

An Investigation of the Recruitment and Retention Challenges in an Organisation for International Cooperation

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Abstract : *Organisations thrive on a handful of skilled personnel to achieve imagined visions and aspirations. Unfortunately the demand for skilled personnel has become a concern especially in major international organisations. This organisation's vision is to develop underprivileged nations across the globe. Of late, their division in South Sudan (SS) experienced an exodus of skilled personnel with unsuccessful efforts to recruit and retain skilled personnel despite boasting an attractive pay structure and provision of subsidised accommodation and transport to and from work. The aim of the study was to investigate the challenges faced by this organisation in the recruitment of skilled personnel. The study findings revealed that there were skilled personnel recruitment challenges which could be as a result of the unfavourable working conditions, lack of a manpower forecasting strategy by the organisation and SS as a country. The political and economic environments were also perceived as critical challenges hindering the recruitment process of skilled personnel. One of the recommendations is the need for the organisation, in liaison with the SS government, to improve the security situation at staff residents so that employees feel safe and secure to continuously work for in the organisation based in South Sudan.*

Keywords: *Recruitment challenges, staff retention, unfavourable working conditions*

I. Introduction

The organisation for international cooperation in South Sudan (SS) plays a key role in conducting developmental projects to uplift the lives of ordinary citizens in the entire SS community following 50 years of devastating warfare that reduced the country to a near dysfunctional economy (Juba Monitor, 2015). In carrying out this mandate, the organisation relies heavily on a pool of skilled personnel ranging from engineers, doctors, nurses and quantity surveyors, just to name a few. Following the attainment of political independence in 2007, the organisation began pushing its main agenda to re-construct the fallen economy. With the current global unemployment challenges (The Economist, 2015), one would expect immigrants from all over the world to flock to SS seeking employment opportunities to fill numerous vacant positions. Contrary to this, the organisation has of late experienced challenges in recruiting skilled personnel with some quarters pointing fingers at the organisation's compensation packages as the cause for low employee retention. The challenges have worsened from 2011 to the present year; 2015. The attainment of political independence in 2007 by South Sudan was a welcomed development by the citizens. It marked the genesis of rebuilding the economy of a country which was once the cornerstone of Northern Africa 50 years ago due to the abundance of the oil reserves (Juba Monitor, 2014). The fall of the economy, was due to the political instability which disturbed the country for almost a century; hence the attainment of independence meant the urgent need to rebuild the economy once again. Hardly six years into the signing of the peace accord, South Sudan, is yet in another war, this time a tribal war, making the economic re-construction efforts all the more difficult. To help in re-building economies in most under developed countries, the organisation for international cooperation, an agency of the United Nations (UN), provides developmental projects that range from infrastructural projects such as building hospitals, schools, road network and setting up the agricultural sector as some of the examples. The recruitment of skilled personnel becomes much harder during war situations, such is the case of SS, as such, and the organisation has to brace up for such insurmountable challenges.

1.1 The Research Problem

The organisation has struggled to fill vacant positions of skilled personnel, a development which has negatively hampered the efforts to rebuild the South Sudan (SS) economy following the signing of a peace accord between the North and South Sudan. For example, there are 950 skilled personnel positions of which about 450 positions have remained vacant over the years. The outbreak of the civil war on 15 December 2013 worsened the situation with many employees resigning or requesting for transfers exacerbating recruitment efforts. Despite, the civil war, nations still require development especially for South Sudan, taking into account the negative impact of the 50-year devastating war on the entire SS economy. Therefore the purpose of the study is to investigate the recruitment and retention challenges at the organisation from a skilled personnel perspective.

1.2 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to establish the challenges faced by the organisation in the recruitment of skilled personnel with a view of overriding the challenges so that recruitment and retention of skilled personnel can occur.

1.3 Research Questions

- What is the nature of the challenges experienced in recruiting skilled personnel?
- What are the perceptions of skilled personnel regarding current compensation packages and the extent to which the compensation can return skilled workforce?
- What recommendations can be made to management on how the compensation package can be leveraged to recruit and retain staff?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study simply means the importance of the study within and outside the organisation. For the study, the organisation would benefit by gaining knowledge on how best to recruit skilled personnel in a region or country that has difficult conditions which include political instability, lack of resources, unfavourable weather conditions, and lack of adequate health facilities. The study adds to the existing academic knowledge on how to recruit and retain skilled personnel in difficult environments. Building economies requires skilled personnel. The SS division has a mandate to re-construct the SS economy. This can only happen if the organisation employs and retains skilled personnel.

II. Literature Review

Taking into account the demand of skilled personnel such as, information technology (IT) specialists, accounting specialists, HR specialist and engineers just to name a few is an obvious development for many organisations. Neog and Barua (2015) view skilled personnel as the specialist workforce that has undergone intensive training in order to mastermind a particular profession, task or job (Cheong, Rahman and Mahidi (2015). Despite the scarcity of such skills and the difficulty in recruitment of scarce skills, some organisations boast a full complement of skilled personnel, thanks to the retention strategies they would have put in place. Neog *et al.* (2015) posit that the majority of employers across the globe face enormous challenges in recruiting the skilled workforce due to lack of a recruitment strategy, making the recruitment strategy a key Human Resource process. Neog *et al.* (2015) highlight the following as the challenges faced by employers in the recruitment of skilled workforce:

- Skilled personnel require preferential treatment as they value themselves more than the rest of the workforce,
- Skilled personnel demand higher pay and the best fringe benefit packages beyond the reach of most employers and
- Skilled personnel is highly mobile as they can easily move from one employer to another

