

# DOES BEST RECRUITMENT PRACTICE INFLUENCE HIGH PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION?

**Solomon Ozemoyah Ugheoke\***

Naresuan University International College  
*solowisdom60@yahoo.com*

\*corresponding author: *solowisdom60@yahoo.com*

## ABSTRACT

*Small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) are one of the fastest growing and most dynamic sectors in every economy. The industry is highly labour intensive and for that reason effective recruitment is significant for success. However, the issue of best recruitment practice (BRP) in SMEs has been neglected by researchers and practitioners. This study aimed to address this gap by examining the best recruitment practice and the effect on the achievement of high performance organizations (HPO) in SMEs. The analysis was based on a survey of 354 senior managers that had spent ten years and above in SMEs in the Nigerian market. The result showed that BRP had a significant positive impact on the achievement of HPO. This paper provides an insight into the applicability of BRP as well as offers practical help to human resource practitioners embarking on the best recruitment practice in the achievement of HPO. Managers and human resource professionals can use the result of this study to weigh the adaptability of BRP within the context of SMEs in developing economies.*

**Keywords:** best recruitment practice, SMEs, high performance organization

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Presently, organizations have realized that strategic business objectives can only be achieved with the recruitment of competent and skilled employees. To be effective, organizations are required to implement recruitment practices that can effectively help them to identify personality that fit an organizational culture that is open and supportive of individual human input. With growing numbers of qualified applicants chasing a decreasing pool of jobs, human resource managers are faced with challenges of how to accurately select the best candidates. While this issue has remained a big challenge for human resource professionals, best recruitment practice (BRP) has become the most significant competitive weapon for all organizations in the current business world. It provides validated, fair and unbiased standards to assess applicant competencies to perform in the targeted role/job. Yet the majority of firms, particularly small firms, have not realized the importance of BRP to effectively recruit a skilled and healthy workforce and this has remained a significant issue that has not been addressed by researchers. Despite the renowned importance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to employment opportunities for many nations, there is a dearth of studies on the adoption of BRP in the context of SMEs. Even though studies on BRP are still at an explorative stage, recent, empirical studies on BRP in developed economies have reasonably increased. However, studies on BRP within SMEs in developing countries are scarce. This has resulted in a multitude of human resource challenges with regard to recruitment, motivation and retention of employees (Sels, De Winne, Delmotte, Maes, Faems, & Forrier, 2006). As SMEs grow in size, the use of traditional

recruitment practices becomes increasingly insufficient (Kotey & Slade, 2005; Zheng, Morrison, & O'Neill, 2006). In these circumstances, SMEs managers are required to adopt BRP to build their competitive advantage. Therefore, it is imperative to increase the understanding of BRP among SMEs so that SMEs can effectively recruit skilled and competent employees into their workforce. In view of the above, the objective of this study is to examine the relationship between best recruitment practice and high performance organization. The result of this study will offer a significant insight into the important role of BRP in an organization.

In the following sections, SMEs in Nigeria, high performance organizations, and the study hypothesis are developed using the similarity-attraction theory to propose how best recruitment practice, perhaps, influences the achievement of high performance organizations in the context of SMEs.

## **2.0 SMEs IN NIGERIA**

Small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) have been defined in different ways, though the fundamental characteristics have remained the same (Ardic, Mylenko, & Saltane, 2011). None of the definitions appeared to be more important than the other (Ardic et al., 2011). These definitions vary from country to country, subject to the objective and the policy that govern the sector in that particular country, the number of employees, the value of assets, the capital invested on plant and machinery, and the turnover of the business (Ayanda & Laraba, 2011). However, the fundamental characteristics such as the number of employees, the value of assets, capital invested on plant and machinery, and the turnover of the business have remained the same all over the world (Ardic et al., 2011). The heterogeneity of what constitutes SMEs in different countries is subject to the changes in economic indicators such as the exchange rate which either increases or decreases the monetary value of various countries. These make establishing a common definition for SMEs not feasible (Ardic et al., 2011; US International Trade Commission, 2010).

