

Full Length Research Paper

The recruitment market practices of travel agencies in the Gauteng province of South Africa: What is the status quo?

Mornay Roberts-Lombard

Department of Marketing Management, University of Johannesburg, South Africa. E-mail: mornayrl@uj.ac.za.

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Most research on relationship marketing focuses on the building of relationships between a business and its customers. Little research considers the application of relationship marketing principles to the recruitment market of a business. The purpose of this article is therefore to indicate what the current status is of the relationships which travel agencies in the Gauteng Province of South Africa: (hereafter referred to as Gauteng province) have with their recruitment market. Personal interviews were conducted with 170 travel agency managers and/or owners in Gauteng. The results stipulate that the large staff turnover in the travel agency industry in the Gauteng Province is the result of poor salaries, a lack of educational sponsorships and poor management relationships with employees working for travel agencies. Through a stronger focus on these aspects, the management of travel agencies in Gauteng will be able to recruit and retain experienced employees who can deliver a service to customers that will contribute to greater customer's satisfaction.

Key words: Recruitment, recruitment market, travel agency, travel agent, employee.

INTRODUCTION

A business consists of resources, of which the most important is human resources. The successful existence of the business depends on the manner in which it is able to recruit the most skilled employees. Businesses must focus on how to retain their employees within a highly competitive labour environment to ensure its competitiveness and success (Henry and Temtime, 2009). This requires a comprehensive human resources planning process which provides the business with a competitive advantage over other businesses. Recruitment reflects the process whereby suitable candidates are identified and recruited to the business (Williamson et al., 2010). Potential employees are therefore recruited with the intention to form part of the value-adding activities of the business. According to these activities, the business attempts to satisfy the needs and wants of customers to the best of its ability (Chanda et al., 2010). In terms of the service-driven employer, the motivation of employees also becomes an important factor, since an unhappy

employee can influence a project or business negatively. A direct outcome of this could be that the business can have a negative influence on its relationship building activities with customers (Maharaj and Schlechter, 2007).

This article will provide a theory discussion on recruitment relating to aspects such as the characteristics of candidates when recruited, the importance of a manpower needs assessment before recruitment is initiated, the relevance of understanding the recruitment policy of the business before recruitment actions are initiated, knowledge on the task description of the vacant position before a candidate is recruited, as well as aspects relating to the business offer that is made to a successful candidate. The article will further attempt to indicate what the current status is of the relationships which travel agencies in the Gauteng Province have with their recruitment market, and will provide recommendations to the management of travel agencies regarding the improved application of the principles of relationship marketing to

this market. In addition, the problem statement and the purpose of the article will be highlighted and followed by a focus on the objectives of the study and an overview of the theory relating to the recruitment market. This is followed by a discussion of the methodology applied to the study and the major findings and managerial implications which form an inherent part of the research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To achieve success in the complex and fast-paced marketplace of today, it is increasingly being acknowledged that a number of key market areas need to be addressed. The Relationship Marketing Multiple Markets Model enables a diagnostic review to be undertaken of the key market domains that may be of importance to any given organisation (Harwood et al., 2008:26-37). As a result of such a diagnosis, a number of key groups are identified which are of special importance. The exact number of markets to be focused on by any given organisation will vary. Thus, some organisations will need to focus significantly on relatively few markets, while others will have a much greater number to take into account. The Relationship Marketing (RM) multiple markets model includes supplier markets, customer markets, referral markets, recruitment markets, internal markets and influence markets. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on recruitment markets only.

The success of the South African travel agency industry depends on the quality of service which travel agents deliver to customers. Such service deliverance is in direct relation to the skills of management, as well as the knowledge and professionalism of employees (Nilakantan et al., 2011). This indicates that recruitment is an important function within the business. The business is itself responsible to recruit and retain a successful salesforce which can be viewed as an asset to the business (Ekhsan and Othman, 2009). The recruitment policy of the business must therefore ensure that the most competent candidate is recruited for an advertised position (Van Hoya and Lievens, 2007). For the purposes of this study, the different literature components which constitute the recruitment market will be discussed in more detail.

Candidate requirements

The employees of a service business must possess a service orientation to ensure the delivery of a quality, market-driven service to customers. Such a service delivery will form the basis for the establishment of a long-term relationship with customers (Townsend, 2007). During the selection process the business must be able to establish and measure the suitability of the candidate to the vacant position. It is done by finding answers to

questions such as, does the applicant adhere to the minimum requirements as indicated in the post specification (e.g. skills, experience and the ability of the candidate to learn)? Can the previous experience of the candidate be of value for the position for which he/she is applying? Does the applicant possess the ability to network? What are the interests, internal motivational level and objectives of the applicant? Does the candidate illustrate the potential to become a loyal employee when his/her career record is studied? Is there any information on the application form which can cause doubt about the suitability of the candidate for the position advertised? (Buse, 2009; Henkens et al., 2005). Selden and Orenstein (2011) and (Roberts-Lombard, 2006) refer to the minimum entry qualification for a travel agency position as a Diploma in Tourism and Travel. He further states that the skills required are interpersonal, communication, listening and computer literate skills, as well as the skill of patience.

One of the primary reasons for the delivery of poor services to customers can be ascribed to the selection and appointment of potential candidates who are not suitable for the delivery of the service. The purpose of recruitment should be to recruit, select and appoint the most suitable candidate for the correct position within the business (Fernandez-Araoz et al., 2009). It must be emphasised that potential employees of a high caliber prefer to work for businesses that are reputable in order for them to be successful (Luna-Arocas and Camps, 2008).

Against the background provided as stated earlier it is important to select employees in the service sector according to specified criteria. These criteria are especially applicable to positions which are directly related to customer liaison and incorporate the following namely, a mature inclination and a positive self image, well developed interpersonal skills, a high tolerance level, an inherent need to satisfy the individual needs of customer, the expression of personal characteristics such as initiative, creativity, perseverance and the need for self development, the execution of efficient communication, and the ability of the candidate to influence other people (Raub and Streit, 2006; Theron et al., 2003). It is therefore the responsibility of the business to appoint employees who can add the characteristics of trust, loyalty, respect and commitment to the business (Theron et al., 2003). The selection of the most suitable candidate and the establishment of a well designed training programme can be the key to the success of a business (Treven, 2006; Whetstone et al., 2006).

