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CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this work is to investigate successful recruitment and selection approaches in examination of alternative routes which can be applied in United Response (U R) a private service provider in the health and social care sector operating in England and Wales.

The subject of recruitment and selection has drawn extensive attention from numerous researchers and practitioners over a long period of time. A number of authors in the area of Human Resource Management (HRM) (Beardwell et al., 2004: Roberts, 2008; Bratton and Gold, 2007) have written on the importance and contribution of recruitment and selection in ensuring organisations have the right people at the right time and doing the right job to deliver operational excellence, business development and contribute to the overall success of ambitious organisations.

For example Beardwell et al., (2004) state the importance of ensuring the right people are selected to join an organisation’s work force has become increasingly apparent as the emphasis on people to be the prime source of competitive advantage has grown. Although most organisations now recognise their future success lies to a large extent in finding and retaining talented employees endowed with appropriate attitudes, ability, skill, knowledge and personality to perform. The author is of the view that, organisation’s attempts to find and fit the right people in the organisation’s structure and functions can come at a greater financial cost and can be time consuming due the length of procedures involved. However, despite the recent economic recession which has resulted in increase in unemployment rate, Richardson, (2009) argues that there is continuous increase in competition for best talented people in many sectors, consequently the cost of not recruiting the right people for the right jobs can be devastating. Recruiting the right people will
expand the company’s capabilities, and hence provide stability which subsequently translates into measurable results in terms of the quality of the services provided, essential to the company’s strong financial performance.

However, this work intends to focus on the adoption and use of emerging recruitment and selection approaches and how these have contributed to the efficiency and effectiveness of the recruitment process to establish alternative routes that can be adopted at United Response (UR). With reference to the current recruitment and selection approaches being used in UR, this work will seek to take a critical review of what authoritative practitioners and researchers have said concerning these approaches.

Further to this, the author will also consider orthodox views from a wide range of researchers and practitioners with regard to the stance that attracting and engaging talented people is a fundamental means through which organisations can develop an irreproachable competitive advantage. Numerous contrasting frames of thought will be considered in efforts to highlight key issues relating to the pros and cons of the adopted recruitment and selection techniques, employee engagement practices and retention strategies with the aim of establishing alternative successful approaches.

The research work will be carried out in United Response (UR), based in England and Wales. The researcher is an employee of this organisation working as a support worker. Access has already been negotiated with the regional manager for the North West region of England and the organisation has agreed to assist with the use of research facilities located in Manchester and Leeds to access required information necessary for the progression of this research work.
1.1 About United Response (U R)

United Response is a top 100 charity operating in England and Wales, providing a range of support services for more than 1,500 people with learning disabilities, mental health needs and physical disabilities. U R employs over 2,000 people across England and Wales. United Response’s mission is to enable people with learning disabilities, mental health needs and physical disabilities to take control of their lives. It has a vision of having a society where disabled people are equal participants and have access to the same rights and opportunities as everyone else (United Response, 2008).

The organisation spends more than 15 percent of its annual expenditure on recruiting, engaging and developing its staff. Being a private service provider in the health and social care sector, U R is subject to sector specific legislation and employment regulations which have implications on its recruitment and selection processes and other mandatory requirements for the management and development of its human resources (United Response, 2008).

1.2 Significance of the research

The research topic was arrived at, following consultations with the organisation with regard to pressing issues that needed to be examined in an attempt to improve United Response’s operational excellence, business development options, and the quality and standard of services provided.

The researcher is aware that recruitment and selection is a very wide area to conduct the required research within the given time frame. Therefore following consultations with the UR regional manager for the Northwest, attempts to streamline the subject area to a minimum of two recruitment approaches that have been perceived as successful by both leading practitioners and researchers in this field were approved. In view of this, the researcher will seek to adopt a qualitative study of the
perceived successful recruitment and selection approaches focusing on emerging approaches as a means to arrive at applicable approaches for the resourcing needs in \textit{U R}.

