







Rethinking Recruitment Methods in Africa for A Better Management: An Evidence from Businesses in Burkina Faso

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1. Introduction

The processes and sources of recruitment have evolved over time and continue to do so linked to the professionalization of human resources management as well as to factors related to the environment, the sector and the level of economic and technological development. According to Gomez-Mejía, Balkin, and Cardy (2016) modern human resource management is concerned with issues such as equal opportunities, civil rights of candidates, correcting the language in communication with them, defending the employee privacy, ethics and corporate social responsibility, protection of data of candidates. It affects the recruitment process. After planning human resources, profiling jobs and analyzing the skills and financial compensation or training needed for each of them, Montes and González (2010) indicate that the next step is the recruitment of personnel, which feeds on sources external and internal. External sources are advertisements (of all kinds), employment agencies (private or public employment services), job boards and networks of all kinds. Internal sources are internal promotion, job rotation, hiring of interns and sponsorship by company employees. We present the advantages and disadvantages of each of these sources of recruitment See Table 5 in appendices). However, this division is not the most appropriate if one thinks of a country like Burkina Faso. Recruitment routes that can be defined as Western or Modern and others more traditional or African. Given the expectations of management and business owners, faced with the growing demand for labor and the

demands of each of the economic sectors, the challenge is the implementation of adequate techniques of acquiring competent human resources to develop functions within the organization. Recruitment channels in developed countries are increasingly based on new technologies and pursue competition, efficiency and competitiveness objectives. For their part, the most traditional recruitment methods or those linked to the realities and culture of the Burkina Faso, pursue objectives of loyalty, trust and the fulfillment of a social duty. Recent trends in human resource recruitment point to the hybridization of the most modern systems (based on the Internet and new technologies), or to go further, towards massive investments in systems. Recruitment, artificial intelligence, automation and robotization of processes, championed by [Shenoy and Aithal \(2018\)](#) as traditional recruiting systems are about to move on to a better life. In Nigeria, where according to Internet users already represent 55% of the population, [Omolawal and Onyeonoru \(2018\)](#) explain that for 70% of more than a thousand human resources managers surveyed in Nigeria, the use of online recruitment enables them to obtain better candidates (more qualified and more experienced) for the positions to be filled. [Odumeru \(2012\)](#) explains that the most popular source of recruitment (66%) in Nigeria is the use of selection agencies that use the Internet to capture and process applications. However, in Burkina Faso, also according to [Miniwatts Marketing Group \(2019\)](#) Internet users represent only 16% of the population, and those who browse social networks like Facebook are only 4%, which implies that up to 'As these percentages increase, the use of portals and / or social networks as sources of recruitment will remain in the minority in Burkina Faso. However, personnel management and in particular the recruitment phase, must consider the worker as a valuable source of resources within the organization, able to provide knowledge, skills and attitudes to be able to develop within the organization. In this sense, the phase of recruitment and selection of personnel will generate a series of information for the organization available to the person belonging to the organization. The recruitment phase arises from the need for qualified personnel to perform a function within the organization, in order to achieve the objectives set or improve those that already exist staff we will take the one developed by [Bretones and Rodríguez \(2008\)](#) who define it as the "[...] psychosocial process that develops in the organization, through which people are chosen to perform work[...]"'. To carry out this process successfully, different decisions must be made, with the sole aim of finding the right person to develop and perform functions within the organization, in order to optimize its usefulness and to meet the objectives set by the management. The terminology of human resources management has been widely studied and particularly focused on the Anglo-Saxon market, as reported by [Clark, Gospel, and Montgomery \(1999\)](#). In addition to the Anglo-Saxon area, studies have focused on the Asian region and in particular on the so-called Asian tigers of the 1990s, and more recently on China, due to the industrial development it has experienced in recent years. In the African context, some of the literature is based on the findings of [Kamoche \(2001\)](#); [Kamoche \(2002\)](#) who points out that low African economic growth, as well as stagnation after centralized planning of the economy, has not led to the development of economic research on this subject. Despite the fact that Africa offers much lower labor costs than in Asia, the discouragement of companies in this area is due to political instability, corruption, lack of infrastructure and low purchasing power of the African businessman ([Kamoche, 2002](#)). In addition, the African continent is still largely dependent on the agricultural sector, where 680 million people (two-thirds of Africa's population) still depend on agricultural livelihoods. In addition, the higher the level of development, the less the impact of traditional African management and human resource behavior. For example, in Nigeria, where half of the recruits come from Internet portals, [Anakwe \(2002\)](#) points out that recruitment agencies are the most important resource available to companies for recruiting staff. But in the same country, regarding to a regional administration, [Adenugba, Fadoju, and Akhuetie \(2017\)](#) explain that the dynamics of the recruitment are mostly driven more by non-meritocratic influences such as ethnicity, religion, statism, politicization etc.

