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A STUDY OF SELECTION TECHNIQUES
FOR NONPROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL AND
THEIR INTERPRETATION IN THE
HOSPITAL FOOD SERVICE

Thesis for the Degree of M. S.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Andrea S. Tandoc

1965

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A STUDY OF SELECTION TECHNIQUES FOR NONPROFESSIONAL
PERSONNEL AND THEIR INTERPRETATION IN
THE HOSPITAL FOOD SERVICE

By

Andrea S. Tandoc

A PROBLEM

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the Dean of the College of Home Economics
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INTRODUCTION

Every organization whether it be a private enterprise, a nonprofit institution, or a governmental agency must operate with and through people. Organizational effectiveness is primarily contingent on the management of human resources and is, to a great extent, determined by one phase of manpower management, personnel selection.

Large and successful industries have for many years realized the advantage to production in having a well organized personnel selection program. The overwhelming importance of the selection task, long recognized by General Motors Corporation as Number I of its management goals, has been summarized by this corporation as:

The careful selection and placement of employees to make sure that they are physically, mentally, and temperamentally fitted to the jobs they are expected to do; to also make sure that new employees can reasonably be expected to develop into desirable employees so that there will be a minimum number of square pegs in round holes.¹

The American Hospital Association (1) has stated that trustees and administrators of large hospitals have

¹A. A. Hendrix, "Interviewing Techniques," Industrial Medicine and Surgery, XIX (1950), 401.

agreed that with the exception of motive, theoretically there is no vital distinction between the running of a hospital and the running of any service organization and that the same principles should govern the management of a hospital as have been found effective in business.

In a 1955-1956 study of eleven Midwest hospitals, Harman (14) reported that hospital administrators, dietitians, and personnel directors in many hospitals have become increasingly aware of the worker as a human problem and are constantly gaining insight about the importance of each worker to himself and to the hospital, and that a starting point toward this goal accomplishment is the personnel selection program. Selection techniques in 1965 are essentially the same as those utilized at the time of the Harman study in 1955. However, the interpretation of techniques has changed in relation to principles and practices for a particular organization (36,38,42).

This paper will discuss personnel selection techniques for nonprofessional dietary workers and their current interpretation by the administrative staffs of six Michigan hospitals included in the Harman study.

SELECTION TECHNIQUES--A REVIEW

Human resources are unquestionably more efficiently managed now than in the past, although by no means has every problem in personnel selection been solved. New problems have appeared, and old problems have taken on new forms that require new solutions (38).

Success or failure on the job depends on many variables which are independent of the actual selection process. No selection procedure however refined, can do more than indicate the probabilities of a particular candidate subsequently making good. The use of one or several selection methods is a function of the importance of the job, the money and time available for selection and the accuracy of any one method compared with a combination of methods.

Recruitment

Recruitment is a continuing function and requires careful planning. Personnel staff charged with the recruiting service should be aware of changes in the internal organization which affect the type of operation and hence the type of manpower required.

Because the recruitment problem differs among various organizations, policies and standards relative to a particular program should be defined. Armatas (20) suggested four basic considerations in establishing an effective recruitment program.

1. The minimum skills and requirements of each of the various jobs must be spelled out prior to any actual recruitment. To recruit individuals who will not be hired ultimately is needless waste of time, money and energy.

2. Each organization must understand and objectify the degree of potential for personal development required in new employees.

3. Prior to recruitment, everyone affected must be informed of the job to which the new employee will probably be assigned. This procedure helps present employees view the organization as stable and understand the changes to come.

4. The organization must decide whether all new employees will be hired at the bottom and trained for promotion or whether new employees with diverse skills and educational qualifications will be hired outside the institution.

The value of promotion from within the organization or recruitment from an outside source is always a controversial issue. Policy of promotion from within is considered

a significant factor in maintaining high employee morale and contributing to worker satisfaction. However, Lundberg (20) has remarked that failure to infuse new workers at higher levels produces an ultraconservative organization resistant to change, which will experience difficulty in adapting to new market or competitive conditions. Outside recruitment requires careful consideration of a wide range of sources and a number of common practices. Choices are by no means simple; decisions must take into account the attitudes of present employees as well as public concern about the long-term employment, development and effective utilization of manpower resources.

Assuming that the employer has decided the recruitment policy in determining the number and type of employees needed, the recruiter must know what his organization can offer to the potential employees and what they want. Burling (8) summarized basic appeals that job applicants usually look for:

- Security. This is first in importance and derived from an adequate income, job, tenure and confidence in the employer.
- Self-esteem. This is acquired from income, from status in the organization and from recognition as an individual.

- Opportunity for growth. Growth will appeal to some workers, a dependable routine to others. Training and promotions should be provided.
- Reputation of employer. The appeal of the employer's image to the potential employee, his friends and his family cannot be overestimated.
- Companionship. The group interaction is determined to a large extent by the kinds of people with whom the potential employee will work.
- Job content. A challenging job where innovation is encouraged attracts superior applicants.
- Financial rewards. In many cases the salary offered is the immediate reason for interest in a job. Group incentive systems, such as the famous Scanlon Plan, may help draw potential applicants.
- Location. Traffic congestion in the center of large cities and the resulting expense and travel time from distant suburbs have encouraged employers to locate in outlying areas.