Nigeria faces the dilemma of what constitutes the SMEs, using size and scale of business. For instance, Udechukwu (2003) defined SMEs in Nigeria as industries having 100 to 300 employees with an overall capital of 50 to 200 million Naira including working capital, excluding cost of land. According to small and medium industries equity investment scheme (SMIEIS), SMEs are industries having 10-300 employees and an overall capital of 1.5 to 200 million Naira including working capital (Obamuyi, 2010). Still in the process of providing a common definition, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), in collaboration with the Nigerian Bank of Commerce and Industry, defined SMEs as business enterprises whose capital cost and cost per employee fall within the value of \$300,000 and \$7,500 respectively (Ogundele, Hassan, & OKafor, 2007). Upon these definitions springing from various sectors, the Nigerian Bank of Commerce and Industry (NCR) developed its own operational definition for SMEs by defining SMEs as an industry with an operating capital of \$750,000, excluding cost of land.

Despite the official definition by NCR, confusion still trails agreeing on a common definition within the national boundary in Nigeria. As a result, the National policy on micro, small and medium enterprise (MSMES) provided a general comprehensive definition of micro, small and medium enterprises (SMEDAN, 2012), which serves as the operational definition for this study. Operationalizing this definition is based on the understanding of changes in economic indicators

such as exchange rate, interest rate and price index which will either decrease or increase the monetary value. The definition is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1.  
*Categorization of SMEs in Nigeria*

S/N	Size/Category	Employment	Assets (=N= Million) (excluding land and building)
1	Micro enterprises	Less than 10	Less than 5
2	Small enterprises	10 to 49	5 to less than 50
3	Medium enterprises	50 to 199	50 to less than 500

Source: National Policy on MSMEs, 2012.

Currently, SMEs are identified as the engine of growth of a nation, the seedbed for wealth creation, enhancing the standard of living of the poor. They are the breeding and nurturing grounds for industrial improvement, managerial capability, catalysts for social and economic modification, breeding groups of skilled and semi-skilled employees to enlarge the future of business (Ayanda & Laraba, 2011; Berisha & Namani, 2009; Okpara, 2009; Rocha, 2012; SMEDAN, 2012). Hence, more educated SMEs have emerged. Besides, SMEs have become academic disciplines and areas of research for researchers, with more recognition by various governments. Presently, various governments are creating favorable policies and enabling environments for SMEs to flourish, which may not have been witnessed in the past. This is against the view that SMEs were only meant for those with no formal education.

However, the growth of SMEs in Nigeria is not fast compared to SMEs in other continents such as Asia, Europe, America and Australia. According to Okpara (2011) the majority of SMEs in Nigeria are unable to achieve higher performance because of poor human resource practices. Similarly, Mariam, Tunde and Oluwakemi (2011) argued that human resource practice among the SMEs in Nigeria is still in its infancy. This affects their business view. The World Bank has also expressed dissatisfaction over the poor performance of SMEs in Nigeria, that even though labour is cheap, the value added by SMEs in Nigeria is minimal. Moreover, Ayanda and Laraba (2011) reported that the majority of SMEs in Nigeria wind up within their first five years of business while only 5% to 10% survive to achieve maturity stage, despite the overabundance of domestic markets and raw materials. Similarly, Gbadebo (2016) argued that the current economic downturn in Nigeria should be blamed on the failure of SMEs (Punch newspaper, 2016).

In view of the aforesaid issues, the need to help SMEs to achieve high performance in Nigeria is necessary because adopting the best recruitment practice (BRP) among SMEs will consequently increase the quality of their products, profits and their contributions to the country's GDP. Implementation of BRP will help SMEs' managers to select skilled employees such that the employees become a source of competitive advantage for the firm. As such, research on best

practices is needed for Nigeria SMEs to successfully achieve higher performance and compete in the global market.