Being an employee of \textit{U R}, working as a support worker, the researcher feels that if the desired change is to be achieved in \textit{UR}. It is critical to consider a review of the approaches used in recruitment and selection, as this is paramount in attracting and engaging the right people with the right skills and attitude needed to fuel and power the desire for a high performance culture fitting with requirement for the achievement of organisational goals. Therefore below are the objectives for this proposed research.

1.3 Objectives

1. To critically evaluate the current recruitment and selection approaches of United Response.

2. To critically examine an alternative recruitment route which has not been used in United Response.

3. To draw conclusions about the applicability of alternative recruitment routes in United Response.
CHAPTER 2

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Recruitment and Selection defined.

Recruitment can be defined as a set of activities and practices used for the primary purpose of legally identifying sufficient numbers and quality of people fitting for a given purpose. It is carried out to provide an organisation with a pool of qualified potential individuals’ from which judicious selection for the most appropriate applicants can be made for filling vacancies in the organisation.

A review of the HRM literature indicates that recruitment and selection are regarded as integrated activities and where recruitment stops and selection begins is a questionable point (Beardwell et al., 2004). Nevertheless, for the purpose of this work it is useful to differentiate between the two activities. As defined above, numerous authors (Whitehill, 1991: Roberts, 2008; McCormack and Scholarios, 2009) describe recruitment as a process of building a pool of potentially qualified applicants. Whereas selection is seen as a set of activities concerned with predicting which applicants will make the most appropriate contribution to the organisation in view of the present and future human resource requirements (Beardwell et al., 2004: McCormack and Scholarios, 2009).

Despite recruitment and selection being considered as integrated activities unfortunately human resources literature discussions tend to neglect recruitment and place greater emphasis on selection. In view of this (McCormack and Scholarios, 2009) comment that the more effective an organisation is at identifying and attracting a high quality profile of job applicants, the less important the selection stage of hiring becomes. Therefore it can be suggested that an effective and agile recruitment strategy is the most fundamental human resource function and if managed well can have a significant impact on organisational performance and is critical to developing a more agile competitive edge (Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2006: Evans et al, 2007).
As the contemporary business environment become increasingly competitive and labour markets continue to grow more diverse, organisations need to be more proactive in their resourcing strategies. Evans et al., (2007) and Richardson, (2008) argue that ineffective recruitment approaches can result in long-term negative effects, among them high training and development costs in efforts to minimise the incidence of poor performance and high turnover which in turn, impact on staff morale, the provision of high quality goods and services and the retention of organisational memory. Richardson, (2008) goes further to argue that at worst, the organisation can fail to achieve its objectives thereby losing its competitive edge and market share. However, it is important to consider that the process of implementing an effective and successful recruitment approach could bring along with it other costs related to the perceptions and attitudes of the people involved in this change.

2.2 Objective of Recruitment

Numerous researchers and practitioners (CIPD, 2010; Redman and Wilkinson, 2009) comment on the purpose and importance of recruitment. Most of the recent HR literature (Heraty and Morley, 1998: Holbeche, 2009 and Cheese et al., 2009) emphasises the necessity of the recruitment and selection of adaptable people who can adjust and are able to fit in self directed and multidisciplinary teams which are nowadays required necessary for organisations to remain competitive. Pfeffer, (1994) cited in (Holbeche, 2009) argues that employees and the way they work provide critical contribution to the success of any organisation. Pfeffer’s argument is that as technology increases and product life cycles shorten, the major source of competitive advantage is finding the right individual employees. Hence in establishing what can be regarded as successful recruitment approaches, it is important to consider some of the objectives of recruitment and selection as suggested below;

i. Attract and encourage appropriate quality candidates to apply for positions in the organisation thereby creating a pool of qualified potential applicants which enables the selection of best candidates for the organisation at a minimum cost (Redman and Wilkinson, 2009). However, it can be argued that the notion of finding the best candidates
at a minimum cost is not any thing that can be easily achieved. As despite, record high unemployment in the UK economy it is still difficult to find suitably qualified and talented candidates with specific skills in some sectors.