Effectiveness of the basic appeals depends partly on the applicant's immediate situation and partly on the opportunity for individual growth; consequently a recruitment program should be related to the applicant's fundamental needs and to those demands which are not met by his present job.

The Application Blank

The application blank which plays a simple yet important role in selection is a method of securing a standard set of information about a prospective employee.

If the application blank is used to maximum advantage in personnel selection, periodic content review as to wording and comprehensiveness of questions asked, answers of applicants and time required to complete the form is essential. Wording and comprehensiveness of the form affect the efficiency and validity of the selection process. The questions asked should take into account the principle that fewer people are willing to lie by errors of commission than by errors of omission (24).

Questions to be included in the application form depend on the type of work the applicant is seeking. Every item should serve a purpose. The answers in the filled-in application blank are valuable because they suggest further questions to the interviewer and reference checker, furnish clues to the written tests which may be needed to evaluate the applicant and provide worthy information for personnel research.

The time required to complete the form is also relevant. Qualified applicants may lose interest if they must complete a time consuming form before they are assured that the organization is interested in them (33).

A periodic review also identifies any item no longer absolutely necessary (9,33). In recent years, many companies have found it desirable to revise their forms or have been required to do so because of the emphasis on nondiscrimination in employment and enactment of fair employment practices (FEP).

A procedure should be established to weed out of the files or regularly bring up to date those forms that are one or more years old. These old files are highly useful as an index of the sources of poor and good applicants and as a measure of recruiting efficiency. Old files also serve as a basis for improving the application blank by determining through job performance and turnover just which items need to be added, reworded or deleted.

Beach (3) discussed two methods of evaluating filled-in application forms, clinical evaluation and statistical evaluation. Advocates of clinical evaluation claim that a properly designed blank can provide clues to leadership ability and how the individual gets along with others. However, the conclusions derived can only be considered tentative unless the evaluator has a sound background in psychology and personnel management theory. Statistical evaluation can be said to increase the accuracy of prediction only when dealing with a large number of applicants for a particular type of job.

The Interview

The interview is and probably will continue for many years to be the most important technique of the entire process of personnel selection. No other method offers the flexibility and the depth that the interview provides. Unfortunately, interviewing is also a difficult and complex procedure to master since it requires intense concentration, intelligence, sensitivity and training.

Beach (3) asserted that the interview, when combined with other selection techniques and conducted by properly trained personnel under proper conditions, has very positive and significant predictive values. Sidney (32) maintained that the interview as a method of selection has the advantage of yielding certain kinds of information which probably cannot be found in any other way.

If there is weakness in the interview, it is due more to lack of skill and understanding on the part of the interviewer than to inherent weakness in the interview itself. Determining the validity of the interview with the assumption that a demonstrated validity will hold for all time is uncertain, since over a period of time, significant changes may occur in the original relationships. There are changes in the interview, changes in jobs and changes in the ways in which the interviewer handles his task. Mandell (24) has aptly summarized the many criticisms of the employment interview by stating that the basic difficulty of this type

of interview, as usually conducted, is that it involves making extensive inferences from limited data obtained in an artificial situation by unqualified observers.

All human beings have strengths and weaknesses, and the differences between the strengths and weaknesses of the same person are as great as the differences among people, thus making every selection a compromise. The selection process emphasizes weakness as a more important basis for rejection than the possession of strength as a basis for acceptance because the interviewer is often more oriented toward looking for weaknesses rather than for strengths. In the interview, a rational basis is needed for determining which strengths justify an offer of employment and which weaknesses can be safely ignored.

Organizations are learning what can and cannot be measured by the interview. This means that employers are no longer confused by the generalizations that the interview measures the "will do factors." Interviewing without the aid of other selection methods (reference checks and tests) is now considered as dangerous as overdependence on any other selection procedures.

Mandell (23) has realistically appraised the interview as a selection technique:

- The interview provides information which is valid by itself, only in the case of either outstanding or very inferior applicants.

- The interview is valuable when it is used to measure characteristics that can also be measured by reference checks, tests, medical examination, school grades and verified experience.
- The interview is necessary to give the applicant job information, to answer his questions and to sell him on the job if he seems satisfactory.
- The interview is necessary in order that the supervisor may determine whether he likes the applicant and whether he will fit into the work group.
- The interview may be more valuable in determining the most valuable position for the applicant after he is hired rather than in determining if he should be hired at all.
- The only characteristics which can generally be measured well in the interview are those that can be observed in contrast to those which require inferences.

The interview as a selection device should not be judged by whether it provides perfect results but rather by the capacity to make a reasonably significant improvement in results. This can be achieved if and when the employers will show continuous awareness and interest in improving and evaluating the use of the technique in their particular organization.

