Figure 6: Statistics of the Choice of selection Methods

Question Six:

Table 6: Regularity of the Use of Selection Methods

Selection Methods	Regularity of the use of selection methods			Percentage of time used
	Never	Sometimes	Always	
1.) Interviews	11	3.1	85.9	89%
2.) Application forms /CV	4	1.6	94.4	96%
3.) References	19	3.9	77.1	81%
4.) Psychological tests (ability, personality, special aptitudes)	96	4	0	4%
5.) Performance Test	91	9	0	9%
6.) Assessment centres	95.9	4	0	4%
7.) Other resource (handwriting, bio data)	85	15	0	15%
8.) Examination	50	14.5	35.5	50%

Systematic Observation Schedule

Question Seven

KEY

S = Senior Managers L = Line managers M = Management Staff

1. Interviews
2. Application forms /CV
3. References
4. Psychological tests (ability, personality, special aptitudes)
5. Performance Test
6. Assessment centres
7. Other resource (handwriting, bio-data)
8. Examination

Table 7: Question one of systematic observation

Min. 0	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Percentage	
S	15	3	8	3	-	-	-	1	1	37.5	
L	10	2	5	1	-	-	-	-	1	25	
M	10	2	5	-	-	1	-	1	1	25	
N	35	7	18	4	-	1	-	2	3	87.5	
O	17.5% 45% 10% - 2.5% - 5% 7.5% 87.5%										
T	This parameter was used to check the popularity of the selection process through the basis of selection. The first observation was the most popular methods of selecting candidates is that of application/CVs where 45% of the sample always use this as a main method of selection followed by interview and references. However it was observed that the tribal tradition of Flour Mills Nigeria reduces the use of formal selection procedures in the selection process.										
E											
S											

Question eight of Systemic Observation

Table 8: Application of Selection Technique

Min. 0	Formal	Informal	Both	Ambiguous	TOTAL
S	4	7	2	2	15
L	5	3	1	1	10
M	2	6	1	1	10
Total	11	16	4	4	35
Percent	27.5	40	10	10	87.5
N O T E S	It is observed that only 11 respondents (27.5%) out of the 35 observed stated that although Flour Mills Nigeria selection techniques are applied in a formal technique, this is still not put into practice fully and this causes friction in the selection process. While 16 respondents (40%) stated that the nature of the selection techniques is informal this is why Flour Mills faces a lot of problems in its selection process. 4 respondents (10%) said they make use of both and 4 respondents (10%) where uncertain about whether the selection technique fitted into formal or informal.				

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Question Nine:

Table 9: Choice of Selection Criteria/Technique

Management	Choice of selection criteria/technique		
Staff	Formal	Informal	Ambiguous
Senior Manager	3	10	2
Line Manager	1	8	1
Human Resource Team	1	8	1
Total	5	26	4
Percent	12.5	65	10

Selection Process and its Effectiveness

In Question nine respondents were asked how they would assess the current selection process in Flour Mills Nigeria Plc, the response is analysed in Table 10:

Question Ten**Table 10: Assessment and Effectiveness of the Total Selection Process**

MANAGEMENT	Assessment and Effectiveness of the Total Selection Process					TOTAL
STAFF	Successful	Good	Adequate	Inadequate	Could be improved	
Senior manager	2	1	1	2	9	15
Line manager	1	1	1	2	5	10
Human resource management team	1	1	1	1	6	10
Total	4	3	3	5	20	35
Percent	10	7.5	7.5	12.5	50	87.5

From Table 10, 20 respondents (50%) believed that the selection process could be improved, 5 respondents (12.5%) believed it was inadequate, 3 respondents (7.5%) said it was adequate and also 3 respondents (7.5%) said it was good thus needed no improvement and 4 respondents (10%) said it was a successful.

As evidence from the research, the HR team has little responsibility at the management level. Though Human Resource management practices has been empirically shown as a means of achieving competitive advantage, Flour Mills Nigeria has failed to utilize this opportunity. However, the research also revealed that there are factors that have restricted Flour Mills Nigeria from exploring HR practices or perhaps best practice. For instance, Professional bodies issue codes of practice, but the Nigerian Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development don't issue codes on selection procedures and this makes the nature of the selection process in Nigerian organizations poor, unlike in the UK where the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development issues a code on selection procedures, and the UK Equal Opportunities Commission publishes Fair and Efficient Selection (Newell & Scarbrough, 2002).

Another assumed reason is that most small organizations like the Flour Mills Nigeria Plc do not have enough funds to systematically carry out formal selection process and methods. What is evidence in the research is that they tend to practice management paternalism, which is a management style that is largely authoritarian and is normally associated with the traditional master-servant relationship and with a social system that gives workers a low social status and demand from them unquestioning personal allegiance to their employer or managers(Akinnusi,1991).

Another reason that contributes to the low profile of HR functions in Nigeria especially in the public sector is the lack of well lay down legal framework system, the very high rate of unemployment and high level of corruption.

It has been noted earlier that the primary aim of selection procedure or program is to enhance job performance. More recently, Practitioners and researchers have identified numerous factors in an organization that affect individual performance. Notably among these factors that affect performance is training programs of employees (Gatewood *et al*, 2008). Pilbeam and Corbridge (2006) also suggested that recruitment and selection philosophy should be to 'select for attitude and train for skill'. What this actually means is focusing recruitment and selection process on behavioural competencies such as costumer focus, team working skills, responsiveness to change, and willingness to conform to dominant corporate values.