Manpower needs assessment

Employee planning should be done within the broader framework of the strategic plan and objectives of the business (Ekhsan and Othman, 2009). It is important to

remember that the focus of the recruitment and the selection procedures of a business is to ensure that the correct number and category of employees are recruited at the right time and place to meet the current and future needs of the business. The business must be able to determine what the future demand and supply will be of employees with specific skills (Dwyer, 2007). The forecasting of future employee needs must focus on the task and post description of the potential employee, and must incorporate identified aspects which are peculiar to the employment needs of the business (Bar-Isaac and Ganuza, 2008; Petzer, 2005).

Recruitment policy

The recruitment and selection of potential employees is the function of the human resources manager in the business (Runnels et al., 2011). The quality of business products and services is directly determined by the quality of its employees. Employees who are recruited to the business must ensure effective, efficient and profitable service delivery by the business (Raub and Streit, 2006).

The following guidelines can also empower the business to recruit the most suitable candidates to build a long-term relationship with customers, namely, more comprehensive and aggressive recruitment campaigns, improved recruitment packages inclusive of fringe benefits for both new and current employees, more flexible recruitment packages to adhere to the needs of individual professionals, a higher percentage of women and mature students within the workforce, experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate students and cooperation with other businesses with regard to the recruitment of new employees (Townes, 2010).

Task description

The estimation and establishment of the quality and quantity of employees which a business will require in the future must precede all recruitment actions and must incorporate three steps, namely, Step 1: The identification of the functions currently being performed by the business, such as the post analysis and post description. The most important tasks of the job, with subdivisions providing more information and practical examples, must be identified; Step 2: Specification of the type of employees required to perform such duties (post specification); and, Step 3: the specification of the number of employees which will be required by the business in the future (human resources forecasting and planning) (Luna-Arocas and Camps, 2008).

The compilation of a framework which specifies the skills, characteristics and qualities which the potential employee must possess, is possible if the specifications, description and expectations of the position are taken into consideration (Wilson et al., 2008). The possibility exists

that the potential candidate does not possess all the required skills and characteristics which the vacant post requires. It is for this reason that a business must determine the skills and competencies of employees who are employed in similar positions within the business (Townsend, 2007). The evaluation of candidates who are already employed by the business is easier, since the business already possesses information on and experience of the ability of the potential candidate and his or her work performance. All parties who have a direct interest in the appointment of the most suitable candidate in a vacant position must reach consensus regarding the required skills and characteristics which the successful candidate must possess (Williamson et al., 2010). It must further serve as a measurement tool for the recruitment of the most suitable candidate for a position within the business (Henkens et al., 2005).

Business offer

The identification of the most suitable candidate for positions within the business requires comprehensive planning. The offer which the business communicates to the successful candidate must contain the most prominent motives and fears of the candidate (Middleton, 2010). The motives of the candidate (e.g. career advancement), as well as the opportunities and challenges which the position offers, must be central to the marketing of the business offer to the successful candidate (Yeaton, 2008; Raub and Streit, 2006).

In addition, it must be emphasised that smaller businesses, such as travel agencies, experience problems with the recruitment of appropriate candidates. The reasons for this include the fact that salaries are less competitive due to a shortage of funds, that training opportunities are not provided to staff on a regular basis, the overall experience of employees with regard to job satisfaction is poor, and work security within the small business is also less guaranteed compared to large corporate institutions (Naidu, 2010).

Problem statement

Human resources are a key success factor in the travel agency industry in the Gauteng Province. The customers of a travel agency are in contact with service employees during the service delivery process. Service levels in a travel agency have to meet the most exacting standards and have to be maintained around the clock. The challenging work environment in which travel consultants operate, makes it even more difficult to deliver a friendly, smiling service to customers. Travel consultants work under continuous pressure to meet sales quotas, whilst they are expected to manage customer portfolios during long working hour days. Thus, it becomes imperative for travel agencies to recruit employees who have realistic

expectations of job demands and working conditions in the travel agency industry. A realistic recruitment approach implies that travel agencies should provide potential candidates with complete and unbiased information to attract only those individuals who match the job profile and can meet the demands. This could ensure a decrease in staff turnover and an increase in job satisfaction and the performance of employees (Buse, 2009; Raub and Streit, 2006). The recruitment and retention of highly skilled, qualified and experienced employees therefore implies that the business must market itself to potential employees. It encompasses the creation and establishment of a positive environmental climate in which an employee can work, as well as providing potential employees with communication regarding the advantages to work for the business (Dwyer, 2007).

However, Townes et al. (2010) indicated that there are challenges facing the recruitment market of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province. The experienced staff of travel agencies are being lured by recruitment agencies with improved salary and benefit packages, thereby motivating them to change employer. The nomination of a suitable candidate to a new employer also occurs without the references of the successful candidate being contacted by the recruitment agency. The owners and managers of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province view this process as the ruthless headhunting of employees, which has a negative influence on the growth and future success of the travel agency industry in the country. This situation creates conflict between the management of travel agencies and recruitment consultants, resulting in the majority of travel agencies recruiting their own staff. Against the brief background on the importance of employee recruitment and the current recruitment challenges in the travel agency industry in the Gauteng Province provided earlier, the problem statement of this article is as follows:

The recruitment market practices of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province remain unclear and unexplored.

Considering the information provided earlier, there is a clear need for the management of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province to apply the principles of relationship marketing to their daily operations. It is furthermore important that travel agencies also apply these principles to their relationship building initiatives with the recruitment market that influences their competitiveness in the market-place. Such competitiveness specifically depends on the ability of the travel agency to recruit and retain experienced, skilled and qualified staff.

Contribution of the article

Limited research has been conducted on recruitment market practices in South Africa, and no study has

focused exclusively on the recruitment market practices within the travel agency industry in the Gauteng Province. Prior research within South Africa includes studies conducted for the purpose of investigating the recruitment market practices in an insurance, banking, hospital or manufacturing environment, or to provide a broad academic perspective on the legal aspects of labour recruitment in the afore – mentioned industries. This article will provide a discussion on recruitment market practices from a service industry perspective which will be beneficial to the travel agency industry in the Gauteng Province. The results and conclusions drawn may be used to ensure the recruitment and retention of skilled and qualified individuals in the travel agency industry in the country. In addition, the findings of this article could also create a greater awareness amongst South African travel agents of the requirements for establishing positive, long-term relationships with employees of the travel agency. It is therefore proposed that this article will contribute to the theoretical and empirical knowledge on the recruitment market practices of the travel agency industry in the Gauteng Province.

