**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND PLACEMENT IN THE GHANA NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE IN THE CENTRAL REGION**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature…………………………...…     Date………………………
Name: MICHAEL LAWRENCE ADOM

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature………………………… Date………………………...
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# ABSTRACT

Issues of recruitment, selection and placement are at the heart of the human resource management process. Not only are they critical to the success of any institution but are also essential to the survival of any institution. This study assesses the recruitment, selection and placement processes within the Ghana National Fire Service in the Central Region of Ghana.

Questionnaire and in-depth interview guides were used to solicit data from a representative sample of 218 personnel including senior and junior officers of both sexes.

The results revealed that over three-quarters of the personnel were second cycle graduates with a little more than one per cent having tertiary qualification. Political influence in recruitment, selection and placement was overwhelmingly reported as major source of pressure on the recruitment process. The poor working conditions within the service as a whole was mentioned as a factor that was making the service unattractive to highly qualified professionals. Unless the issue of poor working condition is addressed, the Service will not be able to attract the required quality manpower for effective and efficient delivery.

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# DEDICATION

To my daughter, Precious Michelle Enam Adom

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

| Content | Page |
|---|---|

## LIST OF TABLES

# LIST OF FIGURES

# ACRONYMS

ADO:            Assistant Divisional Officer

CFO:            Chief Fire Officer

CGC Inter:      City and Guilds Certificate Intermediate

DFO:            District Fire Officer

FATS:           Fire Academy and Training School

GNFS:           Ghana National Fire Service

HRD:            Human Resource Development

HRP:            Human Resource Planning

ILO:            International Labour Organisation

NVTI:           National Vocational Training Institute

RFO:            Regional Fire Officer

RSA:            Royal Society of Arts

SPSS:           Statistical Product and Service Solutions

SSCE:           Senior Secondary Certificate of Education

UCC:            University of Cape Coast

## CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

**Background to the Study**

The importance of institutions providing fire prevention and fighting services cannot be overstated in current development thinking. These services are needed to protect properties and save precious lives. However, in developing countries such as Ghana, the provision of these services leaves much to be desired. Such institutions in developing countries are not adequately equipped to provide the needed fire prevention and fighting services as required by the legislations that established them. This situation, coupled with poor conditions of service render these institutions incapable of attracting the needed human resource for effective service delivery. As a result, their performance usually falls below public expectation.

Before Ghana's independence on March 6, 1957, there were pockets of fire brigades which were operating privately.   These were:

- Civil Aviation and Rescue

- Railways and Harbours Fire Service

- Accra City Fire Station

- Tema Local Council Fire Service

- Kumasi City Fire Service

- Sekondi / Takoradi Fire Service

- Armed Forces Fire Service

On the advice of a British Fire Service Officer, G.S Leader, the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) was established by an Act of Parliament in 1963 (Act 219).   The Act made it compulsory for all the other fire brigades to amalgamate except the Armed Forces Fire Brigade, which remained autonomous for security reasons (A day in the life of a fireman, Mirror (1999, February). The provisions made under the Act 219 of 1963 called for the following activities to be undertaken:

- Fire Control

- Public Education

- Fire Investigation

- Emergency Assistance

- Fire Safety Inspection

- Emergency Medical Assistance

In 1997, GNFS was re-established by an Act of Parliament, Act 537 of 1997 to prevent and manage undesired fires (Government of Ghana, 1997).  The Act further  stipulates that the Service shall consist of personnel enlisted into the GNFS  in existence immediately before the commencement  of this  Act and  other personnel  who  may  be  enlisted  into  the  Service. The  Service has  numerous  functions  to  perform  under  the  Act  537  of 1997 in order to achieve its objectives of preventing and managing undesirable fires. The Act authorises the GNFS to perform the following functions:

- Organise public fire education programmes to create and sustain awareness of the hazard of fire and also heighten the role of the individual in the prevention of undesired fire;

- Provide technical advice for the buildings plans in respect of machinery and structural layouts to facilitate escape from fire rescue operations and fire management;

-  Inspect and offer technical advice on fire extinguishers;

- Co-ordinate and advice on the training of personnel in the fire fighting department of institutions in the country;

- Train and organize fire volunteer squads at community level;

- Offer rescue and evacuation services to those trapped by fire or in other emergency situations; and

- Undertake any other function incidental to the objective of the service.

In spite of the numerous activities to be undertaken by the personnel of the service, the manpower strength of the service in 2006 was 6,020. This was made up of 5149 and 871 junior and senior officers, respectively (Ghana National Fire Service, 2007). During 2006, the staff strength of the service was reduced by 162 (Table 1).

**Table 1: Staff reduction of the GNFS in 2006**

| Retirement | Senior Staff | Junior Staff | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Compulsory | 32 | 53 | 85 |
| Voluntary | 1 | 15 | 16 |
| Resignation | 1 | 15 | 16 |
| Dismissal | - | 21 | 21 |
| Death | 10 | 14 | 24 |
| Total | 44 | 118 | 162 |

Source:  Ghana National Fire Service, 2007.

The importance of Fire Service in the socio-economic development of the country cannot be over emphasized. The service does not only respond to emergency situations like fire outbreaks but also able to rescue life and properties during flood situations. One  of  the  most  significant  rescue operations  in  recent times was undertaken at Achimota where  a  drowned man  was  recovered after  three days  of  continuous  search during a heavy down pour in 2006. Fire is not only economically destructive to mankind but also cruel to human environment when it strikes. As outlined in the CFO Guidelines for 2007, in 2006 a total of 1986 fire outbreaks were recorded resulting in a total loss of GH¢ 2,204,096.86 as against  2,683  fires  and  a loss of ¢ 5,361,557.41 the previous year.  This revelation pre-supposes that there is much to be done in terms of both human resource management and development in the GNFS.

The Ghana Fire Academy and Training School (FATS) is the key basic training institution of the GNFS where officers and men are trained to take up key positions in the GNFS. The fire academy trains cadet officers who are made up of mainstream station officers selected on merit. In addition, few university degree holders within the fire service are selected to pursue six months training and subsequently commissioned as Assistant Divisional Officers (ADO). The training school also prepares non-degree holders to undergo six months basic fire fighting techniques training and pass out as recruit firemen and firewomen. These categories of personnel are placed into the mainstream fire service such as the operation department, administration and finance unit, safety department, rural fire department in the various stations in the country.

According to Armstrong (2006), every organization uses both strategic and coherent approaches to manage its human resources which is classified as the most valued asset in an organization. The quality exhibition of fighting undesired fires by personnel of the GNFS which is dependent on the quality and quantity of personnel of the service plays an important role in the development of the nation. As noted by Harbison (1973, p. 1) cited in Arkoh, (2004, p. 17).

Human resources constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of a nation. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production. Human beings are active agents who accumulate capital,

exploit natural resources and build social, economic and political organizations for national development.

The nature of the activities of the GNFS called for a qualified and trained personnel to undertake the various duties.

According to Boachie-Mensah (2006), the principal purpose of recruitment activities is to develop a pool of job candidates in line with the human resource plan of the organization. In addition, he classified selection as a process of identifying who is the most suitable for the job from the pool of qualified candidates. Wriston has also added value to this as quoted in Folkes and Linenash (1982; cited in Koranteng, 2005, p. 2) that 'I believe the only game in town is the personnel game. My theory is that if you have the right person in the right place you don't have to do any thing else. If you have the wrong person in the job, there is not a management system known to man that can save you'.

There is anecdotal evidence of inadequate personnel in the Ghana National Fire Service in terms of quantity and quality. Thus, the various stations throughout Ghana are understaffed and therefore are not able to perform their duties effectively and efficiently.

**Problem Statement**

Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) like any other security services in Ghana has been confronted with issues and challenges in respect of recruitment, selection and placement. Since the Ghana National

Fire Service was established in 1963, it has been confronted with a number of challenges that border on inadequate number and quality of personnel to undertake its mandate. Recruitment, selection and placement of qualified personnel are of grave concern to the service in particular and the Government as a whole because these issues affect the delivery of efficient and effective service by the GNFS to the public.

The present strength of 6,020 of personnel of the service cannot cope with the numerous fire outbreaks in the country. There is therefore a mismatch between the personnel needs of the service and available funds to train existing staff and to recruit new ones. Almost all the various fire service stations in the country are yearning for personnel. At times, when there is recruitment, the passed-out recruits refuse posting to certain areas of the country. In addition, the recruited personnel are also not evenly distributed to the fire stations due to the limited number. There is also the perception of political interference, family pressure on officers in charge of the recruitment and old friends and school mates relationship that seem to taint the selection of the personnel into the service.

Anyima-Ackah (2002) noted that trained and competent personnel are crucial to the efficiency and effectiveness of an establishment. He alluded to the fact that although the GNFS trains its corps of fire brigades, one question still remains and that is whether the trained personnel are qualified and competent enough to cope with the current emergency situations of fire service.

7

In view of the enormous task that the GNFS is mandated to perform there is the need to recruit the right calibre of persons into the service. In the light of the foregoing, one would be tempted to ask some pertinent questions, answers to which, are necessary for the proper functioning of the GNFS. For example: What are the qualifications of personnel of the GNFS in the Central Region? Are these qualifications in consonance with their placement? Do personnel have the technical background demanded by their current job prescriptions? And above all, are personnel comfortable with their current placement in relation to their qualifications? This study is therefore intended to explore issues of recruitment, selection and placement in order to understand the current level of performance of the GNFS.