Nevertheless many other studies focus on employee performance, as [Sutano and Kurniawah \(2016\)](#); [Kanyemba, Iwu, and Allen-Ile \(2015\)](#) or [Ekwoaba, Ikeije, and Ufoma \(2015\)](#) who show that the optimal recruitment sources increases employees productivity. One of the elements to which the African economies and that of Burkina Faso in particular must devote the most efforts is the development and strengthening of their human resources, taking into account the economic impact of the growth of their population, in order to reduce their level of poverty. Burkina Faso is a landlocked country located in the heart of West Africa. [Table 2](#) in the appendix presents some of its main quantities. The breakdown by sector gives us: trade 53%, services 31%, industry 10% and crafts 5%. However, half of them are no longer operational or have migrated to the informal sector, in order not to pay taxes. And among them, only 6,418 declared having an annual turnover of more than 1 million CFA francs (approximately 1,500 euros). According to [Weber \(2018\)](#) the labor force participation rate is 89.8%. Formal jobs are concentrated in urban centers and represent only 20% of the hired population, while in rural areas they represent 1%. Informal contracts are present in all sectors of the economy, including the public sector where 17% of workers do not have an employment contract. Another peculiarity of the Burkina Faso labor market is the relevance of unpaid work, common among young people and women. However, the official unemployment rate in Burkina Faso is 6.6% according to 2004 estimates. The accelerated growth of the population and its preparation for education form the basis of what is called the demographic dividend, a stage of growth in which the conditions for industrialization and development are the most optimal. For this reason, the importance of adequate management of human resources is enormous, and in this context that of the processes of recruitment and selection of personnel. Staff

selection is choosing the right person for the right job within the company. Therefore, the management chooses among the most suitable recruited candidates, to fill the existing positions in the company, trying to maintain and increase the efficiency and performance of the staff, as well as the efficiency of the organization. In this way, the recruiter seeks to solve two fundamental problems: the adequacy of the manager and the efficiency of the manager (Chiavenato, 2000). According to Cohen (1981) the selection of personnel essentially consists of comparing the aptitudes and possibilities of the candidate with the requirements of the position. It is the balance between the requirements of the position, the potentialities and the characteristics of the person. On the other hand, staff recruitment is a set of procedures that aims to attract and identify candidates who enhance the position to be held within the organization with their qualifications and abilities. The recruitment process begins with research and ends when applications are received. In this way, a set of candidates is obtained, from which they will emerge regardless of recruitment and new employees will then be selected (Alles, 2000).

Main question: What are the likely effects of the very traditional methods and / or modern methods on the competitiveness of African businesses?

The main objective of this research is to examine the relationships that exist between the African traditional methods of recruitment and modern methods of recruitment.

2. Literature Review

Traditional Recruitment Methods: these bring together the usual methods used in the African context to recruit staff. These include, among other things, recruitments based on family, sponsorship and through an internship.

Modern Recruitment Methods: These are the recruitment methods in use in large modern companies, especially those in developed countries. The methods are also copied in the western system of recruitment. These include recruitments through internal promotion, or through agencies or advertisements in the press.

2.1. Modern Method of Recruitment Versus African Traditional Method of Recruitment

Below are summarized the criteria that reflect the aspects to be taken into account in the survey of the recruitment and selection processes of staff.

