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RECRUITMENT AND QUALITY ACADEMIC STAFF SELECTION: THE CASE STUDY OF COVENANT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The sources from which organizations decide to select personnel from are central to its ability to survive, adapt, and grow (Noe et al, 2004:171). The paper examines a case study of recruitment and selection of quality academic staff into Covenant University. The paper addresses the factors that could affect recruitment sources and the advantages of identification of such sources. The study used the primary data by means of discussion with the human resource department (Registry) of Covenant University and secondary data by means of information from relevant journals, covenant university records and textbooks. The paper suggested ways of proper identification of quality academic staff recruitment sources and recommended that organizations such as universities should be proactive in the area of sourcing for competent academic staff to achieve the goals of the university. This it could do by identifying labour sources like unemployed graduates, the industries, and institutions of higher learning, retired senior academics and the provision of resources in terms of finance to hire them.

Introduction

The university is an institution of higher learning that provides high-level manpower needs to organizations whether in the public or private sector. Like any other organization that has its goals to achieve, requires quality staff. The ability of any university to take-off and achieve its goals is a function of its ability to attract competent or quality staff into its employment.

Major problem facing the Nigerian universities today is that of quality staffing, arising from their inability to identify recruitment sources from where employees could be selected and the financial resources to employ qualified staff to achieve their goals and objectives.

The Nigerian Universities could be classified into first, second, third and fourth generation universities. The first generation universities are the universities established in the country before the 1970s, the second generation universities, are those universities established in the 1970s, the third generation universities, are those universities established either by the federal or state governments in the 1980s and 1990s, while the fourth generation universities, are those universities established in the late 1990s and 2000s mainly by private individuals or organizations. One thing that is common to all these universities in Nigeria is the problem of quality manpower in terms of skill, higher educational qualification and experience.

The Nigerian universities, irrespective of the time they were established, subject their courses/programmes for accreditation by the National University Commission (NUC) from time to time. It is the course accreditation that determines the rating of any university. The factors considered by the NUC during its accreditation of programmes in the Nigerian universities include among other things: ratio of staff to students and the quality of staff in terms of higher educational qualifications, skills and experience. In time past, some university courses have failed NUC accreditation due to their inability to attract quality staff, which is partly due to the problems inherent in their process of staff recruitment/selection namely; nepotism, insufficient financial resources and improper identification of recruitment sources.

The study addressed the way Covenant University one of the fourth generation universities in Nigeria, have handled its staff recruitment/selection in the past three years. Further more, it addressed the modalities put in place by the university to overcome the manpower problems in the university. In addition, the paper shall attempt to find out whether adequate identification of labour sources by Covenant University has facilitated quality staff recruitment/selection, and to see the extent it has enhanced the accreditation of courses/programmes presented to the National University Commission by the university.

Given the nature of our paper, we are depending on primary sources of data inform of interview with the department of human resources (Registry) of the university and secondary data largely from relevant journals, Covenant University records and textbooks. However, we have presented some of our data in tables for easy understanding.

The paper is divided into nine sections: Section two examined the literature review and theoretical framework. Section three focused on recruitment sources. Section four looked at the relationship between staff recruitment/selection policies of organizations and labour market characteristics. Section five addressed the factors that affect the general labour market. Section six examined the benefits of adequate identification of recruitment sources to organizations. Section seven looked at the linkage between labour sourcing decision and organizational performance. Section eight focused on the case study of new universities overcoming labour sourcing problem, and Section nine contains the conclusion and the way forward.

Conceptual Clarification and Literature Review

In a paper of this nature, it would be appropriate to clarify certain concepts that will enable us understand the topic under consideration.

Staff Recruitment – This is a serious organizational affair any where in the word. This is because it has been discovered that the success and failure of an organization to a greater extent depends on the quality of the workforce of the organization arising from the level importance attached to the recruitment of its workforce. Cascio (2003:201) argues that

Recruitment is a form of business competition, and it is fiercely competitive, just as corporations compete to develop, manufacture, and market the best product or service, so they must also compete to identify, attract, and hire the most qualified people.

Barber (1998) sees staff recruitment as consisting of any practice or activity carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees. As important as staff recruitment is to the successful realization of the competent workforce in the organization, organizations do not have the same strategies put in place by them to get the job of recruitment done.

Olian and Rynes (1984) posit that because of differences in the companies' strategies (either in form of ownership and objective of the organization), makes organizations more often to assign different degrees of interest to staff recruitment.