ii. Contribute to human resource planning and job analysis techniques in determining present and future resourcing needs of the organisation as suggested by Beardwell et al., (2004). Nonetheless, due to high volatility of the business environment it is not always the case for organisations to predict resourcing needs.

iii. Reduce rate of turnover and the probability of job applicants deciding to leave the organisation after a short period following spending on recruitment and selection activities (CIPD, 2009). On the other hand it must be acknowledged that, there are many factors that may lead to high employee turnover rates. Thus requiring organisations to become even more creative in finding and retaining suitable applicants, for example through identifying non-traditional applicant groups or by offering additional incentives such as a good pay and benefits.

iv. Increase organizational and individual effectiveness of various recruiting approaches and sources for all types of job applicants.

v. Meet the organizations legal and social requirements regarding the qualifications and diversity of the workforce (CIPD, 2009; Bratton and Gold, 2007).

Given the assumed contribution of an effective recruitment system to organisational performance, it can be argued that organisations need to adopt a more strategic approach to HR planning before moving on to the actual recruitment and selection process (Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2006; Bratton and Gold, 2007). According to (Beardwell et al. 2004; Evans et al. 2007) HR planning involves defining job roles and responsibilities, identifying role associated competencies, as well as developing an understanding of the labour market, both internal and external, in order to match the availability of potential labour to the organisation’s current and future resourcing needs.
2.3 Recent trends and challenges influencing recruitment

In evaluating the currently used recruitment and selection approaches in United Response (UR) to establish an effective and successful alternative route, it is noteworthy to consider the context within which recruitment and selection takes place. This can be derived from the best fit contingency view which argues that the effectiveness of human resource practices (resourcing activities included) depends on how they closely fit with external and internal influences on the organisation.

However, recent developments within the business environment and within organisations are continuing to bring new challenges for recruitment and selection strategies rendering the traditional approaches to be inadequate and insufficient (Heraty and Morley, 1998; Holbeche, 2009).

Consequently, researchers and practitioners continue to monitor how external drivers are shaping resourcing strategies in organisations. For example (Schuler and Jackson, 1996; Lievens et al., 2001; Redman and Wilkinson, 2009) observe that external influences such as labour market changes, technological developments, demographical social changes and government policies and legislation are the major themes that are significantly shaping recruitment and selection approaches as summarised in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Factors influencing Recruitment and selection approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Influences</th>
<th>Internal influences</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Changing labour market conditions</td>
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<td>• Technological developments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Demographics, social and cultural changes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Government legislation &amp; Regulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Industrial sector competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Overall business strategy of the organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Management style &amp; HRM approach in the organisation</td>
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<td>• Financial position</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Size and culture of the organisation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sector and technology</td>
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Source: Author, 2010
Each of these influences in figure 1 has significant impact on the soundness and effectiveness of the adopted recruitment and selection approaches in United Response (UR). It is for this reason (Lievens et al, 2001; Evans et al, 2007) suggest that for any recruitment approach to be considered as successful bearing in mind on what terms this “success” is. It must be designed in a way that allows the organisation to be responsive to the constantly (changing external factors) changing labour market; targeted at the right people with appropriate skills; fitting with the social and cultural demands of the times; respecting government laws and regulations in efforts aimed at creating and sustaining organisational competitive advantage in its sector.

For example, in its recent 2008 report on recruitment based on the UK economy, CIPD, (2009) advise that personnel involved in recruitment should be aware of relevant legislation and the latest legal position on issues such as; Inclusion and workforce diversity policies in the workplace significantly focusing on discrimination and the need to treat candidates fairly, asylum and immigration rules, data protection, and employing those with criminal records and anyone who will be working with children or vulnerable adults.

Lievens et al.,(2001) and McCormack and Scholarios,( 2009) highlight the influence of labour markets on recruitment commenting that when there is an oversupply of manpower in the labour market at the time of recruitment, even minimal informal recruitment attempts by organisations will attract more than enough applicants. Nevertheless, the researcher’s view is that although this may provide a large pool of quality applicants and reduces the risk of hiring poor performing individuals, it increases costs and time associated with an effective recruitment process.

