

# HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF TEACHERS

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**Abstract:** Education has been shown to be the foundation of social equity and economic progress, underpinning individual and community, self-sufficiency and sustainability. The correlation between teacher quality and student education outcomes has been well evidenced in previous research. The purpose of this study is to explore the potential use of Human Resource Management (HRM) theory and practice to identify and select quality teachers for the range of individual and contextually different schools that exist within education systems. The variance between schools in their context, sector, socio-economic status and needs, is considerable, consequently individual schools have quite specific local needs when recruiting and selecting teachers. The ability to draw on consistent evidence-based practices may result in not only rigorous recruitment and selection processes but also teacher retention. Effective recruitment, selection and retention of teachers has emerged, in recent studies, to be one of the most crucial school improvement strategies. In order to understand how HRM practices might improve recruitment and selection of teachers in independent schools it was necessary firstly to identify the HRM practices being used. To this end an online survey of school leaders was conducted. The results of this survey indicated that a variety of HRM processes were being utilized by school leaders at the functional level with little cognizance of the strategic possibilities nor an HRM evidence-based structure of practices. These results provide a compelling reason for further research and indicate there is great potential for use of HRM expertise and practices by school leaders for recruitment and selection of teachers as part of a suite of HRM practices which may indeed lead to school improvement and eventually to improved social and economic outcomes.

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**Keywords:** HRM, recruitment and selection, teacher quality, organizational fit, school improvement, cultural fit, personality testing, human capital

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## I. INTRODUCTION

HRM literature suggests the most critical point of personnel quality control in any industry is the “entry point” (Greives & Hanafin, 2005). Empirical evidence and the literature concur that no amount of staff professional development can compensate for inadequate recruitment, selection and employment practices and poor hiring decisions. Furthermore, poor hiring decisions ultimately lead to staff turnover (Mason & Schroeder, 2010).

Teacher turnover has been shown to be damaging to student achievement, especially in lower performing schools, and the negative effect of teacher turnover on student outcomes is not often mitigated by hiring a new “better” teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Teacher turnover has a direct impact on the student’s learning, but it also has a negative organizational impact, including diminished staff cohesion and collegiality, and loss of organizational knowledge, not to mention the financial impact of recruitment, selection and training of new teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hargis & Bradley, 2011). Effective staffing, commencing with strategically aligned recruitment, selection and retention practices, can support improved educational outcomes, and more efficient managerial and administrative practices in the school (Cranston, 2012a; Heneman & Judge, 2009).

This study is borne out of the strength of current evidence supporting HRM practices and concerns within education regarding the selection of

quality teachers (Cranston, 2012a, 2012b; Greives & Hanafin, 2005; Mertz, 2010). This gave rise to an interest in investigating whether and how, the inclusion of HRM practices in the selection processes of teachers can improve the selection, recruitment, employment and retention of teachers, as human capital in the school context.

Human capital is well established as the greatest resource in any organization, and is described as the knowledge, skills, attitudes and other attributes (KSAO’s) required or desired of an employee matched to a specific position (Heneman & Judge, 2009). HRM research suggests person-job fit (Heneman & Judge, 2009) to be the match between the specific job requirements and rewards and the applicants knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation. Organizations also seek person-organizational fit (Ng & Sarris, 2012) which is an alignment between the applicant’s values and those of the organization (Heneman & Judge, 2009). Person-organization fit will more likely ensure perceived organizational support, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Ng & Sarris, 2012). Person-group fit (Werbel & Johnson, 2001) or the aggregated unit human capital (Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011), and the importance of collaboration, is also a consideration for organizations with the increased benefits of team work and collaboration (Klein et al., 2009; Nancarrow et al., 2013).