Recruitment Sources: According to Reynold et al as cited in Cascio (2003:204), recruitment sources or the labour market is a geographical area within which the forces of labour supply (people looking for work) interact with the forces of labour demand (employers looking for people) and thereby determine the price of labour.

On his part, Yesufu (2000:114) sees recruitment sources or the labour market as refers to all the institutions and methods by which persons that are desirous of productive employment are put in touch with one or more prospective or probable employers. Such arrangements according to him serve to source suitable employees to fill vacant positions that are known to exist or that may be notified by employers. He posits that, "An efficient labour market must be easily accessible to both unemployed persons seeking work, and all the possible employing establishments and prospective individual employers." He argued further:

A labour market in functional terms is one that caters for economically identifiable or occupationally stratified labour that displays comparative levels of education and training, substitutability and consequently commands comparative wages or salaries (Yesufu, 2000:114).

Efficient recruitment source or labour market can thus be stratified basically by reference to industry, as well as vertically with regards to occupations and professions that are comparable in terms of education, training, technical and management responsibilities and also, assumed levels of productivity and comparative incomes (Yesufu, 2000:115). On our part, recruitment sources can be said to be both institutions and geographical area where those who are seeking for employment are available for the employer either within a short-term or long-term and are ready to work for the accomplishment of the goals and objectives of employers.

Cascio (2003:205) has observed that in a tight labour market, the demand by employers exceeds the available supply of worker, thus tends to exert upward pressure on wage. On the other hand, in a loose labour market the reverse is the case – the supply of workers exceeds employer's demand, exerting downward pressure on wages. He identified some factors that are important for defining the limits of a recruitment sources or the labour market as:

- a. Geography;
- b. Education and /or technical background required to perform a job;
- c. Industry;
- d. Licencing or certification requirements; and
- e. Union membership.

Staff Selection: Robbins and Coulter (1999:347-348) see staff selection as an exercise in prediction. It seeks to predict which applicants will be successful if hired. They pointed out that success in this case means performing well on the criteria the organization uses to evaluate employees. They identified the following as means which the organization can use to predict whether applicants will perform well on the job or not; application form, written tests, performance simulation tests, interview, background investigations and physical examination.

According to Etomi (2002:26), staff selection is the process through which those who are recruited by the organization to serve as candidates are winnowed down to the few who are hired, or identifying the candidates from the recruitment pool who best meet organizational requirements for employment. Byars and Rue (2004:160) on their part see staff selection as the process of choosing from among available applicants - the individuals who are most likely to successfully perform a job from the pool of qualified candidates.

Noe et al (2004:171) observed that through personnel selection, organizations make decisions about who will or will not be allowed to join the organization. They point out that selection begins with the candidates identified through recruitment and attempts to reduce their number to the individuals best qualified to perform the available jobs. And at the end of the process, the selected individuals are placed in jobs with the organization. From the above definitions, we can conclude that staff selection is a process through

which the best applicant is engaged by an organization for the purpose of achieving the goals and objectives of that organization.

The growth of any organization is brought about by the totality of the contributions of staff available to it. It is the quality of staff, together with adequate equipments in the organization and its proper management that leads to quality results/products. As have been observed by Olowu and Adamolekun (2002:87) it is becoming more essential to secure and manage quality human resources as the most valuable resource of any organization, because of the need for effective and efficient delivery of goods and services by organizations.

Generally, organizations are becoming aware that for their goals and objectives to be realized, there is need for them to have competent staff in their employment. Such competent staff are sourced from the labour market. The more unique a profession is, the more competitive it is to source for competent staff in the labour market in terms of time and money (Gberevbie, 2004:177).

The sustenance, stability and continuous smooth running of an organization necessitate replacement of staff for the reason of resignation, retirement, dismissal or death, and this is a recurring phenomenon in the organization. As observed by Torrington and Hall (1998:204) there is always a need for the replacement of employees in the organization. Labour turnover necessitates continuing replacement of employees. When immediate replacement fails to take place, the operations, activities and even the goals and objectives may be undermined. The challenges organization faces therefore is how to identify potential staff that is ready to work for a long time for the realization of its goals and objectives.