Objectives of the article

The primary objective of the article is to investigate the recruitment market practices of travel agencies in Gauteng, and to make recommendations regarding the improved application of the principles of relationship marketing to the recruitment market of travel agencies in the province.

The secondary objectives are:

- (i) To determine the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider candidate requirements relevant when making an appointment.
- (ii) To determine the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised.
- (iii) To determine the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently make use of a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited.
- (iv) To determine the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited.
- (v) To determine the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently use different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency.
- (vi) To determine whether significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider and should consider candidate requirements

when making an appointment.

(vii) To determine whether significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform and should perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised.

(viii) To determine whether significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited.

(ix) To determine whether significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop and should develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited.

(x) To determine whether significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency.

Hypotheses of the article

H1: Travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider candidate requirements relevant when making an appointment.

H0(1): Travel agencies in Gauteng do not currently consider candidate requirements relevant when making an appointment.

H2: Travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised.

H0(2): Travel agencies in Gauteng do not currently perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised.

H3: Travel agencies in Gauteng currently make use of a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited.

H0(3): Travel agencies in Gauteng do not currently make use of a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited.

H4: Travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited.

H0(4): Travel agencies in Gauteng do not currently develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited.

H5: Travel agencies in Gauteng currently use different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency.

H0(5): Travel agencies in Gauteng do not currently use different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency.

H6: Significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider and should consider candidate requirements when making an appointment.

H0(6): Significant differences do not exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider and should consider candidate requirements when making an appointment.

H7: Significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform and should perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised.

H0(7): Significant differences do not exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform and should perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised.

H8: Significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited.

H0(8): Significant differences do not exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited.

H9: Significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop and should develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited.

H0(9): Significant differences do not exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop and should develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited.

H10: Significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency.

H0(10): Significant differences do not exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply different forms of business offers to recruit qualified

and experienced candidates to the travel agency.

H11: A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider and should consider candidate requirements when making an appointment.

H0(11): A significant difference does not exist between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider and should consider candidate requirements when making an appointment.

H12: A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform and should perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised.

H0(12): A significant difference does not exist between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform and should perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised.

H13: A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited.

H0(13): A significant difference does not exist between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited.

H14: A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop and should develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited.

H0(14): A significant difference does not exist between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop and should develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited.

H15: A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply different forms of business offer to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency.

H0(15): A significant difference does not exist between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply different forms of business offer to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency.

METHODOLOGY

Research approach

This study made use of a quantitative research approach and a descriptive research design. The study was also cross sectional since the respondents were only interviewed once.

Population and sample

The population for this study included all the travel agencies registered with the Association of South African Travel Agents (ASATA) in the Gauteng Province. The target population for this study was 280 travel agencies of which 170 participated in the study. In terms of the small size of the population, it was decided to conduct a census. A census is a count of all the elements in a population (Tustin et al., 2005:337).

Research instrument

The measuring instrument used was a structured questionnaire and was developed and validated by Roberts-Lombard (2006). The empirical research component of the study consisted of the completion of interviewer-administered questionnaires through personal interviews. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A incorporated closed-ended questions to gather demographic data on the profile of the travel agency. The biographical data of the respondents was gathered through one question in this section, namely the location of the travel agency (for example Pretoria or Johannesburg).

Section B was in the format of a five-point Likert-type scale, comprising 27 statements on recruitment market relationship building, constituting the five constructs of the study, namely "candidate requirements", "manpower needs assessment", "recruitment policy", "task description" and "business offer". The purpose of the statements in the questionnaire was to test respondents' current and ideal application of identified relationship marketing principles in the recruitment market of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province. The statement's response continuum ranged from 1 to 5, where 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. The current application of the recruitment market principles was indicated as x(a) on the questionnaire, whilst the ideal implication was indicated as x(b).

Structured interviews were conducted with ten owners or managers of travel agencies in Johannesburg to pre-test the questionnaire before its formal application as a data gathering instrument.

Data gathering

Personal interviews were conducted with the managers and/or owners of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province. A time frame of sixty days was allocated to complete the interviews. To ensure the participation of the maximum number of population elements, interviews were arranged on the premises of the travel agency.

Data analysis

Before the results from the survey can be analysed, it is necessary to examine the representativity of the sample, as well as the validity and reliability of the measurement sets. Doing so assists in understanding the context in which results should be interpreted. This section further describes the level of agreement of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province with regard to the extent to which

candidate requirements are currently considered and should be considered in terms of the different aspects, namely:

- (i) When making an appointment with a human resource, assessment is immediately performed and should be performed before a vacant position is advertised.
- (ii) A structured recruitment policy is currently applied and should be applied before a candidate is recruited.
- (iii) A job description for a vacant position is currently developed and should be developed before a candidate is recruited.
- (iv) Different forms of business offer are currently applied and should be applied when recruiting qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency.

Individual statement and overall mean scores for the measurement sets as well as the significant differences between the current and ideal measurement sets for the study were calculated. Furthermore, the Paired Sample T-test was used to determine whether or not significant differences exist between the mean responses of the five measurement sets in the study. Considering that the researcher relied on a 95% level of confidence, or a 5% level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$), a p-value of less than or equal to 0.05 indicates a significant difference between the means in terms of the Independent Sample T-test.

Representativity

The researcher strictly followed the sample plan as described in the section on research methodology, in order to ensure the representativity of the sample.