Furthermore, technological developments have led to growth in the use of internet and organisational specific intranets which has a major influence on the type of labour required and the means through which potential employees make their applications (Beardwell et al, 2004; Lacey and Lavery, 2007). Thus the use of the internet for the purposes of recruitment and selection has now been widely accepted by many organisations. Consequently, United Response
has been influenced by the age of time; need to attract the right job applicants and position themselves as a competitive employer to adopt the use of electronic recruitment besides the use of traditional recruitment approaches.

However as much as external factors influence the effectiveness of recruitment approaches, factors within the organisation also play a major role and affect the way recruitment and selection is handled (Legge, 2005; Holbeche, 2009). Therefore it can be argued that since the overall purpose of recruitment and selection activities is to find the right people with appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude fitting with the business strategy; management style and culture of the organisation within the budgeted cost and technology available to the organisation. An effective recruitment strategy or approach must be one which is responsive to the external environment but also fitting within the overall business strategy, organisation’s objectives and policies, size of the organisation, and must be within the planned costs and financial implications. Unfortunately establishing effective recruitment approaches constantly demands more attention and proactively responding to constantly changing influences.

In a similar vein (Heraty and Morley, 1998; Lievens et al., 2001) argue that the problem of inefficiency and inadequacy with traditional recruitment approaches is as a result of placing high emphasis on matching individuals to immediate job requirements. They argue that nowadays jobs are often not well designed as employees are selected to work in multidisciplinary teams on different projects and may frequently change work roles and likely to follow different organisational career paths. Thus this is challenging the traditional methods of job analysis and personal specification prior to conducting recruitment activities.

Lievens et al., (2001) go further to argue that due to these developments, organisations need to take into account that besides the psychometrics paradigm, a social process perspective has become relevant in the recruitment and selection process making the selection procedure more into a negotiation process between employers and employees.
Therefore, the resourcing process and activities are now being viewed as an interactive social process where the applicant has as much say and power about whether to engage in the application process as the organisation. Hence, in situations where there are skills shortages and inadequate supply of quality labour, according to (Redman and Wilkinson, 2009) organisations as is the case with United Response (UR) need to work harder to attract applicants, maintain their interests in the company and convince the applicants through employer branding. Employer branding is a competitive strategy which implies that organisations must think beyond just recruitment and selection for specific job vacancies and focus on communicating information about their image and the whole employment package to potential applicants (CIPD, 2007a).

2.4 Emerging Recruitment Approaches
As a result of these challenges organisations need to use more creative solutions to target diverse applicant groups which include

- **Electronic Recruitment**: encompassing e-recruitment through company websites, portals and use of viral recruitment which allows companies to use social network sites like MySpace or Face book to target Generation Y applicants and professional social networking sites such Linked.

- **Outsourcing** A company may draw required personnel from outsourcing firms. The outsourcing firms help the organisation by the initial screening of the candidates according to the needs of the organisation and creating a suitable pool of talent for the final selection by the organisation as per their needs.

In addition to the use of traditional recruitment approaches, United Response (UR) is currently using the above mentioned resourcing approaches although with a strong inclination towards developing an improved electronic recruitment system.
Figure 2: Conceptual framework for investigation of successful recruitment approaches in examination of alternative routes which have not been used in United Response

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework
Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The literature review in chapter two highlighted a number of theories available to conduct an investigation of successful recruitment approaches in examination of alternative routes which have not been used in United Response. It is a critical at this stage to develop understanding of the research philosophy and methodology important for the selection of the most appropriate methods to be used to find reliable and credible results for the research objectives.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge (Saunders et al, 2007).

According to Saunders et al, (2007) there are three ways of thinking about research philosophy: epistemology, ontology and axiology as can be defined in table1 below.