Theoretical Framework

In this paper, the decision-making theory was adopted as a basis for our analysis. This is because, hiring quality staff through selection that enhances the attainment of the goals and objectives of the organization is a management decision. According to Noel et al (2004:171) "The organization's decisions about selecting personnel are central to its ability to survive, adapt, and grow." They argued further "Selection decisions become especially critical when organizations face tight labour markets or must compete for talent with other organizations in the same industry." Example is the

competition for quality staff in terms of skill, educational qualification and experience by both public and private universities in Nigeria.

The importance of the decision-making theory to this paper is based on the fact that decision-making is at the very heart of business success of any organization. The more quality a decision taken by an organization is, particularly as regard to who to hire to do a job and from what source, determines the quality output such organization will expect in terms of higher productivity and profitability.

While it is essential for organizations to recruit quality staff to achieve its goals and objectives, the number of staff to be recruited per time, the time for the recruitment, and the level of seriousness placed on it depends largely on the recruitment policy of the organization. As observed by Castetter (1992:116), the extent to which recruitment sources can be cultivated to locate potential recruits depends to a considerable degree on recruitment policy and plans of the organization concerned.

Isaac (1975:230) observed that the decision-making theory focuses upon the decision maker as the fundamental unit of analysis. He points out that the basic assumptions of decision-making theory is that of making decisions that are judgments about how to gain a particular objective in a given situation. In this case, the organization wants to achieve its goals of performance – profit maximization in the private sector, effective and efficient provision of social amenities to the people in the public sector. In either case, decision-making is crucial in order to achieve the goals of that organization. Particularly decisions concerning human resources, which is considered so vital to organizational effectiveness. No matter how well equipped an organization may be in terms of money and material, decisions about human resources are central to the attainment organizational goals.

Isaac (1975:230) argues that the decision-making theorist does not claim that the model accounts for all political, social and economic phenomena, rather it is assumed that decision-making is most important an aspect of the political, social and economic system and consequently of primary interest to the political scientist. Harrison as cited in Gold-Enuwe (2002:15) defines a decision as:

A moment in on-going process of evaluating alternatives related to a goal at which the expectations of the decision-maker whether in the public or private sector with regard to a particular course of action compel him to make a selection or commitment towards which he directs his intellect and energies for the purpose of attaining his objectives.

Noel et al (2004:171) posit that "Personnel selection is the process through which organizations make decisions about who will or not be allowed to join the organization" and this decision is vital to the very survival of the organization. According to Rosenbloom (1993:320) administrative decision-making is simply the choice from among competing alternatives of the ends and means that an organization or a nation will pursue and employ to realize its goals and objectives for the benefits of the entire organization or even the community.

And to Bernard as cited in Onwuchekwa (1993:157) decision-making is the deliberate adoption of means to ends, which is the essence of formal organization. He stresses that what is important in organizational decision-making is the superlative degree to which logical processes must and can characterize organization's action as contrasted with individual action, and the degree to which decision is specialized in an organization.

Edigin and Otoghile (1994:87) observed that decision-making which has to do with choosing between alternatives is almost a universal definition. They points out that the utility of this definition lies in the fact that not only does it cover individual and private organizations' decisions that are taken, but also covers the more complex and systematic process of making not only domestic governmental decisions, but that of foreign policy decisions as it relates to one country and another in the international system in achieving a nation's national interest.