**Objectives**

The main objective of the study is to explore issues relating to recruitment, selection and placement of personnel into the Ghana National Fire Service in the Central Region of Ghana. The specific objectives are to:

- Find out the qualifications of personnel and determine whether they fall in line with the required qualifications;

- Explore factors that influence the selection, recruitment and placement of personnel apart from the required qualifications;

- Identify challenges facing the service in terms of selection, recruitment and placement of personnel; and

- Make appropriate recommendations.

**Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- What are the qualifications of the personnel in the Central Region?

- What factors apart from the outlined qualifications influence the recruitment process?

- What are the challenges facing the selection, recruitment and placement process in the region?

**Rationale for the Study**

Though difficult to study due to its sensitive nature, this study intends to attempt an investigation into other factors that are likely to influence selection, recruitment and placement into the Ghana National Fire Service, using the Central Region.

Thus, apart from giving us some insights into the issues of concern, the study will also serve as a source of literature for further researches. The study will be useful to the Central Regional Command of the Ghana National Fire Service as it tries to bring out the challenges relating to recruitment, selection and placement in the region. This is due to the decentralisation of the recruitment process from the national headquarters to the regional level.

The study will therefore unearth gaps in the selection, recruitment and placement in the Ghana National Fire Service in the Central Region. The recommendations arising out of the research will help Ghana National Fire

Service to resolve some of the challenges relating to selection, recruitment and placement.

**Scope of study**

The research settings are the various fire service stations in the Central Region. Apart from the headquarters, UCC and Breman Essiam, the rest of the stations are located in municipal and district capitals with significantly high populations. These district capitals are settlements with concentration of development activities within the district.

Economic activities in these settlements do not differ from those of settlements with similar statuses within Ghana. Many of these settlements have farming and fishing as dominant primary activities though a significant proportion of the population can be found in the formal economy.

The study is also limited to only issues concerning the recruitment, selection and placement process in the Central Region of Ghana.

**Chapter Organization**

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One serves generally as an introduction to the study. This includes a brief background to the study, the problem to be investigated and objectives of the study. The rest are the rationale for the study, the research setting and how the study will be organized. The second chapter reviews relevant literature to the study. Methodological issues are discussed in the third chapter. Chapter four forms

the analysis and discussions. Summary, policy implications and conclusions are taken up in chapter five.

## CHAPTER TWO

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

**Introduction**

This chapter reviews the relevant literature to the personnel recruitment, selection and placement. Attempts are made to evaluate recruitment procedures, relevant conceptual issues and empirical findings on recruitment activities. The chapter concludes with how the literature throws light on the issues of recruitment, selection and placement.

**Human resource planning**

Human resource planning (HRP) determines the human resources required by the organisation to achieve its strategic goals. As defined by Bulla and Scott (1994), it is 'the process for ensuring that the human resource requirements of an organisation are identified and plans are made for satisfying those requirements'( cited in Armstrong, 2006, p. 363). Human resource planning is based on the belief that people are an organisation's most important strategic resource. It is generally concerned with matching resources to business needs in the longer term, although it sometimes addresses shorter term requirements. It also addresses human resource needs both in quantitative and qualitative terms, which means answering two basic

questions: first, how many people, and second, what sort of people? Human resource planning also looks at broader issues relating to the ways in which people are employed and developed in order to improve organisational effectiveness.

In addition, human resource planning is one of the major administrative functions in the operation of any organisation. It addresses the area of recruitment, selection, compensation and appraisal of personnel. Castetter (1992) divided HRP process into eleven key areas that work together. These sub-functions are planning, bargaining, recruitment, selection, induction, appraisal development, compensation, justice, continuity, and information. Castetter's model shows the internal and external personnel information needs working simultaneously on the other personnel sub-functions. These internal and external situational forces influence organisational decision-making and indicate the importance and complexity of recruitment and selection procedures and practices. The internal forces are the purposes and the informal and formal goals of the organisation. Size, structure, and quality of leadership were also classified as the internal forces acting on personnel processes. The external forces consisted of the outside political environment that influences the organisation.

## Recruitment

Human resource is one of the most vital assets in an organization. Recruitment plays a very crucial role in equipping any organization with the

right calibre of employees. As noted by Acheampong (2006), recruitment refers to the process of making a worker interested in a particular job so as to apply for it. The nature of work and the organizational structure of an establishment determine employees' response to that organization. Recruitment is therefore a positive process for searching for proper and active workers and motivating them to apply for specific jobs (Acheampong, 2006).

The manpower requirements of an establishment call for recruitment of employees into that organization. Recruitment therefore leads to decision by employers to select a certain calibre of people and profession into an organization. Thus, highlighting the attractiveness of an organization plays a major role in recruitment activities. Although management recognizes the importance of people for the survival of the organization, only a few have a real understanding of what is required to ensure that appropriate individuals are selected during recruitment. Recruitment that has a deceptive package may raise expectations that cannot be met during employment whereas unattractive recruitment package is unlikely to attract prospective applicants to an organisation (Posthuma, 2002 & Bagchi, 2003). While it is important for recruitment officers to attract potential employees to apply for a job by motivating them through their recruitment packages, all efforts should be made to be realistic in order to avoid high labour turn over.

Noe (1994) has defined recruitment as "the process through which the organization seeks applicants for potential employment" (cited in Koranteng, 2005, p. 15). This implies that the onus for searching for the

14

right people to fill the vacancy gap lies on the organization's human resource management. If an organization fails to conduct proper recruitment exercise, the manpower requirement in the form of selecting the right personnel cannot be achieved. According to Asmah (1999), recruitment is "the search for employees both inside and outside the organization to fill vacant positions with the major objective of obtaining highly qualified employees at lower cost" (cited in Koranteng, 2005, p. 16).

It is generally acknowledged that an organization's most important resources are the people who supply their work, talent, creativity and drive to the organization. Jansson (2009) has observed that an organization's success depends, to a large extent, on finding the right employees with the necessary skills to successfully carry out the tasks required to meet the organization's goals. It is for this reason that a manager's most critical tasks are recruitment, selection, placement, training and development of people who will best help the company to achieve strategic goals.

According to Stoner and Freeman (1992) "an organization's human resources management process is an ongoing procedure that tries to keep the organization supplied with the right people in the right position at the right time (Cited in Boachie–Mensah, 2006). The assessment of both current and future human resource needs helps managers to determine whom they should recruit and select to achieve organizational goals now and in the future. The over all aim of the recruitment and selection process should be to satisfy the human resource needs of an organization. As reported by

Competency and Emotional Intelligence (2004), Britannia Building Society recruits on the basis of the candidates attitudes first, then skills and abilities second (Armstrong, 2006).

A properly planned and systematic recruitment policy is necessary to minimize disruption of work by constantly changing personnel and achieve equitable distribution of employment opportunities. As noted by Dawra (2001), recruitment policy should take into account the fact that high calibre personnel are essential but hard to find. He further explains that despite tremendous unemployment, it is not easy to find the right type of personnel. For example, in the expanding industrial economy of India, the demand for top management, technical and scientific personnel is expanding at a fast rate leading to an all-around shortage of such personnel (Dawra, 2001). Due to this, many companies indulge in "pirating", that is, attracting executives from sister organization with higher salaries. But this does not in any way expand the supply of such personnel. He therefore concluded that a sound recruitment policy has to be based on a comprehensive programme of management development.

Recruitment needs may fall into three broad categories- planned, anticipated and unexpected. The planned needs arise from change in organizational decisions and retirement policies; unexpected needs arise from individuals' decisions to leave the company and from ill health, accidents or deaths. The anticipated category comprises those jobs which the organization,

by studying the trends within and outside the company, can predict (Lawrence, 1967, p. 34).

**Internal and external recruitment**

Recruitment from within and without are the two main methods of recruitment (Cascio, 1992). Cascio noted that management can announce vacant positions for the current employees internally through the staff notice board even if it is assumed that there would be no response. Herman (1994) argued that there are three ways to hire from within the organisation. The first approach does not consider affirmative action and is seen as unfair and preferential by other candidates seeking leadership positions. Frequently, the manager checks with the supervisor to whom the person currently reports, and if the transfer plan is acceptable to both, the change is made.

Job posting and succession plans are the two other ways suggested by Herman (1994) to hire from within the organisation. It is important to note that filling job vacancies from within the organisation usually involves transfers and promotions and many organisations have policies of recruiting or promoting from within except in very exceptional situations (Boachie-Mensah, 2006).

Internal recruitment does not only reduce the cost which may be incurred from recruitment to training but also promotes job satisfaction and boost the morale employees (Acheampong, 2006). Armstrong (2006) noted that first consideration in respect of recruitment should be given to internal

candidates even though some organisations with powerful equal opportunities policies (often local authorities) insist that both internal and external candidates should be given equal opportunities in terms of applying for new positions. Armstrong further noted that if there are no qualified candidates internally, such positions should be advertised for external candidates to apply.

**Selection**

Selection is a process of weeding out the unsuitable candidates and finally arriving at the most suitable one. While the recruitment process packages vacant positions to attract qualified persons, selection involves separating the employable candidates from the unsuitable. Thus, while recruitment is a positive process, selection is a negative process which rejects some of the candidates.

Technically speaking, recruitment and selection are not synonymous. Dawra (2001) further alluded to the fact that recruitment means announcing job opportunities to the public in such a way that a good number of suitable people will apply for the jobs whereas selection means choosing from that number, those applicants who are most likely to succeed in the job. An interview is the most likely used technique for selection. The primary goal in selection is to match human characteristics and abilities with the demands of jobs. This objective is most succinctly expressed as "to find the right man for the right job". Techniques used by a particular organization depend upon a

number of factors. Large organizations use more sophisticated selection techniques. These techniques differ according to the kind of personnel that are to be selected. For instance, techniques used for the selection of managerial personnel ought to be different from those used for clerical or semi-skilled personnel. Good selection is important for all firms, especially for a small one. In a smaller organization, the effect of poor selection and inadequate training can have more disastrous results than in a large company. The selection process plays a very crucial role in human resource development of an organisation.