Table 1: Definition of the three ways of thinking about research philosophy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epistemology</th>
<th>General set of assumptions concerning the best ways of inquiring into the nature of the world</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ontology</td>
<td>Assumptions that we make about the nature of reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axiology</td>
<td>Studies Judgement about value</td>
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</table>

Gray, (2009) pp 16 further explains that “Ontology embodies what is, while epistemology tries to understand what it means to know. Epistemology provides a philosophical background for deciding what kinds of knowledge are legitimate and adequate.”
Understanding philosophical issues is useful for a number of reasons among them are to help the researcher identify and create research designs outside of the past experience (Saunders et al, 2007). According to Easterby-Smith et al, (2006), taking a balanced view of the different philosophical positions is important because research problems may require a combination of methods drawn from more than one position. However, there are three philosophical positions which predominate in management research: Positivism, Interpretivism, and Realism as illustrated on the continuum of Ontological assumptions in figure 3.

**Figure 3: Continuum of ontological assumptions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectivism</th>
<th>Constructivism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POSITIVIST</td>
<td>REALIST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERPRETIVIST</td>
<td></td>
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- Reality as a concrete process
- Reality as a contextual realm of symbolic discourse
- Reality as a social construction
- Reality as a projection of human imagination

Source: Morgan and Smircich (1980)

**3.3 Positivism**

Positivism is closely related to objectivism and adopts the philosophical stance of the natural scientist in which the social world exists externally and its properties should be measured using objective methods, rather than being inferred subjectively through reflection or sensations (Easterby-Smith et al, 2006).

Proponents of this position advocate that the researcher will not be affected by his own beliefs and values. It is based on the assumption that the researcher is independent of and unaffected by the subject of the research (Saunders et al, 2007). Positivism emphasises highly structured methodology to facilitate replication and quantifiable analysis that can be subjected to statistical analysis as the end result of such research can be Law like generalisations.
3.4 Interpretivism

Interpretivism also referred to as Social Constructionism is a philosophical stance adopted by researchers who regard the business world as too complex to permit the discovery of definite Laws. It takes the view that reality is determined by people rather than by external factors (Easterby-Smith et al. 2006). It argues that different individuals have different understanding of situations they encounter. This position is argued to be appropriate for business and management research (Saunders et al. 2007). In contrast to Positivism, Interpretivism can be context specific and acknowledges that business situations may be different and specific to organisations, time periods and personnel across all sectors.

According to Saunders et al. (2007) there are advantages and disadvantages relating to both social Constructionism and positivism as summarised in table 2.

Table 2: Advantages and Disadvantages of Positivism and Social Construction

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Social Constructionism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advantages</strong></td>
<td>1. Provides a clear theoretical focus for the research from the outset.</td>
<td>1. Facilitates understanding of how and why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Greater opportunity for researcher to retain control of the research process.</td>
<td>2. Enables researcher to be alive to changes, which occur during the research process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Easily comparable data</td>
<td>3. Good at understanding social processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disadvantages</strong></td>
<td>1. Inflexible, direction often cannot be changed once data collection has begun.</td>
<td>1. Data collection can be time consuming and data analysis is difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Weak at understanding social Processes.</td>
<td>2. Researcher has to live with the uncertainty that clear patterns may not emerge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Often doesn’t discover the meanings people attach to social phenomena.</td>
<td>3. Generally perceived as less credible by non-researchers</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Source:** Saunders et al, (2007) adapted from (Blake, 2009, Bolton business School)
3.5 Realism
Realism is based on the philosophical assumption that what the senses show us is reality and that objects have an existence independent of the human mind (Saunders et al, 2007). Realism shares some philosophical aspects with Positivism as it assumes a scientific approach to the development of knowledge, underpinning this assumption is the collection of data and the understanding of those data.

There are two types of realism, direct and critical realism. Direct realism states that what you see is what you get, what we experience portrays the world accurately. However, critical realists argue that what we experience are sensations, the images of things in the real world, not the things directly (Saunders et al, 2007). Therefore realism may be seen from two different viewpoints by the researcher. The direct realist perspective suggests the world is relatively unchanging and operates only at one level in an organisation. On the other hand critical realists consider that the world is constantly changing and operates at multiple-levels within an organisation (Saunders et al, 2007).