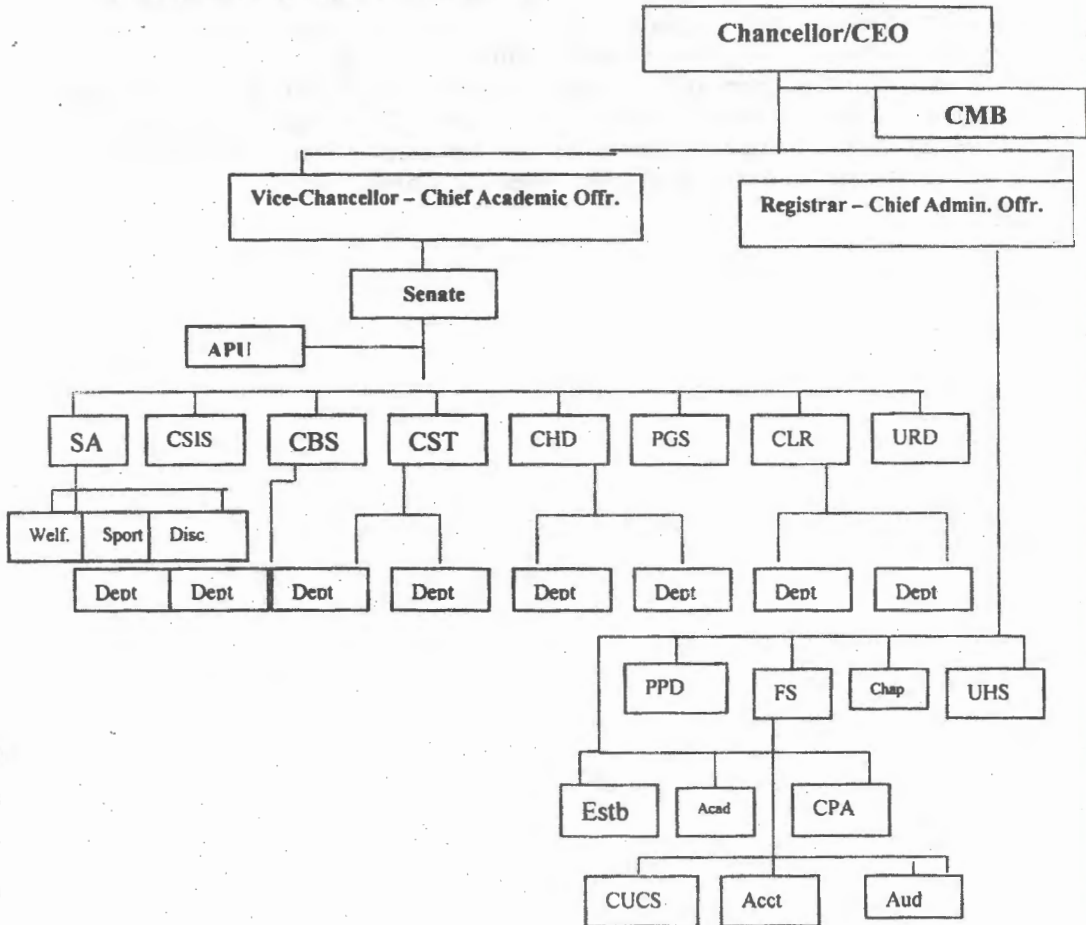
It is worthy of note that while the decision-maker (whether in the public, private sector, and even at the individual level) is the focal point in decision making theory, the decision-maker is not viewed as operating within a vacuum, the environment, the situation in which the decision is to be taken is recognized as an important factor, both as a shaper of objectives that the organization is set to achieve and as a set of limits that help determine what management can and

cannot do in seeking the goals and objectives of the organization (Isaac, 1975:230).

There are many recruitment sources available to the organization that management takes the decision on which of them to settle for per time to enhance quality staff selection to realize the goals and objectives of the organization. It is the management of an organization that determines whether to go to a particular recruitment source or the labour market to get qualified staff and provide the financial resources to hire them that enhances its performance or operations either in the long or short run. Below is the decision -making model of Covenant University.

Table 1: Model of Decision-Making in Covenant University

**COVENANT UNIVERSITY
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



Source: Covenant University Registry (2006)

Note: The University's Organogram is an evolving one in view of her age and the dynamic nature of takeoff challenges

The organizational chart above describes the decision-making model of Covenant University. The model is Unique in the sense that

the university has a resident Chancellor who is the chief executive officer (CEO) of the institution. The Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar of the institution are at the same level of hierarchy, while the Vice-Chancellor is the chief academic officer; the Registrar on the other hand is the chief Administration officer. The model has worked well so far and whatever achievements recorded up till now by the university in terms of infrastructural development, staff recruitment/selection and others could be attributed to the presence of an executive Chancellor who oversees major developmental projects of the university.

The Chancellor/CEO is at the head of the institution and below is the CMB – Central Management Board; this body formulates the main policies of the university, and the Chancellor is the President of the board. Below at one end is the Vice-Chancellor, who is the chief academic officer, and below that is the university Senate, just below that is the APU – Academic Planning Unit, below that is the SA-Student Affairs, which is at the same level with the CSIS – Centre for Systems and Information Services, CBS – College of Business and Social Sciences, CST – College of Science and Technology, CHD – College of Human Development, PGS – Post-graduate School and CLR – Centre for Learning Resources i.e. Library. Below the SA is the Welf – Welfare, Sport and Disc – Discipline. Below CBS, CST, CHD and CLR are the departments.