In support of the above, Ahmad, Tariq and Hussain (2015), posit that hiring skilled personnel is a huge and an almost impossible task for the contemporary organisation because most countries fail from the onset to formulate and implement the manpower skilled development policies that ensure a country has adequate skills. In other words, from a national level, there should be manpower human resource planning that forecast on the broader requirements for the country as a whole. Thus, institutions pursue human resource planning so as to establish the future supply, and demand for, human resources with an overall aim of gaining competitive advantage. Haorei (2012) illuminates on political instability in respective countries as a factor hindering the recruitment of skilled personnel as they employees fear for their lives. In view of SS's political instability due to the current civil war which broke out on 15 December 2013 (Juba Monitor, 2014), recruiting skilled personnel could be more challenging than before as Juba is no longer a preferred city to work for due to high levels of political instability. The other serious challenge which is faced by organisations in the recruitment of skilled personnel is that most organisations do not have qualified human resource practitioners capable of hiring skilled personnel (Noe, Gerhart, and Wright, 2010). According to Noe *et al.* (2010), qualified and experienced human resource practitioners have the skill to formulate and implement strategic human resource strategies and policies that can address the skills within an organisation. Gbadamosi (2003) believes the challenges organisations face in recruiting skilled personnel are:

Global Labour Shortage: A growing labour shortage is a trend across the world. In the United States it is expected that by 2010 approximately 10 million jobs will be unfilled. This will provide qualified employees with the power to choose the job and organisation which most fulfils them. It is also likely that organisations will outsource certain functions from organisations in countries such as India and China (Gbadamosi, 2003).

Skills Gaps: There are shortages in key skills that are needed by organisations which if absent may lead to poor performance ultimately impacting on the organisation's competitive advantage. Organisations should therefore invest considerably in training and development to address skills gaps (Gbadamosi, 2003).

Retention of Key Talent: Research from the USA shows that an employee's average tenure with a company is 3.6 years. When companies compete for skills it is important that they find alternative methods to retain essential talent (Gbadamosi, 2003).

Loss of Organisational Knowledge: When staff leave an organisation it is obvious that they take with them all the organisational knowledge they have acquired and to minimize this trend, organisations should ensure that it has measures to retain such knowledge (Gbadamosi, 2003).

Employee Self-Service & Online Forms: The intranet is being used more and more to provide Human Resource services to employees. Employees and management now submit HR related forms (such as leave applications) online which saves time and money. This requires that HR departments invest in and maintain a suitable IT infrastructure which will enable them to deliver online services.

Older Retirement Age: Many employees from the "baby boomer" generation will continue to work past their retirement age. The reason for this is that they do not have the funds to stop work and that they are still fit and well to continue to work (Gbadamosi, 2003). It is critical to note that global labour shortages, skills gap, retention of key talent and the retirement age no doubt affect the recruitment of skilled personnel as the organisation is part of the global corporation that in no way could escape this scourge.

2.1 Defining compensation

Grobler, Wörnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2006:35) identify the term "compensation" which is often used interchangeably with wage and salary administration. However the term compensation is actually a broader concept. Compensation refers not only to extrinsic rewards such as salary and benefits, but also to intrinsic rewards such as achieving personal goals, autonomy and more challenging job opportunities." Snell and Bohlander (2007:378) view "strategic compensation planning" as a term which refers to "the compensation of employees in ways that enhance motivation and growth, while at the same time aligning their efforts with the objectives, philosophies and culture of the organisation." Taking care of human resources is always the most difficult task compared to managing other forms of resources such as technology and finance. In view of the above, the UN inclusive of its agencies that include the organisation is well known for being an employer of choice boasting of having one of the best compensation packages in South Sudan and the world over. Employees working for the organisation are paid in United States Dollars giving them economic advantage due to the high exchange rate of the US dollar over all currencies in Africa and other parts of the world. The organisation is also well known for offering the best pensionable package, housing and soft loans to the entire permanent workforce through the through its bank head quartered in New York. In view of this, there seems that a huge gap exists arising from the fact that the organisation is currently experiencing challenges in the recruitment of skilled personnel despite the provision of lucrative conditions of service.

2.2 Factors influencing the determination of compensation

Compensation has a considerable impact on employee attitudes and behaviour and is critical for retaining the employee while achieving the organisation's strategic goal. According to Noe *et al.*, (2010) the Equity Theory plays a huge impact in compensation. The Theory argues that "a person compares her/his own ratio of perceived outcomes (e.g. pay, benefits, working conditions) to perceived inputs (e.g. effort, ability, experience) to the ratio of a comparison other" (Noe *et al.*, 2010). If equity is perceived, no change will occur in the employee's behaviour or attitudes, and these changes would precipitate in the form of either looking for alternative employment or, if inequity is perceived, the employee will take steps to restore equity through, for example, reducing the amount of effort he/she exerts. The implications of the Equity Theory on compensation are that employees' behaviour and attitudes is bound to be affected if inequity is perceived by some employees. The types of comparisons which are possible include:

External equity: where comparisons are made with employees holding similar positions within other organisations

Internal equity: where comparisons are not only made with employees performing the same job, but with employees in different jobs and at different levels within the same organisation. Snell and Bohlander (2007:384-388) came up with external and internal factors which influence the organisation's choice of compensation system which include:

The Labour Market: This refers to a situation where the supply and demand of labour influences the levels of pay. For examples higher pay levels are usually associated with scarce skills and for the organisation this would translate into the roles of engineers and medical doctors just to name a few.

Economic Conditions: This refers to an environment where there is competition within the industry for certain skills and in cases where high degrees of competitiveness within industries exist, the organisation is bound to pay higher wages.