Tests

The increased attention given to tests these days operates on the general principle that human behavior can best be forecast by sampling (44). In other words, the test creates a situation in which the applicant reacts and the reactions are considered as useful samples of his behavior in the work for which he is applying. Like other selection tools, tests have limitations and are designed to supplement other screening methods, not to replace them. Test scores have a relatively high margin of error and are inaccurate predictors of job success. Three schools of thought on testing and evaluation (9,11,19) believe that tests predict failure better than they do success. A man may have the ability to be successful and the test may predict success. But translating that ability into actual performance requires motivation and satisfactory leadership. Failure can be predicted because, if the test results show that a man lacks, for example, the ability to grasp complex relations among parts in a system, he cannot succeed on a job in which that ability is requisite. No amount of motivation can correct a basic lack of ability.

Prenting (29) and Greene (12) pointed out inherent characteristics in tests that should be recognized. Measurement techniques cannot be expected to make decisions for a person. They can only present evidence more clearly. The

best test available cannot, at present, predict with great accuracy what a person will do in complex learning or vocational situations since tests ordinarily do not show why a person made a particular score. Other authors (40,43,44) agree with Prenting and Greene that although tests are useful guides in selection they do not necessarily provide accurate measures of what a person may do in a job. Furthermore, Murphy (27) maintained that tests can never be a substitute for good judgment.

Tests, despite their imperfections, are clearly worthwhile in certain circumstances and probably valueless in others. Regardless of the manner in which an organization uses tests, the main goal of the employer is to get the maximum accuracy from the program. This means that testing should be supervised by thoroughly trained personnel, and a careful follow-up schedule should be maintained to ascertain the true benefit of the system.

The Physical Examination

Not too many years ago, the physical examination was viewed as a negative selection technique. Today, the physical examination is recognized as a positive aid in placement. This change in emphasis has been promoted by the experience in progressive companies of successfully employing physically handicapped persons because the physically disabled people

must live and seek to support themselves by gainful employment if at all possible. Fundamentally, physical standards should be adjusted to work requirements because demands of all jobs are not the same. Research on counseling and placement of the physically handicapped by federal and state rehabilitation agencies has greatly increased the skills of handicapped (44).

Shaw (31) concurred with Halsey (13) that the basic purposes of physical examination demand special attention:

- For the protection of the applicant. The employment executive can better decide the position in which the applicant should be placed to give good service and not endanger his health.
- For the protection of present employees. Applicants with communicable diseases or other conditions which might endanger the health or safety of other employees are rejected, at least until the condition is fully corrected.
- For the protection of the employer. Old injuries or previous ailments are discovered and recorded to prevent future accidents and unjust claims.

Almost without exception the physical examination is given immediately prior to the final selection interview in order to have medical results available for the final interview.

Reference Checks

Reference checking is a good method of providing information on behavior which has been observed in a natural rather than in an artificial situation. The Wisconsin Electric Power Company has commented on reference materials in one of the company brochures:

So long as reference limitations are recognized, the rating adds some information and balance. It is frequently used by employers as the sole guide in management selection which in our experience, is as primitive as substituting a chunk of buffalo tallow for a thermometer. Both will tell you whether it's hot or cold, but only one will tell you how hot or cold it is.³

The relevance of reference information varies considerably from applicant to applicant. Reference checks are valid only when they provide accurate information about the past, when the person providing the information has observed the job candidate over a sufficient period of time and when he is willing to tell the whole truth (24). Whatever the purpose of the employer, a statement in the information form should assure previous employers, supervisors, teachers and others that the nature of the material supplied will be confidential.

Reference checks have their own weakness because of the lack of standardization and objectivity. The current

³Wisconsin Electric Company, "Presentation in Competition for Charles A. Coffin Award," Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1953, p. 21.

work situation of each applicant is different, and the characteristics of those providing reference information are as directly reflected in their evaluation as in the behavior of those being evaluated (15,30).

A variety of special reference forms can be used to reflect the differences in the information desired or obtainable. Depending on the level of position being filled, the telephone or mail forms vary in the extent to which they ask for factual rather than subjective information. Most forms require only a few minutes for completion; this increases the likelihood of a response but at the same time reduces the value. Kay and Palmer (18) pointed out that about 75 per cent of the organizations, on the basis of questionnaire responses, obtain references for nonprofessional employees by telephone; the remainder use the mail. Ideally, mail and telephone should be utilized in the early stages of the screening process.

Getting reference information remains important for only from the applicant's past and current employers can the necessary depth of information be obtained.

Induction and Orientation

Great care and attention are given to induction and orientation of new employees. Practices in placement have become somewhat more formal as general policy has come to place increased importance on the attitudes of all employees.

Loss of workers because of poor induction programs is costly to any organization.

Establishing objectives for employees as well as for employers is the logical starting point for induction and orientation. Armatas (20) has described the framework for a sound induction and orientation program.

For the employee, attention should be given to:

- Creating a favorable attitude. First impressions are lasting.
- Establishing a sense of belonging. By giving the new employee a sense of belonging, the organization may keep him from indifference and quitting before he gives his job an honest try.
- Facilitating learning. Good induction is designed to remove the mental and emotional barriers to adequate job learning, ignorance, uncertainties and fears which often trouble the new employee.