On the other side, below the Chancellor is the Registrar, who is the chief administration officer of the university. Below that is the Est – Establishment at the same level with Acad- Academic Registry, CPA – Corporate Public Affairs, PPD – Physical Planning Department, FS – Financial Services, CHAP – Chaplaincy, and UHS – University Health Centre. Below the FS are CUCS – Covenant University Consortium Services, Acct – Accounts and Aud – Audit, which are at the same level, reporting to the Financial Services.

Recruitment Sources or Labour Market for Organizations

The following sources of labour for organizations were discussed in this paper:

Part-time employees: This was one of the methods adopted by Covenant University to select its academic staff. These are people who are ready to offer their services for a fixed amount of a given period of time depending on the arrangement. Academic staff moving from one university to the other as part-time lecturers or

those academic staff that leave their university to work in another university on sabbatical leave are good examples. This recruitment source is very vital particularly to newly established private universities like Covenant University in the facilitation of accreditation of its courses by the National University Commission, because it provides qualified and experienced hands.

Carrell et al (2000:156) have argued that part-time employees have been discovered to be less expensive than the full-time employees to the organization, particularly where the part-time staff are as competent as the full-time employees. They pointed out that part-time workers saves the organization from incurring expenses like leave allowances, medical bills for family of staff and payment of gratuity and pension to retired full-time staff. They observed that part-time staffs are more enthusiastic for jobs that are traditionally boring and routine than the full-time employees because the part-time staffs do not have to face constant repetition, day after day for long periods of time.

Executive Search or Headhunting: This was another method adopted by Covenant University in its resolve for the selection of quality academic staff. It is a process whereby best candidates considered fit enough to handle a position – particularly at the management level of an organization are employed through a third party from their present place of employment. The idea of executive search is based on the fact that the best candidates considered fit enough to occupy top positions in the organization are not in the category of those seeking for new jobs, but are those who are successful in their present jobs and are not thinking of moving elsewhere (Okoh, 1998:85).

A specialized agency for a fixed amount of fee, undertakes to find such persons by means, which they keep secret, but through informants. The candidate is then approached discreetly and after a discussion about salary, fringe benefits and other conditions of employment, he is then introduced to the employer. This process is not done through the regular open advertisement on Radio, Newspaper, Magazine, TV, and the Internet (Okoh, 1998:85).

Older workers: This source of staff selection was of major importance to Covenant University in its quest for quality academic staff employment. It is a situation whereby an organization decides to bring into its workforce, older workers who may be between the

ages of 45 and 70years old. The advantage of this is that it saves the organization time, energy and money that it would have taken to train competent hands in that particular area (Carrell et al, 2000:156). This source of labour contributed greatly to the enhancement of quality academic staff selection in Covenant University. By deciding to engage older workers who are already vast in their various fields, the university was able to commence operation immediately without delay at the inception of the academic session on October 21st 2002, because the source made available competent and experience quality academic staff to the university.

Underemployed: This was another selection source of quality academic staff for Covenant University. It comprises of individuals who though in full-time employment, feel they are under-employed because their jobs are unrelated to their interests and training. Although, people in this category may not be necessarily looking for jobs, they may want to be recruited by another organization because they would prefer jobs more in line with their training, skills and interest (Carrell et al, 2000:156). Professionals like Lawyers and Accountants were employed into Covenant Universities for a part time lecturing job in their area of professional specialization.

Unemployed: This has been one of the major sources of staff employment for the Covenant University. The unemployed in the society are the most available recruitment source for organizations. They can be found in any area in terms of skills, qualification and experience. They could be contacted through direct application, employment agencies, or advertisement (Carrell et al, 2000:156). According to Byars and Rue (2004:140) job advertising for the employment of staff into an organization are commonly placed in daily newspapers and in trade and professional publications for easy access by those seeking for employment in these organizations.

Pirating or Poaching: This source was very crucial to Covenant University quest to have quality academic staff in its employment in its bid to get its courses/programmes accredited by the National University Commission. It is a situation whereby one organization on becoming aware that a particular individual or group of individuals in a particular organization can best handle an aspect of a task in the organization; decides to go for such a person or persons with a view to bringing them into its own organization as employees. This happen where an organization does not deem it necessary to

develop and train its own staff in that particular field, either because of time or the huge financial implications involved. The staff so recruited in this way, (pirating or poaching) are usually paid higher remuneration in the new organization' (Carrell et al, 2000:156). Employing a senior lecturer or an associate professor from one university with a promise to make him/her a full professor in the new appointment is a good example.