Government Influences where legislation, such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act in South Africa, controls and guides issues such as minimum wage and overtime pay.

Union Influences where unions affect compensation levels through entering into negotiations with management (Snell and Bohlander, 2007:388).

Internal Environmental Factors which influence an organisation's approach to compensation include:

Organisational Strategy and Goals where the compensation approach adopted by the organisation should support the effective implementation of the company's strategy

Labour Budget: where the amount of money available within the organisation for employee compensation during a given year is specified

Compensation Decision Makers which includes top management and possibly the organisation's employees (Snell and Bohlander, 2007: 384). Noeet al. (2010) outlines factors which may influence the organisation's provision of benefits to enhance the overall compensation strategy. Such factors include:

Government Requirements: This is usually stipulated by legislation and includes unemployment insurance, accident insurance and pensions. The organisation does provide such benefits.

Economic and Labour Market Conditions: Under difficult economic conditions, organisations looking for the best employees will seek to provide better benefits and services than their competitors.

The Aims of Management: May affect the benefits and services offered. For example, management might strive for employee satisfaction or oppose trade unions.

Competition: Can prompt an organisation to adapt or expand its benefit plans.

The Preferences or Attitude of Employees: According to Noeet al. (2010), for a benefit to increase employee satisfaction, employees must have full knowledge about the benefit, otherwise the benefit will do very little to enhance the compensation strategy. In determining whether an organisation's current pay structure tallies with market levels, organisations have no choice but to conduct a market pay survey by benchmarking itself with the rest of the organisation with the industry Noeet al., 2010: 505). The market survey will determine its labour-market competitors and the representative jobs in terms of level, functional area and product market to include in the survey (Noeet al., 2010). The survey should also investigate the return on investment which the competitors are receiving for the compensation packages which they are offering to their employees. Noeet al. (2010) point out that if the market pay survey shows that the organisation is paying below the competitor's compensation structure, the organisation may have difficulty in attracting and retaining suitably skilled and experienced personnel. On the other hand if the organisation's compensation structure is above that of its competitors, the organisation may find it difficult to compete because of its high labour costs. Most organisations use what is called the job-based compensation structures. Thus, a job structure is based on internal comparisons between jobs and serves to delineate the relative worth of various jobs in the organisation (Noeet al., 2010). Noeet al. (2010) identifies three pay structure approaches may be identified. These are based on:

Market Survey Data: Where compensation is structured according to what similar organisations are paying similar positions

Pay Policy Line: Where compensation structuring is based on a combination of internal and external compensation related information.

Pay Grades: Where jobs are classified into a number of pay grades. The pay grades specify the pay range for particular categories of jobs (Noeet al., 2010).

2.3 Perceptions on compensation practices and its relationship to retention

Compensation practices refer to what an organisation does to implement the compensation system argues Miller (2010). In order to successfully implement a given compensation system, organisations ought to formulate a policy on compensation. Kose, Tetic and Atac (2015), regard compensation practices as the engine that drives an organisation. They argue that an organisation with effective compensation practices is assured of fostering growth. Because of this reason contemporary organisations focus on continuous improvement of employee benefits in order to motivate their employees Kose, et al. (2015). Nel, Werner, Haasbroek, Poisat, Sono and Schultz (2011) view employee benefits as "items in total compensation package offered to employees over and above salary, which increase their wealth or well-being at some cost to the employer." Organisations may also offer the following employee benefits and services:

Food Services: Where tea and lunch facilities are provided, such as cafeterias;

Education Expenses: Where employers provide partial or full reimbursement for an employee's study fees (Grobleret al., 2006: 378);

Transportation Programmes: Where employers may, for example, provide the services of a company bus or offer company cars to certain grades of employees;

Housing Subsidy: Where an employer may subsidize the employee's repayment of his/her housing loan;

Childcare Programmes: Where the employer will either subsidise childcare costs or provide childcare facilities (Grobleret al., 2006: 378). Nel et al. (2011) argue that organisations may provide employee benefits and services to keep the organisation more competitive and going forward by attracting and retaining key skills. Nel et al. (2011) emphasize that the rewarding environment is always the starting point for adding value to the organisation's human capital which primarily seeks to lower labour turnover. A study conducted by Nel et al. (2011), reveals that over 75% of workers in general prefer health benefits, with younger workers preferring a savings plan as a second preference and older workers a pension. It is important therefore that the employee benefit programme which is put in place for the staff of the organisation in SS is one which takes into account the current trends as well as the needs of both the younger and older employees. It would make sense for the organisations to provide employee benefit programmes structured as follows:

Medical Aid: A medical aid scheme which covers both the employee and his/her dependents need to be put in place. Such a medical aid scheme would go a long way to ensuring that employees are able to cover medical expenses which result from HIV/Aids related illnesses, other illness as well as the use of mental health and substance abuse professionals.

Life and Disability Insurance: Given the impact which HIV/Aids has had thus far in SS and in particular the organisation's workforce, disability insurance becomes a need rather than a want for all employees. This will ensure the continuation of salary should an employee become disabled or pass away, thereby providing for his / her dependents (Grobleret al., 2006: 377). The cost of the life and disability insurance may be deducted from the employee's monthly remuneration and may be subsidized by the organisation if necessary.

Pension Fund: It is customary, in the administration of pension funds, for the organisation to deduct the employee's contribution to the fund and pay it on their behalf. It is also customary, although not essential, for the organisation to subsidize a portion of the monthly pension payment (Nel et al., 2011). It would be in the organisation's interest to provide a pension or provident fund to the employees so as to enable them to start saving for their retirement. In addition to these voluntary benefits, organisations should ensure that they provide the necessary mandatory benefits as well. In SS, the mandatory benefits include unemployment insurance, compensation for injuries and diseases and leave.

