

SECURING EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEES IN THE HEALTH CARE SECTOR IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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Abstract

One of the key points in human resource management is securing effective employees. In fact securing effective employees emphasizes the importance of finding and attracting as many potential candidates for the job openings in order to have a large pool of potential employees and thus choose the best among them. From this point of view employee recruitment and employee selection remains the focus of finding effective employees, of course permanently having in mind job analysis, human resource planning, compensation, development etc. The papers is organised around a survey conducted with 450 health care employees in the Republic of Macedonia and the main objective is to determine the extent to which proper employee recruitment and selection techniques are implemented by health care organizations in the Republic of Macedonia.

Key words: *Human resource management, effective employees, employee recruitment, employee selection*

1. Securing effective employees

One of the key points in human resource management is securing effective employees. In fact securing effective employees emphasizes the importance of finding and attracting as many potential candidates for the job openings in order to have a large pool of potential employees and thus choose the best among them. From this point of view employee recruitment and employee selection remains the focus of finding effective employees, of course permanently having in mind job analysis, human resource planning, compensation, development etc. Having this in mind, employee recruitment and selection will be the analyzed as part of this master thesis.

The process of human resource management (HRM) attracts, develops, and maintains a talented and energetic workforce. Its purpose is to ensure that an organization is always staffed with the best people available so that it gets important jobs done in the best possible ways. You might state the *goal of HRM* this way: to build organizational performance capacity through people. This means making sure that highly capable and enthusiastic people are always in the right positions and working with the support they need to be successful. (Schermerhorn, 2010, p.208)

Securing effective employees among others has to do with finding appropriate human resources. "The phrase appropriate human resources refer to the individuals within the organization who make a valuable contribution to management system goal attainment. This contribution results from their productivity in the positions they hold. The phrase *inappropriate human resources* refers to organization members who do not make a valuable contribution to the attainment of management system objectives. For one reason or another, these individuals are ineffective in their jobs." (Certo & Certo, 2012, p.296).

Employee recruitment and selection are under the influence of several factors, including but not limited to the following (Porter et al, 2006, p.106):

- The process must be systematic – that is, carried out in a logical fashion and consistently in line with the organization's policies, systems, human resource plan and business objectives.
- Fairness – ethical and legal considerations must be complied with. The way in which recruitment/selection is carried out says a lot about the organization, and prospective employees will be aware of the messages conveyed by the way the process is managed.

- Efficiency – this means using the resources of time, money, reputation and human resources to best effect. Having a systematic plan provides a blueprint for the exercise.
- Effectiveness – obtaining the right person using the optimum resources available must be the paramount objective. Moreover, ineffective recruitment can lead to a poor ‘fit’ between the employer and the new employee, causing an induction crisis and underperformance. Not selecting the best candidate is a waste of money, and could cause financial losses and otherwise to the employer.

Generating a pool of qualified candidates for a particular job is the recruitment component of staffing. It requires a job specification, which identifies the qualifications necessary for effective job performance. Most firms conduct a job analysis in which they systematically gather and organize information about the tasks, duties, and responsibilities of various jobs. While there are many job analysis techniques, virtually all of them lead to a job description, which is a formal document that identifies, defines, and describes the duties, responsibilities, and working conditions associated with a job. A properly conducted job analysis ensures that the hiring process is job-related in case of a legal challenge (Mejia& Balkin, 2012, p. 294).

When talking about employee recruitment the following human resource policies should be kept in mind (Noe et al, 2011, p.138):

- *Internal versus external recruiting* —Organizations with policies to “promote from within” try to fill upper-level vacancies by recruiting candidates internally—that is, finding candidates who already work for the organization. Opportunities for advancement make a job more attractive to applicants and employees.
- *Lead-the-market pay strategies* —Pay is an important job characteristic for almost all applicants. Organizations have a recruiting advantage if their policy is to take a “lead-the-market” approach to pay—that is, pay more than the current market wages for a job. Higher pay can also make up for a job’s less desirable features, such as working on a night shift or in dangerous conditions.
- *Employment-at-will policies* —Within the laws of the state where they are operating, employers have latitude to set policies about their rights in an employment relationship. A widespread policy follows the principle of employment at will, which holds that if there is no specific employment contract saying otherwise, the employer or employee may end an employment relationship at any time.
- *Image advertising* —Besides advertising specific job openings, organizations may advertise themselves as a good place to work in general. Advertising designed to create a generally favorable impression of the organization is called *image advertising*. Image advertising is particularly important for organizations in highly competitive labor markets that perceive themselves as having a bad image

An effective recruitment effort should create a pool of qualified applicants. As the word implies, selection is the screening process used to decide which individuals to hire. The ultimate objective is to hire people who will perform well based on the criteria the firm uses to evaluate employees. No selection process is foolproof. Some hires will turn out to be mistakes and other candidates who would have made good employees may be rejected. An organization with a high proportion of individuals who fall into these categories, is likely to see much lower job performance on average than an organization that consistently makes the right hiring decisions. (Mejia& Balkin, 2012, p. 296). One way to look at the employee selection is presented in figure 1.8.