For the employer, focus should be on:

- Reducing turnover. The relation of labor turnover to good or poor induction is evidence for need of a carefully planned program to get the employee off to a good start.
- Saving time and trouble. A good induction program answers the new worker's questions so that he will not be constantly bothering his supervisor and

fellow workers. Without such a program, and without asking, the employee may decide on answers himself, breaking rules and regulations along the way.

- Reducing grievances. Good induction permits the new employee to know from the start his obligations and rights and thus reduce grievances due to lack of knowledge.

With objectives determined, a framework is established to guide the planning of content and techniques for the induction period. In making the new employee feel a part of the organization, he should work through recognized informal group leadership. A system is built that provides social satisfaction as well as job instruction. Incentives are offered which build teamwork for the new employee. The fact remains that who is selected is not as important as how the person is treated after he has been hired (14).

Induction and orientation should take into account two major considerations: first, acquainting the new employee with his new surroundings and to the rules and regulations of the company; and second, indoctrinating the new employee in the philosophy of the organization. The essence of indoctrination is to convince the employee that, in the last analysis, what is good for the organization and the economic system is best for the employee.

Ethical Implications

To reflect upon the ethical implications of the selection process may be relevant at this point.

The answer to the question of how far management should go in investigating applicants is indicated by the present practices of employers. Employers are essentially practical so that they go as far as they need in order to improve selection. They have learned that behavior and performance on the job are related to past and present accomplishments.

According to William Whyte (39), selection procedures are inconsistent with the ideal of individual freedom. He suggests that a line should be drawn indicating how far the organization may go in asking men to take tests; he asks, "How much more must a man testify against himself? . . . The Bill of Rights should not stop at organization's edge."⁴

Despite objections to invasion of personal privacy present practices will undoubtedly continue because employer interest focuses on successful placement, and such placement is to the interest of both the individual worker and the organization. Management should therefore have a clearly defined policy for handling confidential data.

⁴William H. Whyte, The Organization Man (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1956), p. 222.

METHOD

From the eleven Midwest Hospitals that participated in the 1955 Harman study, the six Michigan hospitals were chosen for the 1965 survey of selection techniques for non-professional personnel. Two hospitals were in Detroit, Main Grace and Henry Ford; and one in the Detroit suburb of Dearborn, Oakwood Hospital; two in Lansing, St. Lawrence and E. W. Sparrow; one in Flint, Hurley Hospital.

Letters were sent to the Directors of Dietetics of the selected hospitals requesting interviews about their selection procedure for nonprofessional dietary workers. In this letter, the purpose of the investigator was stated and the fact that this hospital had participated in a similar study made by Lt. Col. Harman in 1955. Tentative dates for interviews were suggested.

Positive response and cooperation were expressed by each Director of Dietetics. Letters confirming the interview dates were sent to the three Detroit area hospitals. For the Lansing hospitals and the one in Flint, the interviewer confirmed dates by telephone.

The investigator reviewed the interview guide prepared by Lt. Col. Harman and decided that the original questionnaire with minor revisions and additions was appropriate

for the 1965 study (see Appendix, Exhibit 3). The preparation of additional questions pinpointed concerns of 1965 in the area of general operation as well as in refinements of the selection process; e.g., statements on future expansion plans, unionization and factors in the decision to hire were elicited from the interviewees. Pretest of the revised interview guide was conducted in E. W. Sparrow Hospital.

During the past ten years, the role and the usefulness of the tape recorder in interviewing have been recognized because of the ease of transcription, precise coverage of subject matter and the fact that the interviewer is able to play back the recorded interview. Interviews with the respective hospital personnel were recorded with a portable tape recorder at a one and seven-eighths inches per second speed using a magnetic 600 ft. tape. One hour was the maximum time required for each interview.

In three hospitals, St. Lawrence, E. W. Sparrow and Henry Ford, interviews were conducted in the office of the Director of Dietetics. In two hospitals, Main Grace and Oakwood, interviews took place in the office of the Personnel Director. In Hurley Hospital, the interview was conducted in the office of the Medical Director which, at the time of the interview, was available and the most convenient location.

In four hospitals, St. Lawrence, E. W. Sparrow, Hurley and Oakwood, both the Personnel Director and the

Director of Dietetics were interviewed. In Main Grace Hospital only the Personnel Director was interviewed and in Henry Ford Hospital only the Director of Dietetics was interviewed.

For convenience of the investigator, pertinent data from the 1955 Harman study were summarized on a tabular form. Appendix Exhibit 4 illustrates the summary sheet for three of the six hospitals. As the investigator listened to the 1965 taped interviews, she recorded facts and observations about the respective hospitals on this same form. The tabulation of 1965 data was relatively simple and enabled the investigator to study and appraise the general operational procedures and selection techniques in the six Michigan hospitals surveyed.