Table-1. Characteristics of the different modern recruiting sources.

Modern method		
Sources	Description	Appreciation
Agency recruitment	At moderate cost, one obtains the skills best suited to perform specific functions and tasks within the organization through a third party.	Efficiency in the performance of specific functions; the agency carefully assesses the capacity of the worker.
Internal promotion	Without recruitment and training costs, motivates staff, while ensuring adherence to the values of the company.	Efficiency and loyalty to the organization. The best internally assessed workers are promoted.
Ad or press	The publication of classified advertisements in the field of employment allows African employers to carry out a selection process themselves from multiple applications.	Efficiency in performing specific functions. The CVs submitted by the candidates are evaluated.

Source: Fieldwork, 2018.

Table-2. Characteristics of the different traditional recruitment sources.

African Traditional methods		
Sources	Description	Appreciation
Only after an internship	Without recruitment costs or labor costs, facilitates professional training and the integration of company values.	Training and loyalty to the organization. In a way, it makes it possible to evaluate the recruited worker.
Sponsorship by employee	Without recruitment costs, guarantees professional competence and moral values by holding a company employee responsible.	Loyalty to the leader and efficiency. The abilities of the worker are not assessed.
Big family or village ties recruitment	Without recruitment costs, loyalty to the promoter of the company is mainly valued. Unlike sponsorship, this modality usually does not offer key positions within the organization or the training required for the position.	Loyalty to the leader and efficiency. The abilities of the worker are not assessed.

Source: Fieldwork, 2018.

2.2. Research Assumption / Hypothesis

There is a relationship between traditional methods of recruitment and modern methods of recruitment.

3. Methodology

Procedure: This work attempts to describe the different recruitment and selection processes used by companies in Burkina Faso. To do this, a survey was carried out among the participants of the Africalia 2018 Forum, obtaining 127 valid results from businessmen from Burkina Faso. This survey examined, among other aspects, the hiring processes commonly used by employers in their companies. In addition, information was obtained on the sectors in which they are located, as well as on turnover and socio-demographic variables (sex and age). The various sectors of activity surveyed were identified and grouped into 4; Agro-industry, construction, commerce and services. Likewise, the turnover expressed by the entrepreneurs was broken down into 5 brackets from which to choose; 0 - 19 million, 20 to 50 million, 51 to 500 million, 501 million to 3 billion and more than 3 billion. This stratification made it possible to identify small, medium and large companies. This exploratory study used IBM-SPSS software for the analysis of data obtained from the surveys. The sample size was established from the participants of the Africalia 2018 congress, which with 105 respondents reaching the maximum error at 97% is 9.25% (Ganassali, 2009; Hejase & Hejase, 2013; Nasse, 2020). In the present research the total number of respondents is 114 what is completely sufficient.

Measuring tool: The survey consists of a specific section of multiple choice questions to indicate the different methods of recruiting and selecting personnel employed by companies. For this, 6 recruitment sources commonly used in Burkina Faso were grouped under two aspects: classical methods and traditional methods in African culture. In the classic methods we have: the recruitment agency; internal promotion; and an advertisement in the press. In traditional methods we have: only after an internship; through sponsorship of an employee; and someone from the extended family or place of origin. Companies declared sales (by segments) are used as a competitiveness indicator.

Ethical consideration: Respondents answers are used for the purpose of the present research, and their identity and the identity of the company are also kept anonymous (Nasse, 2020).