## **2.1 High Performance Organizations (HPOs)**

High performance organizations (HPOs) have remained a popular demand among shareholders. This is because HPOs have the ability to function in a complex and hazardous environment, making minimum errors over a long period of time and serve as a valuable lesson to all organizations on how they can minimize inaccuracy and handle peak demands (Baker, Day, & Salas, 2006). According to Jamrog, Vickers, Overbolt, & Monison (2008), HPOs are organizations with clear, consistent strategy, striving beyond and above in providing customer value, better in terms of clarifying performance measures, training people to perform their tasks and creating environments for employees to work in teams. Similarly, de Waal, Orij, Rosman, and Zevenbergen (2014) defined a HPO as an accountable organization, highly reliable, adaptive, intellectual, agile, flexible, real time, a resilient enterprise, a robust enterprise, and a reactive and sustainable organization. In the same vein, de Waal and Sultan (2012) defined a HPO as an organization that has achieved both financial and nonfinancial outcomes better than its competitors over a minimum period of five to ten years. However, achieving HPO status requires an organization, irrespective of the size and location, to have a wellarticulated, clear and compelling mission, focusing on the needs of customers and strategically managing its employees (de Waal, 2012). Similarly, Wolf (2008) argued that building a HPO requires an organization to move beyond the process of removing difficulty to a process of creating an open environment that will encourage uninterrupted performance built on competent and positive transformation.

Using an in-depth case study, de Waal and Frijns (2009) found that it is possible to recognize the factors that determine continuous organizational success, so that managers can be provided with a model that will enhance organizational value. A study by de Waal and Akaraborworn (2013) found that achieving HPO status is an important way for organizations to improve in a sustainable way. Wolf (2008) also found that building a HPO demands firms to move beyond a process of removing difficulty to a process of creating an open environment to encourage uninterrupted performance that is built on competent and positive transformation. According to de Waal, A., Goedegebuure, and Tan Akaraborworn (2014) de Waal, Orij, Rosman, and Zevenbergen (2014) management of HPOs supports trust relationships with all level employees by valuing employee loyalty, treating employees with respect, creating and upholding individual relationships with employees, encouraging belief and trust in others, and treating people fairly. Furthermore, a HPO pays more attention to long-term than short-term gain (de Waal, 2012; Waal & Frijns, 2009) and endlessly works harder to improve customer value via learning customer's needs, understanding their values, building excellent relationships, having direct contact with customers, engaging them in the organization's activities, creating openness and paying attention to ways that will continuously improve customer value (de Waal, 2012). Thus, the theoretical framework of this study is discussed in the next section.

## **3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The similarity-attraction theory (Byrne, 1971) underpinned the framework of this study. The similarity-attraction theory puts forward that attracting and retaining the most qualified and talented employee is fundamental for organizational success and survival (Breugh, 2013).

According to Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, and Jones (2005), one of the most important determinants of organizational attraction is perceived fit because applicants prefer work environments that are well-matched with their own characteristics (Kristof, 1996). Evidence showed that organizational attractiveness is related to applicant fit with organization characteristics, and with job attributes (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Thus, applicants are likely to develop beliefs about their fit with employer characteristics, influencing their attraction to the organization (Van Hove & Lievens, 2007), i.e. in the context of employee's recruitment, job applicants are attracted to organizations which share characteristics, opinions, beliefs, as well as attitudes similar to their own (Byrne, 1971). Personal characteristics of the job applicant are among the most important factors that influence applicant ratings of jobs illustrated in the recruitment media (Johnson, Winter, Reio Jr, Thompson, & Petrosko, 2008). Attracting high-performing applicants is a critical component of personnel selection and overall organizational success. Thus, applicant attraction outcomes are predicted by job-organization characteristics, recruiter behaviors, perceptions of the recruiting process, perceived fit and hiring expectancies. It is further argued that before and during the selection process, the alignment between employee skills, job requirement and the alignment between their values, requirements and goals with the firm objectives significantly predict the firm as an attractive and viable workplace environment to work (Ugheoke, Isa, & Noor, 2014). Therefore, attracting high quality employees remain a major concern for most employers (Suazo, Martínez, & Sandoval, 2009), and there is reason that the way an employer reacts to the recruitment process will affect the firm's ability to attract quality employees.