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Within the last ten years, the public has become increasingly concerned with the changing role of hospitals. Like the family, the schools and government, the hospital ultimately touches all individually and collectively. Personal physical and mental health, community well-being and economic resources are all intimately affected by the work of hospitals. In fact, seldom do people rely more dramatically or more completely on the product or services of an organization than in the case of hospitals. No longer are hospitals used solely in caring for the sick and homeless at the expense of the wealthy. Today hospitals are greatly needed because of the increasing proportion of older people in the population who are in need of hospital care. Admissions for people under fifteen years have actually declined since the middle twenties, but admissions for the twenty-five to forty-five age group have doubled and those for older age groups have more than doubled. Further, apartment house living and the employment of women outside the home are among the factors that make it increasingly difficult to care for the sick and injured at home. Finally, the growth in membership of the non-profit hospital insurance plans,

Blue-Cross Blue-Shield on voluntary basis and the Extraordinary Medical Expense Plan (EME) which provides low cost protection to help defray the expense of illness has contributed to the increasing need for hospital services.

Scope of Dietary Operation

In studying the personnel selection techniques of six selected Michigan hospitals, the scope of the dietary operation was an important factor to consider. The number of patients fed per day was a principle determinant of dietary staff employed. The number of nonprofessional employees as well as the number of part time workers was a significant factor in knowing the dietary employees hired. In 1965, the scope of dietary operation for the six hospitals was expressed as number of patients, number of nonprofessional employees and number of part time employees.

<u>Hospital</u>	<u>Patients</u>	<u>Number of Non-Professional Employees</u>	<u>Number of Part Time Employees</u>
St. Lawrence	200	46	20
E. W. Sparrow	365	95	30
Hurley	635	145	50
Main Grace	425	180	None
Henry Ford	1,000	275	No Record
Oakwood	400	95	19

In all hospitals, with the exception of Main Grace Hospital, the full time employees were supplemented with part time workers who averaged ten to twenty hours per week. The personnel policy of Main Grace Hospital was that no dietary employee should be hired on part time basis. Hurley Hospital used the largest number of part time workers. This exception was caused by a dietary policy that all new employees were hired on part time agreement and that part time employees were an excellent solution to the problem of overlapping duties in the dietary department.

In all six hospitals, hiring was the responsibility of the personnel office, but the final interview was the prerogative of the Director of Dietetics or her qualified assistant.

The dietary department records of the respective hospitals furnished the number of people hired in 1964 and the average length of employee was based on personal calculation of the Director of Dietetics.

<u>Hospital</u>	<u>Number Hired in 1964</u>	<u>Average Years of Service</u>
St. Lawrence	31	5
E. W. Sparrow	98	5
Hurley	55	8-10
Main Grace	30	5-7
Henry Ford	No Record	No Record
Oakwood	49	4

For Main Grace Hospital, 75 per cent of their employees were employed for an average of five to seven years. At Oakwood Hospital, 50 per cent of the employees had worked in the hospital for four years or more.

Management in any organization today views worker turnover with concern. In the hospitals surveyed, a higher turnover rate occurred in nonskilled jobs like porters and dishwashers than among skilled employees; e.g., supervisors, cooks, and bakers. Of the six hospitals, Hurley was the only hospital that did not have turnover problems except in time of retirement, death or illness.

Because of the increasing demand for hospital services, expansion in bed capacity has been planned by five of the six Michigan hospitals. Dietitians at Oakwood, Henry Ford and Hurley hospitals stated that increased bed capacity will require long range planning for kitchen renovation, as well as re-evaluation of staffing both qualitatively and quantitatively. Main Grace Hospital has no plans for future expansion. The Director of Dietetics at St. Lawrence Hospital mentioned that centralization of the present food system was one of their major projects which should result in a decrease of dietary department personnel.

One of the major reasons that unions are trying to enroll hospital workers is that union membership has been declining and the service fields among nonprofessional

employees furnish a fertile field for union organization. Hospitals today probably face the greatest threat to unionization because of the Economic Security Program of the American Hospital Association whose primary objective is the establishment of collective bargaining for hospital employees.

In the six selected hospitals, with the exception of St. Lawrence Hospital, the survey pointed out the growing interest of employers as well as the employees in the union. According to the Personnel Director of Hurley Hospital, unionization was a way of life among workers because the community of Flint was the birthplace of union movement. Hurley Hospital employees were 95 per cent unionized. Although workers at E. W. Sparrow and Oakwood hospitals were unionized, membership in the union was on voluntary basis. Main Grace and Henry Ford hospitals were not unionized, but in the past strong union organization pressure had been exerted.

Recruitment

The initial step in the selection procedure is recruitment. Effective selection from available manpower is accomplished through full utilization of recruitment sources.

E. W. Sparrow considered advertising in local newspapers and services rendered by the Community Service and the Senior Citizen Organization good control sources for future employees. St. Lawrence, Hurley, and Oakwood hospitals advertised for employees when applicants were low in number; Henry Ford occasionally advertised in Detroit newspapers; and Main Grace advertised only for cooks and supervisors.

Recruitment from within was a common practice for all the hospitals except E. W. Sparrow. Hurley Hospital recruited from within directly when promotional positions existed and indirectly through encouragement of good employees to enlist their friends. The Directors of Dietetics and Personnel Directors interviewed were in agreement that recruitment from within served as a motivation for the employees to do a good job.