The most critical and far reaching school improvement strategy to enhance teacher quality is improved recruitment and selection practices,

resulting in and supporting retention (Cranston, 2012a, 2012b). Consequently, there is a huge burden of responsibility on school leaders who select teachers, to ensure their recruitment and selection criteria and practices are effective in employing quality teachers who are aligned to the strategic direction of the school. Therefore, the two research questions for this study were:

- (1) What Human Resource Management (HRM) practices are evident in the recruitment and selection of teachers in independent schools?
- (2) How can HRM practices support the recruitment, selection, employment and retention of teachers in independent schools?

Schools vary considerably in the context, sector, socio economic status and needs, and individual schools have quite specific local needs when recruiting and selecting teachers. Utilizing the body of HRM literature and expertise on recruitment, selection and employment to identify quality teachers could supplement educator's expertise in identifying the most effective potential teachers for the individual school context. However, despite the wealth of evidence on successful HRM recruitment, selection and employment practices in other contexts, there is limited literature to suggest that these findings have been used to improve current education practice.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

The study used quantitative method. The quantitative data were collected through an online survey and analysed using multivariate techniques.

### 2.1. Participants

The survey sample was school leaders from independent schools. The instrument was designed for this target group because they are the key decision makers in recruitment and selection of teachers in their schools. 112 respondents completed the survey but only 98 fully completed the questionnaire, which was a 20% response rate.

### 2.2 The instrument

The survey was administered to identify the HRM practices and procedures used in schools by leadership teams and where present HR managers. The questionnaire also investigated the perceptions of the efficacy of those practices related to the recruitment, selection and retention of teaching staff. The first section focused on demographic details. The remainder of the survey contained 37 items that required a response on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The item prompts were developed from HRM principles and practices, identified in the literature, that were relevant to schools. The data were intended to reveal a range of variables and relationships between variables not currently evident, consequently the survey lent itself to multivariate analysis (Vogt, 2007).

## III. RESULTS

### 3.1 Principal Components Analysis

A Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was conducted on the survey responses to reduce the data from the 37 items into a smaller number of factors. Prior to performing the PCA, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was .749, exceeding the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1970, 1974) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) reached statistical significance supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of .45 and above.

The three-component solution explained 46.3% of the variance as displayed in Table 3.1. To aid in the interpretation of these three components, oblimin rotation was performed and all items that were below .45 removed. The rotated solution revealed the presence of a simple structure, with all three components showing a number of strong loadings and all variables loading substantially on only one component. The double loaded items were also removed, the final solution is shown in the Structure Matrix Table 3.2.

The Cronbach alpha revealed all three dependent variables had good internal consistency with Cronbach alpha coefficients of .895, .757 and .728, respectively, which are all above the recommended ideal of .7 (Field, 2013; Pallant, 2013).

Total Variance Explained				
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	
1	7.660	28.371	28.371	7.204
2	2.730	10.111	38.482	3.418
3	2.110	7.816	46.298	3.109

Table 3.1

	Component		
	1	2	3
Staffing strategy is reviewed prior to commencing recruitment and selection of new staff	<b>.673</b>	.246	-.145