Redeploying: This source played significant role in staff employment at the Covenant University. Qualified hands were redeployed into academic field from other sections of the university. It is a situation whereby an organization moves its staff from one section of the workforce to another section. This may be as a result of over staffing in that particular section, or that after a study of the staff over a period of time, had discovered that the staff so redeployed can best function in that new section, instead of engaging fresh employees to do the same job (Carrell et al, 2000:156).

According to Byars and Rue (2004:137-138), one of the best recruitment sources or labour market for best talents is the organization's own employees. They observed that this is so because of the advantages the organization stands to derive from it. These are: First, the organization is in a better position to know or have good idea of the strengths and weaknesses of its employees, this it can do by maintaining a skills inventory which it can use as a starting point for recruiting from within. Second, recruitment from within can have a significant, positive effect on employee motivation and morale when it creates promotion opportunities or prevents lay-off.

When employees know they will be considered for openings, they have an incentive for good performance. On the other hand, if employees know that outsiders are usually given the first opportunity to fill openings, the effect is the opposite - demotivation and hence poor performance. Third, due to high investment of the organization on its staff, full use of the abilities of the organization's employees improves the organization's return on its investment.

Byars and Rue, however pointed out some disadvantages associated with selecting from internal staff to fill vacant positions as: First, infighting for promotions. This can become overly intense amongst staff and have a negative effect on the morale and

performance of the people who are not promoted. Second, It may stifle new ideas and innovation when selecting to fill vacant positions comes only from internal sources (Ibid: 139).

Outsourcing: This source played a major role in quality academic staff employment at the Covenant University, particularly in the area of training of the internal academic staff in post-graduate programmes by external lecturers. Quible (1996:203) has observed that an organization could also use what he called 'Out-sourcing' to get its job done effectively. He referred to 'out-sourcing' as a process whereby the organization turns over certain of its functions to an outside agency in the form of a contract that has the specialization necessary to perform them well. On their part, Noel et al (2004:49) see outsourcing as the practice of having another company (a vendor, third party provider, or consultant) provides services.

One of the functions that could be outsourced by organizations and that actually took place at the Covenant University is the post-graduate training for internal academic staff of the university by external lecturers on contract terms. Quible (1996:204) argues that the advantages an organization derives from the out-sourcing methods include: cost reduction, prevention of over-staffing, enhancement of quality of work process and saving of administrative over-head. However, Thompson et al (2004:257) points out the dangers of excessive outsourcing by organizations to include: losing control over the performance of key value chain activities and becoming overly dependent on outsiders.

Relationship between Staff Recruitment/Selection Policies of an Organization and Labour Market Characteristics.

There is a strong relationship between staff recruitment/selection policies of an organization and the labour market characteristics. According to Rynes (1991:399) employers change their policies on staff recruitment/selection in response to changes in the labour market condition – like scarcity of qualified manpower to take up teaching appointments in the Nigerian universities. Cascio (2003:206) posits that as labour becomes increasingly scarce in terms of skill, experience and educational qualification, employers may change their policies in the following ways:

- i. Improving the characteristics of vacant positions – by raising salaries or increasing training and educational benefits;
- ii. Reducing hiring standards;
- iii. Using more (and more expensive) recruiting methods; and
- iv. Extending searches over a wider geographical area.

Reducing hiring standard is a means which organization uses to achieve its goals and objectives in the short run. For instance, a newly established university with a high academic staff selection standard, faced with the National University Commission's accreditation, which is a basis for the continued patronage by prospective students, may wave aside certain aspects of its staff selection policies – like not wanting to recruit retired senior academics into its employment. This does happen as a result of the scarcity of academic staff with P.hD and Professors in their various fields in Nigeria.

Factors that affect the general labour market

The labour market of any nation is the totality of the human resources that are available, and are ready to work. The supply of labour to organizations is influenced by the prevailing circumstances in that society per time. Cole (2002:148 & 200) pointed out some factors that could affect the general labour market to include economic, social and political.

Periods of Economic Slump

During periods of economic slump usually associated with high levels of unemployment it is easier for employers to hire labour on their terms and cheaply. Conversely, where there is economic boom, there is bound to be demand for more manpower. It becomes the employees' market, particularly for the highly professional people, and employers would regard the labour market as difficult.