Best recruitment practice (BRP) is the recruitment practice an organization can use to gain an initial competitive edge. What is BRP? Although, literally, "best" signifies highest, in the context of best practice studies, the term connotes the most efficient and effective way of recruiting the best job applicant. It does not only fill the positions, but in a thoughtful process that follows the best standard resulting in a group of candidates that are "self-selected" of which the selection was not pre-determined. Similarly, the process of BRP is intended to be fairer and clearly lays down the required competencies and test them in such a way that the recruiter has little discretion to favour one candidate over another. According to Sangeetha (2010) attracting and hiring the right candidate for the right job through an effective recruitment system is a key to competitive advantage and such recruitment activities should be conducted in an 'open and fair' way. Since applicants prioritize perceived fairness to the selection processes, it has significant influence on various pre-and post-hire attitudes and behavioral outcomes (Hausknecht, Day & Thomas, 2004). A study by Truxillo, Steiner, and Gilliland (2004) argued that fairness in the recruitment process of an organization is an important element that facilitates organizational effectiveness and significantly influences a variety of valuable outcomes that serve as strong predictors of behavioral manifestations (Hung, Ansari & Aafaqi, 2004; Lemons & Jones, 2001).

Thus, to be effective, firms are required to implement practices that identify personalities that fit an organizational culture that is open and supportive of individual human input. Accordingly, Linley and Garcea (2010) argued that through best practice, organizations can effectively select applicants who match the requirements more efficiently from those who will not deliver quality outcomes. Only firms that identify themselves by engaging in highly competitive hiring and take aggressive action to compete for talents, will achieve higher performance. As such, organizations should make BRP a top priority (Lee, 2005). Similarly, Theriou and Chatzoglou (2014) in a sample of 212 manufacturing firms in Greece, observed that organizations that pursued best

practices achieved better performance through the interaction of this practice with knowledge management and organizational learning capability. Hence, BRP serves as an instrument for any organization to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage, because it identifies what people do well compared to the requirements and job-fit of the potential employer (Linley & Garcea, 2010). As such, organizations have become more attentive that if improperly recruited, recruitment actions can harm the organizations' public image (Barber, 1998). If this argument is realistic, it is more important for firms to spend greater effort by ensuring their recruitment is consistent with best practices. Jameson (2000) surveyed 4,331 organizations in the United Kingdom, and found that best recruitment affects the level of training in an organization, such that managers may prefer to recruit rather than train.

Furthermore, BRP and performance relationship have been established by resource-based view (RBV) literature. RBV has highlighted that when tacit knowledge is introduced into firms, human resources are hard to imitate (Barney, 1991). In view of the above, firms that recruited employees that possess stocks of organizational knowledge, characterized as uncommon or idiosyncratic, stand a good chance of generating and sustaining high returns (Raft & Lord, 2002). Following an extensive review of best practice in large organizations in the Western context, empirical work in the context of developing economies suggest that smaller firms may also make greater use of best recruitment practice. Consequently, it is important for this study to examine BRP in the context of small firms to echo the findings of extant literature. On the basis of the aforesaid literature, it is important to establish the relationship between BRP and higher organizational performance. As such this study develops the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between best recruitment practice and the achievement of high performance organization.