Selection is a process of matching prospective employees to the job they have applied for (Acheampong 2006, p. 101). Acheampong further noted that in the matching process, the applicant's qualifications are rated against the specifications of the job advertised. It is the task of every management team of an organisation to identify who is the most suitable for the job through selection. The selection effort is concerned with choosing the candidates who are most likely to succeed on a job from the pool of qualified candidates (Boachie-Mensah, 2006, p. 292). Boachie-Mensah further explained that if the success of an organisation ultimately depends on its employees, then the task of initial selection is one of the most important of all the decision –making processes that employers have to undertake. The purpose of the task is to choose the individuals who are potentially suitable for employment in the organisation. It is important to take great care in

specifying the competences and behavioural characteristics required of employees during selection process.

An excellent student affairs staffing programme, for instance, begins with hiring the right people and placing them in positions with responsibilities that allow them to maximize their skills, knowledge, and talents in the pursuit of student affairs purposes. The first commandment for student affairs administrators therefore is to hire the right people. The second commandment is to do it the right way (Winston, Creamer & Miller, 1997). This emphasizes that the achievement of organisational goals depends on the selection of qualified candidates to fill the specifications of job vacancies in the organisation.

**Rationale for recruitment and selection policy**

Every successful organization depends on an intensive human resource management. It is not surprising then, that recruitment and selection of personnel should be a priority in most if not all units and divisions of an institution. Recruitment and selection should include procedures directed toward analysis of the need and purpose of a position, the culture of the institution, and ultimately to select and hire the person that best fits the position. Position regarding recruitment and selection should be directed towards the following objectives:

- Hire the right person;

- Conduct a wide and extensive search of the potential position candidates;

- Recruit personnel who are compatible with the organisation's environment and culture;

- Recruit individuals by using a model that focuses on learning and education of the whole person; and

- Place individuals in positions with responsibilities that will enhance their personal development.

Winston and Creamer (1997) specifically noted that:

"An excellent student affairs staffing programme begins with hiring the right people and placing them in position with responsibilities that allow them to maximise their skills, knowledge and talents in the pursuit of student affairs purposes.... The first commandment for student affairs administrators, therefore, is to hire the right people. The second commandment is to do it the right way" (p. 123).

Other writers have equally commented on the need for managers of organisations to prepare themselves for current and future needs of their institutions (see Broussard, Arceneaux & Boutte, 1989). Having well planned and defined recruitment and selection policies in place before recruitment commences is therefore important. Caldwell and Tymko (1990) subsequently argue that there is a continuous need to define policy and that major problems occur due to lack of adequate policy making. It has to be noted that having

written policy standardises the recruitment and selection procedures and validates the entire process. One should not also lose sight of the fact that affirmative action and equity policies do not only dictate procedures for good administration but also allow for fair hiring of personnel practices in organisation. Anderson (1988) therefore maintains that one of the best ways to avoid unjust practices such as discrimination in recruitment and selection is to develop planned and written policies.

**Recruitment and selection policy statement**

Any vacant position is filled based upon a thorough position analysis regardless of the level of the position. The diverse goals of the institution, division of personnel affairs, and the unit are addressed in recruitment and selection processes (Winston & Creamer, 1997).

Different units may, however, use different processes for recruitment depending upon the circumstances surrounding the need to fill the position, but must take steps to ensure that the values of the profession are applied in all procedures that are used. Recruitment and selection will be planned, implemented, and evaluated to ensure that each potential employee is provided with equal opportunities to compete for the position.

**Manpower recruitment process**

There are two denominators to the recruitment process - that in all cases, recruitment involves locating and attracting adequate human resources

to fill existing vacancies and that recruitment is an absolutely critical management activity. If the right people cannot easily be identified, sooner or later there will be no future for the organisation (Anderson, 1988; Caldwell & Tymko, 1990). Heathfield (no date) noted that no employer can survive in the absence of human resources. Recruitment is also an area in which there are important social and legal implications.

Vacancies in an organisation occur through someone leaving the organisation or as a result of expansion. Recruiting a new employee may be the most obvious step when a vacancy occurs but it is not necessarily the most appropriate. Some of the other options are:

- Reorganise the work. Jobs may be rearranged so that the total amount of work in a section is done by the remaining employees without recruitment;

- Use of overtime. Extra output can be achieved by using overtime. Few HRD managers like the extensive use of overtime and it lacks logic at a time of high unemployment but it may be the best way of dealing with a short- term problem, i.e. during sickness or maternity leave of an employee;

- Mechanise the work. There are ways in which the work of a departing employee can be mechanised, though it is seldom feasible to mechanise a single vacancy; and

23

- Use an Agency. Another strategy is to use an agency to provide temporary personnel, who are not permanent liability to the company (Musella & Lawton, 1986).

Once the employer has decided that external recruitment is necessary, a cost effective and appropriate method of recruitment must be selected. Recruitment or employee selection is the first step in the employment of labour and the methods through which labour is brought into the organisation have much to do with the ultimate success or failure of the organisation. Recruitment is a process that not only helps to fill a vacancy physically, mentally, and temperamentally but also helps to develop an employee into a desire asset (Bradt & Vonnegut, 2009). On the other hand, selection process finds persons with potential to grow in the organisation

**Recruitment procedures**

Certain recruiting procedures produce the best candidates for particular job vacancies (Anderson, 1988). However, before any contact with candidates, human resource planning must identify current and future staffing needs. A job vacancy is analysed to see what the actual job specifications are and what method of recruitment will be most effective. The common methods of recruitment include internal search, referrals, contacting employment agencies, advertising vacancies with college and university and advertising in newspapers. There should also be follow-ups on unsolicited

24

applications (Rebore, 1982, p: 83-4). If there are enough qualified candidates internally, external recruitment may not be needed.

**Induction**

The introduction of the employee to the job is known as Induction. It is the process by which new employees are introduced to the practices, policies and purposes of the organisation. It is basically a welcoming process. Induction follows placement and consists of the task of orienting or introducing the employee to the organisation (Castetter, 1992). Instead of leaving the young recruits to stumble through the organisation, it is better to systematically introduce him/her to the organisation, its policy and position in the economy. Literally, induction helps the individual employee to get on with the environment of organisation (Rebore, 1982). After an employee is assigned to his job, it is necessary to guide him to his job situation, his associates in the job and the overall policies of the organisation.

The induction stage demands great care because the first impression made on the mind of the employee is very critical in his professional life and the treatment he receives during the early days on the new job will help him to form his opinion about the organisation. A large proportion of labour turnover occurs during the early weeks of employment because no effort has been made to make the new employee feel at home. He thus, becomes unhappy and leaves to find another job in a more congenial atmosphere. Induction seeks to develop in the employee a sense of belonging and loyalty

to the organisation, build a two-way channel of communication between management and workers. In other words, it serves to make a worker feel at home.

An induction process properly designed, should serve the following purposes:

- help the newcomer to overcome his natural shyness, any nervousness he may experience in meeting new people in the new environment;

- integrate the young recruits into the organisation and develop a sense of belonging which is a strong motivational force; and

- supply information about the nature of work-force, condition of service and welfare facilities (Huselid, 1995).

Induction is done through acquainting the new employee with his new surroundings and its rules and regulations and indoctrinating him in the "philosophy" of the organisation and its reasons for existence (Heathfield, no date). After the employee has been placed in his job, induction involves periodic follow-up measures to ensure whether the employee has been properly placed or not.

**Placement**

Once the employee is successful in both recruitment and selection stages, he would be placed in a suitable job. Placement has been defined by Dawra (2001) as the determination of the job to which an accepted candidate is to be assigned and his assignment to that job. Placement aims at ensuring

that the individual who has been selected is placed suitably in the job and does the job well. It is a check on the previous steps and the only means by which selection in the future can be made more efficiently. Just recruiting an employee to an organisation is not enough. Putting the right man in the right job is equally important. A misplaced employee is disgruntled and frustrated and cannot give his best to the organisation. Lack of interest in the job will lead to lower productivity. Proper placement will go a long way to reduce employee turnover, absenteeism and improve the moral of the employees.

According to Acheampong (2006), placement refers to the process of matching the employee to both the content and the context of the assigned job when an employment offer has been made. He further states that it is however, difficult to match a new employee, about whom very little is still known to the various aspects of the job. It is therefore important to note that, during the early stages of employment an employee is still on probation, pending on appraisal report from the immediate supervisor.


**Transfer and promotion**

Vacancies are sometimes not only filled by internal sources or the recruitment of new employees. Transfer refers to changes in which the pay, status and privileges of the posts are the same as before (Dawra, 2001). In other words, a transfer is a lateral movement of an employee, not involving promotion or demotion. A transfer may require an employee to change his work group, work place or organisation unit. Here, the objectives of

personnel administration are effective utilization of human resources, desirable working relationship among all members of the organisation and maximum individual development. This is where transfer is used to place employees in position where they may get better job satisfaction and contribute their best to the organisation.

When an employee is placed in a position in which he can be most productive, chances for the effectiveness of the organisation in attaining its objectives are increased (Armstrong, 2006). It should be the aim of any organisation to change the positions of the employees as soon as the capacities increase and vacancies warrant.

Transfer is intended to achieve certain objectives. Among them are to:

- satisfy the needs of an organisation arising out of a change;

- meet the request of employees;

- utilise properly the services of an employee who is not performing satisfactorily where he is placed;

- suit the age and health of an employee;

- train the employee for later advancement;

- supply the creative opportunity to deserving employees

- correct erroneous placement; and

- To adjust the work force of one department with that of another when one is closed.