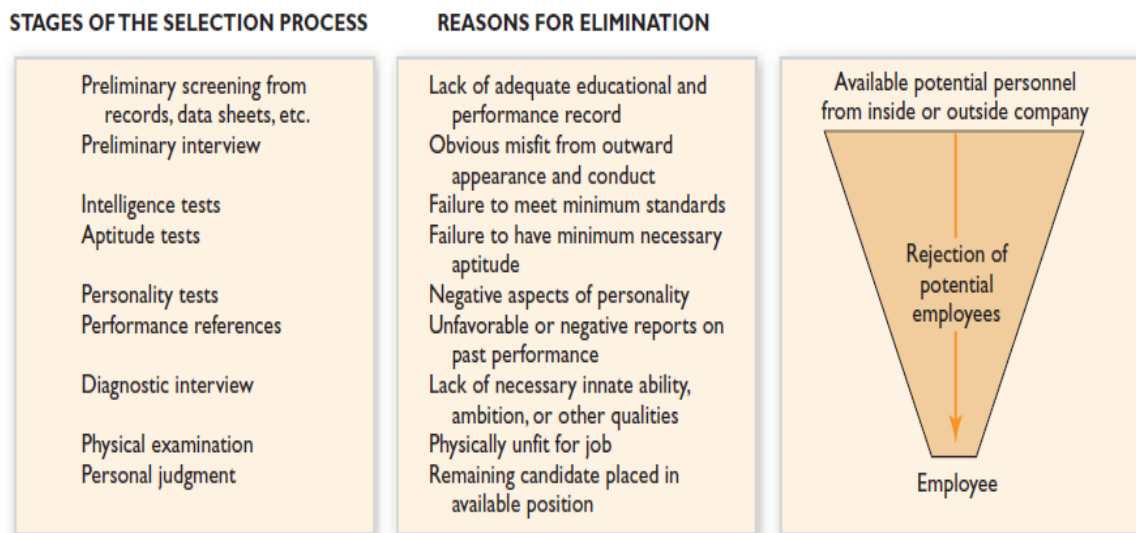


Figure 1. Employee selection (Certo & Certo, 2012, p.302).

The main techniques in personnel selection are presented in table 1.

| Technique | Description |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Interviews | Many involve more than one interviewer. When several interviewers are involved, the term <i>panel interview</i> is used. The most important features of an interview are the extent to which a preplanned structure is followed and the proportion of questions that are directly related to the job. |
| Psychometric tests | This category includes tests of cognitive ability (such as general intelligence, verbal ability, numerical ability) and self-report measures of personality. |
| References | Usually obtained from current or previous employers, often in the final stages of the selection process. The information requested may be specific or general and open-ended. |
| Biodata | Specifications of biographical information about a candidate's life history. Some bio-data inventories may contain many (e.g. 150+) questions and ask objective questions, such as professional qualifications held, and more subjective ones, such as preferences for different job features. |
| Work-sample tests | Such tests literally use samples of the job in question (e.g. the contents of an in-tray for an executive position or specific kinds of typing for a secretarial post). The applicant is given instructions and then a specific amount of time to complete the tasks. |
| Handwriting analysis (graphology) | Inferences are made about candidates' characteristics by examining specific features of their handwriting (e.g. slant, letter shapes). Obviously, a reasonably lengthy sample of the candidate's normal writing is required. |
| Assessment centers | This procedure involves a combination of several of the previously mentioned techniques (e.g. psychometric tests, interviews, work samples). Candidates are usually dealt with in groups and some of the techniques used require the candidates to interact (e.g. simulated group decision-making exercises). |

Table 1. Employee selection techniques (Arnold et al., 2005, p.172).

2. Health care human resources in the Republic of Macedonia

The Republic of Macedonia has had a permanently growing number of doctors. Studies point to a surplus of health personnel. This seems to be partly the result of the relatively high obligatory number of medical doctors per 1000 citizens, for example, as defined in the system established prior to 1991, and partly the result of the absence of a strict quota for professional training. Furthermore, analysis of data on the employment of medical personnel confirms that the 1990s saw no significant policy changes in this field. Accordingly, the sector experiences difficulties in employing all qualified personnel and there is therefore unemployment among doctors and nurses. However, the recent reduction in admission numbers to the Medical Faculty aims to take account of these difficulties. On the contrary, unemployment among pharmacists is rare.¹

Since the independence of the country in 1991, a permanent growth in the number of physicians can be noticed starting from 4396 in 1990 up to 5649 in 2011, chart 1.

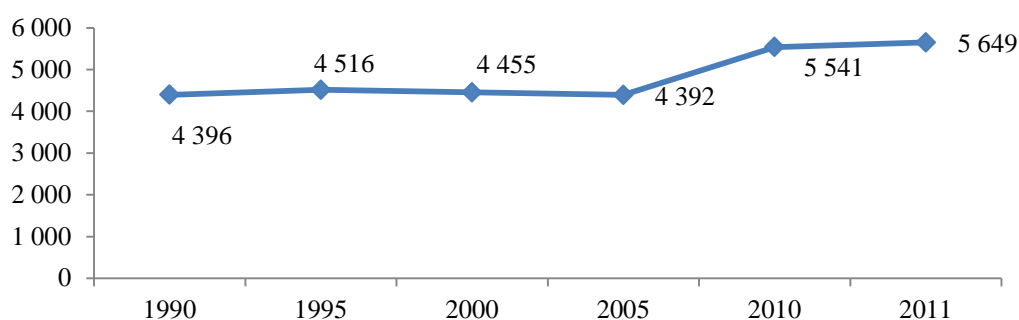


Chart 1. Number of doctors in the Republic of Macedonia (Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Macedonia 2013).