Distribution of Results: Skewness and Kurtosis

The recruitment market practices of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province were measured according to five constructs, namely "Candidate requirements", "Manpower needs assessment", "Recruitment policy", "Task description" and "Business offer". The data was analysed to uncover the mean scores for the following, namely:

- (i) the current application of recruitment market practices;
- (ii) the ideal implementation of recruitment market practices;
- (iii) the standard deviation for individual statements referring to both (a) the current application of recruitment market practices and (b) the ideal implementation of recruitment market practices;
- (iv) to determine whether significant differences exist between the extent to which candidate requirements are currently considered and should be considered when making an appointment;
- (v) a human resource needs assessment is currently performed and should be performed before a vacant position is advertised;
- (vi) a structured recruitment policy is currently applied and should be applied before a candidate is recruited;
- (vii) a job description for a vacant position is currently developed and should be developed before a candidate is recruited;
- (viii) different forms of business offers are currently applied and should be applied when recruiting qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency;
- (ix) the standard marginal homogeneity test statistics; and
- (x) the p-value of 0.05 is divided by 12 for the 12 statements in the first measurement set (0.004), 0.05 is divided by 6 for the 6 statements in the second measurement set (0.008), 0.05 is divided by 9 for the 9 statements in the third measurement set (0.005), 0.05 is divided by 6 for the 6 statements in the fourth measurement set (0.008) and 0.05 is divided by 5 for the 5 statements in the fifth measurement set (0.001) in order to signal significant differences between the means of the current and ideal state of the five

measurement sets.

Before the results can be presented, it is necessary to determine whether the results obtained for each of the survey's statements show a normal distribution. The kurtosis and skewness of the results' distribution for each construct were examined. An activity for which the skewness of the distribution is less than 2.00 falls within acceptable limits of normality (West et al., 1995). All statements included in the five measurement sets determining the recruitment market practices of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province fall within these limits.

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the measurement sets which assess the customer market practices of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province. The measure ranges from 0 to 1. A value of 1 indicates perfect reliability, whilst the value of 0.6 is deemed to be the lower level of acceptability (Malhotra, 2007). The reliability statistics for the measurement sets are presented in Table 1.

It is evident in Table 1 that Cronbach's alpha for the five measurement sets is above the lower limit of acceptability, 0.60. This confirms that the measurement sets used in the study were reliable. It was also proven that the measurement instrument proved itself reliable in a previous study. Therefore, the reliability of the current state of affairs was assessed.

Validity

When assessing validity, the researcher determines whether a measure used in the study actually does measure what the researcher intends it to measure. The measurement instrument developed and validated by Roberts-Lombard (2006) in a previous study was also used in this study. The instrument was considered valid for the purposes of the present study.

RESULTS

Table 2 provides an exposition of the candidate requirements of travel agencies in Gauteng when making an appointment. The different items that constitute the construct are specified, the total number of respondents (n) who participated in the study is highlighted, the mean scores indicating the extent to which travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider and should consider the characteristics that a candidate must possess when making an appointment are provided and the standard deviation, standard marginal homogeneity statistic as well as the p-value for each item are specified.

It is evident from Table 2 that the statement "To secure a position with us, candidates should possess the following characteristics:

- (a) Good interpersonal skills" (4.83) obtained the highest mean score. The lowest mean score (3.15) was for the statement "We take into account the emotional intelligence of candidates (that is self-discipline, motivation, empathy, social skills and self-awareness) when recruitment for vacancies in the travel agency is conducted". The majority of the statements in the measurement set

Table 1. Reliability statistics.

Measurement sets	Cronbach's alpha (Current application of statements in measurement set)
Candidate requirements	0.727
Human resource needs assessment	0.742
Recruitment policy	0.715
Task descriptions	0.681
Business offer	0.683

“Candidate requirements” illustrate a significant difference in the extent to which travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider; and should consider the characteristics that a candidate must possess when making an appointment for a p-value less than 0.004. This implies that the management of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province do not currently consider all the characteristics that are important to them when making an appointment. Table 2 further illustrates that there is no significant difference in terms of the following statements ($P > 0.004$):

- (c) Specialised skills and knowledge
- (d) Leadership
- (e) Enthusiasm

Since Table 2 illustrates that there is a significant difference in the ability of travel agencies to currently and ideally consider all the characteristics that are important when making an appointment, Hypothesis 1 (H1) stating that travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider candidate requirements relevant when making an appointment) is rejected. The null hypothesis (Ho1) stating that travel agencies in Gauteng do not currently consider candidate requirements relevant when making an appointment is therefore accepted. Furthermore, Table 2 also indicates that significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider and should consider candidate requirements when making an appointment. This therefore implies that Hypothesis 6 is accepted, whilst the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3 provides an exposition of the human resource needs assessment of travel agencies in Gauteng regarding the research of employment needs to establish future employment opportunities, activities to measure the level of skills required in the future, as well as the testing of candidates to determine their suitability for a vacant position. The different items that constitute the construct are specified, the total number of respondents (n) who participated in the study is highlighted, the mean scores indicating to what extent travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform and should perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised are provided, and the standard deviation,

standard marginal homogeneity statistic as well as the p-value for each item are specified.

Table 3 illustrates that the statement “We acknowledge that our human resources play an important role in our daily operations” (4.27), obtained the highest mean score. The lowest mean score (2.62) was for the statement “We use psychometric testing to determine the suitability of candidates for a vacant position”.

The majority of statements in the measurement set “Human resource needs assessment” illustrate that a significant difference does not exist in the extent to which travel agencies in Gauteng currently and should ideally perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised for a p-value less than 0.008. This implies that travel agencies in the Gauteng Province do perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised. Table 3 further illustrates that there is no significant difference in terms of the following statements ($P < 0.008$):

- Management researches the employment needs of the travel agency on a regular basis to establish future employment opportunities.
- Management regularly conducts a human resource audit to establish the employee skills and training required in the future.

Since Table 3 illustrates that there is no significant difference in the ability of travel agencies to currently and ideally perform a human resource needs assessment before making an appointment, Hypothesis 2 (H2) (stating that travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised) is accepted. The null hypothesis (Ho2) stating that travel agencies in Gauteng do not currently perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised is therefore rejected. Furthermore, Table 3 also indicates that significant differences do not exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform and should perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised. This therefore implies that null hypothesis 7 is accepted whilst the alternative

Table 2. Candidate requirements.