**Transfer policy**

Every organisation should have a just, clear-cut and impartial transfer policy which should be known to each employee. Since every transfer involves cost and employee grievances may arise, the company should formulate a policy indicating the circumstances under which transfer may be effected. A good transfer policy therefore should specify the types of transfers and the conditions under which these will be made, locate the authority in an officer who may initiate and implement transfer and indicate the basis for transfer- whether it is based on seniority or any other factor (Galbraith & Edstrong, 2001). In addition, a good transfer policy should ensure that transfers are written and communicated to all affected employees and should not be made frequently.

There are no specific provisions in any law in Ghana on the question of the employer's right to transfer his employees. But then as per some judgements of some few courts in Ghana, the employer has the right to transfer a workman from one department to another in the same establishment. On the contrary the employer has no power to transfer a workman from one establishment to another unless there is such provision in the contract of employment (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2006).

Promotion on the other hand refers to changes in which the pay, status, and privileges of new posts are higher when compare with the old (Arvey & Renz, 1992). It is also the transfer of an employee to a new position which commands higher pay, privileges or status compared with the old. In other

words, it is vertical move in rank and responsibility. Employees expect to be informed about ladders of promotion, how they can prepare themselves for advancement and what will be expected of them in the higher rated jobs.

**Basis of promotion**

There is controversy as to what should be the criteria for promotion – seniority or ability. Trade unions prefer seniority while management prefers ability or merit (Dawra, 2001). Seniority refers to the relative length of service of employees. Historically the seniority method of promotion should be regarded as a success. In business, however, it is not always dependable as a promotional policy. It survives simply because no better system has been evolved that has won public confident. If the seniority principle is adopted, capable young men are likely to become impatience about 'waiting–for–dead-men's shoes' and will quite to look for better prospectus elsewhere.

In principle, it is agreed by all that promotion should be based on merit. The use of merit as a basis for promotion causes difficulties because what management regards as merit, union may consider as favouritism and can distrust the sincerity of management when it claims the right to promote solely on merit. When management adopts merit as a basis for promotion, it must evolve controls to recognise merit objectively in order to refute the allegations of favouritism. Seniority –cum- merit should be basis of promotions where merit can be objectively tested (Galbraith & Edstrong, 2001). Merit is a term which includes efficiency, skill and aptitude. When a

combination of merit and seniority is desirable, the play of discretion in the matter of selection cannot be overlooked.

Promotion is commonly believed to be a critical factor in the identification and development of managers. It provides young managers with early challenge and responsibility. It has been found out that those who were promoted early rose to higher levels than those who were not (Dawra, 2001).

**Promotion, succession and career systems**

There is a general consensus on the impact of promotion, succession and career systems on the ability of organisations to compete effectively in today's complex and dynamic environment. On the realisation that promotion, succession and career systems are proving inadequate in providing the needed leadership, big companies are going outside their institutions to recruit top executives (Dawra, 2001). This subsequently gives credence to external recruitment as against internal recruitment.

For an institution such as the Ghana National Fire Service which has not been able to attract top professionals basically as a result of the unattractive conditions of service, depending on succession through promotion could create human resource problems for the service. The unattractive nature of the service coupled with the generally low educational attainment currently existing in the service could affect getting highly qualified personnel to manage the affairs of the service.

**Demotion**

Demotion could be considered as a direct opposite of promotion. It basically refers to the lowering of status, salary and responsibilities of an employee. It is generally used as a punitive measure and is a preliminary step to discharge although its usefulness as a punitive measure has been questioned on many grounds (Cheadle, 2005). For example, one argument is that reducing demoted worker's salary could affect the level of motivation of the affected worker and also has the potential of affecting the level of motivation of other workers leading to low productivity in the long run.

Demotion will serve its purpose if it satisfies the following conditions:

- A clear and reasonable list of rules should be framed, violations of which would subject an employee to demotion;

- This information should be clearly communicated to employees;

- There should be proper investigation of any alleged violation;

- If violations are found, there should be a consistent and equitable application of the penalty, preferably by the immediate superior; and

- There should be a provision for review.


**Salient features of the selection process: A conceptual approach**

There are many frameworks that exist in the literature to explain selection, recruitment and placement in institutions. More often these

frameworks try to explain one of these concepts at a time. A framework based on the salient features of the selection process is shown in Figure 1.
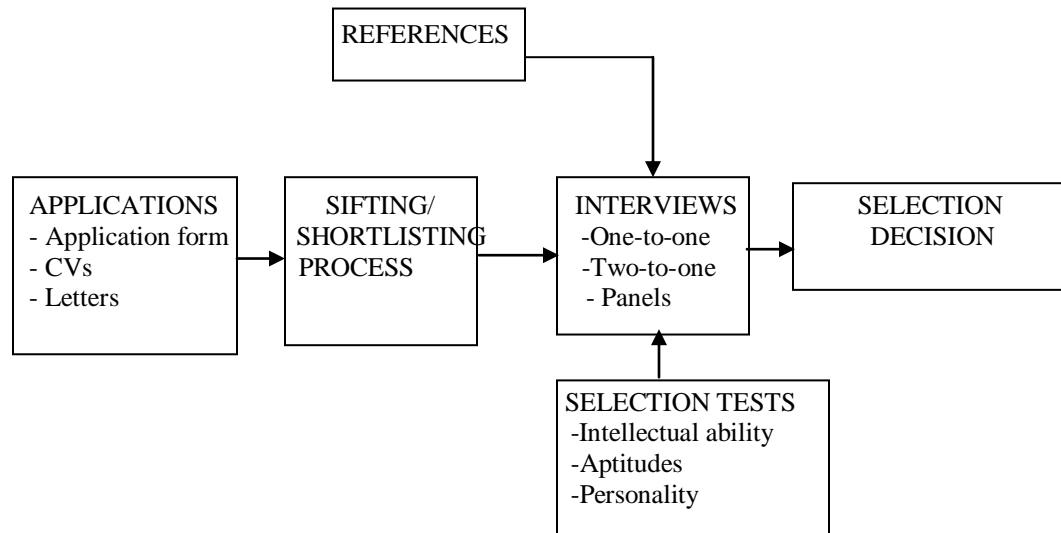


**Figure 1: Salient features of the selection process**

Source: Cole (2002, p. 3)

The selection process involves various components that have to be dealt with in order to achieve the objectives of the selection. It starts with potential employees submitting their applications for consideration. After these applications are received, the various qualifications are assessed using the demands of the advertised position as the yardstick. As a result, potentially successful candidates at this stage are short listed and invited to an interview. The interview could be one-to-one, two-to-one or as panels (Figure 1).

At this stage reference letters on various applicants are considered and selection tests could also be conducted to reduce the number of applicants

relative to the available vacancies. Selection decision on applicants is made after this stage and successful applicants are offered the opportunity to work with the institution.

**Conclusion**

The review has thrown light on the main issues in recruitment, selection and placement. The various conceptual issues regarding selection, recruitment and placement were also discussed. These discussions have helped to put the study into perspective. The issues discussed direct the study in particular and therefore form the basis for analysis in the chapters that follow.

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

This chapter outlines the various methods that were used to achieve the objectives of the study. It covers the study organisation, study design, population, sample and sampling procedure. It also covers instrumentation, data collection techniques and how data were analysed.

## Administrative structure of the GNFS

The GNFS is headed by the Chief Fire Officer (CFO), a politically appointed position. He is the link between the fire service and the government in power at a particular period through the Ministry of the Interior. For the CFO to be able to execute his administrative functions and policies, he is assisted by four Deputy Chief Fire Officers, namely: the Deputy Chief Fire Officer in–charge of Operations, Deputy Chief Fire Officer in-charge of Finance and Administration and the remaining two Deputy Chief Fire Officers responsible for Training and Logistics respectively. They serve as link between the various commanders of Fire Service and the CFO.

**Research design**

The underlying theoretical paradigm of descriptive survey was chosen for the study. According to Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh (1990), descriptive research studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. They are directed towards determining the nature of a situation, as it exists at the time of the study. On his part Amedahe (2002) posits that descriptive research takes the form of a survey where detailed data is collected on the phenomenon of interest to describe and justify existing conditions and practices and make plans for improving upon them. They are directed towards determining the nature of a situation, as it exists at the time of the study. The survey design selects a large sample that represents the target group of the population in question. As with causal-comparative research, there is no administration or control of a treatment as is found in experimental research. Descriptive surveys focus on determining the status of a defined population with respect to certain variables.

The descriptive survey design was chosen because it has the advantage of producing good amount of responses from a wide range of people. At the same time, it provides a meaningful picture of events and seeks to explain people's perception and behaviour on the basis of data gathered at a point in time. Furthermore, it can be used with greater confidence with regard to particular questions of special interest or value to a researcher. Also in-dept and follow-up questions can be asked and items that are unclear can be explained using descriptive design (Fraenkel & Wallen,

1993). According to Amedahe (2002) the strength of the survey design is to be able to get into the mind of the respondents and know how they feel about the phenomenon of interest. It also gives a good representation of the group being studied.

On the contrary, there is the difficulty of ensuring that the questions to be answered or statements to be responded to using the descriptive design are clear and not misleading because survey results can vary significantly depending on the exact wording of questions or statements. It may also produce untrustworthy results because they delve into private matters that people may not be completely trustful about. Furthermore, questionnaires require subjects who can articulate their thoughts well and sometimes even put such thoughts in writing (Seifert & Hoffnung, 1991). Another limitation is that, the events or conditions understudy already exist or have occurred and the researcher merely selects the relevant variables for analysis. These disadvantages not withstanding, the descriptive survey design was considered the most appropriate for carrying out the study on issues and challenges of recruitment, selection and placement in the Ghana National Fire Service in the Central Region.