As can be noticed from the data presented in table 2 parallel with the increase of number of doctors in the Republic of Macedonia, there has been of process of improving the structure of doctors. While in 1990 more than half of the total number of doctors in the country belonged to the category of general physicians in 2011 this number fell to only 37%.

| Year | Total | General physicians | | Specialists | |
|------|-------|--------------------|----|-------------|----|
| | | n | % | n | % |
| | 4 396 | 2 240 | 51 | 2 156 | 49 |
| | 4 487 | 2 191 | 49 | 2 296 | 51 |
| | 4 564 | 2 039 | 45 | 2 525 | 55 |
| | 4 528 | 1 923 | 42 | 2 605 | 58 |
| | 4 505 | 1 822 | 40 | 2 683 | 60 |
| | 4 516 | 1 786 | 40 | 2 730 | 60 |
| | 4 464 | 1 732 | 39 | 2 732 | 61 |
| | 4 491 | 1 718 | 38 | 2 773 | 62 |
| | 4 508 | 1 726 | 38 | 2 782 | 62 |

¹ Health Systems in Tranzition: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, p. 46

| | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|----|-------|----|
| | 4 449 | 1 648 | 37 | 2 801 | 63 |
| | 4 455 | 1 563 | 35 | 2 892 | 65 |
| | 4 459 | 1 565 | 35 | 2 894 | 65 |
| | 4 573 | 1 619 | 35 | 2 954 | 65 |
| | 4 448 | 1 497 | 34 | 2 951 | 66 |
| | 4 490 | 1 465 | 33 | 3 025 | 67 |
| | 4 392 | 1 340 | 31 | 3 052 | 69 |
| | 5 134 | 1 833 | 36 | 3 301 | 64 |
| | 5 052 | 1 704 | 34 | 3 348 | 66 |
| | 5 364 | 1 887 | 35 | 3 477 | 65 |
| | 5 364 | 1 904 | 35 | 3 460 | 65 |
| | 5 541 | 1 961 | 35 | 3 580 | 65 |
| | 5 649 | 2 085 | 37 | 3 564 | 63 |

Table 2. Structure of doctors in the Republic of Macedonia (Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Macedonia 2013).

As can be noticed from the data presented in chart 2. similarly the number of dentists and pharmacists in the Republic of Macedonia has grown rapidly over the years although not with the same intensity. While the number of dentists has grown from 1112 in 1990 to 1622 in 2011, the number of pharmacists has doubled during the same period going from 372 up to 782.

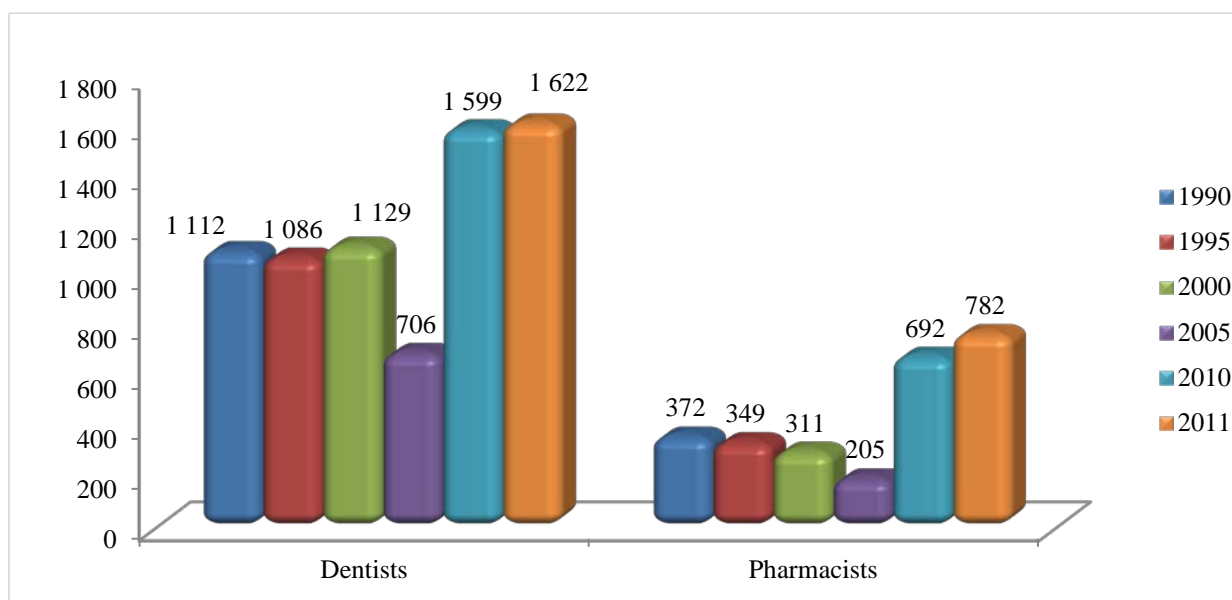


Chart 2. Number of dentists and pharmacists in the Republic of Macedonia (Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Macedonia 2013).

3. Securing effective employees in the health care sector in the Republic of Macedonia

In order to gain insides regarding the human resource management practices in health care organization in the Republic of Macedonia, a specially prepared questionnaire was drafted and the same was distributed to over 1050 healthcare employees in the country, especially to doctors. Only 420 employees responded to the questionnaire. This extensive survey was conducted over a relatively long period of time raging from September 2012 to June 2013.

3.1. Sample description

As can be noticed from the data presented in chart 3.3.. the sample is dominated by female respondents. In fact around 61% of respondents are female and only 39% are male.

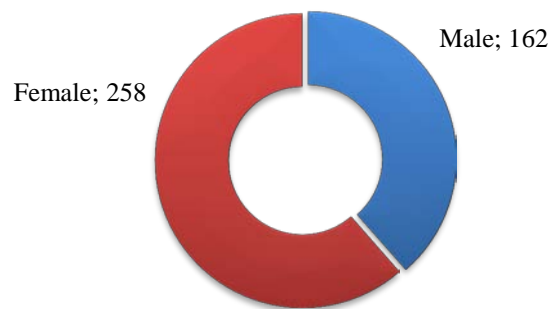


Chart 3. Gender structure of respondents

No respondents under the age of 21 or above the age of 61 were a part of the survey. As shown in chart 3.4.. most of the respondents belong to the relatively older age groups. In fact only 28% of respondents belong to the age group between 22 and 35 years old, and only 10% more belong to the age groups of 22-40. Thus, over 60% of respondents belong to the age group 41-60 years old.