## **4.0 METHOD**

### **4.1 Population**

The first step needed for all sampling to be effective is to clearly define the population of interest. According to the small and medium scale enterprise development of Nigeria (2012), Nigeria has 17, 261,753 SMEs. Obviously, all the SMEs in Nigeria cannot be the population of this study because of high costs, and time constraints as literature has revealed, i.e. from a population, researchers must draw a conclusion on the element they need to study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The breakdown of SMEs in Nigeria revealed that the food and beverage (F&B) sector has the largest segment of the Nigerian SMEs industry (Aussenwirtschaft Austria, Branchenreport Nigeria–June, 2014). Out of the population, Lagos state constituted over 80% (percent) of SMEs in Nigeria (Lagos State Business Directory, 2013). Therefore, F&B SMEs in Lagos make up the population of this study. Food and beverage SMEs constituted the population of this study because of the poor performance that has been associated with F&B SMEs in Nigeria. This is consistent with Mohammed and Obeleagu-Nzelibe (2013) that 70% to 80% of foods produced by F&B SMEs in Nigeria fall below the industrial standard because of lack of proper business plans, and human and financial resources. Besides, F&B SMEs in Nigeria have been under researched and lack of research attention has caused the low performance of the SMEs (Ihugba, Odii, & Njoku, 2013).

## **4.2 Sampling frame and techniques**

The choice of a study sample is unavoidable in a research because of the difficulty in observing every element of the population. Thus the need to take a sample becomes necessary. Since it is practically impossible to gather all the SMEs, selecting who participates in this research is fundamentally important. All the SMEs in Nigeria could not be studied because of the high number of the SMEs and the vast land mass of the country (about 923,768 km<sup>2</sup>). As such, an optimal sample was significant for minimizing the cost of sampling error, thus suggesting the need for selecting a suitable sample size. This study used the Krejcie and Morgan population and sample size table which is best used by researchers. From Krejcie and Morgan's (1979) population and sample size table, the ideal sample size for a population of 4535 was 354. A large sample size of 354 would make statistical significance test sensitive (Hair et al., 2010). The sample size of 354 was suitable for this study to be generalized. Hence a total of 354 questionnaires were distributed to achieve a high response rate. The selected sample represented the entire F&B SMEs population, therefore any statement from the sample applies to the entire study population. This study drew its sample from every senior manager in each of the SMEs. Senior managers are the chief executive officers (CEOs) of the SMEs who develop goals and make decisions about the direction of the business. The simple random sampling was employed in this study because it has the least element of personal bias and is mostly suitable if the unit of analysis is organizations.

## **4.3 Participants**

This study administered a total of 354 questionnaires to food and beverages SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria. Two hundred and fifty two (252) questionnaires were usable out of the 267 returned representing a 71.2% response rate. One hundred and sixty nine (67.1%) of the SMEs that participated in the survey had been in the business for 10-15 years, while 83 (32.9%) SMEs had spent 16-20 years in the business. All the SMEs had a long span of experience in the market. Therefore, the information provided by the respondents was sufficient to make precise judgments that would result in the achievement of the objectives of the study. In terms of the number of employees, SMEs which employed 51-60 employees constituted the largest percentage in this study (127) representing 50.3 % of the total number of respondents. Next were SMEs that employed over 60 employees (86) which represented 34.1%, while only 15.6% were medium size enterprises. This indicated that almost all the organizations in the study belonged to medium size organizations. This is important because the age of the firm, the size of the firm and the type of industry in which a firm belongs to affect the performance of the firm. The majority of the participants, 223(88.5%) were male managers, while 29 (11.5%) were female. A high percentage of the respondents held bachelor degrees which accounted for 182 respondents, representing 72.2%. This was followed by 64 with masters degrees (25.4%) while 6 (2.4%) held doctorate degrees. Therefore, the data used in this study were provided by respondents from different educational backgrounds.

## **4.4 Measures**

The measures for this study were adapted from previous studies. Some of the items were modified in order to suit the context of the study. The items were pre-tested by three experts (one professor and two senior lecturers) for clarity and understanding of the scale items. All the response options were indicated on a seven- point Likert scale where , 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree, and the respondents were rated based on their level of agreement with the

items. The independent variable (BRP) was measured with thirteen (13) items adopted from Bauer, Truxillo, Sanchez, Craig, Ferrara, and Campion (2001). The thirteen items have been shown to be reliable and valid to measure BRP. Studies have reported that the scale has adequate internal consistency (the Cronbach alphas ranging from .76 to .82(Wang, Hackett, Cui, & Zhang, 2012). The dependent variable (High Performance Organization) was measured with ten items adapted from de Waal (2010). This scale has been established to be reliable (de Waal, Goedegebuure, & Tan Akaraborworn, 2014).