**Target Population**

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1993), a population is the target group about which the investigator has the interest in gaining information and drawing conclusion. For this study, the target population is the personnel of

the Ghana National Fire Service stationed in the Central Region of Ghana. As at the end of 2007, there were 502 fire personnel in the Central Region. This figure comprised 60 (49 males and 11 females) senior officers and 442 (385 males and 57 females) junior officers. These personnel were distributed in twelve stations apart from the Regional Office (Table 2).

**Table 2: Distribution of fire personnel in the Central Region by sex**

| Station | Senior Officer | | Junior Officer | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Regional Headquarters | 16 | 2 | 76 | 14 | 92 | 16 |
| Cape Coast Municipal | 3 | 1 | 45 | 8 | 48 | 9 |
| University of Cape Coast | 2 | 3 | 27 | 6 | 29 | 9 |
| Elmina | 2 | 0 | 17 | 2 | 19 | 2 |
| Komenda | 2 | 0 | 15 | 2 | 17 | 2 |
| Mankessim | 3 | 2 | 36 | 6 | 39 | 8 |
| Apam | 3 | 0 | 17 | 1 | 20 | 1 |
| Winneba | 6 | 0 | 43 | 8 | 49 | 8 |
| Agona Swedru | 3 | 2 | 45 | 6 | 48 | 8 |
| Breman Asikuma | 1 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 12 | 2 |
| Breman Essiam | 3 | 0 | 16 | 0 | 19 | 0 |
| Assin Foso | 2 | 0 | 18 | 2 | 20 | 2 |
| Dunkwa-on-Offin | 3 | 0 | 19 | 1 | 22 | 1 |
| Total | 49 | 11 | 385 | 57 | 434 | 68 |

Source: Central Regional Headquarters, 2007.

The three stations in Cape Coast accounted for about 45% of senior staff and about 40% of junior staff and 40% of the overall total population fire personnel in the region. Due to the fluid nature of the staff strength as a result of in and out transfers, the figures used in this study were those available as at the close of December, 2007.

**Sample and sampling procedures**

A stratified random sampling technique was employed in this study. Amedahe (2002) argues strongly that the stratified sampling method is appropriate where unique members of the population in the form of strata and the use of simple random sampling method would tilt the eventual sample to a stratum. The researcher therefore divided the population into groups or strata using the simple random sampling with each group containing subjects with similar characteristics. A representative sample of 218 respondents was drawn from a total sample frame of 502 fire personnel in the region using Fisher, Laing, Stoeckel & Townsend (1998, p. 45) formula for determining the sample size. The total number of respondents selected from each station was then calculated based on the proportion of that station's total number of fire personnel in the region with regard to the sample size. Thus, if a station has 'X' number of personnel, its total sample size 'q' was calculated by the equation, $q = X(218)/502$. This procedure applied mainly to the male sample.

Due to the relatively smaller number of female fire personnel in the region (68 females against 434 males), all the female fire personnel were

included in the sample. Officers-in-charge of the various stations were selected purposively for in-depth interview.

**Research instruments**

Questionnaire (Appendix A) and in-depth interview (Appendix B) were used to gather data from both the officers and men of the Ghana National Fire Service in the Central Region. The questionnaire was divided into three sections (A, B and C). Section A comprised the background characteristics of the respondents, such as age, marital status, educational level at the time of entry into the service and current educational level. The second section dealt with issues relating to factors influencing recruitment, selection and placement while the final section solicited data relating to challenges of recruitment, selection and placement. The in-depth interview guide also has similar sections. Apart from the Officers-in-charge of the various stations who were subjected to the in-depth interview, all the other respondents filled the questionnaire.

**Pre-field activities**

Reconnaissance Survey and Training of Field assistants

Visits were made to the various fire stations in the central region to acquaint with the personnel and to seek permission for the data collection. These visits afforded the researcher the opportunity to interact with some of the officers before the actual data collection exercise.

One field assistant was recruited and trained for the collection exercise. His duty was to distribute the questionnaire to the selected fire personnel while the researcher conducted the in-depth interviews. The canvasser method, which involves the administration of questionnaires by field assistants, was not adopted because the respondents were literates and could fill the questionnaire themselves.

**Data management and analysis**

Challenges encountered in the field

Some few challenges were encountered in the field. Initially, it was difficult to obtain permission from the Central Regional Command in order to carry out the study. It took the researcher sometime to convince the Regional Commander that the study was for academic purpose only. He finally allowed the research team to collect the data after going through the questionnaire himself.

Second, respondents were reluctant to respond to the questions. The various District Commanders intervened before they agreed and answered the questions. These hold ups had no effect on the quality of data gathered.

Editing

Data collected from the field were checked for completeness of contents and for internal consistency in the responses. This was done by inference because some questions in the research instrument were related. It

was, therefore, possible to infer the answer to a particular question from the answer provided for a related question. However, care was taken not to introduce new errors.

All the in-depth interviews were conducted in English Language. This made the transcription less difficult since there was no need to translate into English Language before transcription. The transcription was carefully done in order not to introduce any error.

**Data analysis**

Templates for the questions were laid after the pre-test using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) software. The data were subsequently coded and inputted into the programme. Responses for the few open ended questions were written down, organized into groups, coded and tallied to check the frequency of particular responses.

A structured format was followed to direct the data analysis as suggested by Kumar (2005). The analysis was in three sections – the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed in the first section while issues of recruitment, selection and placement were explored in the second section. The final section sorted out challenges to recruitment, selection and placement process. Frequency distributions, cross tabulations, other descriptive statistics were used.

**Pre-test and field work**

       The research instruments were tested on 20 fire personnel from the Regional Headquarters. This helped to amend some of the items in the research instruments.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the outcome of the study relating to the challenges of recruitment, selection and placement. First, the chapter presents the results of the study using statistical techniques. Specifically, the demographic background of the respondents were analysed in relation to the main issues covered in the study. This allowed for a thorough discussion of issues and therefore informed the recommendations in the next chapter.

**Background characteristics and qualifications of respondents**

Age distribution of respondents

Age of employees is an important variable especially in the security services. Analysing the ages of employees gives us an idea about the strength of the work force of a particular institution. Majority (82%) of fire personnel in the Central Region were between the ages of 31 and 50 (Table 3). The age grouping (see Table 3) was informed by the distribution of the respondents. A little below 10% were above 50 years. The personnel situation in the Central Region is relatively young with a mean age of about 41. The modal age is

however below the mean (37). About half of the total sample is below forty years. This distribution deviates from what Mensah, Badu & Osei (2008) found that majority (72%) of their respondents were less than forty years when they studied issues on addressing the educational needs of health workers in Ghana,. Considering the attractiveness of the two institutions (Ghana National Fire Service and the Ghana Health Service) in terms of remuneration in Ghana, it is not surprising that employees of the latter were relatively younger.

**Table 3: Age distribution of respondents**

| Age group | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| ≤ 30      | 9         | 4.1        |
| 31-35     | 48        | 22.0       |
| 36-40     | 54        | 24.8       |
| 41-45     | 40        | 18.3       |
| 46-50     | 46        | 21.1       |
| 51-55     | 15        | 6.9        |
| 56-60     | 6         | 2.8        |
| Total     | 218       | 100.0      |

Mean: 41.1;  Median: 40.3;  Mode: 37.0

Field Survey (2008)

Marital status of respondents

Majority of the respondents (80.2%) were married. The proportion of married respondents varied substantially by sex. While virtually all the female respondents were married (96%), about 73% of the male respondents were married (Figure 2).
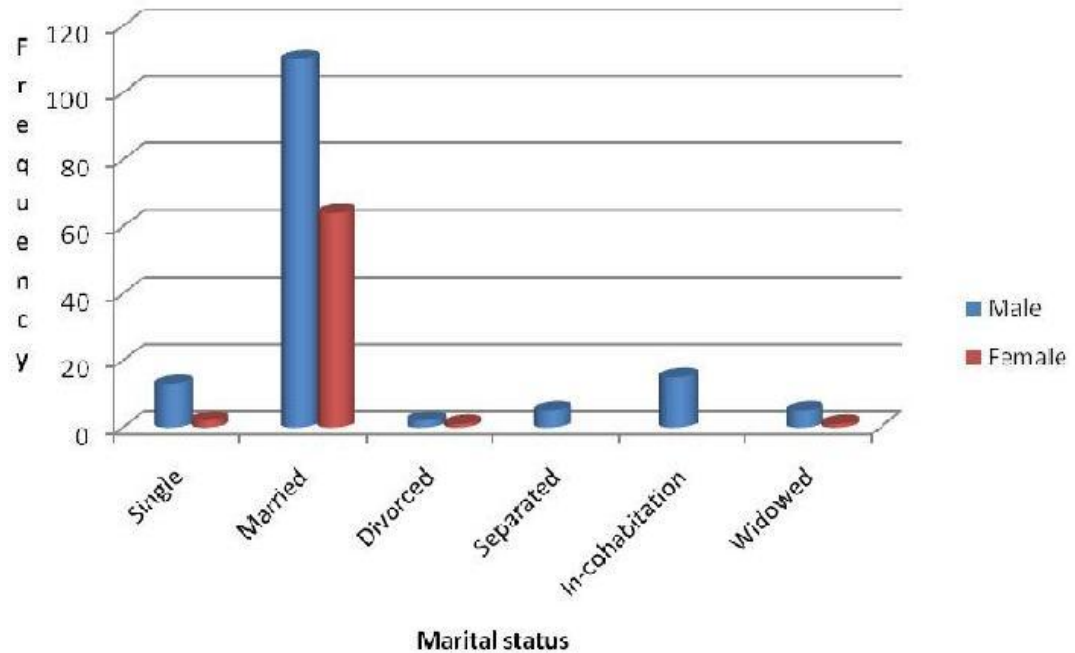


**Figure 2: Distribution of marital status of respondents**

Source: Field survey (2008)

Entry qualification and rank of respondents

Formal educational attainment constitutes the main determinant of job placement in the formal sector in Ghana. It is one's educational qualification that determines one's placement, salary scale and to some extent the frequency of promotion. Thus, people who are highly qualified in terms of formal education have a greater potential to be employed in well-paying jobs

(Carron & Carr-Hill, 1991). Similarly, in the Ghana National Fire Service, one's educational achievement determines the placement as a junior or senior officer which subsequently determines your salary.