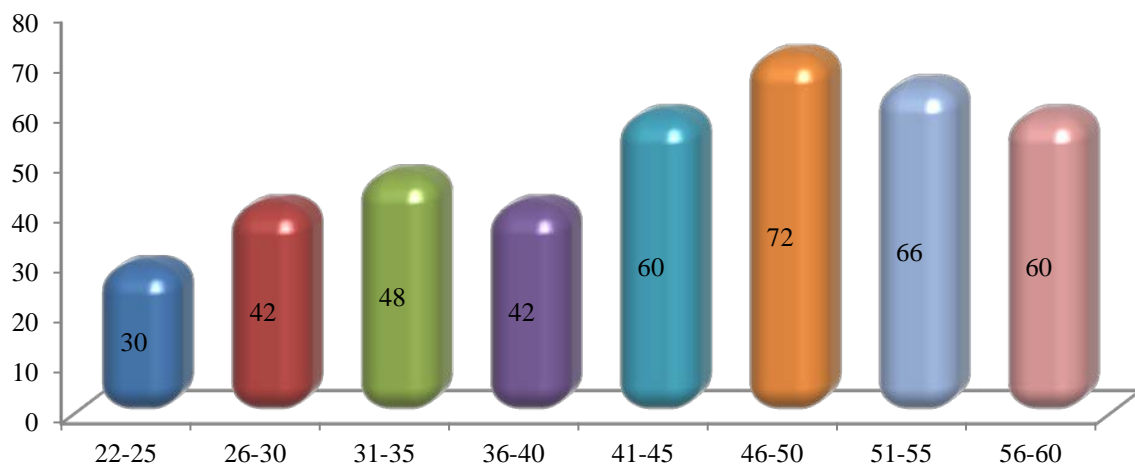


Chart 4. Age structure of respondents

When it comes to the educational structure of the respondents, it is relatively balanced. In fact 48.5% of the total number of respondents has only primary or secondary education thus work as technical

staff in the hospitals. The rest have university degrees and work as doctors. From this staff only 25% have only a bachelor's degree and $\frac{3}{4}$ have already finished a specialization.

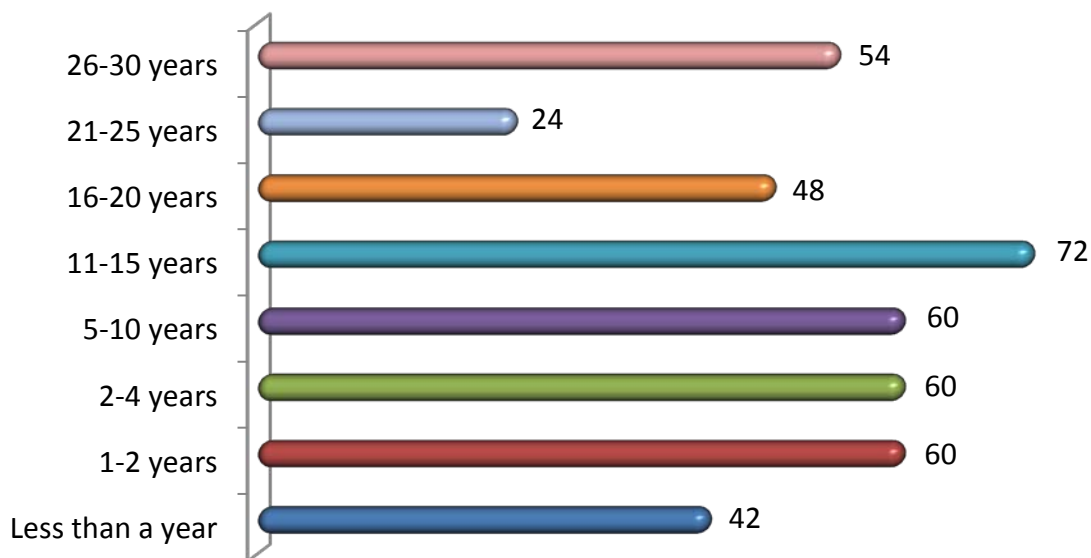


Chart 5. Respondents work experience

As can be noticed from the data presented in chart 5 when it comes to their work experience, only 47% of respondents have more than 10 years of experience while the rest have between one and ten years of experience. Only 10% of respondents have less than a year of experience.

3.2. Data analysis

As can be noticed from the data presented in table 3 the health care organizations in the Republic of Macedonia, implement most recruitment techniques but only a few of the selection techniques when making the hiring decision. It should be pointed out that according to the survey results only 1/10 of respondents have been tested for knowledge of foreign language during the employment phase. For the last two years a government decision that all applicants must be able to speak at least one of the main foreign languages and therefore all applicants have been tested for foreign language knowledge. A fact that should be mentioned also is that health care organizations in the Republic of Macedonia have very rarely interviewed the candidates prior to making an employment decision, although this is a legal requirement.

| | Yes | | No | |
|---|-----|------|-----|------|
| | n | % | n | % |
| I have been employed via an open call/competition | 330 | 78.6 | 90 | 21.4 |
| In the application period I have filed an application form | 264 | 62.9 | 156 | 37.1 |
| A CV was required of me during the application form | 348 | 82.9 | 72 | 17.1 |
| I have been subject to test of professional knowledge during the employment phase | 204 | 48.6 | 216 | 51.4 |

| | | | | |
|---|-----|------|-----|------|
| I have been subject to a test of foreign language during the employment phase | 42 | 10.0 | 378 | 90.0 |
| I have been interviewed during the employment phase | 84 | 20.0 | 336 | 80.0 |
| Recommendations were required of me during the employment phase | 324 | 77.1 | 96 | 22.9 |
| A job description was delivered to me when I started working | 354 | 84.3 | 66 | 15.7 |

Table 3. Recruitment and selection techniques in the health care sector in the Republic of Macedonia

3.3. Estimation results

As can be notices from the data presented in chart 3.14, dependless of their age structure the majority of respondents have been initially hired through an open call, although the distribution is not equal for different age groups.