Candidate requirements considered when making an appointment							
Item	N	Mean (a) [x(a)]	Standard deviation	Mean (b) [x(b)]	Standard deviation	Standard marginal homogeneity test statistic	P- value
To secure a position with us, candidates should possess the following characteristics							
(a) Good inter-personal skills	170	4.83	0.396	4.66	0.492	3.507	.000*
(b) Enthusiasm	170	4.57	0.557	4.54	0.516	.243	.808
(c) Specialised skills and knowledge	170	4.31	0.779	4.44	0.867	-1.812	.070
(d) Leadership	170	4.18	0.775	4.29	0.722	-1.638	.101
We assess the skills, training and personality of a candidate before an appointment is made to a specific position	170	4.09	0.952	4.60	0.619	-4.562	.000*
To secure a position with us, candidates should possess the following characteristics							
(e) Ambition	170	4.08	0.952	4.34	0.766	-4.621	.000
Good interpersonal skills, reliability and the ability to show initiative are prerequisites for appointment to our travel agency	170	4.01	0.710	4.59	0.539	-6.517	.000*
A potential employee should possess the characteristics of trust, loyalty, respect and a positive attitude towards the organisation	170	3.92	0.722	4.28	1.038	-3.704	.000*
Skills are more important than academic qualifications to secure a position with us	170	3.66	0.840	4.24	0.496	-7.118	.000*
Recruitment is an important function of management in our travel agency	170	3.42	1.099	4.60	0.679	-7.859	.000*
The values, vision, objectives and goals of the candidate should be compatible with ours to secure appointment to a vacant position	170	3.29	0.867	4.32	0.684	-7.586	.000*
We take into account the emotional intelligence of candidates (that is self-discipline, motivation, empathy, social skills and self-awareness) when recruitment for vacancies in the travel agency is conducted	170	3.15	0.952	3.98	0.718	-7.172	.000*

*Significant difference exists where the p-value is lower than 0.004 (0.05 ÷ 12 statements).

hypothesis is rejected. Table 4 provides an exposition of the recruitment policy of travel agencies in Gauteng regarding the activities to measure whether the recruiting of candidates for a position is in alignment with the policy of affirmative action, structured or unstructured interviews to determine the suitability of candidates for a vacant position are conducted, potential employees must fit into the organisational culture of the travel agency to secure employment, and gender and race are considered for appointment to a new position or for internal promotions. The different items that constitute the construct are specified, the total number of respondents (n) who participated in the study is highlighted, the mean scores indicating to what extent travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited are provided, and the standard deviation, standard marginal homogeneity

statistic, as well as the p-value for each item are specified.

According to Table 4, the statement "potential employees must fit into our organisational culture to secure employment" (4.12) obtained the highest mean score. The lowest mean score (2.57) was for the statement "The recruitment of candidates for advertised positions is conducted in conjunction with recruitment agencies".

The majority of the statements in the measurement set "Recruitment policy" illustrate a significant difference in the extent to which travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited for a p-value less than 0.005. This implies that the management of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province do not currently make use of a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is

Table 3. Human resource needs assessment.

Candidate requirements considered when making an appointment							
Item	N	Mean (a) [x(a)]	Standard deviation	Mean (b) [x(b)]	Standard deviation	Standard marginal homogeneity test statistic	P-value
We acknowledge that our human resources play an important role in our daily operations	170	4.27	0.691	4.28	0.770	-.098	.922
We use skills testing to determine the suitability of candidates for a vacant position	170	3.48	1.234	3.60	0.852	-1.061	.289
Management research the employment needs of the travel agency on a regular basis to establish future employment opportunities	170	2.98	0.927	4.56	0.728	-8.945	.000*
We regularly conduct a human resource audit to establish the employee skills and training required in the future	170	2.94	1.105	4.49	0.601	-8.633	.000*
We maintain a database of potential available candidates from where we can obtain applications and CVs at any time	170	2.78	0.926	2.89	1.078	-.292	.770
We use psychometric testing to determine the suitability of candidates for a vacant position	170	2.62	0.968	2.34	0.679	2.683	.010

*Significant difference exists where the p-value is lower than 0.008 (0.05 ÷ 6 statements).

recruited.

Since Table 4 illustrates that there is a significant difference in the ability of travel agencies to currently and ideally apply a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited, Hypothesis 3 (H3) stating that travel agencies in Gauteng currently make use of a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited, is rejected. The null hypothesis (Ho3) stating that travel agencies in Gauteng do not currently make use of a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited, is therefore accepted. Table 4 further illustrates that there is no significant difference in terms of the following statements ($P < 0.005$):

1. Potential employees must fit into our organisational culture to secure employment.
2. We use unstructured interviews to determine the suitability of candidates for a vacant position (applicable

to formal interviews).

3. We consider gender and race for internal promotions. Furthermore, Table 4 also indicates that significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited. This therefore implies that Hypothesis 8 is accepted, whilst the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5 provides an exposition of the job description that travel agencies in Gauteng develop for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited. This measurement set refers to aspects such as whether a job description defines key competencies when the recruitment of human resources is conducted, the role the new employee will play in the travel agency, and the responsibilities and authority that will be allocated to the new

Table 4. Recruitment policy.

Use of a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited							
Item	N	Mean (a) [x(a)]	Standard deviation	Mean (b) [x(b)]	Standard deviation	Standard marginal homogeneity test statistic	P-value
Potential employees must fit into our organisational culture to secure employment	170	4.12	0.822	4.36	0.818	-2.399	.016
We use unstructured interviews to determine the suitability of candidates for a vacant position (applicable to formal interviews)	170	3.34	0.959	3.48	1.259	-1.292	.196
When recruiting candidates for a position, the policy of affirmative action is followed	170	3.09	0.919	4.47	0.867	-8.188	.000*
We recruit potential employees from colleges, technikons and universities	170	3.01	0.802	4.08	1.129	-6.620	.000*
We consider gender and race for internal promotions	170	2.96	0.824	3.04	0.712	-.711	.477
We use structured interviews to determine the suitability of candidates for a vacant position (applicable to formal interviews)	170	2.95	1.044	3.95	1.198	-6.257	.000*
We receive large numbers of experienced applicants in response to a job advert in the media	170	2.72	1.029	3.60	0.775	-9.120	.000*
We receive large numbers of qualified applicants in response to a job advert in the media	170	2.58	1.116	3.37	0.713	-7.581	.000*
The recruitment of candidates for advertised positions is conducted in conjunction with recruitment agencies	170	2.57	0.787	4.09	0.956	-8.253	.000*

*Significant difference exists where the p-value is lower than 0.005 ($0.05 \div 9$ statements).

employee when recruited. The different items that constitute the construct are specified, the total number of respondents (n) who participated in the study is highlighted, the mean scores indicating to what extent travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop and should develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited are provided, and the standard deviation, standard marginal homogeneity statistic, as well as the p-value for each item are specified.