Currently, the following are the minimum requirements for recruitment into the Ghana National Fire Service:

- Secondary School Certificate of Education (SSCE)

- Royal Society of Arts (RSA) Certificate Stage II

- City and Guilds Certificate Intermediate (CGC Inter)

- National Vocational Training Institute Certificate (NVTI) or their equivalent.

According to the Regional Commander of the Ghana National Fire Service in the Central Region, fire recruits are confirmed after one year of service to the rank of a Fireman/Firewoman. The Commander again indicated that depending on the need, professionals such as Physicians and Lawyers are also employed. Such persons may be appointed to the rank of Divisional Officer III or II depending on the person's experience. However, these professionals are often scarce. According to data available at the Central Regional headquarters of the Ghana National Fire Service, there were currently no such professional serving in the region. One District Fire Officer reported that even where such professionals are recruited they do not remain at post due to the poor working conditions within the service. This subsequently increases the labour turn over in the service.

A little above three-quarters of the respondents were second cycle graduates at the time of their employment into the Ghana National Fire Service (see Table 4). About 23% of the respondents had basic school (Middle/Junior High School) qualification before their employment into the service. Only a marginal proportion of 1.4% (3) had tertiary education at the time of employment. Out of this only one was a first degree holder and the rest were from the polytechnic.

**Table 4: Educational attainment of respondents before employment**

| Educational attainment | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Middle/JHS | 49 | 22.5 |
| Sec./SHS | 166 | 76.1 |
| Polytechnic | 2 | 0.9 |
| Undergraduate degree | 1 | 0.5 |
| Total | 218 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey (2008)

This distribution has implications for job placement and potential for promotion as over three-quarters were employed at the junior rank level. This accounted for the small proportion (11.7%) of senior fire personnel in the Central Region. Currently, the minimum qualification for recruitment into the Ghana National Fire Service is a second cycle certificate (for example Senior High School, National Vocational Training Institute). The twenty-two and

half per cent that had Middle or Junior High School certificate at the time of employment were those who were employed long ago when the minimum qualification was a first cycle certificate. It has to be noted that educational qualification is not the only requirement for recruitment and placement into the Ghana National Fire Service, especially when skilled personnel such as drivers and mechanics are being sought. Other qualifications such as those with Middle School Leaving Certificate with trade test certificates are also considered especial if their trades are needed for recruitment.

The data suggest that all respondents interviewed acquired the minimum educational qualification needed for recruitment into the Ghana National Fire Service. Some of the respondents acquired higher educational qualifications while on the job. This affected their current rank as only 10 per cent of the respondents were still on the entry rank. However, this is not an indication that all respondents who had been promoted since recruitment into the Ghana National Fire Service were due to acquiring a higher educational qualification. Long service was mentioned by respondents as another requirement for promotion; therefore, those who have served on a particular rank for a certain number of years could also be promoted.

The Ghana National Fire Service still remains as one of the security services in Ghana that is highly patronised by second cycle graduates. Poor remuneration was reported by respondents as the main factor why the Ghana National Fire Service was unattractive to highly educated professionals. This was indicated by the overwhelming proportion (98.6%) of personnel in the

service who entered with first or second cycle qualification (Table 4). Even where professionals are recruited and trained, respondents indicated that they did not spend any meaningful time with the service as one would have expected. The increase in labour turn over leading to an increase in the recurrent expenditure of the service further worsened the financial situations of the service. Subsequently, the rank on entry is dominated by Fireman/Firewoman.

With the decrease in the number of years for pre-university education from 17 to 12 years in 1987, one would have thought that the proportion of respondents less than 30 years would match the proportion with second cycle education. As it stands now (4.1% for those less than 30 years and 76.1% for those with second cycle education) one might be tempted to assume that people do not seek recruitment into the Ghana National Fire Service immediately after completing second cycle education. Another argument is that personnel who entered the service with second cycle qualifications have not upgraded their educational status since recruitment. Also, it could be argued that due to the poor working conditions currently prevailing in the service, people might consider recruitment into the service as the last resort. Thus, they only applied to the Ghana National fire Service after all other avenues had failed them.

It is important to note that where about 99% (see Table 4) of personnel in the service in the Central Region had up to second cycle qualification, the service was likely to have inadequate personnel at some key

decision making positions where higher qualifications were needed for effective functioning. No doubt, only 11.7% of the personnel were senior officers at the time of the study. This problem could be attributed to the unattractive nature of working conditions in the service in general and has the potential of affecting output negatively. This problem also has serious implications for job progression.

**Factors influencing recruitment, selection and placement**

Like any public institution in Ghana, the Ghana National Fire Service is plagued with myriad of problems when it comes to issues relating to how people should be recruited and placed at appropriate ranks within the service. In general, these problems stem from pressures from sources such as social networks and political pressure. Respondents have reported factors from two broad categories: positive and negative.

Positive factors are those attributes that boost people's chances in the selection process. They include, but are not limited to one's physical fitness (32%), acquisition of technical skill in addition to the basic academic qualification (20%), and one's biological composition such as sickle cell status (10%). Those who are sickle cell positive are disqualified. Among the reasons given for classifying these factors as positive include the fact that people who have these attributes were recruited and placed at whatever rank on merit. A respondent explained further that such persons were usually not found wanting in the discharge of their duties. The negative factors include

commitment to social network demands and bowing to political pressure which usually lead to recruiting persons below the minimum Ghana National Fire Service standards.

A proportion of the respondents (23%) while admitting the positive factors, were silent on the negative factors. More often, issues on recruitment, especially those that bother on circumventing laid down procedures are hardly discussed openly because of fear of victimisation. This was probably be responsible for why some of the respondents were unwilling to comment on them. A substantial proportion (63%) of the respondents were quick to note that once an individual was recruited into the service his/her progression or otherwise depended on his/her performance on the job although few of them held the view that there were instances when some personnel were not promoted based on merit. They however, alluded to fact that these occurrences seemed to prevail at the national level than the regional level.

**Sources of pressure on recruitment**

The high unemployment rates that plagued the labour market in the last few decades especially in the developing world has led to a scramble for the few job opportunities available. This situation has made competition for the few available jobs keener. As a result, the informal concept that has dominated the labour market especially in Ghana is 'whom you know'. This concept explains a situation where those who have access to available jobs are the ones with networks to those offices. Respondents were asked to

indicate three sources from where pressure on recruitment officers was likely to emanate as shown in Table 5.

Every establishment shows some form of goodwill to individuals of group of persons who, over the years, have helped in diverse ways for the sustenance of the establishment. Such persons or groups are sometimes given preferential treatment over others when it comes to receiving some services from the establishment. These gestures are considered to be given to 'friends' of that establishment. Though not a bad practice in principle, it could be exploited to the disadvantage of the good intentions that it is supposed to serve.

**Table 5: Sources of pressure on recruitment of personnel**

| Source | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| **Political** | | |
| Response | 210 | 96.3 |
| No response | 8 | 3.7 |
| Total | 218 | 100.0 |
| **Family networks** | | |
| Response | 185 | 84.9 |
| No response | 33 | 15.1 |
| Total | 218 | 100.0 |

**Table 5 continued:**

**Old Students Associations**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Response | 160 | 73.4 |
| No response | 58 | 26.6 |
| Total | 218 | 100.0 |

**Headquarters protocol**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Response | 120 | 55.0 |
| No response | 98 | 45.0 |
| Total | 218 | 100.0 |

**Peers**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Response | 116 | 53.2 |
| No response | 102 | 46.8 |
| Total | 218 | 100.0 |

**Friends**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Response | 109 | 50.0 |
| No response | 109 | 50.0 |
| Total | 218 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey (2008)


Political networks (96.3%) have been identified as a major source of pressure on the recruitment process (Table 5). Old Students networking, in recent times, has become a strong conduit for accessing facilities and services in Ghana and elsewhere. The results of this study showed that the

phenomenon was gradually catching up with the Ghana National Fire Service as 73.4% of the respondents indicated old students networks as a source of pressure on the recruitment process (see Table 5). Pressure from within the service itself was also acknowledged. Fifty-five percent and 53.2% reported that pressure on the recruitment process could come from the headquarters and peers in the regional command respectively. Demands from within can be influential especially if such demands come from above (the national headquarters). Thus, the potential of these sources (Headquarters protocol and Peers) coupled with that coming from politics could derail the process of recruitment.

Compounding the problem associated with the recruitment process is the mismatch between the number of persons to be recruited and the potential applicants. Since the decentralisation of the recruitment exercise to the regional level in 2002, the process has been struggling against the quota for the region and the qualified applicants. For example, in 2002 the quota for the Central Region was 18. This figure rose marginally to 20 in 2005 and 2006 and to 22 in 2007. In all these recruitment periods, an average of 600 applicants qualified to be recruited.