The Great Lakes and the Michigan Farm Section Commission provided good sources of applicants for St. Lawrence Hospital. Main Grace Hospital utilized the service of Michigan Employment Section Commission. E. W. Sparrow, Hurley and Oakwood did employ an agency; Henry Ford occasionally contacted an employment agency when situation demanded.

In many cases the salary tendered was the immediate reason for interest in a job. Wage scales offered today in many hospitals are successfully competing with commerce and industry in the recruitment of personnel.

The Application Blank

The application blank is undoubtedly one of the most common tools of selection because information in the form provides a clue to the need of and a basis for other selective processes. Such an agreement was found in the interviewed hospitals. Applicants in all hospitals were required to fill in an application blank.

The application form was in general use throughout the six hospitals with the exception of Oakwood Hospital. The Director of Dietetics and Personnel Director of E. W. Sparrow Hospital considered the form indispensable to departmental operation. At St. Lawrence and Oakwood, the blank served as an excellent permanent record of employment because reference information was given. Henry Ford Hospital recognized the importance of the blank for showing the education of the applicant and as a valuable aid in interviewing. Hurley Hospital considered the form very essential.

Opinions as to items most useful in selecting the right employee for the job were not the same. In all six hospitals, previous work experience was considered the most useful item on the application blank and education next in value. Items like Working Men's Compensation, police records as well as military services were considered important in some hospitals. Exhibit 1 shows application form items considered most important for selection on the application

Exhibit 1. Items Most Favored for Selection on the Application Form

Hospital	Work Record	Age	Dependent Children	Education	Health	Address	Telephone	Military Service	Police Records	All Items	Working Men's Compensation	Reference
St. Lawrence	x	x		x	x							x
E. W. Sparrow	x	x	x	x	x						x	x
Hurley							x			x		
Main Grace	x	x		x	x							
Henry Ford				x	x	x		x	x		x	
Oakwood				x	x							

form. Telephone was particularly utilized by Hurley Hospital on account of the large percentage of part time employees. Age was considered valuable by E. W. Sparrow and Main Grace hospitals. Older workers were less favored for working because they are less energetic, more inclined to meet accidents and more costly in terms of welfare payments. At least eighth grade level was required in all hospitals. The Personnel Director at Henry Ford Hospital paid particular attention to the address, military service and police records of the applicant.

The enactment of the Fair Employment Practices has necessitated all hospitals to revise their application blanks in the past ten years. Questions on religion, nationality, creed as well as the requirement of picture on the form has been eliminated. However, since 1965, additional questions on previous health records, accidents, police records and military services were included in the form used by E. W. Sparrow, Main Grace, Henry Ford and Oakwood hospitals.

The Interview

After potential employees have been made available through recruitment, the role of the interview in the selection procedure becomes significant. Initial interviews were the responsibility of the personnel office and the final interviews by the Directors of Dietetics.

At Hurley and Oakwood hospitals, only the interviewer was present during the interview. The Directors of Dietetics at Henry Ford and Main Grace hospitals occasionally utilized their assistant dietitian in selecting dietary aids. At E. W. Sparrow when two or three applicants were interviewed for the same position two interviewers were present. The number of interviewers needed at St. Lawrence depended on the nature of the job.

The Directors of Dietetics and Personnel Directors in all hospitals used the application form in interviewing. The two Lansing hospitals found an interviewer guide valuable. None of the interviewers utilized a written job specification but knew from experience what was expected from the applicant.

The individual qualifications related to the hiring decision presented differences of interviewer's opinion. Exhibit 2 shows opinions expressed by the interviewers regarding factors influencing hiring decision.

The Director of Dietetics of the two Lansing hospitals, and Henry Ford Hospital stated that experience factor depended on the job. The Personnel Director at Oakwood Hospital found that experience was very essential in determining the future stability of the applicant. At Main Grace Hospital, technical experience was required for skilled workers. At Hurley Hospital, experience was not necessary since applicants with no experience were found better and easier to train.

Exhibit 2. Opinions Expressed by the Interviewers Regarding Factors Influencing Hiring Decision

Hospital	Factors Influencing the Hiring Decision		
	Previous Experience	Education	Age
St. Lawrence	Depends on job	Depends on job	If possible, 55
E. W. Sparrow	Depends on job	Depends on job	No limit at present but would like to set the limit between 45 and 55
Hurley	Not necessary	If possible, eighth grade	If possible, 55
Main Grace	Technical knowledge required	Depends on job	Within limits of law
Henry Ford	Depends on job	Not too important	No limit as long as employee is strong
Oakwood	Necessary for stability	No particular educational qualification	No limit

Reference	Sex	Marital Status	Other
3	Depends on job	No	Health and Personality
Depends on job. Must always have one	Depends on job	No	Personality
No definite number	No	No	Personality
None	No	No	Appearance
2	No	No	Alertness and ability to comprehend
Two last employers of applicant	No	No	Appearance

Most dietitians felt that the level of education of applicant depended on the type of job. At Hurley Hospital, eighth grade was required; at Henry Ford, education was relatively unimportant and at Oakwood, no educational qualification was asked from the applicant.