2.4 Types of compensation packages and implications on employee retention

Noeet al. (2010) provides several incentive-based compensation packages which include merit pay programmes, individual incentives, profit sharing and gain sharing. In order ensure the effectiveness of incentive compensation systems, Noeet al. (2010) emphasise that:

- employees should participate in decisions relating to incentive compensation systems,
- effective communication should take place to ensure that employees understand the incentive based compensation system, and organisations should take note of the fact that not only incentive pay plans impact on productivity and performance, but so too does the manner in which employees are treated (Noeet al., 2010).

The following presents the various compensation packages organisations could use in orders to retain skilled workforce that they deserve.

Merit Pay Programmes: Merit pay programmes relate pay to performance by basing an employee's annual increase on performance appraisal ratings (Noeet al., 2010). Merit pay programmes have been criticised by in Noeet al., 2010 as they argue that was unfair to rate individual performance as differences naturally exist between people due to the system they work for. It is also argued that merit pay programmes do not actually exist in that merit increases are allocated within the boundaries of predetermined merit increase budgets. However, organisations that have favourable merit pay systems have a good chance of motivating the workforce ultimately improving its retention rates and vice versa to the organisation with an unfavourable merit pay system.

Individual Incentives: Incentives, such as merit pay programmes, are based on an individual's performance. However, in contrast to merit pay programmes, they are not incorporated into an employee's base pay and therefore need to be earned and re-earned (Noeet al., 2010). Individual incentives tend to be rare and therefore have the disadvantage of not providing for the development of a problem solving, proactive workforce (Noeet al., 2010).

Profit Sharing: Profit sharing provides for payments which are on how an organisation has performed (Noeet al., 2010). The advantage of this approach is that all employees are included therefore reducing inequalities and favouritism amongst employees (Noeet al., 2010). The main disadvantages of profit sharing include failure to disclose important information on profits earned by the organisation. Further, profit sharing may not provide the much needed motivational environment for individual employees (Noeet al., 2010). The organisation is not a private company, hence does not offer profit sharing schemes.

Ownership: Ownership may be achieved through the issuing of share options to employees or by implementing employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs). This is more or less similar to profit sharing explained above, hence similar advantages and disadvantages apply. Since the organisation is not a private limited company, this type of compensation package is not appropriate despite it being a powerful aspect that attracts and retains employees. This then would mean that skilled personnel, given an opportunity would consider resigning to joining an enterprise that offers ownership programmes as this would improve their livelihood.

Gainsharing: This refers to a situation where employees enjoy the productivity benefit of sharing the gains by the firm (Noe *et al.*, 2010). This differs from profit and ownership sharing schemes in the following manner: the measurement is grouped focused as a group opposed to individual focus. An advantage of gainsharing is that it usually involves rewards such as employee participation and problem solving. Similar to profit sharing and ownership, gainsharing to a large extent motivates and retains employees. An organisation such as this one does not have such schemes in place and risks losing their skills workforce to those organisations that offer them.

Group Incentives and Team Awards: These awards are applied to the smaller work group, thus employees are rewarded at different levels. This approach is very healthy as it reduces competition amongst individuals within the group and team (Noe *et al.*, 2010). However, competition between the team and group may arise which might bring more burdens than the benefits associated with the overall approach.

Non-monetary concrete packages: According to Kose *et al.* (2015) non-monetary packages refer to the benefits an employer freely provides to the employee such as food, office equipment, transport, dressing, gym facilities, private team building, and telephone and cell phone services. The organisation does provide most of these services free of charge to all the employees, for example they provide free transport to and from work, provide office laptops, free gym facilities and mobile phones to office bearers.

Non-monetary social incentives: These incentives in an organisation present in the form of the social openness of an organization in terms of communication (Kose *et al.*, 2015). Non-monetary social incentives revolve around manager-subordinate relationships vis-a-vis the social processes within an organisation. The bottom line is that communication is regarded as an incentive given to the employee as part of the compensatory mechanism since it is targeted to benefit the employee and the employer. A manager's communication gesture is important in that it is a key component of communication effectiveness. When managers are open to communication by appreciating employee thoughts, employees become motivated and vice versa. For example, face-to-face communication is a very rich form of communication in that it provides for gestures, a combination of visual and audio channels, personal communication and the language source and provides for interpretation of body language and tone of voice ultimately benefiting both the organisation and the employee (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2001).

Non-monetary job-related incentives: These incentives refer to those directly related to the job which have a potential to motivate the worker. Examples of such incentives include job design which encompasses job enrichment, job enlargement and job rotation. The principles of job enlargement, job enrichment and job rotation, as well as the job characteristics approach to work and work schedule options can be used as incentives to enhance employee performance as they are part and parcel of an organisation's compensation strategy.

Job Enlargement: Robbins (2009) posit that job enlargement focuses on increasing responsibilities at the same levels, usually known as "horizontal enlargement". By so doing employees are provided with a greater variety of tasks to do ultimately removing boredom, which means it may bring some form of motivation (Robbins, 2009). Several researchers argue that this approach contributes to employee performance and satisfaction by introducing diversity of tasks and responsibilities.

Job Enrichment: In contrast to job enlargement, job enrichment is perceived as an approach that fosters in deepening the job content by increasing more depth in tasks that call for more sophisticated skills (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2001). In short this is a vertical expansion of the job tasks, meaning that at the end of the day, a worker doing the job that has been vertically improved will boast of doing a more challenging job thereby enhancing employee independence and freedom (Robbins, 2009). Similar to job enlargement, job enrichment also enhances employee satisfaction and performance in that it increases employees' involvement in their jobs (Jones *et al.*, 2009).