It is evident from Table 5 that the statement "Before we recruit candidates for a specific position, attention is paid

to the following aspects: (c) the tasks the new employee will perform" (4.12) obtained the highest mean score. The lowest mean score (3.32) was for the statement "We ensure that job descriptions define key competencies when the recruitment of human resources is conducted".

The majority of the statements in the measurement set "Job description" do not illustrate a significant difference in the extent to which travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited for a p-value less than 0.008. This implies that the management of travel

Table 5. Job description.

Development of a job description for a vacant position							
Item	N	Mean (a) [x(a)]	Standard deviation	Mean (b) [x(b)]	Standard deviation	Standard marginal homogeneity test statistic	P-value
Before we recruit candidates for a specific position, attention is paid to the following aspects							
(c) The task the new employee will perform	170	4.12	0.468	4.13	0.476	-.149	.881
(a) The role the new employee will play in the travel agency	170	4.19	0.635	4.20	0.417	-.149	.881
How the role of the new employee can change in the future	170	4.43	0.609	4.33	0.693	3.434	.194
(b) The responsibilities allocated to the new employee	170	4.05	0.393	4.10	0.559	-1.093	.274
(d) The authority allocated to the new employee	170	3.99	0.593	3.33	1.335	4.343	.000*
We ensure that job descriptions define key competencies when the recruitment of human resources is conducted	170	3.32	0.966	4.25	0.718	-6.541	.000*

*Significant difference exist where the p-value is lower than 0.008 (0.05 ÷ 6 statements).

agencies in the Gauteng Province do currently develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited.

Since Table 5 illustrates that no significant difference exists regarding how the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop and should develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited, Hypothesis 4 (H4) stating that travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited, is accepted. The null hypothesis (Ho4) stating that travel agencies in Gauteng do not currently develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited, is rejected. Table 5 further illustrates that there is no significant difference in terms of the following statements ($P < 0.008$):

1. Before we recruit candidates for a specific position, attention is paid to the following aspect:
(e) The authority allocated to the new employee.
2. We ensure that job descriptions define key competencies when the recruitment of human resources is conducted.

Furthermore, Table 5 also indicates that significant differences do not exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop and should develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited. This therefore implies that the null hypothesis 9 is accepted, whilst the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Table 6 provides an exposition of the different forms of business offers that travel agencies in Gauteng use to recruit qualified and experienced candidates. The different items that constitute the construct are specified, the total number of respondents (n) who participated in the study is highlighted, the mean scores indicating the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency are provided, and the standard deviation, standard marginal homogeneity statistic as well as the p-value for each item are specified.

Table 6 illustrates that the statement "We recruit qualified and skilled candidates because of the following offerings:

- (b) "The opportunity for personal development" (3.72) obtained the highest mean score. The lowest mean score

Table 6. Business offer.

Business offer to recruit qualified and experienced candidates									
Item	N	Mean (a) [x(a)]	Standard deviation	Mean (b) [x(b)]	Standard deviation	Standard marginal homogeneity test statistic		P-value	
We recruit qualified and skilled candidates because of the following offerings									
(b)The opportunity for personal development	170	3.72	0.780	4.21	0.820	-6.102		.000*	
(d) The opportunity to work in the travel and tourism industry.	170	3.60	0.775	4.05	0.787	-4.835		.000*	
When making a job offer to a potential employee, we actively market ourselves to the candidate to improve the possibility that the candidate will accept the offer	170 170	3.30	0,954	3.85	0.574	-5.367		.0000 .000*	
We recruit qualified and skilled candidates because of the following offerings									
(c) Sponsored travel opportunities for educational purposes	2.841 170	0.879 2.84	0 0.879	3.06 3.06	1.290 1.290	-1	-1.685	.9	.092
(a) Competitive financial remuneration packages	170	2.81	1.137	4.28	0.720	-8.126		.000*	

*Significant difference exists where the p-value is lower than 0.001(0.05 ÷ 5 statements).

(2.81) was for the statement “We recruit qualified and skilled candidates because of the following offerings:

- (a) Competitive financial remuneration packages”.

The majority of the statements in the measurement set “Business offer” do illustrate a significant difference in the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency for a p-value less than 0.001. This implies that the management of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province do not currently apply different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency.

Since Table 6 illustrates that a significant difference does exist regarding how the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency, the null hypothesis 5 (H05) stating that travel agencies in Gauteng do not currently use different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency is accepted. The Hypothesis (Ho5) stating travel agencies in Gauteng currently use different

forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency is rejected.

Furthermore, Table 6 also indicates that significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency. This therefore implies that hypothesis 10 is accepted whilst the null hypothesis is rejected.

Overall mean scores for each measurement set

Table 7 indicates whether or not significant differences exist when it comes to the overall mean scores for the five measurement sets representing candidate characteristics, human resource needs assessment, recruitment policy, task description and business offer.

It is evident from Table 7 that there are significant differences in the overall mean scores for all five the measurement sets in the study. Significant differences exist between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng

Table 7. Significance testing of the overall mean scores for the measurement sets candidate characteristics, human resource needs assessment, recruitment policy, task description and business offer.

Referral market practices of travel agencies in Gauteng			
Measurement Sets	Score (Current application)	Score (Ideal application)	P value
Candidate characteristics	3.65	4.39	0.000
Human resource needs assessment	2.83	3.55	.000
Recruitment policy	2.79	3.29	0.000
Task description	3.92	4.17	0.000
Business offer	3.26	3.89	0.000

*Significant difference exists where the p-value is lower than 0.05.

currently consider and should consider candidate requirements when making an appointment, between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform and should perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised, between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited, between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop and should develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited, and between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency.