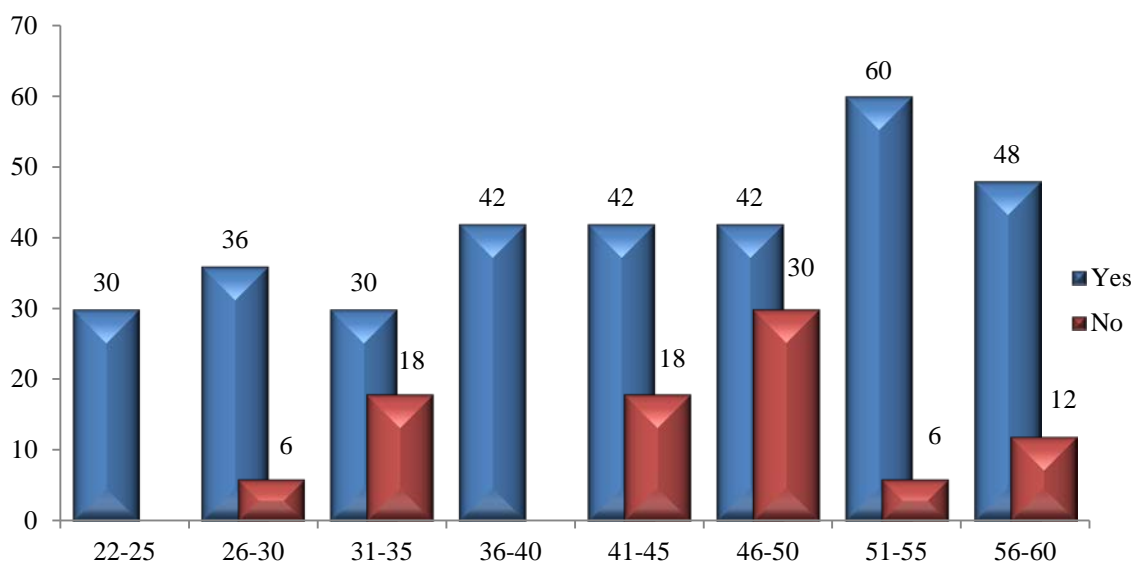


Chart 6. Number of respondents initially hired by an open call depending on their age structure

As can be notices the highest degree of not being initially employed by an open call is at the 46-50 age group (around 41%). On the other hand, all respondents belonging to the age groups of 22-25 and 36-40 have been initially employed through an open call. The unequal dispersion of the data, makes it almost impossible to come to a logical conclusion regarding the potential correlation between age and being employed by an open call.

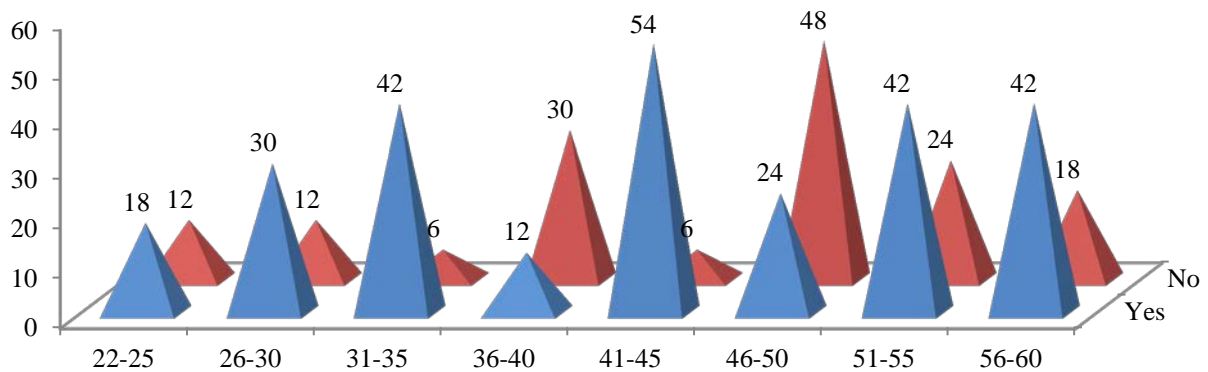


Chart 7. Number of respondents who have filled an application depending on their age structure

As can be noticed from the data presented in chart 7 in almost all age groups the number of respondents that have filled and delivered an application form during their first employment is higher than the number of people that have not filed an application, with the exception of the 26-40 and 46-50 age group. In the first age group over 71% of respondents have declared that they have not delivered an application form and in the second mentioned group 2.3 of respondents have declared the same. The age group 41-45 has the highest degree of respondents that have declared that they have filed and delivered an application form during their initial employment act (90%) followed by the 31-35 age group (87.5) and the 26-30 age group (71%).

The distribution of data regarding the number of respondents that have delivered a CV during their initial employment depending on their age structure is presented in chart 8.