No written policy regarding age limit was formulated at the two Lansing hospitals. Interviewers at Hurley Hospital felt that age limit of fifty-five was desirable because of the heavy duty work unsuitable for older persons. No age limit was required at Henry Ford as long as the individual was strong and healthy. At Main Grace Hospital, age factor was within the limit of the law.

Wide differences of opinion were found as to the value of references in the decision to hire. Number of references required at St. Lawrence was three, at Henry Ford and Oakwood the interviewers asked for two references and at E. W. Sparrow, the applicant was required to give one reference.

Sex was considered relatively unimportant at Hurley, Main Grace, Henry Ford and Oakwood hospitals. However, at the two Lansing hospitals, sex was considered to some extent in the hiring decision depending on the job.

Tests

Notwithstanding the difficulties encountered in the testing program for employment, the utilization of tests in the selection process reduces employee turnover.

Applicants at Hurley Hospital were required to take a test given by the Flint Civil Service Commission. The Wonderlic Personnel Test was recently introduced at Hurley Hospital and E. W. Sparrow hospitals; the other hospitals had not initiated a testing program. Interviewed personnel expressed interest in giving psychological and personality tests to all applicants to help identify personality types of the workers.

Physical Examination

The physical examination avoids mistakes in hiring and protects the health and safety of the prospective employees.

All hospitals required applicants to have a physical examination after the initial interview. The potential applicants were given a thorough examination which included chest x-ray, laboratory tests and blood pressure. In addition to the physical examination for the Detroit area hospitals (Main Grace, Oakwood, Henry Ford) the employees were required to obtain health certificates from the city of Detroit Health Department.

Induction and Orientation

The final step in the selection program is the proper induction and placement of the selected applicant.

Sponsorship was a common practice among the six hospitals. The dietitians and/or food supervisors were the persons responsible for sponsoring the new workers.

A probation period was required in all the six hospitals: for E. W. Sparrow, Main Grace and Henry Ford hospitals, three months; for Hurley Hospital, six months; for St. Lawrence, the probation period ranged from three to six months depending on the worker's job.

The dietitians and/or food supervisors were responsible for employee follow-up and evaluation of work performance. At Hurley, Henry Ford and St. Lawrence hospitals, a biennial rating program for all employees had been established.

OBSERVATIONS

A study of selection techniques for nonprofessional dietary employees in six Michigan hospitals selected from the eleven Midwest hospitals that participated in the 1955 Harman study was discussed in this paper. A revised questionnaire was used as a guide in interviews with the Directors of Dietetics and Personnel Directors.

Information was obtained in particular areas in the selection procedure: recruitment, the application blank, interviewing, tests, physical examination and orientation and induction. All the hospitals surveyed had personnel departments which selected and screened applicants.

Scope of Dietary Operation

In the study of the personnel selection procedures of the Michigan hospitals, the scope of the dietary operation was an important factor considered. The number of patients fed per day was the principle determinant of the number of staff employed. With the exception of Main Grace Hospital, the full time employees were supplemented with part time workers. Hurley Hospital used the largest number of part time workers. Hiring was the responsibility of the personnel

office, but the final interview was the prerogative of the Director of Dietetics or her qualified assistant.

In the hospitals surveyed, high turnover rate occurred among nonskilled workers. Hurley Hospital was the only hospital that did not have turnover problems.

Expansion in bed capacity has been planned by five of the six Michigan hospitals. The increased bed capacity has required long range planning for kitchen renovation as well as re-evaluation of dietary staffs. Main Grace Hospital did not have plans for future expansion.

In the six selected hospitals, with the exception of St. Lawrence Hospital, there was growing interest among the employers and employees for the union. Hurley Hospital was highly unionized because the community of Flint was the birthplace of union movement. E. W. Sparrow and Oakwood hospitals were also unionized and membership in the union was on voluntary basis. Main Grace and Henry Ford hospital employees were not union members although in the past, strong union organization pressure had been exerted.

Recruitment

Advertising in local newspapers and services rendered by Community and Senior Citizen Organization were good sources for potential employees. Some hospitals advertised for employees only when applicants were low in number.

Recruitment from within was practice for all the hospitals. The Directors of Dietetics and Personnel Directors were in agreement that recruitment from within served as a motivation for the employees to do a good job.

In most cases the salary given was the immediate reason for interest in a job. Wage scales offered today in many hospitals are successfully competing with commerce and industry in the recruitment of employees.

The Application Blank

The application form was in general use throughout the six hospitals with the exception of Oakwood. The form served as an excellent record of employment because reference information was given as well as information in education of the applicant.

Various opinions regarding the items most useful in selecting the right employee for the job were indicated in this study. Previous work experience was considered the most useful item on the application blank and education next in value. Particular attention to the address, military service and police records of the applicant were made by the Personnel Directors.

Revisions on the application blank were necessitated in all the hospitals because of the enactment of the Fair Employment Practices.

The Interview

In two hospitals only the interviewer was present during the interview. When two or three applicants were interviewed for the same job, two interviewers were present.

The Directors of Dietetics and Personnel Directors in all the hospitals used the application blank for interviewing. None of the interviewers utilized a written job specification.