However realism also has some common grounds with Social Constructionism in that people are not objects to be studied as the case in natural science. Realism is more concerned with exposing and identifying what reality is as opposed to discovering it (Easterby-Smith et al, 2004). Therefore, knowledge is advanced through the process of theory-building in which discoveries add to what is already known.

3.6 Research philosophy position
The research philosophy for this research will be based on the following:

- The purpose of the research is to investigate effective recruitment approaches to examine alternative routes which have not been used in United Response
- The literature review highlighted that developing an effective recruitment approach is influenced by a number of factors both internal and external to the organisation. However what can be established as effective and
successful recruitment approach varies according to the context and purpose to the organisation and the job applicant’s experiences. In view of this, effectiveness can be understood as that rendered by statistical measurement of numeric data such as cost of recruitment, rate of staff turnover and time required to conduct recruitment activities (Moran, 2010). Furthermore it can also be understood as subjected to the interpretative filters of those deciding what will be “effective” from their point of view.

Therefore, the philosophical position suitable for this research is that of Realism. The aim of this research is to increase general understanding in the development of effective recruitment approaches in a turbulent business environment.

3.7 Research strategy

There are a number of research strategies for the collection of data. Some of the methods are more suited to the deductive approach whilst others clearly belong to the inductive approach.

Choice of the research strategy is guided by various factors, however significant among them is the research question and objectives and philosophical underpinnings. The most prominent strategies in management research include experiment, survey, case study, action research and grounded research. For the purposes of addressing the research question and objectives, this research will employ the following strategy:

1. Case study: Robson (2002) cited in Saunders et al., (2007) defines case study as a strategy for doing research which involves an observed investigation of a particular contemporary observable fact within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence. Therefore, a case study strategy will be employed to investigate the current recruitment approaches in United Response (UR). The case study strategy is mostly used in explanatory and exploratory research. It has the advantage of combining various data collection techniques critical for the collection of reliable information. However, according to (Susan, 1997), Critics of the case study method argue that the study of a small number of cases can offer no grounds for establishing reliability of findings. Whilst others (Yin,
1984 cited in Saunders et al., (2007) argued that the intense exposure to study of the case makes the findings bias, and dismissed case study research as useful only as an exploratory tool. Yet researchers continue to use the case study as a research method with success in carefully planned studies of real-life situations, and problems. Therefore, a single case of the organisation (UR) will be used to address the requirements of the research objectives. Advantages of using case study are that, it uses a combination of data collection techniques important for triangulation.

2. Survey: Usually used for the collection of a large amount of data from a sizeable population obtained using a questionnaire administered to a sample of the population (Saunders et al., 2007). The data collected using survey strategy can be used to suggest possible reasons for particular relationships between variables and to produce models of these relationships. Survey strategy has the advantage of generating findings that are representative of the whole population at a lower cost than collecting the data for the whole population. However, according to Saunders et al., (2007) data collected is unlikely to be as wide ranging as those collected using other research strategies. This is because there is a limit to the number of questions a questionnaire can contain, and richness of the data to be collected is dependent on the goodwill of the respondents. However in this research a survey strategy will be used.

3.8 Qualitative method and Quantitative Method

Qualitative method is used by researchers when the intention is to gather the opinions of experts or participants. It is subjective in nature and the data collected can include empirical evidence, values, meanings and experiences. Qualitative research uses an inductive reasoning to generate ideas from data as opposed to the quantitative approach which employs deductive reasoning and needs to confirm a hypothesis (Naoum, 1999). Quantitative Method - is a method used to collect data impartially by using structured procedures and involves using large amounts of samples. 

A draw back to quantitative research is that the research begins with a
theoretical framework and has little diversion from this framework as a result, quantitative research does not provide for any new concepts to be discovered during the research (Saunders, 2007).

Having chosen the use of semi-structured interview, this research will adopt qualitative method for data collection and quantitative method for the analysis of those data respectively.