A job analysis to determine the KSAOs of the position is conducted before recruitment begins	<b>.663</b>	.385	.11 1	selection is informed by HRM professionals			9
Staffing strategy informs the recruitment and selection process	<b>.658</b>	.186	- .00 1	The selection panel are trained in interview techniques	.467	<b>.641</b>	- .12 6
Recruitment and selection of teaching staff is informed by current research	<b>.656</b>	.416	.19 6	The selection panel are trained in current employment legislation	.478	<b>.606</b>	- .10 1
Employment protocols are cognisant of legal compliance	<b>.652</b>	-.108	.36 3	HRM practices currently used in other organisations outside education are useful to inform school HRM	.149	<b>.539</b>	.23 6
Agreed teacher attributes and characteristics inform the interview question design	<b>.638</b>	.093	.11 8	The initial screening of applicants is outsourced to a recruitment agency	-.099	<b>.482</b>	- .25 2
School policy and planning documents are accessible to all staff	<b>.635</b>	.018	.19 8	The school culture has an impact on all teacher recruitment and selection	.175	.058	<b>.82</b> 2
A structured induction is part of the employment process for all teachers	<b>.614</b>	.364	.13 2	HRM practices have a positive influence on school performance	.307	.029	<b>.72</b> 4
Potential internal career pathways are evident in the school structure	<b>.607</b>	.141	.10 1	Recruitment and selection are the most important of all HRM practices	.056	.036	<b>.57</b> 6
Retention of valued staff is included in staffing strategy planning	<b>.605</b>	.169	.06 5	Your school HRM practices are effective in maintaining teacher quality	.404	.360	<b>.53</b> 7
There is a clear organisation structure	<b>.604</b>	-.037	.30 2	Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.			
Teacher performance and development is aligned to the APST	<b>.594</b>	.070	- .00 5	a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.			
The performance and development framework is tailored to individual teacher needs	<b>.581</b>	.132	.33 6	<b>Table3.2</b>			
Mentoring is available for new staff and beginning teachers	<b>.571</b>	-.043	.25 1	<b>Multivariate Analysis</b>			
Teacher recruitment is designed to attract a targeted range of applicants to suit the vacancy	<b>.553</b>	.287	.23 0	A Multivariate analysis (MANOVA), was used to determine whether school leader's opinions differed on the three factors created by the PCA according to school size; school leadership tenure; and, the systemic or independent nature of the school. Thus, three sets of analysis were conducted to explore the impact on the three generated dependent variables: Strategic staffing and workforce planning; Recruitment and selection processes; HRM and impact; on the three independent variables: school size; school leadership tenure; and, the systemic or independent nature of the school.			
School strategic plans include a staffing strategy	<b>.470</b>	.164	- .04 4	School size- The school size was determined by the full-time teaching equivalent: small school (n <50), medium school (n50-100) or a large school (n100+).			
Trained recruitment staff are used to screen all applicants	.223	<b>.791</b>	- .12 7	There was no statistical difference between the three school sizes on the combined variables, F (6, 190) = 1.764, p = .109; Wilks Lambda = .897; partial eta squared = .053. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, there was no			
Recruitment and	.152	<b>.711</b>	.15				

statistical significance, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .017.

**Tenure**– Tenure was length of time the respondent had been in their current leadership position: 1-4 years, 5-9 years, and more than 10 years. There was no statistically significant difference between the three groups on the combined dependent variables  $F(6, 190) = 1.268, p = .274$ ; Wilks Lambda = .924; partial eta squared .039. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, no differences reaching statistical significance were found.

**School type**– These were categorized as either part of a multi school system or stand alone. There was no statistical difference between the two school types: systemic or stand-alone, on the combined dependent variables,  $F(3, 96) = 2.078, p = .108$ ; Wilks Lambda = .939, partial eta squared = .061 nor when the dependent variables were considered separately.

These MANOVA's indicated that there were no statistical differences found within the sample on any of the three dependent variables. Consequently, it can be concluded that the school leaders' views were similar, representing a homogenous group in their views and use of HRM practices and the application of HRM practices to the recruitment and selection of teachers.

## IV. DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Staffing and workforce planning

The results revealed a sporadic prioritization of HRM staffing and workforce planning items. Table 3.2 column 1 illustrates the order of importance of the staffing and workforce planning items that emerged in the results. The results indicate there is not a strong link between the strategic plans and the staffing strategy. Whilst HRM has had a strategic role as well as a functional/operational role in other industries (Becker & Huselid, 2006) the literature indicates, as does this study, that this role is still emerging in education (Balossi & Hernandez, 2016; Bowles, Hattie, Dinham, Scull, & Clinton, 2014; Engel & Curran, 2016).

Retention, as an indicator of effective HRM staffing and workforce planning practices (Heneman & Judge, 2009; Parke, 2010) goes hand in hand with recruitment and selection (Balossi & Hernandez, 2016). Retention is the intended result of a rigorous recruitment and selection process.