The pressure on the recruitment process is worrying as this has the potential of affecting the quality of personnel recruited into the service. The overwhelming proportion of respondents (96.3%) admitting that political influence in the selection process was an indication that all was not well in the Ghana National Fire Service. This is likely to put so much pressure on

recruitment officers and has the potential to undermine discipline in the service. Where personnel's selection and recruitment are influenced from the apex of the political hierarchy these personnel are likely to disobey the rules and regulations governing the service. This can subsequently affect the morale of other personnel.

While admitting the fact that all forms of pressure on the recruitment and selection process (for example family networks, peers, old students associations etc.) would have negative consequences for output and harmony in the service one should be quick to note that a certain allowance should be given, especially protocol to the friends of the Ghana national Fire Service. These are category of people who have helped, one time or the other, in diverse ways to improve the service. But this protocol allocation should be regulated in order not to recruit people who think they are related to persons in high positions and therefore are not committed to the cause of the Ghana National fire Service.

**Progression within the Ghana National Fire Service**

Promotion, one of the avenues for motivating employees, was reported as a major problem within the Ghana National Fire Service. Delayed promotion was the major issue reported. According to one respondent, he has been on his current rank for over six years instead of an average of three. He further indicated that this was demoralising. Another respondent from an in-depth interview commenting on the same issue indicated that though

demoralising, it is the general trends therefore one has little to complain about. But there were others who thought they had been cheated as a result of the delay of their promotion. Figure 2 shows the distribution of respondents in terms of the number of years they spent on their current rank.
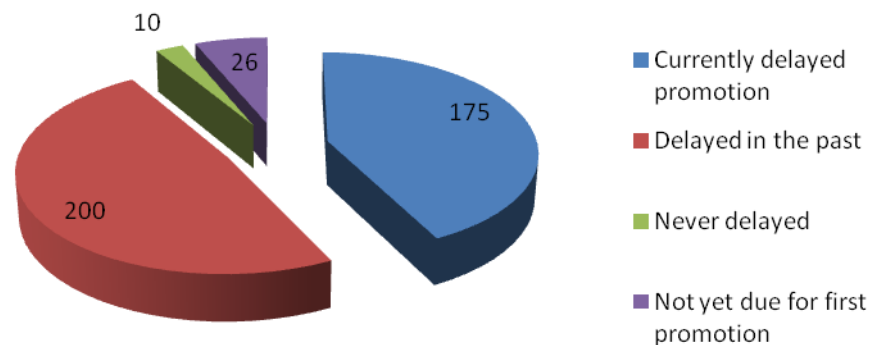


**Figure 2: Respondents' views on promotion**

Source: Field Survey (2008)

About 80% (175) of the respondents were currently delayed at their present rank (Figure 2). Only 4.6% (10) had never been delayed at any rank. Eight respondents in this category had their first and the only promotion after training. Thus, only two of them were likely to have been promoted more than once. Another 92% (200) had been delayed in the past (Figure 2). The proportions of respondents delayed in the past and currently delayed (92% and 80% respectively) indicate that some of the respondents who were

delayed in the past might be currently delayed again as the total number exceeded the sample size of 218. This delay in promotion has implications for motivation and is therefore likely to affect respondents' output.

Delay in the promotion of personnel was another problem identified in relation to progression on the job. The proportion of personnel currently delayed (80%) at their present ranks is disturbing. This proportion viewed against the 4.6% who had never experienced any delay in the past is not only worrying but points to the extent of neglect within the service. Thus, the service finds it difficult to retain professionals. Placement within the service has witnessed similar setbacks. It is not out of place for one to imagine that in an institution with poor working conditions as the Ghana National Fire Service, people will be lobbying to occupy the perceived better sections within the service no matter what it takes. This has compounded the problem of inadequate personnel for some sections. Subsequently, one is likely to see someone who was recruited as a mechanic working in the accounts section. Attributing this to favouritism, lack of specific skills and the desire of the individual (see Table 6) challenges the ability and commitment of internal power structures to properly organise personnel matters in the Ghana National Fire Service, especially in the Central Region. This could undermine output and discipline in the service. All the above issues militating against the smooth running of the Ghana National Fire Service in the Central Region pose tremendous challenges to the administration of the service within the region.

Issues of placement

Placement is one area that has been of concern to the Ghana National Fire Service as far as motivation of personnel is concerned. Problems associated with placement have manifested in different forms among which is the issue of placing people at the wrong position. An in-depth interview with some respondents revealed that this is a major problem facing the Ghana National Fire Service in general and not peculiar to the Central Region. They unanimously indicated that lack of personnel with specific skills was the major cause.

However, respondents interviewed reported that lack of personnel with specific skills was just one of the factors responsible for this situation (Table 6).

**Table 6: Causes of misplacement in the Ghana National Fire Service**

| Cause | Frequency | Per cent |
|---|---|---|
| **Favouritism** | | |
| Response | 195 | 89.4 |
| No response | 23 | 10.6 |
| Total | 218 | 100.0 |
| **Lack of specific skills** | | |
| Response | 115 | 52.0 |
| No response | 103 | 48.0 |

**Table 6 continued:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 218 | 100.0 |
| **Individual desire** | | |
| Response | 78 | 35.8 |
| No response | 140 | 64.2 |
| Total | 218 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey (2008).

About 89 per cent of the respondents reported that favouritism was the major reason why personnel were sometimes placed at sections where they had no expertise. They contended that officers sometimes favoured individuals by yielding to their demand to be placed in a specific section even though they were aware that they had no expertise to work at that section. As a result, such personnel lacked the basic skills required to function effectively at such sections.

A little over half of the respondents (52%) however indicated that lack of personnel with specific skills was responsible for placing people at sections they have no expertise on. They further explained that such personnel have to be given on-the-job training on basic issues at the expense of the service. Over a third (35.8%) were of the view that individuals' desire to work in some specific areas irrespective of having the requisite skills could be blamed for the problem of placing people at the wrong places. To them some specific sections within the Ghana National Fire Service were

perceived as lucrative (for example the Accounts section) hence people without the necessary background work their ways into these sections.

**Challenges facing the recruitment, selection and placement process**

The three processes of recruitment, selection and placement are fraught with many challenges in the Ghana National Fire Service. These challenges could be classified under internal and external. The internal ones are those emanating from within the Ghana National Fire Service itself – both the headquarters and the regional level. The external challenges emanate from outside the service. Respondents unanimously noted that resisting external and internal pressures regarding this process was daunting. Pressure from politicians for their wards to be recruited was reported as the one of the major challenges. This was reported by all the respondents.

Since the decentralisation of the recruitment process to the regional level the process has suffered a mismatch between the number of people expected to be recruited and the potential applicants. Though this problem was there in the past when the selection process was centralised the decentralisation has made the process more accessible now than in the past. This has made recruitment difficult. One of the personnel involved in the recent recruitment exercise in the Central Region indicated that it was difficult to select just about twenty people from about six hundred potential applicants.

**Conclusion**

The study has shown evidence that the Ghana National Fire Service is plagued with myriad of challenges. Although this situation might not be different from what pertains in institutions of similar stature, there is the need for deliberate efforts to boost morale in the Ghana National Fire Service, especially in the Central Region.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Introduction**

This chapter concludes the study by looking at the highlights of the study. It summarizes the entire study taking into consideration the processes involved in the study. It specifically addresses the following issues:

- Summary of the whole study;

- Recommendations based on the main findings of the study; and

- Synthesizing the main issues addressed in the study under a concluding remarks.

**Summary**

The main objective of the study was to explore issues relating to recruitment, selection and placement in the Ghana National Fire Service, specifically in the Central Region of Ghana. To achieve this, the study explored factors influencing the recruitment, selection and the placement process, the background of personnel in the Central Region as well as the challenges facing the recruitment, selection and the placement process in the Central Region. Related research questions were formulated and answered.

A representative sample was randomly selected from the total number of personnel in the Central Region. All female personnel in the region were included in the sample because of their relatively small size. Questionnaire and in-depth interview guide were used to collect data from the respondents. The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) software was used to analyse the data. Related literature was also reviewed in order to keep the study in focus.

The main findings of the study were summarised as follows:

- Substantial proportion (82%) of the respondents were between the ages of 31 and 50;

- Over three-quarters of the respondents were second cycle certificate holders at the time of the study;

- A marginal proportion (1.4%) had tertiary qualifications with only one person holding a university degree;

- All respondents recruited into the service in the Central Region had the minimum requirement before recruitment;

- About 98.6% of the respondents indicated that they entered the service with first or second cycle qualifications;

- Political influence in the recruitment, selection and the placement process was reported by 96.3% of the respondents;

- Promotions of 80% of the respondents were currently delayed as at the time of the study with the promotions of 92% of the respondents ever delayed;

- Only 4.6% of the respondents have never had their promotions delayed;

- Placing personnel at positions not related to their qualifications was a major placement issue in the Ghana National Fire Service;

- Favouritism (89.4%), lack of specific skills (52%) and individual desire (35.8%) were given as the reasons responsible for placing personnel at wrong positions; and

- Challenges facing the recruitment, selection and placement process emanates from two sources – internal (that is, within the Ghana National Fire Service) and external (outside the Ghana National Fire Service).

**Conclusions**

Majority (75%) of the respondents had second cycle education qualifications. The fact that only less than two per cent of the respondents had tertiary qualifications was worrying and has implications for efficient and effective performance in the service. However, all the respondents interviewed had the basic educational qualification required for recruitment.