## 5.0 DATA ANALYSIS

Several statistical analyses were conducted in this study using SPSS version 20 to analyze the data, such as reliability analysis, correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analysis. Specifically, both descriptive and inferential analysis were conducted to establish the influence of BRP on the achievement of HPO.

### 5.1 Reliability analysis

The study used the Cronbach alpha coefficient to assess the reliability of the items in this study. As a rule of thumb, a higher Cronbach coefficient alpha demonstrates higher reliability. A Cronbach alpha value of 0.70 has been recommended as the minimum limit of acceptability (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The Cronbach alpha coefficient ranged between 0.736 for BRP and 0.896 for HPO. Thus, it can be argued that all the instruments used in this study were reliable because the Cronbach alphas were higher than 0.70. The correlation analysis that involved Best Recruitment Practice and HPO was conducted to examine the strength and the direction of the linear relationship between the variables. The result of the Pearson correlation showed that BRP correlated with HPO at the significant level of 0.01.

#### *Correlation Analysis Summary between Variables*

	<b>BRP</b>	<b>HPO</b>
<b>BRP</b>	1	
<b>HPO</b>	.443**	1

Note. \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### 5.2 Hypotheses testing

There is no precise way of what and how BRP and high performance organization (HPO) should be studied, i.e. no one type of measure is better than the other. This indicates that different measures are better for different types of workplaces, different corporate philosophies and different types of organizations. Besides, HPO could be abstract or concrete and can be observed, managed, and measured in subjective and objective means. As a result, this study used unidimensional approaches to conceptualize and measure best recruitment practice and high performance organization. Regression analysis provides an avenue to assess the level of relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. The regression analysis result was presented at the significant level of  $p < 0.05$ . When items on BRP were keyed into the SPSS, the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 0.446. In other words, the regression model sufficiently fitted the data and significantly explained 44.6% of the variation in HPO ( $R^2 = 44.6$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The coefficient of the result of BRP was statistically significant

to high performance organization at  $p < 0.05$ . Thus, hypothesis 1 was supported. The result is illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1.  
*Regression Analysis Summaries for HPO*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Standard error</b>	<b>beta</b>	<b>t. value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Best recruitment practice	.084	.318	2.471	.003**
R square				0.446
Sig. F change				0.000***
F value				19.293

\*P<0.10, \*\* <0.05, \*\*\* p<0.001, Sig =Significant

## 6.0 DISCUSSION

The result of this study showed a significant positive relationship between BRP and HPO. Such a result indicated that firms that implement BRP would achieve competitive advantages because best-qualified candidates with the desired knowledge, skills and experience for the job in a timely and cost-effective manner will be attracted. Therefore, to emerge as the employer of choice, the firm must improve its recruitment process. Such improvement provides better reputation for the firm. The more applicants perceive fairness and unbiased standard in any recruitment, the more positive the evaluation on the firm's overall corporate image. As such, firms that implement BRP enhance productivity, improve returns and achieve economies of scale; this is conducive for the survival of the organizations. The result is consistent with the studies by Boxal & Purcel (2011); Sangeetha (2010); Theriou & Chatzoglou (2008); Theriou & Chatzoglou (2014) that best practice remained an unique element that facilitates competitive advantage for all organizations, because it emphasizes employees' capability, knowledge and skills (Marchinton & Wilkinson, 2003). Similarly, RBV also supports that competitive advantage and performance result from a firm's ability to identify specific resources and capabilities which are costly for competitors to imitate (Barney, 1991). Thus, with BRP firms have the ability of selecting the right candidates that fit the job.