Hypothesis testing

Significance testing indicates whether or not the different groups of respondents (classified by geographical location) differ significantly in the overall means score calculated for each measurement set (Hypotheses 11 to 15). The results of the significance testing are as follows (detailed explanations and relevant Tables are only included where significant differences were found to exist):

Hypothesis 11

A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider and should consider candidate requirements when making an appointment.

Hypothesis 12

A significant difference exists between the overall means

of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform and should perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised.

Hypothesis 13

A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited.

Hypothesis 14

A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop and should develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited.

Hypothesis 15

A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency.

This therefore implies that hypotheses 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 are accepted and the null hypotheses rejected.

An overall summary of the measurement of the hypotheses is provided in Table 8.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The managerial implications of the study are listed and discussed according to the components of the recruitment market which are characteristic of the travel agency

Table 8. Summary of hypotheses.

Hypotheses	Accepted	Rejected
Hypothesis 1 Travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider candidate requirements relevant when making an appointment		x
Hypothesis 2 Travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised	x	
Hypothesis 3 Travel agencies in Gauteng currently make use of a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited		x
Hypothesis 4 Travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited	x	
Hypothesis 5 Travel agencies in Gauteng currently use different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency		x
Hypothesis 6 Significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider and should consider candidate requirements when making an appointment	x	
Hypothesis 7 Significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform and should perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised.		x
Hypothesis 8 Significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited	x	
Hypothesis 9 Significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop and should develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited	x	
Hypothesis 10 Significant differences exist between the means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply different forms of business offers to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency	x	
Hypothesis 11 A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently consider and should consider candidate requirements when making an appointment	x	

Table 8. Contd.

Hypothesis 12 A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently perform and should perform a human resource needs assessment before a vacant position is advertised	x
Hypothesis 13 A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply a structured recruitment policy when a candidate is recruited	x
Hypothesis 14 A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently develop and should develop a job description for a vacant position before a candidate is recruited	x
Hypothesis 15 A significant difference exists between the overall means of the extent to which the owners or managers of travel agencies in Gauteng currently apply and should apply different forms of business offer to recruit qualified and experienced candidates to the travel agency	x

industry in the Gauteng Province.

Candidate requirements

According to the literature, it is necessary for a business to ensure that the most suitable candidate with the correct qualifications, skills and experience is recruited to the business (Townsend, 2007). The outcome of the study is in accordance with the literature which states that the highly competitive nature of the travel agency industry in the Gauteng Province necessitates individual travel agencies to appoint candidates who possess the relevant qualifications and experience. This empowers the travel agency to deliver a service to customers that will ensure their satisfaction to a greater extent with greater possibility.

In addition, travel agencies in the Gauteng Province also view aspects such as interpersonal skills, leadership qualities, specialised skills and knowledge as important prerequisites before a candidate is appointed in a vacant position. This will enable the travel agency to better position itself in ensuring the long-term loyalty of customers, since they (travel agencies) will have the necessary manpower to satisfy the needs and wants of customers more successfully. The criteria stated above which are viewed by the travel agency management as important before an appointment to a vacant position is made, correlate with the criteria stipulated by Theron et al. (2003) (refer to the literature review section on candidate requirements). Theron et al. (2003) further

state that these criteria are especially relevant to positions which are directly related to customer liaison.

Bar-Isaac and Ganuza (2008) stipulate that the purpose of recruitment should be to recruit, select and appoint the most suitable candidate for the correct position within the business. Streeter (2007) stipulates that criteria such as well-developed interpersonal skills, the expression of personal characteristics such as initiative, creativity, perseverance and the need for self-development are important when functioning in a service environment. The findings of the study are in agreement with the literature, stating that travel agencies in the Gauteng Province view aspects such as interpersonal skills, leadership qualities, specialised skills and knowledge as important prerequisites before a candidate is appointed in a vacant position. This will enable the travel agency to better position itself to ensure the long-term loyalty of customers, since they (travel agencies) will have the manpower to satisfy the needs of customers with greater success.

Manpower needs assessment

There is definite room for improvement with regard to the manner in which travel agencies in the Gauteng Province establish their human resource needs. Travel agencies do not have a structured format according to which they determine future human resource needs, or whereby potential candidates are tested before an appointment is made. These two aspects can have a direct influence on

the quality of service delivery of the travel agency to the customers, as well as the future expansion plans of the travel agency. This finding of the study is in contrast with the literature which argues that a business must be able to determine what the future demand and supply will be of employees with specific skills. The forecasting of futuristic employee needs must focus on the task and post description of the potential employee, and must incorporate identified aspects which are characteristic of the employment needs of the business (Ekhsan and Othman, 2009; Petzer, 2005).

In addition, the literature further stipulates that if a business views the recruitment of individuals as a product, and employees as consumers of recruitment, then marketing can be used as a valuable model for the recruitment of employees. This model can determine the tasks which prospective employees must perform to function optimally within the business. The business can apply marketing principles such as the accurate segmentation of the labour market to make the recruitment of the most suitable candidate for a position, easier (Weddle, 2008; Henkens et al., 2005). However, the findings of the study are in contrast with the stated literature and stipulate that according to the owners and/or managers of travel agencies, the execution of a manpower needs audit is currently, or in the future, not a priority function for the travel agency, and potential employees are currently not required to complete a skills or psychometric testing programme before an appointment is made. This aspect is also not viewed as important for the future, and travel agencies do not currently possess a database of prospective employees from which they can obtain a Curriculum Vitae. This shortcoming is disconcerting, considering the large staff turnover which travel agencies in the Gauteng Province currently experience in the industry. The management of travel agencies will therefore have to develop a greater awareness of the experienced and qualified human resources that are available in the market place. The recruitment and appointment of these human resources in vacant positions will empower and enable the travel agencies to improve their professional service delivery to customers, which can further lead to an improvement in customer retention.