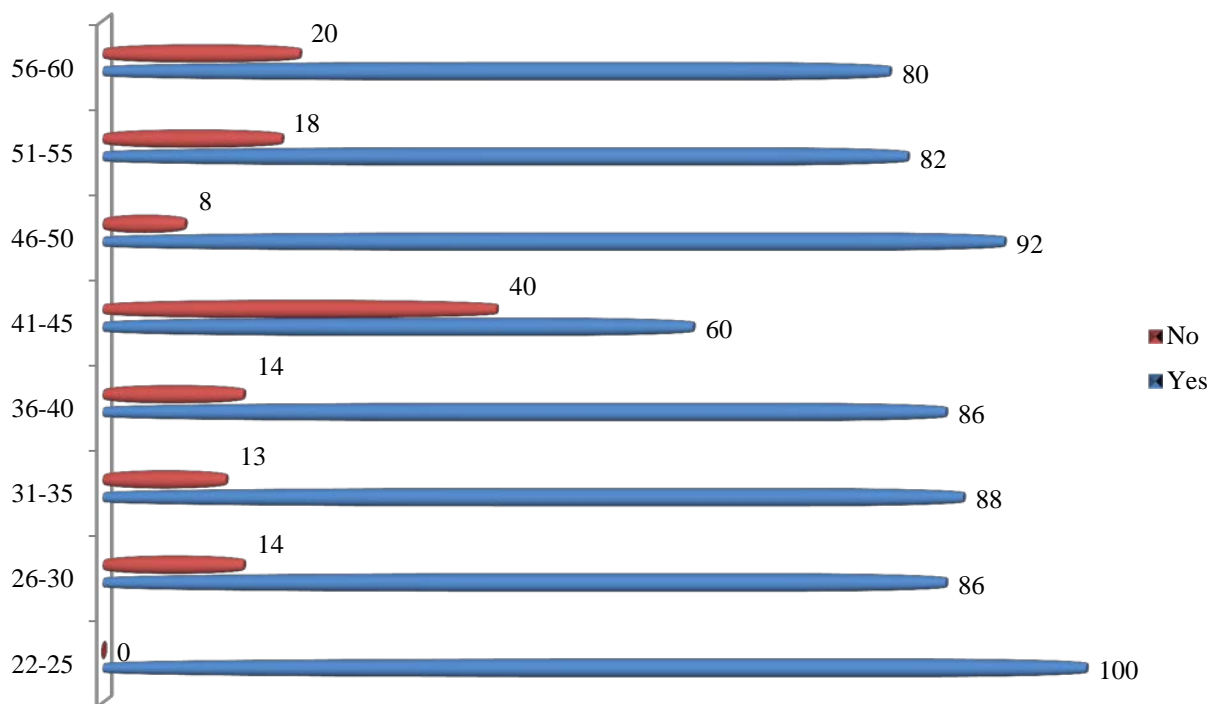


Chart 8. Number of respondents who have delivered a CV during their initial employment depending on their age structure (in %)

As can be noticed from chart 8 a vast majority of respondents regardless their age structure have delivered CV during the initial employment phase. The age group 41-45 is characterized by the highest degree of employees that have not delivered a CV during their initial employment phase. In fact 40% of respondents belonging to this age group have declared that they have not delivered a CV during the initial employment phase. On the other hand there is a more or less equal dispersion of answers when it comes to other age groups. In fact all respondents of the 22-25 age group, 92% of respondents from the 46-50 age group, 88% of respondents from the 31-35 age group and 86% of the 26-30 and 36-40 age group have declared that they did deliver a CV during the initial phase of their employment.

| Age | Tests of professional knowledge | | | | Language tests | | | |
|-------|---------------------------------|----|----|------|----------------|----|----|-----|
| | Yes | | No | | Yes | | No | |
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| 22-25 | 24 | 80 | 6 | 20 | 24 | 80 | 6 | 20 |
| 26-30 | 18 | 43 | 24 | 57.1 | 18 | 43 | 24 | 57 |
| 31-35 | 24 | 50 | 24 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 48 | 100 |
| 36-40 | 12 | 29 | 30 | 71.4 | 0 | 0 | 42 | 100 |
| 41-45 | 30 | 50 | 30 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 60 | 100 |
| 46-50 | 30 | 42 | 42 | 58.3 | 0 | 0 | 72 | 100 |
| 51-55 | 42 | 64 | 24 | 36.4 | 0 | 0 | 66 | 100 |
| 56-60 | 24 | 40 | 36 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 60 | 100 |

Table 4. Number of respondents who have been subject to a test of professional knowledge and language knowledge during the initial employment depending on their age structure

As can be noticed from the data presented in table 4, respondents from all age groups have been subject to tests of professional knowledge, although the distribution is not equal for all age groups. On the other hand, the survey proves the commonly known fact that foreign language tests are a new approach for the selections of staff in the health organizations in the Republic of Macedonia. In fact, only respondents of the younger age groups (22-30) have been subject to foreign language tests during their initial employment. Around 4/5 of the 22-25 age group have been subject to tests of professional knowledge and foreign language tests, and around 57% of the 26-30 age group have been subject to these kinds of tests. None of the respondents belonging to the 31-60 age group have been subject to foreign language tests. Besides this a trend line would show that in general older employees have been less subject to tests of professional knowledge during their initial employment in the health sector in the Republic of Macedonia, compared to younger generations. Thus one might logically conclude that testing the medical personnel is sort of a new trend for the health sector in the Republic of Macedonia although tests of professional knowledge have been implemented earlier than test of foreign language knowledge.