The selective hiring that is, the use of sophisticated techniques to ensure selection of the 'right' people, is frequently added in the 'bundles' best practice. Hence, the contribution of effective recruitment and selection to enhanced business performance is crucial. Empirical research, for example Patterson *et al*. (1997) has shown that acquisition and development of employee skills through the use of sophisticated selection, induction and training to have a positive impact on company productivity and productivity. Therefore, the practice of recruitment and selection is increasingly important from the Human Resource Management perspective (Beardwell & Claydon, 2007). Armstrong (2006) in agreement with the above suggestion inferred that the primary aim of training of the employees is to ensure that organization has the skilled, knowledgeable and competent people required to meet its present and future needs.

In an agreement with what the literature has suggested, the research has shown that the Flour Mills Nigeria Plc sees training as an essential part of selection process which will in turn leads to organizational performance and productivity. For example, when the staff of the Flour Mills Nigeria Plc was asked about the importance of training in the selection process of the company, it was realized that 50% of the respondents agreed that training form an important part of the organization selection process. It is assumed that through this selection technique the Flour Mills Nigeria Plc has been able to prepare its employees for the present and future needs of the company.

However, it is suffice to add that though 50% of the respondents see training as important in the selection process, the 20% of the respondents who argued that training is not an important aspect in selection process of the Flour Mills Nigeria plc clearly showed that there is a lot to do by the organization to properly incorporate training into the organizational strategy and policies in the selection process .This in no doubt would help the Flour Mills to employ the right people for the job.

Formulation of appropriate selection strategy is an important aspect of successive selection process or procedure. Lack of appropriate selection strategy leads to ineffective selection procedure which can cause any company a fortune. According to (Robert, 1997; Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2006; Torrington *et al.*, (2008), selection is primarily concerned about matching people to specific jobs. Selection is also strategic, in that a range of activities should be undertaken to find people to fill a role.

Therefore, it is important that organisations adopt a systematic approach to selecting its employees. This approach forms the nature of the selection process which is strategic in nature and consists of the following methods of selection: the classic trio which are application forms, interviews and references then the supplementary selection methods which are bio-data, work sample tests, psychometric tests and assessment centres (Torrington & Hall, 1998; 2005; 2008).

In consistent with the above view, IRS (1997; 2004) declare that, “Effective selection process is the foundation of any successful Human Resource strategy”. Sparrow and Hiltrop (1994) and Beardwell and Claydon, (2007) suggested, strategic integration envisages selection as a powerful organisational mechanism for aligning the nature of the selection process and behaviour of employees with its corporate strategy.

Iles and Salaman (1995: 207) state that:

“For the nature of selecting a candidate in an organisation to be identified, its selection processes has to be classified as strategic and must exhibit three interdependent primary features: strategic integration; a long term focus; and a mechanism for translating strategic demands into an appropriate selection specification”.

However, the research has revealed that the Flour Mills Nigeria Plc has no formal selection strategy in the selection process of its management staff which form the most important part of the organizations. The research showed that only 15% agreed that flour Mills Nigeria has a selection strategy while the larger number of 72.5% totally disagreed stressing that Flour Mills plc lack a formulation of selection strategy for the selection of its management staff. This has gone contrary to what the literature said about the selection process being strategic.

On the use of selection tools, there are a variety of selection tools available to organisations, ranging from the more traditional methods of interview, application forms and references, through to the more sophisticated techniques of bio data, aptitude tests, personality questionnaires, assessment centres, psychological testing etc. Iles (1999: 232) does not advise that one selection method be used alone. He suggests a combination of two or more methods since each of the method has strength and weakness; hence its reliability and validity determine the degree to which a selection technique is perceived as effective or perhaps sophisticated (Beardwell & Claydon, 2007).

Accordingly this research has identified that Flour Mills Nigeria plc has regularly employed methods in its selection process. The most however used methods are the interviews (89%), application forms/ CV (96%) and references (81%). Its suffice to add that unlike in the UK where emphasis is mostly on psychological test and performance test, Flour Mills Nigeria has place little important on these methods, relying solely on interviews , application form/CV and references. Nevertheless, it was observed that the tribal tradition of Flour Mills Nigeria reduces the use of formal selection procedures in the selection process.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This carried out an in-depth analysis corporate strategic choice of selection methods in Flour Mills Nigeria Plc. The aim is to establish how well this organisation has followed what the academics and practitioners have preached on the best way to carry out a successive selection process. The analysis is presented using the following key issues; human resource management in the Flour Mills Nigeria Plc, formulation of corporate selection strategy, the choice of selection methods and management selection decisions. Data collected for this research were drawn from semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and systematic observation and they complemented each other to achieve triangulation to arrive at the study's intended objective. Needless to mention that the methods utilised in this work have limited generalisability. Based on the findings, the study concludes that, corporate strategic choice of selection methods is significantly linked to management selection decisions, and recommends that:

1. Management of Flourmill Nigeria PLC should prepare a detailed human resource plan, which would identify the short, medium and long-term human resource requirements.
2. Human resource specialist should educate the human resource team about the importance of making the right selection for the benefit of the company.
3. The human resource team should be reformed to take into account the demand of the
4. Management of Flourmill Nigeria PLC should implement procedures, policies, laws and legislations that require the organisation to make use of more formal and well defined selection procedures and strategy.

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