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table-3. Sample characteristics.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative percentage
<i>Sex</i>				
Feminine	24	21.1	21.1	21.1
Male	90	78.9	78.9	100.0
Total	114	100.0	100.0	
<i>Age</i>				
25-35	28	24.6	24.6	24.6
36-45	57	50.0	50.0	74.6
46-55	28	24.6	24.6	99.2
56 years old and over	1	0.8	0.8	100.0
Total	114	100.0	100.0	
<i>Economic sectors</i>				
Agro industry	23	20.2	20.2	20.2
Construction	11	9.6	9.6	29.8
Trade	27	23.7	23.7	53.5
Services	53	46.5	46.5	100.0
Total	114	100.0	100.0	
<i>Sales figures</i>				
0 - 19 million	29	25.4	25.4	25.4
20 - 50 million	33	28.9	28.9	54.4
51 - 500 million	13	11.4	11.4	65.8
501 - 3 billion	31	27.2	27.2	93.0
more than 3 billion	8	7.0	7.0	100.0
Total	114			

4.2. Relationships by Sector

4.2.1. Agro - Industrial Companies

The results on Table 4 below shows that the crossing of 'Traditional methods' and 'Modern methods' is very significant. Thus, the relationship between the two variables is very significant.

Table-4. Results of the crossing of “Traditional method” and “Modern method”.

Variable Crossing	Results
“Traditional methods” and “Modern methods”	p = < 0.002 The relationship is very significant.
* p = <0.05	

4.3. Contruction and Public Works Companies

The results on Table 5 below shows that the crossing of 'Traditional methods' and 'Modern methods' is not significant. Thus, the relationship between the two variables is not significant.

Table-5. Results of the crossing of “Traditional method” and “Modern method”.

Variable Crossing	Results
“Traditional methods” and “Modern methods”	p = < 0.479 The relationship is not significant.
* p = <0.05	

4.4. Commercial Companies

The results on Table 6 below shows that the crossing of 'Traditional methods' and 'Modern methods' is not significant. Thus, the relationship between the two variables is not significant.

Table-6. Results of the crossing of “Traditional method” and “Modern method”.

Variable crossing	Results
“Traditional methods” and “Modern methods”	p = < 0.116 The relationship is not significant.
* p = <0.05	

4.5. Service Companies

The results on Table 7 below shows that the crossing of 'Traditional methods' and 'Modern methods' is very significant. Thus, the relationship between the two variables is very significant.

Table-7. Results of the crossing of “Traditional method” and “Modern method”.

Variable crossing	Results
“Traditional methods” and “Modern methods”	p = < 0.03 The relationship is very significant.
* p = <0.05	

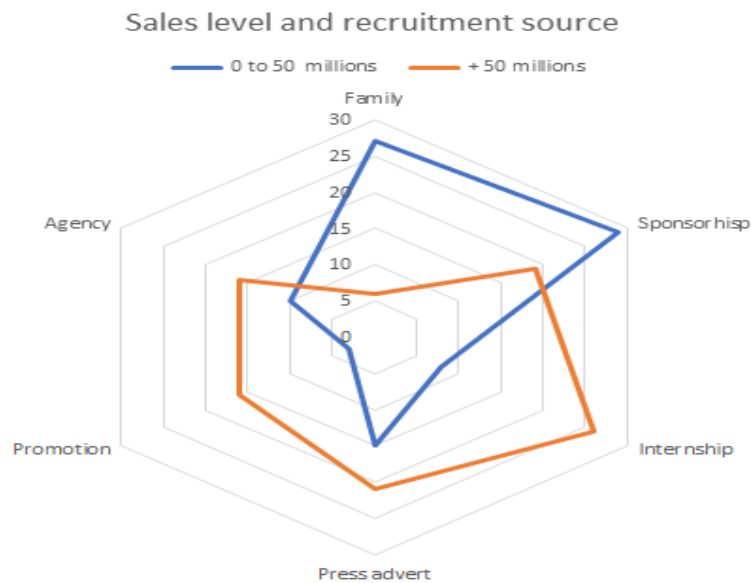


Figure-1. Relationships by sales level.

These results are consistent with Huselid (1995) who, including modern recruitment sources into “High Performance Work Practices” explains that they have a multiplier effect on sales level. Companies surveyed

have been divided in two groups, according to sales level: 0 to 50 millions (62 companies) and + 50 millions (52 companies) with clearly different results as it can be seen in the previous graphic.