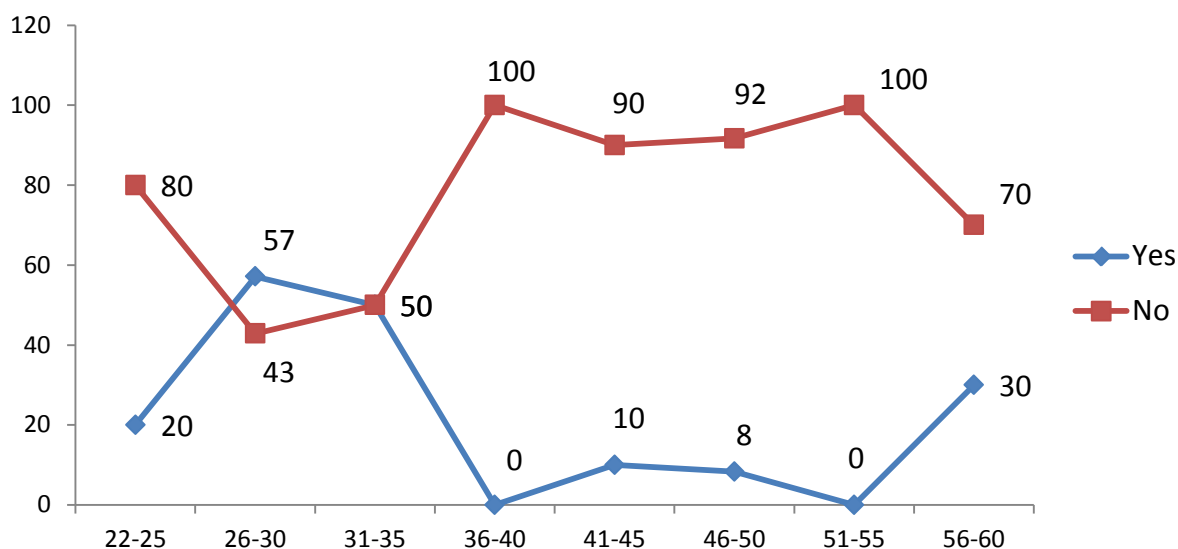


Chart 9. Number of respondents who have been interviewed during their initial employment depending on their age structure (in %)

As can be noticed from the data presented in chart 9 in most cases, regardless the respondent's age, they have not been called on an interview. Although this trend is general for all age groups, it can be noticed that the percentage of employees that have not undergone an interview process is in general higher at the older age groups and lower age groups. In fact, all respondents belonging to the 36-40 and 51-55 age group, as well as over 90% of the 41-50 age group have declared that they have not undergone a formal interview process during their initial employment phase. Half of the respondents belonging to the 31-35 age group have declared that they have undergone a formal interview process during their initial employment.

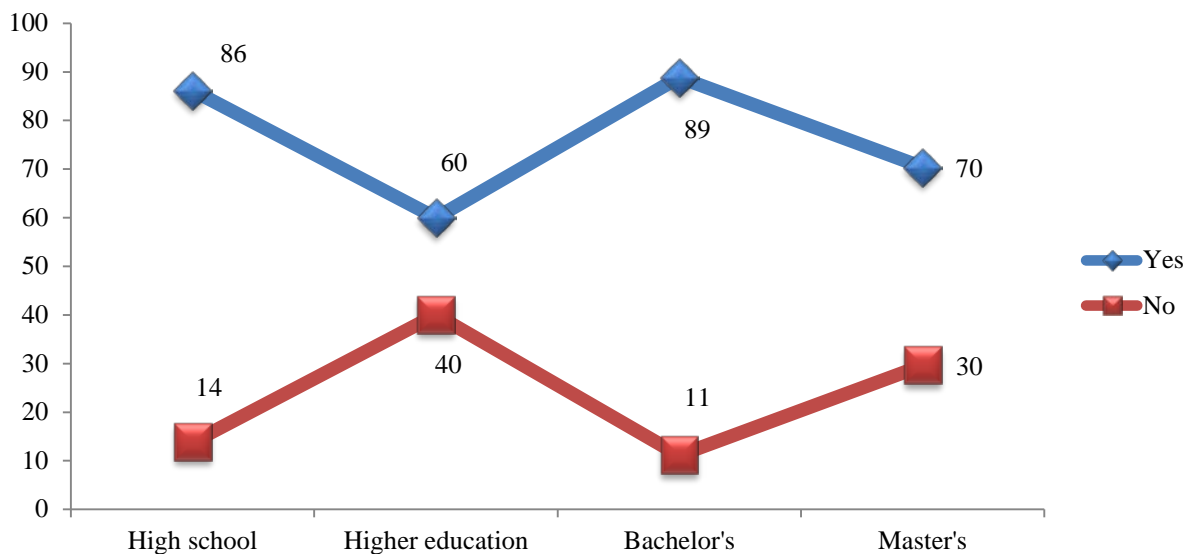


Chart 10. Percentage of employees that have been employed by an open call depending on the educational structure of respondents

As shown in chart 10 a dominant number of respondents that have finished only secondary education and bachelor’s degree have been employed by a open call. On the other hand at the higher education and master’s education level the percentage of employees that have been hired by an open call is lower. If chart 3.10 and chart 3.19 are combined it becomes obvious that people that have been employed for longer periods of time have less been employed by an open call.

| | Application form | | | | CV | | | |
|------------------|------------------|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| | Yes (n) | Yes (%) | No (n) | No (%) | Yes (n) | Yes (%) | No (n) | No (%) |
| High school | 102 | 59 | 72 | 41 | 138 | 96 | 6 | 4 |
| Higher education | 24 | 80 | 6 | 20 | 30 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Bachelor's | 48 | 89 | 6 | 11 | 42 | 78 | 12 | 22 |
| Master's | 90 | 56 | 72 | 44 | 138 | 85 | 24 | 15 |

Table 5. Recruitment techniques used by health organizations depending on respondents education level

As presented in table 5 during the initial employment phase 59% of respondents that have finished only secondary education have delivered an application form and 96% of them have delivered a CV. Around 4/5 of respondents that have finished higher education during their initial employment have filed and delivered an application form and all of them have delivered a CV. Around 89% of respondents that have a bachelors degree have filed and delivered an application form during their initial employment and 78% of them have delivered a CV. Only 56% of master’s degree respondents have declared that during their initial employment phase they have filed and delivered an application form and 85% of them have delivered a CV.

| | Test of professional knowledge | | | | Test of foreign language | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|--------------------------|---------|--------|--------|
| | Yes (n) | Yes (%) | No (n) | No (%) | Yes (n) | Yes (%) | No (n) | No (%) |
| High school | 90 | 52 | 84 | 48 | 42 | 24 | 132 | 76 |
| Higher education | 24 | 80 | 6 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 100 |
| Bachelor's | 18 | 33 | 36 | 67 | 0 | 0 | 54 | 100 |
| Master's | 72 | 44 | 90 | 56 | 0 | 0 | 162 | 100 |

Table 6. Selection techniques used by health organizations depending on respondents education level

As can be noticed from 6 only the part of respondents with higher education is dominated by people that have undergone a test of professional knowledge and only 42% of people that have finished only high school have undergone a test of foreign language.