3.9 Research Methods/ Choices

1. Use of secondary data: In addition to using primary data collection methods, documentary secondary data will be used in this research. Documentary data include written materials, company reports, journal articles, books and other records relevant to this research. According to Ghauri and Gronhaug, (2005) cited in Saunders et al., (2007) advantages of using secondary data are that it provides enormous savings in resources, it is less expensive than to collect the data yourself, it helps to contextualise findings within a more general context and facilitates triangulation of the findings. Nonetheless, secondary data has its disadvantages as the data will have been collected for a specific purpose that differs from the research objectives of this research (Denscombe, 1998) cited in Saunders et al., (2007). Furthermore, where data was collected for commercial reasons gaining access may be difficult and costly. When using secondary data, the researcher has no control over the quality of the data.

With respect to these draw backs, access has already been gained in (UR) to use their research facilities and documentary evidence which is focused on their recruitment practices. This research will take a critical analysis of secondary data, from UR company reports, and recent publications from Human Resource outsourcing firms, to find an alternative resourcing approach for applicable in United Response (UR).

2. A self- completion survey method involving the use of structured questionnaires to collect data will be used in this research. A structured questionnaire is a predetermined set of questions designed to capture data from respondents (Hair, 2007). Self –administered questionnaires
will be administered electronically to a cross-sectional of staff members in UR ranging from relief support workers, permanent support workers, senior support workers and service managers from different locations. This will be carried out using UR intranet as all locations and sites are connected. Advantages of using this, is that it easy to administer and allows for faster and cheaper means of data collection and analysis. However, the draw back is that it is limited to only computer users and cannot probe complex issues. Furthermore questions on questionnaire are argued to be simple and straightforward and do not allow for searching of new issues (Shipton 2001).

United Response has more than 300 staff employed in the Northwest of England, using probability sampling; the questionnaire will be distributed to 45 members of staff. The sample selection will be based on the recently employed staff across United Response (UR) working in the Northwest region for the past 12 months with the aim of obtaining their perception of the recruitment process and staff retention policies.

Questionnaire containing both closed and open questions will be developed from the literature review. A small pilot study is being arranged with selected number of staff at UR to allow for testing, revision and refinement of the questionnaire.

3. Semi-structured interviews: Used for the collection of qualitative data through interviews, allow respondents to talk about their perspectives on a particular subject (Saunders et al., 2007). It uses open-ended questions prepared by the researcher or questions that may arise during the interview. Advantages of this method are that it is simple, efficient and practical way of getting data about things that cannot be easily observed, it has high validity as respondents are able to talk about things in detail and depth. However, limitations of using Semi structured interview include; it depends on the skill and ability of the researcher to think of questions during the interview and articulacy of the respondent. In addition it is time consuming and expensive, is not reliable as respondents may be asked different questions and qualitative data collected may be difficult to analyse. Nonetheless Semi- structured
interviews will be conducted in this research with two relevant senior HR managers in the Northwest region, to discuss factors influencing current recruitment at UR and the feasibility of adopting an alternative resourcing approach. The two senior HR staff will be selected based on the criteria that, they have worked in UR for the past 12 months, participate in recruitment activities and are responsible for the developing the resourcing strategies for United response.

3.10 Triangulation
As can be noted from the research methods above, this research will use a multi-method approach to ensure triangulation, validity and reliability in the research design. Saunders et al, (2007) suggest that multiple methods allow a better understanding of research questions and therefore findings can be trusted. Triangulation enables the researcher to validate a particular finding by examining whether different sources provide convergent information (DePoy and Gitlin, 2005).

3.11 Limitations of the research design
Using of the case study to investigate the current recruitment approaches in one organisation (UR) makes the reliability and validity of the results of this research to lack general applicability. The business environment is constantly changing. The review of the literature and critical analysis of secondary data will facilitate efforts aimed at establishing a trend so as to find alternative resourcing approaches for United Response (UR).

3.12 Research Ethics
This research will observe and adhere to the ethical standards and issues with regard to: voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw by individual employees from the process. The research shall maintain the confidentiality of data provided by individuals or identifiable participants and their anonymity. Data collected and information will be exclusively used for the purpose of this academic work.
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