Social factors

In situations of social unrest or depression in the society, the skilled manpower would tend to take up jobs abroad. Local organizations would then be denied the much needed skilled manpower. In such situations employers are bound to pay heavily in terms of time and money to acquire the skilled manpower available.

Political factor

Labour market can either be favourable or not favourable to organizations, depending on political considerations such as those of government legislation, level of state benefits, taxation policies of government and political instability in the society. These could make the labour market favourable or not favourable to organizations. Where there is political instability, less emphasis is placed on acquiring labour by organizations.

Benefits of Adequate Identification of Recruitment Sources of Quality Staff for the Organization.

The adequate identification of labour recruitment sources from where organizations can attract competent or quality staff within a short notice, without disrupting its activities is a strategy for organizational performance. Armstrong (2001:316) has observed that Employee resourcing strategy is a vital part of both the formulation and implementation of business strategies.

Adequate identification of labour recruitment sources for quality staff is very important to the organization. It helps the organization to overcome the short – term drawback of immediate replacement of staff that has to perform sensitive and immediate tasks that may be left undone as a result of sudden resignation, death or leave of absence.

As observed by Bartol and Martin (1998:320), the internal work force of an organization may experience changes brought about by staff retirements, resignations, terminations, death and leave of absence. These could cause major shifts in the need for human resource in the organization. They argued that in order for organizations to retain greater flexibility in staff recruitment, it should make use of 'contingent workers' to keep the system going without obstruction. They referred to 'contingent workers' as part-time workers and those hired on a temporary basis to handle areas of fluctuating demand or changing needs that cannot be handled by the organization's full-time staff at least in the very short-run. By so doing, the smooth running of the organizational activities to achieve its goals and objectives is assured.

The goals and objectives of organizations are more likely to be achieved when quality staff are brought into that organization.

Quality staff are those staff recruited into the organization on the basis of their unique educational qualifications, skills, work experience and other factors that may be of benefits to the realization of organizational goals.

The presence of quality staff in an organization enhances that organization's productive capacity and hence earns the organization good recognition by members of the public and higher returns on investment. On the other hand lack of quality staff in an organization reduces the organization's productive capacity and hence low returns on investment

Linkage between Labour Sourcing Decisions and Organizational Performance

The human resource of an organization is very vital to the attainment of the organizational goals and objectives. There is a linkage between labour sourcing decision and organizational performance. The linkage is based on the fact that for organization to achieve its goals and objectives, the labour sourcing decisions on where to get quality staff and when to hire them becomes very crucial to the performance and survival of that organization.

According to Noel et al (2004:171), "the organization's decision about selecting personnel are central to its ability to survive, adapt and grow." The decision of organization to lay-off most part of its vital workforce for example, due to present low patronage of its products may be detrimental to the growth and survival of that organization in the long - run, particularly when the fortune of that organization changes for the better. When this happens, it may be difficult for the organization to get qualified and dedicated staff who are familiar with the work environment of that organization to carry out its activities.

The decision therefore by organization in the area of adequate identification of recruitment sources of quality staff to carry out its activities becomes a catalyst for organizational goal attainment and enhanced performance. While the former may be termed bad decision, the later on the other hand may be termed a good decision by organization to achieve its goals and objectives.

A Case Study: Overcoming the Problem of Sourcing for Labour by New Universities in Nigeria -The Covenant University.

In Nigerian public universities, it has been estimated that in some programmes, the ratio of lecturer to students is not less than 1:200 (Source: Discussion). What the above means is that there is scarcity of qualified academic manpower in Nigeria. For private universities to emerge at this critical stage of lack of qualified people willing to take up appointment in the universities as academic staff further aggravates the problem of qualified academic staff scarcity in the Nigerian universities.

Covenant University assumed its first academic section 2002/2003 on October 21st 2002, with three colleges namely; College of Business and Social Sciences, College of Human Development and College of Science and Technology. The university started with a student population of 1,500 and academic staff strength of less than 80. The university came into being at a time when even the older public universities in Nigeria were in dire need of qualified manpower to take up teaching appointments in higher institutions in the country.

In order to employ quality staff, the university identified the labour recruitment sources from where it selected quality academic staff to include Part-time employees, Executive search, older workers or retired senior academics, unemployed graduates, pirating or poaching of staff from other institutions, redeploying of staff and outsourcing process. With the decision to get staff from these sources, the university was able to take-off immediately. The proper identification of the recruitment sources has made the university to achieve high success in its quest for quality academic staff selection into its employment. Below is the table showing the total number of current academic staff, status and distribution at the Covenant University.