The individual qualifications related to the hiring decision presented differences of interviewer's opinion. In some hospitals, experience factor depended on the job. To others technical experience was required for skilled workers. Education factor was considered important to some hospitals.

The average age limit of fifty-five was found desirable in most of the hospitals. To some age limit was not required as long as the individual was strong and healthy.

Wide differences of opinion were found as to the value and number of references in the decision to hire.

Sex was considered in the hiring decision by some hospitals and relatively unimportant to others.

Tests

Applicants in one hospital were required to take a test given by Civil Service Commission. The Wonderlic Personnel Test had recently been introduced in two hospitals.

Interest was expressed by the interviewed personnel in giving psychological and personality tests to all applicants to help identify personality types of the workers.

Physical Examination

All hospitals required applicants to have physical examination after the initial interview. At three hospitals, health certificate from the city of Detroit Health Department was necessary.

Induction and Orientation

Sponsorship was a common practice among the six hospitals. The persons responsible for sponsoring the new employees were the dietitians and/or food supervisors.

A probation period was required in all the six hospitals. The length of probation period was not the same in the six hospitals.

The dietitians and/or food supervisors were in agreement that the new employees needed follow-up regarding their work performance.

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APPENDIX

Exhibit 3. Interview Questionnaire

I. INTRODUCTION

1. What is the size of the Dietary Department?
 - a. Number of nonprofessional employees?
 - b. Number of patients fed per day?
 - c. Number of part time employees?
2. What plans do you have for future expansions?
3. Who hires?
 - a. Dietitians
 - b. Personnel Office
 - c. Other
4. How many people were hired last year?
5. What is the average length of time your employees have been with you?
6. Do you find frequent turnover in a particular job assignment?
7. Are your employees unionized?
 - a. When was the bargaining unit organized?
 - b. How many employees are union members?

II. RECRUITMENT

1. Do you advertise for employees?
If not, why? Undignified? Lack of funds?
Never thought of it? Unsuccessful? Other?
2. Do you recruit from within?
 - Cooks
 - Bakers
 - Salad Personnel
 - Storekeeper
 - Dishwashers and porters
 - Food Service Supervisors
 - Dietary Aids
3. Do you make use of an employment agency such as USES?
4. Is your wage scale within the range offered by industrial or commercial feeding establishments?

Exhibit 3--Continued

III. APPLICATION BLANK:

1. Do you require all applicants to fill out an application blank?
2. Is this form in general use throughout the hospital?
3. Which items on the application form have proved to be the most useful in helping you to select the right kind of people?
4. Has there been any revision in the application blank?
5. In general, how useful is the application blank?

IV. TESTS

1. Do you require any of your applicants to complete arithmetic tests?
2. How about reading or vocabulary tests?
3. Are trade tests required such as
 - a. Knife proficiency?
 - b. Oral trade?
 - c. Other?

V. INTERVIEW:

1. Who conducts the interview?
 - a. Dietitian
 - b. Personnel Office
 - c. Other
2. In interviewing, is more than one interviewer present?
3. Do you work from a
 - a. Job specification?
 - b. Application blank?
 - c. Interviewer's guide?
 - d. Other?

Exhibit 3--Continued

4. In the decision to hire do you consider:
 - a. Experience--what factors are most important?
 - b. Age--arbitrary limit?
 - c. Marital status?
 - d. Reference--kind and number?
 - e. Education?
 - f. Sex?
 - g. Other?

VI. PHYSICAL EXAMINATION:

1. Do you require physical examination?
2. When do you give the physical examination?

VII. PLACEMENT:

1. Is the new worker sponsored?
2. Is there a probation period? How long?
3. Does the person who hired follow up the new employee?

Exhibit 4. Form Used for Summarizing Data from 1955 Harman Study and 1965 Questionnaire

Selection Information Classification	Hospital				
	St. Lawrence		E.W. Sparrow		Hurley
	1955	1965	1955	1965	1965
<u>Scope of Dietary Operation</u> <u>Size of Dietary Department</u> 1. Daily Average Patient Ration 2. Number of Nonprofessional Employees 3. Number of Part Time Employees Plans for Future Expansion Responsible for Hiring Total Hired in 1965 Average Tenure of Employees Turnover Rate Unionization Organization Membership <u>Recruitment</u> <u>Use of Advertising</u> Recruiting from Within Friends of Workers Promotion from Within Employment Agency Used Wage Comparison with Commerce & Industry					

Exhibit 4--Continued

Selection Information Classification	Hospital				
	St. Lawrence		E.W. Sparrow		Hurley
	1955	1965	1955	1965	1955 1965
<u>Application Blank</u> <u>How Used</u> General Use in Hospital Items Significant for Job Success Revision Usefulness of Blank <u>Tests</u> <u>Psychological</u> Other <u>Interview</u> <u>Interviewer</u> Number of Interviewers Present Interviewing Aids Hiring Considerations Experience Age Marital Status References Education Sex Other <u>Physical Examination</u> <u>Requirement</u> Time <u>Induction and Orientation</u> <u>Sponsoring of Worker</u> Probation Worker Follow-Up					

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