Job Rotation: Performing the same task over and over again is bound to result in monotony and boredom. Thus, job rotation serves to address the over-routinisation of work by introducing employee job shifting (Robbins, 2009). For the organisation, if implemented, this could help. However this would depend on the skills possessed by the respective employees as it would be impossible to rotate jobs amongst skilled professional by virtue of different skill sets. For example, it would not be possible for the medical doctor to shift from his job to electrical engineering. This approach would suit employees in administration such as clerical jobs which do not require specialist training.

The Job Characteristics Approach: Robbins (2009) developed the Job Characteristics model. This model identifies five core dimensions of every job:

1. Skill variety which describes the degree to which the incumbent needs to utilise a range of competencies.

2. Task identity which refers to the degree to which the job requires the completion of a whole or identifiable piece of work.
3. Task significance referring to the impact of the work on the lives of the job incumbent as well as others.
4. Autonomy referring to the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom and independence in determining the manner in which the work is to be carried out.
5. Feedback which refers to whether the job incumbent receives comment about the effectiveness of his/her performance (Robbins, 2009).

Job enlargement, enrichment, rotation and the job characteristics model present some unique incentives to the employee. Duyan *et al.*, (2013:106) argue that benefits of this nature are even more important than the monetary rewards as they permanently transform or positively change the employee feeding into the employee retirement life.

Work Schedule Options: Work schedule options have emerged as a further means to address employee motivation, satisfaction and performance through job and work design (Robbins, 2009). Work schedule options include a compressed workweek, flexitime, job sharing, and telecommuting, where employees work from home for at least two days per week via a computer which is linked to the workplace (Robbins, 2009).

III. Research Methodology

This study draws from the business research field which has mainly two forms of research approaches for collecting data and reporting on information namely the Positivist and Phenomenological approaches to research.

3.1 Positivist (quantitative research)

Positivist research is generally a numbers approach, from whom data is collected for analysis to measure and understand a social phenomenon (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). This approach regards reality as consisting of aspects that require observation and measurement. Because of such characteristics, the approach is praised for providing objective results. (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). And because of such advantages it was adopted for this study.

3.2 Phenomenological (qualitative research)

Phenomenological approach is in sharp contrast with the above. The approach is premised around the notion that the world is socially driven by human interests (Lind *et al.*, 2010). It is not a numbers approach but rather a qualitative approach that seeks to collect quality information through interviews. It is praised for providing findings that are valid. In most cases, a qualitative approach that is good should reveal an in-depth understanding of what is being studied. Unfortunately research driven by this approach suffers from the subjectivity of the researcher. This approach was not feasible for the study, hence was not used. The study employed the Positivist (quantitative research). Since this study collected data from a relatively large sample being above 100 and will rely on desktop research to do the analysis, the positivism approach using the quantitative methodology was used. Quantitative research relies on statistical analysis to test results (Lind *et al.*, 2010), making it more appropriate as this study used questionnaire to collect data. A questionnaire was more appropriate for collecting objective and subjective information from a huge sample (Sekaran and Bougie 2010). The sample size for this study was 150.

3.3 The design for the study: descriptive studies

The descriptive research design was adopted for this study as it sought to identify and describe the nature of the challenges for recruiting skilled personnel at the organisation. Descriptive research, as the name implies, provides a description of the data collected. The research attempts to provide solutions to questions (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). In most case, descriptive research is done to pursue the broad aims of the scientific study at hand by developing knowledge to providing precise answers to existing problems.

3.4 Research strategy

According Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill (2012:173) the research strategy represents a plan of action that the researcher intends to provide answers to research objectives and questions. Taking into account that this study followed a positivist approach, research strategies that relate to the positivist approach are discussed.

Surveys: Saunders *et al.* (2012) regards a survey as a positivist approach that relies on samples selected from a population upon which inferences are made. Surveys typically use questionnaires in order to determine the opinions, attitudes, preferences and perceptions of persons of interest to the researcher (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). Designing a survey carefully, i.e. where samples are selected based on scientific methods, statistical techniques could be used to assess the applicability and generalisability of the findings to the larger population. The survey was chosen as a research strategy for this study due to the advantages associated with it

Target population: The target population for this study comprised all the positions that are supposed to be occupied by skilled personnel at the SS division. These positions include both the occupied and the vacant positions totalling 950.

Sampling Strategy: Silverman (2000:159) views sampling as the procedure for selecting a section from the population. In quantitative studies such as this one, it is vital to select a large sample a large number to ensure the collection of meaningful data that would give enough descriptions to the phenomena at hand (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009:268). The study methodology adopted in this study is a descriptive design which utilises the descriptive research to explain, interpret and describe conditions in the present state. Simple random sampling was used to select the participants. According to DeFusco, McLeavey, Pinto and Runkle (2011) simple random sampling refers to the creation of a subset from a population in such a way that each element of the population has an equal chance of being selected. In this study, out of 950 positions, 350 are vacant while 35 have resigned with 20 having requested for transfer leaving a total of 510 as available skilled personnel. It is not possible to use 510 as this is too large to be managed so a systematic random sample was used. 150 participated in the study inclusive of all the HR managers.