5. Discussions of the Results

5.1. Traditional Methods and Modern Methods

Some studies have shown the links between the structure of the company and its competitiveness (Nasse, 2019; Nassè, 2015; Nasse & Sawadogo, 2019) in the sense that the type and size of a company determines the types of employees and leaders it possesses, and thus, all this affects good governance and business performance. Samwel, Omari, and Szumbah (2016) demonstrate that at least 59.5% of recruitments in Tanzania are made through Traditional methods, and thus they show that for small family firms, Traditional methods of recruitments leads to the recruitment of inappropriate personnel and to the progressive reduction of competitive advantage.

The present study has just shown that there are links between Traditional methods of recruitment and modern methods of recruiting companies in several given sectors. Furthermore, it is observed that companies that recruit personnel through Traditional methods are very less efficient or competitive than companies that do so through modern methods. It is also observed that when companies grow, they stop using family members or sponsored workers for recruitment (except in the construction industry, where, by the way, it doesn't make much sense). It is a very marked fact in the agro-industrial sector which has a greater propensity to recruit relatives or sponsored workers. It will not be easy to increase the competitiveness of human resources in Burkina Faso companies, because, as Karsten and Pennink (2007) say, entrepreneurs are not doing the right choices, even after learning the most modern management concepts in the Western context. The organization of the human resources departments in their companies in Burkina Faso, are always stuck to their traditional personnel management habits.

6. Conclusions

The need for qualified human resources is vital for the success of companies, particularly in the West African context where competition is fierce (Nasse, 2019) and where some different challenges affect personnel performance (Ampofo, Nassè, & Akouwerabou, 2020). It is found that the more traditional forms of recruitment of personnel are dominant in Burkina Faso, in particular in agribusiness and commerce, and in the small business segments, and on the other hand, that the most modern forms are preferred in the construction sector or in large companies. An evolution to modern forms of recruitment (as in Ghana, Abdul-Latif, Boateng, and Eneizan (2019) explain that 81% of the companies used internet and social networks for this purpose) will happen in the following years, but it cannot go faster than the internet use behaviours in Burkina Faso. where Miniwatts Marketing Group (2019) says that almost 80% of the population neither have access to such tool, nor says Weber (2018) to electricity and where 80% of owners of informal firms (the large majority of firms) have never attended school. Thus, the recommendation is that companies should put the maximum efforts on modern methods of recruitments, what will surely be an added value (Carbonell, Nassè, & Akouwerabou, 2020) for them to face some challenges but also competition.

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Appendix

Table-8. Socioeconomic data of Burkina Faso.

Concept	Data
Product Interior Gross (GDP)	2018: 14.442 Million USD
Annual growth in GNP	2018: 7%
Trade as% of GDP	2018: 63%
Life expectancy at birth	2017: 60.77 years
Inflation (annual percentage)	2018: 5.04%
Total tax rate (companies)	2018: 41.3%
% of salaried workers	2018: 12.91%
Añadido value in% of GDP	2018: Agriculture 29%, Industry 20%, Services 43%.
Youth illiteracy rate	(15 to 24 years old) 2018: 41.71%
Human development index	0.423. Rank 183 of 189
Rural population with electricity	2017: 0.8%
Total population	2019: 20.321.560
Internet users	Dec. 2018: 3,704,265 (18.2%)
Facebook users	Dec. 2017: 840,000 (4.1%)

Source: Miniwatts Marketing Group (2019).

Table-9. Advantages and disadvantages of the different sources of recruitment.

Traditional sources of recruitment		Modern sources of recruitment	
Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
Motivates employees All employees are already familiar with the philosophy and realities of the company. Lower cost. Recruitment speed. Candidates know the job requirements in advance.	Discouragement of rejected candidates who become the target of reprisals from their direct bosses. Candidates do not bring new values to the company. Recruitment is often not very objective.	Allows you to obtain profiles that bring new ideas and added value to the company. In the case of referrals, it is easy to find very specific profiles as well as loyalty to the company.	Family and friends often don't have the right skills. Sponsorships are only effective in low technical level positions. Often the cost of recruiting per ad or agency is quite high.

Source: Montes and González (2010); Dolan, Valle, Jackson, and Schuler (2007).