Among the factors that influence the recruitment process were pressures from political and social network sources. Interference in the recruitment, selection and placement process by various actors such as politicians, traditional authorities, old school mates and peers was reported as a major challenge for the process. Also, the quality of human resource in the

Ghana National Fire Service was also identified as a challenge and attributed to the unattractive conditions of service in the institution currently. This will make the service not only attractive to highly qualified professionals but retain them as well.

**Recommendations**

To solve these problems there is the need for government to take a second look at service conditions in the Ghana National Fire Service. This could be done by taking a second look at the service conditions of the Ghana National Fire Service. By so doing, the service would be able to attract well qualified personnel to carry out the mandate of the service. This would strengthen the various regional commands. Otherwise, people will continue to use the service as a temporary institution to adjust to the labour market only to leave there after getting a better job thereby increasing the labour turn over of the service.

To ease pressures that have plagued the recruitment process over the years, specific sections of the process could be given to experts not in the Ghana National Fire Service. For example, such experts could be contracted to take up the conduct of examinations for the applicants and the results published in order of merit. The overall performance of those recruited at a particular recruitment exercise should be published. Avenues should be provided for people who wish to challenge the process to do so.

Officers found to have manipulated the recruitment, selection and the placement process should be sanctioned severely to serve as deterrent to others in the future.

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# APPENDICES
## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PERSONNEL OF GHANA NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE IN THE CENTRAL REGION

## INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
## UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

Dear Sir/Madam,

Good day, I am a student of the above institute reading Master of Arts in Development Studies (Human Resource Management major). As part of my programme I am writing a dissertation on the topic: "Issues of selection, recruitment and placement in the Ghana National Fire Service in the Central Region". You have been selected to respond to a questionnaire. After the collection of data from you and others who were selected, all the data will be combined for analysis and no one can identify responses from any individual.
I would like to assure you of anonymity of your responses. Under no condition would information you provided be given to a second person. I assure you of absolute confidentiality.

### Section A: Socio-demographic background

| S/No. | Question | Response Options | Skip To |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Sex | Male…………………………...…1<br>Female………………..…………..2 | |
| 2. | Age (In completed years) | …………………………………………<br>……… | |
| 3. | Highest level of education when recruited | None…………………………………1<br>Primary.…………………………….2<br>Middle/JSS……………………….....3<br>Sec./SSS……………………………4<br>Polytechnic……………………….....5<br>University degree……………………6<br>Postgraduate degree…………………7<br>Postgraduate certificate…….…..……8<br>Other (Please specify)……..………..9 | |
| 4. | Highest level of education currently | None……………………………….1<br>Primary.…………………………….2<br>Middle/JSS…………………………3<br>Sec./SSS……………………………4<br>Polytechnic…………………………5<br>University degree……………………6<br>Postgraduate degree…………………7<br>Postgraduate certificate………..…....8<br>Other (Please specify)……………….9 | |
| 5. | How was the current level of education acquired? | Through distance education………….1<br>Granted study leave with pay………..2<br>Granted study leave without pay……..3<br>Other (Please specify)……………….4 | |
| 6. | Marital status | Single/Never married…………..…...1<br>Married……………………..……….2<br>Divorced………………………...……3<br>Separated……………………..………4 | |

| | | In-cohabitation…………..…….………5 Widowed……………..……………..6 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7. | Current rank | ACFO………….…..……………..1 DO I………….…….…..……………2 DO II…………….……….…………..3 DO III…………..……….…………..4 ADO I…………..……….…………..5 ADO II………….……..…….………6 STNO I/GO I………..…..…………7 STNO II/GO II…………..…………8 SUBO/DGO…………..…….………9 LFM/LFW…………..…………..10 FM/FW…………..…………….11 RFM/RFW…………..…………12 | |
| 8. | Was that your entry rank | Yes………….………..…………1 No……………..……………..……2 | |
| 9. | If no, what was your entry rank? | ……………..……..………………… ……… | |
| 10. | If no, how long has it taken you to move one step up? | Less than two years…….…………1 Between 2 and 4 years……..……….2 Above four years………………….....3 | |
| 11. | Is that the normal duration for promotion to the next rank? | Yes……….………….…………1 No…………….……………..…2 | |
| | | | |
| 12. | How long have you been on your current rank | Less than a year…….…………1 1-2…………………………..2 3-4………………………….3 5-6……………………….4 7-8……………………….5 9-10………………………..6 More than 10 years……..…………7 | |
| 13. | Is that the normal duration to spend on that rank? | Yes…………………………1 No……………………………2 | |
| 14. | If no, is it less or more than the normal duration? | More than the normal duration….…..1 Less than the normal duration……...2 | |
| 15. | If more than the normal duration, why are you still there? | As a form of punishment for an offence.1 Don't know why………..…………...2 Other (Please specify)………………..3 | |
| 16. | Are you the only one suffering from this? | Yes, I am the only one……..……..1 We are few……..…..………………2 A general problem…..………………3 Other (Please specify)………………..4 | |
| 17. | Have you ever attempted to draw the attention of your management of your plight? | Yes………..…..………………1 No…………..…..……………..2 | |
| 18. | If yes, what was their reaction? | ……………..……………………… ……………………………… ……………………………… ……………………………… ……………………………… ……………………………… ……………………………… | |

**Section B: Factors affecting recruitment and promotion in the GNFS**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19. | Apart from educational qualifications are there any other factors considered in recruitment exercise? | Yes……………………………………1<br>No…………………………………….2 | |
| 20. | If yes, list three of them | …………………………………………1<br>…………………………………………2<br>…………………………………………3 | |
| 21. | Were these the same factors considered in recruiting you? | Yes……………………………………1<br>No…………………………………….2 | |
| 22. | If no, what necessitated the change? | New ways of doing things…………..……1<br>New institutional policy……….…………2<br>Other (Specify)……..……………………3 | |
| 23. | Have you ever helped someone to be recruited into the GNFS before? | Yes………..……………….…………1<br>No…………………………………….2 | |
| 24. | If yes, has the person got the qualifications mentioned? | Yes……………………………………1<br>No…………………………………….2 | |
| 25. | If no, is that sometimes the norm? | Yes……………………………………1<br>No…………………………………….2 | |
| 26. | Mention three sources where pressure is likely to come from when it comes to recruitment into GNFS? | …………………………………………1<br>…………………………………………2<br>…………………………………………3 | |
| 27. | Since joining the service were you promoted before? | Yes……………………………………1<br>No…………………………………….2 | |
| 28. | If yes, was it within the turn for promotion? | Yes……………………………………1<br>No…………………………………….2 | |
| 29. | If no, were you due for promotion? | Yes……………………………………1<br>No…………………………………….2 | |
| 30. | If yes, state what is delaying your promotion? | ……………………………………………<br>……………………………………………<br>……………………………………………<br>……………………………………………<br>……………………………………………<br>……………………………………………<br>…………………………………………… | |
| 31. | Were there instances where personnel were placed at where they were not supposed to be? | Yes……………………………………1<br>No…………………………………….2 | |
| 32. | Was there some unlawful promotion in service within the last five years? | Yes……………………………………1<br>No…………………………………….2 | |
| 33. | If yes, were these opposed? | Yes……………………………………1<br>No…………………………………….2 | |
| 34. | Is the Code of Conduct personnel of the GNFS protect some officers who lawfully oppose mistreatment in the service? | Yes……………………………………1<br>No…………………………………….2 | |
| 35. | Are they effective? | Yes……………………………………1<br>No…………………………………….2 | |

| 36. | How were you recruited? | Internal means……………………………..1 External means…………………………..2 Other (specify)…………………………..3 | |
| 37. | Did you find anything wrong with it? | Yes……………………………………..1 No……………………………………….2 | |

**Section C: Challenges regarding selection, recruitment and placement**

| 38. | Give three challenges facing the GNFS regarding selection, recruitment and placement | (i)…………………………………………… …………………………………………… …………………………………………… …………………………………………… (ii)………………………………………… …………………………………………… …………………………………………… …………………………………………… (iii)………………………………………… …………………………………………… …………………………………………… …………………………………………… | |
| 39. | Do you have some internal structures to deal with such challenges? | Yes……………………………………..1 No……………………………………….2 | |
| 40. | Name two of them | (i)……………………………………….. …………………………………………. …………………………………………. (ii)……………………………………….. ……………………………………….. ………………………………………… | |
| 41. | Are these structures effective in dealing with these challenges? | Yes……………………………………..1 No……………………………………….2 | |
| 42. | Suggest two ways of improving the processes of selection, recruitment and placement in the GNFS | (i)…………………………………………. …………………………………………. …………………………………………. …………………………………………. …………………………………………. …………………………………………. (ii)……………………………………….. …………………………………………. …………………………………………. …………………………………………. …………………………………………. …………………………………………. | |

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

**APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PERSONNEL OF GHANA NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE IN THE CENTRAL REGION**

**INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**
**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

Dear Sir/Madam,

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**Interview Guide**

- Socio-demographic background e.g. age, sex, marital status etc.

- What are the factors that are considered when selecting and recruiting people into the Ghana National Fire Service? [Probe for specific factors such as level of education, physical appearance, professional qualification etc.].

- Apart from these what are other factors that are considered in the selection and recruitment process/

- What are the major challenges facing the service currently? [Probe for economic, social, institutional and other categories of challenges].

- Do you think the people you recruited in the last selection and recruitment process are the most qualified people?

- If yes or no, explain your answer.

- Does the institution have problem with the issue of promotion and placement within the service?

- If yes, what are they? [Probe for misplacement of personnel].

- Mention the sources of pressure on the selection and recruitment process.

- Any other comments or suggestions to improve the selection, recruitment and placement process.