Data Collection Instruments: Punch (2006) defines data collection as the process of gathering data taking into account the manner in which data is collected (e.g. personal or telephonic; paper and pencil; facsimile, computer-aided personal or telephonic interview, or mailed questionnaires). Data was collected by means of questionnaire response. Taking into account that the study was a quantitative methodology, data was collected by means of a clearly worded written questionnaire given to the respondents for completion. The questionnaire was chosen because of its ability to allow respondents to give a score while weighing it for further statistical analysis. The questionnaire covered the themes of biographical profiles, challenges experienced by the organisation in the recruitment of skilled personnel and skilled personnel perceptions on employee compensation packages. A pilot study was conducted on 10 skilled personnel who were not involved in the study. This study chose a self-administered questionnaire as the most efficient data collection instrument. Since all the employees have access to computers and internet, the questionnaire was emailed to all the participants. The questionnaire was introduced with a cover letter that kindly requested them to complete the questionnaire. The importance of the study was also explained and some concerns cleared. Respondents were requested to email the completed questionnaire back to the researcher. A reminder was emailed to all the participants who had not completed and returned the response by the close of final return date. Ten working days were given as the data collection time frame.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data was analysed using the SPSS software package and then presented in graphs, tables and pie charts. Descriptive statistics was considered appropriate for describing and summing up data about a sample in order make generalisations onto study population.

3.6 Validity and reliability

Validity addresses the issue of whether the research instrument is actually measuring what is supposed to measure (Saunders *et al.*, 2012).

Face validity: As the name implies, face validity means that the research instrument in this case, the questionnaire, should show a “face”, meaning it should be relevant to the participants in the study. It should be a questionnaire that the respondents understand; it should have statements that are common and drawn from the organisation’s terminology or jargon. All this can be summed by “relevancy of instrument” to the study participants. Face validity can be established by asking friends, colleagues and individuals from the target population to comment on the relevance, balance and adequacy of the research instrument in relation to the research objectives. Since the researcher works for the organisation, workmates assisted to ensure this met the objectives.

Reliability: According to Saunders *et al.*, (2012:175) reliability of a research instrument refers to continuous use of a research instrument in measuring some phenomena while giving similar results. In research, we have three forms of reliability which includes:

Parallel forms: This is a type of reliability that measure which seek to measure the equivalence between variables and thus involves administering two different forms of measurements to the same group of participants and obtaining a positive correlation between the two forms.

Test-retest: This involves the use of the same research instrument at different intervals on the same respondents in order to obtain a correlation of the two sets of responses.

Inter-rater: This is reliability which measures the similarity between the variables in order to establish whether an agreement exist between the two.

3.7 Limitations of the study

The study was limited to permanent skilled personnel at the organisation in SS in the town of Juba. The study relied on a high degree of honesty of the answers/responses provided by the skilled workers and to overcome this researcher had to explain the importance of each and every response to the participants and to the organisation. The study was also limited by the nature of the questions which were predominantly closed ended thereby limiting collection of more information that could have enriched the study findings. To overcome this, the preparation of the questions was carefully done in order to avoid or reduce unbiased information.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

This study was guided by fundamental ethical considerations that relate to responsible research in the human sciences. Thus adequate ethical consideration was made that includes the following:

Informed consent: In this study, the researcher sent letters of consent to all those who have indicated that they would partake in the study.

Ensuring no harm: The researcher ensured that the nature of the study was not misrepresented to participants, and that the self-respect and self-esteem of the participants were not infringed. This was achieved through the use of a letter to all participants as well as the nature of the questions asked in the survey.

Confidentiality and anonymity: To ensure this requirement, the entire questionnaire did not bear the name of the research participants. This is considered critical by Saunders *et al.* (2012:231) as it should be upheld throughout the research process.

IV. Findings

Most of the skilled personnel (39.4%) ranged 35-44 years, followed by 25-34 years at (35.9%), 45+ (14%) and 18-24 (11.8%). It is clear that skilled personnel are in the middle-aged group. Male skilled personnel outnumber the female skilled personnel with 66.4% and 33.6% respectively. Such differences in gender composition in the staff establishment may be influenced by the fact that males are by nature known for seeking job opportunities across the globe, while their female counterparts fend for the family. Also most of the skilled professions required by the organisation fall in the range of engineering and information technology which happens to be male dominated. The majority of the skilled personnel are the international personnel from other countries who seek employment in SS. 64.4% of the skilled personnel are the international personnel while 35.6% represent the South Sudanese. Education is the common denominator when it comes to skilled personnel. In order for one to be skilled, he or she has to attain some level of education that range from secondary, certificate, diploma, degree to post graduate levels. The majority of the skilled personnel had diploma qualifications 30.2%, 25.9% had a degree, 27.7% had secondary education, and 7% had a certificate while 9.1% had above a degree qualification (postgraduate level). It is clear that at least all the skilled personnel were educated which is a good sign to any employer as educated employees have a better chance of improving performance ultimately benefiting the organisation in terms of output improvement.

4.1 Employee perceptions of challenges experienced in recruiting skilled personnel

The results under this theme represent the perceived view of employees and not management, unless if the skilled employee happens to hold a managerial position. Establishing the perceptions of the skilled personnel would go a long way in finding ways on how the recruitment challenged could be minimized, taking the organisation's recruitment strategy to the next level. The first question of the study sought to establish views of the respondents on whether SS had adequate skills or not. It is clear from the results that respondents regard SS as a country without adequate skills as shown by 58.3% followed by 33.4% who agreed that SS does have adequate skilled labour with only 8.3% taking a neutral position. These findings are backed by Neo *et al.* (2015) when they say that the majority of employers across the globe face enormous challenges in recruiting the skilled workforce due to the ever increasing demand for such skills. The question sought to establish if skilled personnel always demanded higher pay rates above their counterparts who are not skilled. The findings reveal that employees do not always demand higher pay rates with an overall 62.5% while 29.20% agree. Only 8.3% were neutral. According to Neo *et al.* (2015) the challenges faced by employers in the recruitment of skilled workforce includes the preferential treatment afforded to skilled personnel as they value themselves more than the rest of the workforce leading to demands for higher pay. A country should always have a manpower planning strategy in place in order to ensure a steady supply of the critical labour for the economy. In line with this, question 3 sought to provide answers to this. The study found a majority neutral result with a 37.50%, followed by 45.8% who disagreed that SS had a manpower planning strategy in place. A total of 16.7% agreed that SS had a policy in place. Neutrality in the question could have arisen from the fact that respondents might not be aware of the country's position regarding policy planning. Studies by Snell and Bohlander (2007) reveal that human resource strategies are a critical requirement for most organisations that put plans in place for future human resource requirements. Nel *et al.* (2011) argue that human resource strategies ensure the availability of critical personnel that includes skilled personnel. An organisation without a manpower recruitment strategy is