Table 2: Shows Information on Academic Staff Strength of Covenant University

S/n.	Description (Lecturers)	Total Staff
1.	College of Business and Social Sciences	72
2.	College of Human Development	39
3.	College of Science and Technology	110
4.	Library	8
Total	All Academic Staff	229

Source: Covenant University (Registry) 2006.

Table 3: Shows the Distribution of Academic Staff According to Status

S/n.	Status of Academic Staff	Total Staff
1.	Professors	14
2.	Staff with Ph.D Degrees	46
3.	Staff with Masters Degrees	150
4.	Staff with first Degrees	33
5.	Part-Time Lecturers	2
6.	Lecturers on Sabbaticals	13

Source: Covenant University (Registry) 2006.

Linkage between Labour Sourcing Decision and Covenant University Enhanced Performance

The decision of the university to adequately identify recruitment sources and select its academic staff from these sources yielded a resounding success at its first attempt at accreditation of its programmes by the National University Commission, less than three years of its existence. The university presented 16 programmes for accreditation by the NUC, Covenant University did not only have all its courses accredited successfully, but was also ranked as the best university in the accreditation exercise in Nigeria at the 2005 programme accreditation exercise in the Nigerian Universities. Below is the table showing the programmes accredited by the NUC according to colleges.

Table 4: Shows the Programmes Accredited According to Colleges at the Covenant University by the National University Commission.

College	Programme Accredited
College of business and Social Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Political Science-International Relations-Marketing-Industrial Relations-Business Administration-Banking and Finance-Economics-Accounting
College of Science and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Architecture-Computer Science-Electrical EngineeringElectronics
College of Human Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Public Relations-Mass Communication-Psychology-Sociology-English

Source: Covenant University Records (2005).

Overcoming the Problem of Academic Staff Scarcity by the Covenant University

In order to overcome the problem of lack of qualified staff facing universities in Nigeria, and to further meet the academic manpower need of the university, Covenant University decided to employ the services of 29 older and qualified manpower particularly at the higher degree (P.hD) level as associate lecturers from public universities all over the country in addition to the 229 academic staff of various qualifications in its employment. The main goal of these associate lecturers is to train internally the lecturers employed by the university that needed to obtain the higher degrees that will enable them function properly as academic staff of the university. Currently a total of 156 academic staff are under going post-graduate programme in various discipline in the university. Below is the table showing the number of academic staff under going the post-graduate training.

Table 5: Shows Academic Staff under going the Post-graduate Programme at the Covenant University.

Degree in View	Number of Staff
Mphil / PhD.	123
Masters Degrees	33
Total	156

Source: Covenant University Post-graduate Handbook (2006).

The decision to engage the services of associate academics into Covenant University no doubt has helped in no small measure to solve the training requirement of academic manpower needs of the institution. This is because with the 156 academic staff currently involved in the internal staff development-training programme at their various level of completion, the short-term academic manpower needs of the university would successfully be solved. This internal training of staff embarked upon as source of qualified labour, has positioned Covenant University to be on its way to overcoming the problem of labour sourcing particularly at the higher degree level facing the Nigerian universities nation-wide.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

In the study, it was established that the human resource of an organization is the most vital resource for the realization of the goals and objectives of that organization. As a result, adequate identification of labour recruitment sources, where competent staff could be recruited within a short notice to carry out the immediate task of the organization and ensure continuity of the activities of the organization is very important. In a situation of sudden vacancies that may exist from time to time, which may be necessitated by resignation or leave of absence in the organization, such identification can be very vital to the attainment of organizational goals and objectives.

Organizations like Covenant University have realized the importance of adequate identification of labour recruitment sources, which has enhanced the selection of quality staff to carry out the task of the organization for its survival and growth. In the study we find out that there is a relationship between labour sourcing decision and organizational performance. We noted that the decision

to identify which labour market to go for staff selection is that of management of the organization.

The study recommends that organizations such as universities should be proactive in the area of sourcing for competent academic staff, in order to achieve the goals of the university. This it could do by taking the issue of adequate identification of labour recruitment sources very seriously, by identifying labour sources like unemployed graduates, the industries, institutions of higher learning and retired senior academics, and provision of the resources in terms of finance to hire them.

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