Against the background provided so far, the establishment of human resource needs must become the primary responsibility of the travel agency management in the Gauteng Province. The efficient planning of this function will empower the travel agency to appoint candidates with the relevant experience, qualifications and personality in vacant positions for their corporate and leisure market sections respectively.

Recruitment policy

According to the literature, the selection of the most

suitable candidate and the establishment of a well designed training programme can be the key to the success of a business. To ensure that the best candidate is recruited and appointed, requires intensive planning. Recruited candidates must be subjected to a stringent selection process to identify the best trained, skilled and motivated candidates for vacant positions in the business (Sin et al., 2006; Ward and Dagger, 2005).

The findings of the study agree with the literature by concluding that travel agencies in the Gauteng Province can follow a more formal approach regarding the recruitment and appointment of candidates for vacant positions. The use of structured interviews provides every candidate with the same opportunity to prove himself/herself during an interview. This also empowers the management of the travel agency to evaluate every candidate more objectively, since each candidate is asked the same questions, they complete the same practical evaluation form and are therefore assessed by the same criteria.

In addition, the theory further stipulates that the recruitment process must use a skills approach to determine the personality and skill requirements for key positions, and the process must be integrated with the business function of the business (Henry and Temtime, 2009; Bachenheimer, 2004). This would require a human resource background to ensure a candidate's successful application. However, a travel agency is a small business consisting of a small number of employees. There is only a small number of staff members who possess a qualification in the field of human resource management. This function is usually the responsibility of the manager or owner of the travel agency. This implies that the contracting of a recruitment agency to manage the recruitment and placement of candidates for a vacant position in the travel agency could hold the following advantages: an individual with experience in the field of recruitment and selection is used to recruit the most suitable candidate for an advertised position in the travel agency, the use of professional testing for the evaluation of candidates by individuals who possess the required knowledge of human resource management is recommended, and the use of a structured format when interviewing candidates is advisable. The design and compilation of the interview questions can be done in conjunction with the management of the travel agency industry. The final compilation of the questionnaire will be done by the recruitment agency, since they possess the required experience in interviewing, and recruitment consultants are also knowledgeable regarding the format of questions to be used for the post level being advertised, and a formal approach to the recruitment function is followed from the design of the advertisement for a vacant position to the testing and final selection of the most suitable candidate for the position.

Furthermore, travel agencies can also have a more direct approach to include race and gender as criteria for

new appointments and internal promotions. This will ensure that the travel agency is pro-active to address gender and race representation on its staff. These two aspects are especially important against the background of the current political climate where affirmative action in the workplace specifically addresses these issues.

Post description

The management of travel agencies in the Gauteng Province compile a post description with great care before an appointment is made in a vacant position. There is limited room for improvement regarding the items as set out in this construct, since the post description and responsibilities of the potential candidate are already specified before an interview with the candidate is arranged. Clarity therefore already exists regarding whether the new employee will focus on the corporate market (corporate customers) or the leisure market (individual customers), and whether the position is a junior or a senior position before an appointment is made.

Currently, comprehensive planning is done within the travel agency industry regarding the post description of new employees before interviews with potential candidates are set up. The responsibilities and authority that will be allocated to the new employee, the different tasks that will be performed by the new candidate, as well as the influence which technology could have on the future performance of the new employee are currently considered by the management and senior staff members of a travel agency before the recruitment of new employees is undertaken. These findings of the study are in accordance with the literature which states that the compilation of a framework which specifies the skills, characteristics and qualities which the potential employee must possess, is possible if the specifications, description and expectations of the position are taken into consideration (Fernandez-Araoz et al., 2009).

Business offer

The literature emphasises that the identification of the most suitable candidate for positions within the business requires comprehensive planning. The offer which the business communicates to the successful candidate must consider and address the most prominent motives and fears of the candidate. The motives of the candidate (e.g. career advancement), as well as the opportunities and challenges which the position entails, must be central to the marketing of the business offer to the successful candidate (Raub and Streit, 2006).

The findings of the study for this construct do not correlate with the literature, since the travel agency management in the Gauteng Province does not address

the motives and fears of candidates who apply for vacant positions. The travel agency management will have to put a greater emphasis on the following aspects, namely the financial package offered to entry level candidates to recruit them to the travel agency, the financial package offered to existing employees to retain their expertise for the travel agency, their internal promotion to ensure their loyalty towards the travel agency must be addressed, and the marketing of the travel agency industry as an environment for personal development and growth must be stimulated.

The decline in commission income from the supplier to the travel agency since the 1st of May 2005, the growing tendency in the travel industry whereby suppliers are continuously making use of direct marketing channels, as well as the continuous uncertainty regarding the future role of travel agencies in the distribution channel have made the travel agency industry less lucrative as a career path. The management of travel agencies must therefore address these aspects in the future to ensure that they will still recruit qualified and experienced candidates for vacant positions.

Conclusion

The future success of the South African travel agency industry will be determined by the quality of service that travel agents deliver to their customers. Such service delivery is in direct relation to the skills of management, as well as the professionalism and knowledge of employees. This therefore emphasises that recruitment is an important function within a business environment. The business itself is therefore responsible to recruit skilled, educated and experienced individuals who will be an added asset to the business (Lee, 2007).

This article provided a theoretical perspective on employee recruitment with specific reference to the characteristics of candidates when recruited, the importance of a manpower needs assessment before recruitment is initiated, the relevance of understanding the recruitment policy of the business before recruitment actions are initiated, knowledge on the post description of the vacant position before a candidate is recruited, as well as aspects relating to the business offer that is made to a successful candidate. This was followed by a discussion on the findings of the study. These findings concluded that the large staff turnover in the travel agency industry is the result of poor salaries, a lack of educational sponsorships and poor management relationships with employees working for travel agencies. The article concluded with a focus on the managerial implications of the findings. The major managerial implications of the study specified that the highly competitive nature of the travel agency industry in the Gauteng Province necessitates individual travel agencies to appoint candidates who possess the relevant

qualifications and experience required by the industry. This empowers the travel agency to deliver a service to customers that will ensure their satisfaction to a greater extent. Finally, the travel agency must also be marketed as an employer who supports the personal development and growth of employees in order to ensure that skilled employees are recruited and current employees are retained within the travel agency industry in the Gauteng Province.

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