destined to a collapsing human resource function. In this regard, question four of the study sought to reveal this stance. A total of 45.9% of the respondents agreed that the organisation had a manpower recruitment strategy 29.2% were neutral while 25% disagreed with the statement. According to Noet *al.* (2010) a strategy is associated with establishing a pre-determined number of an organisation's workforce. Further, the pre-determination should include an estimate of employee figures, appropriate skills, knowledge, and abilities. Politics in any country has an effect on the general administration of the country in all facets. Taking into account that SS's political landscape has been changing over the years, the study sought to enquire on this aspect. A total of 41.6% agreed that the SS political economy had a negative impact on the recruitment of skilled labour, while an equal percentage of 29.20% disagreed/neutral. In support of this finding Haorei (2012) identifies political instability in respective countries as a factor hindering the recruitment of skilled personnel as the employees fear for their lives. Economic conditions are critical for enhancing the standard of living in a country, thus inflation and general cost of living directly affect the decision of an employee taking an offer of employment. Although respondents regard the economic environment as negatively impacting the recruitment of skilled personnel with a 45.80%, this was not convincing as 41.70% who took a neutral position. A total of 12.5% disagreed with the statement. These findings are echoed by Snell and Bohlander (2007:384–388) who identified external and internal factors which influence the organisation's choice of compensation system as economic conditions where high degrees of competitiveness within industries negatively affect the ability of the organisation to pay high wages. The question sought to establish if SS's immigration laws negatively affected the employment of skilled international individuals. The majority of the respondents took a neutral position with a 50% while 45.8% agreed that the emigration had a negative effect on the recruitment of skilled personnel. Only 4.2% disagreed. It is important to note that government requirements have an influence on the recruitment of foreign national through the immigration laws. Noet *al.* (2010) identifies government policy (immigration laws) which may influence the recruitment of skilled personnel.

4.2 Employee perceptions of compensation packages and the retention of skilled personnel

A total of eight questions were carefully prepared and posed to the respondents. Employee compensation is cornerstone for enhancing employee motivation as well as it represents to a large extent the retention strategies of an organisation. The question sought to establish if the organisation's compensation policy was favourable or not. A total of 45.80% were neutral while a total of 33.4% disagreed followed by 20.9% who agreed that the organisation's compensation policy was favourable. Noet *al.*, (2010) posit that compensation has a considerable impact on employee attitudes and behaviour and is instrumental for retaining the employee while achieving the organisation's strategic goal. The results reveal that the organisation's pay is indeed very attractive with a total of 66.7% agreeing to the statement while 25% took a neutral position with 8.40% disagreeing. Working conditions are regarded by employees as the determinant factor when choosing an organisation to join. A total of 41.7% of the respondents disagreed that the organisation's working conditions were favourable while 33.3% agreed. A total of 25% were neutral. Noet *al.*, (2010) identified working conditions as a major compensable factor that that play a major role in changing the landscape of an organisation's compensation package. Repeating a similar task repeatedly is a de-motivational factor. Job rotation is well known for removing the boredom of repeated tasks while enriching the minds of the workers as they gain a variety of skills by rotating jobs within the same organisation. Question 11 sought to establish if the organisation had a job rotation in place. A total of 79.1% disagreed that the organisation does not have a job rotation programme in place, 16.7% were neutral while 4.20% agreed. Robbins (2009) argues that job rotation is praised for enabling employees to move from one job to another, therefore removing some dissatisfaction that might arise due to monotony and boredom associated with doing the same task repeatedly ultimately enhancing motivational levels with those practising the approach. Manager friendliness plays an important role in motivating employees. According to Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) friendliness is regarded a compensatory behaviour that seeks to motivate followers. A total of 66.7% agreed that managers were friendly while 8.4% disagreed with 25% taking a neutral position. A question concerned whether the organisation provides subsidised transport to and from work. In an effort to answer this question, the data collected revealed that the organisation does provide subsidised transport as a total of 70.8% of the respondents agreed to the statement. A total of 25% disagreed while 4.20% were neutral. Koseet *al.* (2015) places subsidised transport as a huge effort by the organisation to compensate its employees for the work they do. Question 14 of the study was based on subsidized housing and sought to establish if the organisation provided subsidized housing. A total of 79.2% of the respondents revealed that the organisation provided subsidized housing while 12.5% disagreed with 8.3% taking a neutral position. Question 16 asked respondents' views on whether the organisation's allowances package were attractive or not. A total of 41.7% of the respondents agreed that the organisation's allowance package was attractive while 33.3% disagreed with the statement with 25% taking a neutral position.