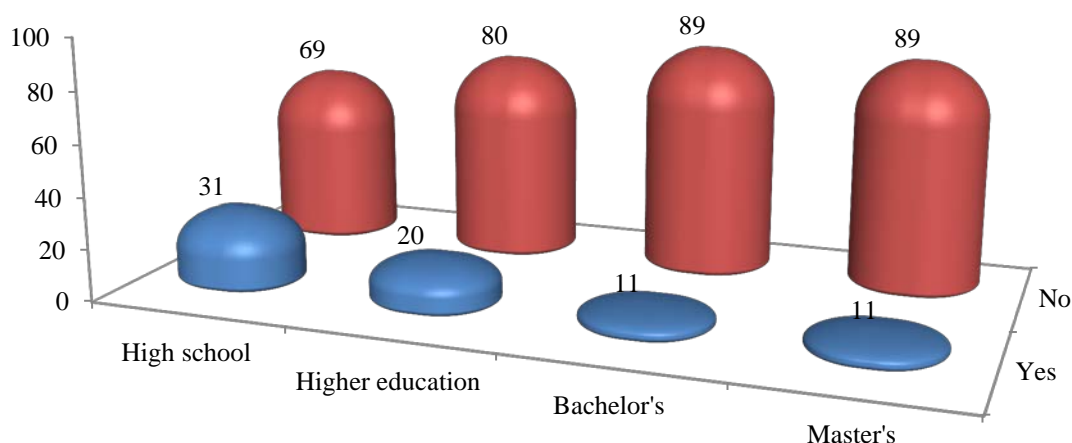


Chart 11. Percentage of employees that have been subject to an interview depending on the educational structure of respondents

As can be noticed from chart 11 respondents with higher educational levels have been less subject to interview during their employment compared to respondents with lower educational levels.

The following can be noted from the data presented in table 3.10:

- Around 93% of the mail respondents have been employed via an open call as compared to around 70% of female respondents employed via an open call.
- There is no gender difference when it comes to having filed and delivered an application form during the initial employment phase.
- Around 74% of male employees have delivered a CV during the initial employment phase as compared to 88% of female respondents.
- Only 44% of male respondents and more than half of female respondents have been subject to a test of professional knowledge during the initial employment phase.
- Only 15% of male respondents and only 7% of female respondents have been subject to a foreign language test during their employment.
- Around 19% of male respondents and 21% of female respondents have been subject to an interview during the employment phase.
- Recommendations were required of 85% of male respondents and 72% of female respondents during the initial employment phase.

| Description | Gender | Male | | Female | |
|---|--------|------|----|--------|----|
| | Answer | n | % | n | % |
| I have been employed via an open call/competition | Yes | 150 | 93 | 180 | 70 |
| | No | 12 | 7 | 78 | 30 |
| In the application period I have filed an application form | Yes | 102 | 63 | 162 | 63 |
| | No | 60 | 37 | 96 | 37 |
| A CV was required of me during the application | Yes | 120 | 74 | 228 | 88 |
| | No | 42 | 26 | 30 | 12 |
| I have been subject to test of professional knowledge during the employment phase | Yes | 72 | 44 | 132 | 51 |
| | No | 90 | 56 | 126 | 49 |
| I have been subject to a test of foreign language during the employment phase | Yes | 24 | 15 | 18 | 7 |
| | No | 138 | 85 | 240 | 93 |
| I have been interviewed during the employment phase | Yes | 30 | 19 | 54 | 21 |
| | No | 132 | 81 | 204 | 79 |
| Recommendations were required of me during the employment phase | Yes | 138 | 85 | 186 | 72 |
| | No | 24 | 15 | 72 | 28 |
| After employment I received a job description | Yes | 156 | 96 | 198 | 77 |
| | No | 6 | 4 | 60 | 23 |
| I have been trained by the institution | Yes | 72 | 44 | 78 | 30 |
| | No | 90 | 56 | 180 | 70 |
| The institution has covered the costs for my specialization | Yes | 84 | 52 | 48 | 19 |
| | No | 78 | 48 | 210 | 81 |
| The institution has covered the costs for my sub-specialization | Yes | 90 | 56 | 66 | 26 |
| | No | 72 | 44 | 192 | 74 |

Table 7. Sex and recruitmet/selection techniques

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The survey, based on a specifically prepared questionnaire, based on previously conducted research in other parts of the world but still adopted to circumstances, has served as a basis for several important conclusions regarding human resource management practices in the health care sector in the Republic of Macedonia. Some of them are as follows:

- Health care organizations in the Republic of Macedonia, implement most recruitment techniques but only a few of the selection techniques when making the hiring decision.
- Only a small portion of employees have been tested for knowledge of foreign language during the employment phase.
- Health care organizations in the Republic of Macedonia have very rarely interviewed the candidates prior to making a employment decision, although this is a legal requirement
- A vast majority of respondents regardless their age structure have delivered CV during the initial employment phase.

- Respondents from all age groups have been subject to tests of professional knowledge, although the distribution is not equal for all age groups.
- Only respondents of the younger age groups (22-30) have been subject to foreign language tests during their initial employment.
- The percentage of employees that have not undergone an interview process is in general higher at the older age groups and lower age groups.
- Respondents with higher education in general have undergone a test of professional knowledge more to employees with lower levels of education.
- Respondents with higher educational levels have been less subject to interview during their employment compared to respondents with lower educational levels.

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