The data revealed that retention was of less importance than other items such as performance and development and career pathways as illustrated in Table 3.1. In HRM practice, these items would be designed as strategies to support staff retention (van den Brink, Fruytier, & Thunnissen, 2013).

### 4.2 Recruitment and selection processes

Recruitment and selection functional processes were clearly more easily adopted by school leaders than the more strategic end of HRM: Staffing and workforce planning. This was evident in the results.

Psychological testing to assess cognitive ability, resilience and other desired personality attributes is widely accepted and used in HRM as an objective recruitment and selection measure (Calvasina & Calvasina, 2016).

However, psychological testing is infrequently used in teacher recruitment and selection and is generally unpopular in the profession (Bowles et al., 2014). This may have contributed to the low value in the quantitative results of item 6 shown in Table 3.2: HRM practices currently used in other organizations outside education are useful to inform school HRM. More functional/procedural HRM informed recruitment and selection processes appeared to be well accepted as illustrated the Table 3.2 column 2.

### 4.3 HRM and impact

The individual item that had the highest agreement was: The school culture has an impact on all teacher recruitment and selection. with a mean of 4.50 in the descriptive statistics, .829 in the Pattern Matrix and .822 in the Structural Matrix.

The least supported item in this variable was: Your school HRM practices are effective in maintaining teacher quality. The strong emphasis on school culture, which has the potential to reinforce cultural consistency rather than focusing on teacher quality was surprising given the current attention teacher quality attracts in the literature (Balossi & Hernandez, 2016; Harris & Sass, 2011; Rothstein, 2015). The evidence that teachers have the greatest impact on student outcomes is plentiful and well established (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hattie, 2009). Evidence of teacher quality and the significance of individual teacher's knowledge, skills, attitudes and personality on student learning is well represented in the literature (Jepsen, 2005; Sautelle, Bowles, Hattie, & Arifin, 2015). If school HRM practices are not effective in maintaining teacher quality this could reinforce the weakness of over focusing on school culture, in recruitment and selection practices, indicating room for improvement.

### 4.4 Summary

The results revealed one specific construct that emerged as overwhelmingly influencing school leaders' recruitment and selection practices and that was school culture. School culture as one of the most important selection criteria for school leaders is supported by research (Mertz, 2010).

School principals and school administrative teams who are generally responsible for recruitment, selection and employment of teachers (Cranston, 2012a; Donaldson, 2013; Guarino, Santibanz, &

Daley, 2006; Mertz, 2010; Papay & Kraft, 2016) are educators, generally without any HRM expertise. Although, as this study revealed, they do their best acquire some HRM knowledge. This limited expertise and convenience adoption of some HRM processes at the functional level can pose difficulty in alignment between strategic goals and staffing (Engel & Curran, 2016; Odden, 2011; Papay & Kraft, 2016). Thus, limiting the effectiveness of strategic plans, limiting the development of organizational capacity and the effective use of human capital, in this case teachers. There is some awareness in the literature of this apparent gap in educational administration HRM knowledge (Engel & Curran, 2016; Greives & Hanafin, 2005; Guarino et al., 2006; Mertz, 2010; Papay & Kraft, 2016), few researchers have pursued this issue leaving scope for future research.

## CONCLUSION

This study has revealed that there are gaps in the understandings and practices of HRM in schools, particularly in the initial phase of HRM: recruitment and selection. The study indicated that this is worthy of further investigation. HRM is in its infancy in schools, as evidenced by the small number of HR managers identified in this study. Potentially, changes to school leadership structures to include HRM expertise could lead to school improvement. There is an opportunity for education to draw on the current HRM literature and evidence based practice which is constantly evolving. HRM is having increased impact on organizations at the leadership level and in maximizing organizational capacity (Ulrich, 2014). Drawing on this current literature and evidence based practice could enable schools to develop robust and rigorous HRM practices to facilitate employment and retention of quality teachers. Improved HRM practices with a more strategic approach may also provide the opportunity for schools to plan towards a desired culture and respond more quickly to change, minimizing the need to maintain existing culture.

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