The outcome of this result is that managers have come to realize that having BRP that fit with the company's needs helps firms to improve the quality of products, customer's value, innovation and efficiency. BRP is a key to achieve high customer's value, product quality and innovation because it assures that employees that have the needed skills assume greater job responsibility. Hence, for SMEs to take good strategic decisions, they need to recruit skilled employees to effectively meet stated goals. Through BRP, SMEs facing performance problems will develop new ways of identifying a competent and motivated workforce that will provide the organization with valuable market information. Through experience, managers constantly develop new ways of identifying the best candidates from the pool of applicants that are best suited for the company. The experience creates the awareness for managers that the old ways of recruitment are not appropriate in today's competitive market; as such, implementing BRP will help them to achieve the needed goal. Apart from the above, the high number of SMEs in Nigeria will also create competition among the firms, hence, SME will use BRP as a strategy to select high value

capacity that will bring quality innovation to the business that gives them a competitive advantage over others.

Furthermore, BRP is considered as the best strategy for small firms to get the right people that fit the job because of the high cost of training and the limited budget constraining SMEs to retrain newly recruited employees. As such, implementing BRP is important for all SMEs that desire to reduce training cost, since every organization is currently looking for ways of reducing cost and at the same time maximising output. Therefore, implementing BRP will help firms to select competent and skilled applicants to achieve competitive advantage. Besides, because the majority of SMEs do not have training and development programs to supplement the less experienced graduates produced by tertiary institutions, they require BRP as an alternative to select the right individuals that fit the firm's goal and have the ability to produce quality output. BRP provides competitive advantage for both large and small firms regardless of the industry or context. Therefore, the first step for any organisation to achieve high performance is to recognize that BRP is strategically important in the current market environment, and not an alternative practice. As such, it is the prime responsibility of managers to implement BRP. It is essential for managers to understand that hiring the wrong candidate results in low productivity and lost opportunities; as such, it is important for firms to recruit the right skills for the right job before deciding the strategic plan.

Therefore, to effectively implement BRP requires SMEs to make use of the social media to attract skilled employees. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) remains a popular platform to attract the best skilled, with approximately 90 percent of human resource professionals using it as a tool to drive traffic towards a career page where information about recruitment drives is frequently updated. Competitive advantage accrues to businesses that are best able to exploit appropriate networks in order to recruit quality talent (Castells, 2000). As such, firms wishing to attract the best skills are required to make their recruitment information easily reachable to users through the social media. Firms should also recognize that if recruitment is inappropriately conducted, recruitment actions can lead to loss of profit, damage the firm's public image, as well be unable to fill positions with qualified employees. Failure to properly address recruitment can have negative consequences for organizations. Therefore, managers involved in recruitment activities should be equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills. Besides, SMEs should regularly review their recruitment process to make sure hidden bias is removed and to ensure specific talent is not being blocked from entering the organization. Recruitment should not simply be a question of filling the gaps in the organization, instead should be proactively focused on bringing the specific skills and experiences to the organization. As such, the first step for any organization to achieve competitive advantage is to recognize that the recruitment of the best talents is of strategic importance for any organization.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

Best recruitment practice is perhaps one of the most important factors for achieving sustainable competitive advantage in the private sector. Therefore, firms cannot achieve any meaningful competitive advantage without operating best recruitment that creates a system where competent employees are recruited in the organization. As such, any firm that desires to be successful requires to attract human talent capable of performing complex tasks. This study has offered a new understanding on the importance of acknowledging BRP as a useful first step in developing a cadre of effective workforce for an organization. However, the study is not without limitations.

The first limitation can be viewed from the sample. The sample size of this study was reasonably small, though still large enough to provide the necessary power to test the hypotheses. The observed relationships may be difficult to generalize to organizations in other industries without carrying out a similar study on them. Future work using larger samples from a broader cross-section of industries would also extend the generalizability of the model. A larger and more diverse sample of firms across industries in different countries with a representative employee pool from each company would be better for the purpose of making consistent inferences. This study has a common limitation of cross-sectional studies. Because the study is cross sectional in nature, this study could not determine causality, since cross-sectional data do not allow for causal interpretations among the variables. Therefore, future longitudinal studies are needed to follow up on the trend of BRP in SMEs.

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