4.3 Compensations versus Retention

This section triangulates some of the compensation benefits offered by the organisation and to establish if the packages to an extent impact on the retention of skilled personnel from an employee perspective rather than management's view, thus four key questions were posed to the skilled personnel. The questions included conditions of service, pay, immigration laws and the SS macro-environment of business. Question 16 of the study sought to establish the views of respondents on whether the conditions of service offered by the organisation would serve as retention factors. The overall majority indicated that the organisation's conditions of service were a contributory factor to retaining skilled employee with 58.66% while 16.67% indicating that conditions of service do not retain skilled personnel with 24.67% taking a neutral position. Allowances paid to employees can make or destroy the organisation fabric and taking into account that allowances are part and parcel of the conditions of service, satisfactory or attractive conditions of service serve as a powerful retention weapon for most organisations (Grobler *et al.*, 2006: 35). Question 18 of the study aimed at inquiring the views of skilled personnel on whether SS's immigration policy positively influenced the organisation's employee retention. SS's immigration laws do not have an influence on employment of the organisation's immigrants, in particular, on retention as a total of 66% indicated that the immigration policy had no effect while 28% indicated that the immigration laws had effect with 10.67% taking a neutral position. This finding is contrary to the literature reviewed on immigration laws impact on the recruitment and retention of skilled personnel. According to Gbadamosi (2003), government policy which includes the immigration negatively impact on the recruitment of skilled personnel. However in this study, the immigration laws were a non-event possibly because the organisation is an international organisation where labour is free to move from one country to another without necessarily being impeded by the local immigration laws of SS. Question 19 of the study was based on the pay structure with a focus on whether or not the pay structure enhanced skilled personnel retention at the organisation. Information gathered to answer this question revealed that skilled personnel were of the view that the pay structure was attractive to the extent that it positively influenced employee retention as backed by a 74.7% while only 14.66% felt that the pay structure didn't influence employee retention. A total of 10.67% were neutral on this aspect. Compensation has a considerable impact on employee attitudes and behaviour and is critical for retaining the employee while achieving the organisation's strategic goal (Noe *et al.*, 2010). Noe *et al.* (2010) emphasise how Equity Theory influences compensation and retention. Equity theory argues that "a person compares her/his own ratio of perceived outcomes such as pay to perceived inputs (e.g. effort, ability, experience) to the ratio of a comparison other" (Noe *et al.*, 2010). The final question of the study was based on SS's macro-environment as a contributory factor to the retention of skilled employees at the organisation. The respondents were of the view that the micro-environment enhanced retention of skilled employees with a total of 66% while 28% view the macro-environment has having little or no affect all. Snell and Bohlander (2007) argue that retention of skilled employee varies from country to country and to a large extent, employee retention depends on the country's macro-environment. Taking into SS's macro-environment into account and going by the study findings, it goes without saying that skilled personnel were bound to migrate to other countries where the environment is conducive.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

The literature revealed the following:

- Skilled personnel recruitment is a huge challenges across most employers across the globe;
- Skilled personnel consider themselves unique, as such they require preferential treatment on salary and benefits
- Retention of skilled personnel is depended upon the compensation package provided by an organisation;
- Political environment, economic environment and government policies impact on the recruitment of skilled personnel in every country;
- Skilled personnel perceive compensation as the springboard for employee retention;
- Provision of education, medical, housing, pension and transport subsidies represent common allowances offered by most organisations.

5.1 Challenges faced by the organisation on recruitment of skilled personnel

Objective 1: to determine the nature of the challenges experienced in recruiting skilled personnel for the South Sudan division

The findings reveal that, SS and the organisation have a critical shortage of skilled personnel and that the few skilled personnel currently employed expect preferential treatment on salaries and fringe benefits. The study also revealed that the organisation, SS and the organisation in particular does not have a manpower planning and focusing strategy in place to ensure skilled personnel availability. The political and economic environment as well as government policies was revealed as hindrances on the recruitment of skilled personnel.

Perceptions of the current compensation packages

Objective 2 part 1) to determine skilled personnel's perceptions of the current compensation.

The study revealed that the organisation does not have a favourable compensation package across the board. However, the pay structure, subsidized housing and transport benefits were revealed as attractive despite the unfavourable compensation package in the overall. The working conditions were revealed as unfavourable possibly due to the unfriendly approach by managers as well as lack of a job rotation programme.

The extent to which the compensation can retain skilled personnel

The data gathered revealed that conditions of service, the pay structure and the SS macro-environment enhanced skilled employee retention while the SS immigration laws had very little of no effect at all on the retention of skilled employees at the organisation.

5.2 Study conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the study:

- Recruitment of skilled personnel is a huge challenge for the organisation and SS as a whole;
- Manpower planning and recruitment strategies are critical for an organisation's recruitment of skilled personnel.
- Skilled personnel require preferential treatment on salaries and conditions of service worsening the recruitments efforts by organisations;
- Compensation provided by organisations is key to employee retention;
- An attractive pay structure and provision of subsidized housing and transport is not enough to retain skilled personnel;
- Immigration laws may not hinder the recruitment of skilled personnel
- Political and economic environment has a negative effect on the recruitment of skilled personnel

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations based on the conclusions can be made:

- The organisation should conduct a job evaluation exercise in order to grade all the positions.
- The organisation and the SS government needs to formulate and implement a manpower planning and focusing strategy for the country and in particular for the organisation;
- The organisation needs a complete review of the compensation package across the board;
- The organisation and the SS government should work together in up-scaling the security measures by offering more security personnel at staff residents, during and after work;
- Despite being satisfactorily provided housing and transport allowances require continuous improvement in tandem with developments in other UN agencies and other organisations too.

5.4 Scope for further research

This study focused on skilled employee perspectives, therefore is limited to employee views. A wider focus on HR and government perspective could be a reasonable scope for further research. Further, the study could be conducted on other UN agencies across SS.

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