AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

SELECTION METHODS IN LEBANON

by
OUSSAMA MOHAMMAD YASSINE

A project
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Human Resources Management
to the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
January 2019

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

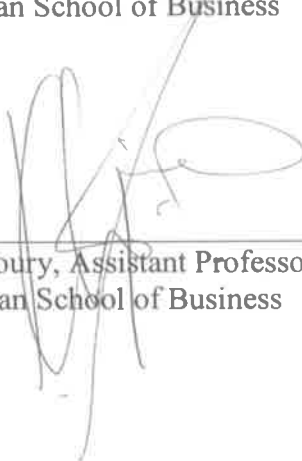SELECTION METHODS IN LEBANON

by
OUSSAMA MOHAMMAD YASSINE

Approved by:

on behalf of Dr. Lina Daouk

_____
Dr. Lina Daouk Öyry, Assistant Professor   First Reader
Suliman S. Olayan School of Business

_____
Dr. Haitham Khoury, Assistant Professor   Second Reader
Suliman S. Olayan School of Business

Date of project presentation: January 23rd, 2019

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THESIS, DISSERTATION, PROJECT RELEASE FORM

Student Name: Yassine   Oussama   Mohammad

                  Last   First   Middle

○ Master's Thesis   ☑ Master's Project   ○ Doctoral Dissertation

☑ I authorize the American University of Beirut to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of my thesis, dissertation, or project; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

☐ I authorize the American University of Beirut, to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of it; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes

after: **One -year from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation or project.**
     Two -years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation or project.
     Three -years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation or project.

Osama   29/01/2019

Signature   Date

This form is signed when submitting the thesis, dissertation, or project to the University Libraries

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT OF

Oussama Mohammad Yassine   for   Master of Human Resources Management
                                  Major: Human Resources Management

Title: Selection Methods in Lebanon

The science of recruitment and selection has evolved and advanced tremendously in the past couple of decades, where a plethora of selection methods have emerged with varying degrees of validity. Efficient recruitment and selection processes are critical for organizations to meet their objectives by ensuring the attraction and selection of best fit candidates for the job and organizational culture. Yet, little information is available about the recruitment and selection practice in Lebanon, especially in local organizations, given that the concept of HR is relatively new to the country. Therefore, the aim of this research study is to gain a better understanding of the selection practices of organizations in Lebanon, including local, regional, and multinational companies of small, medium, and large sizes. Through an online survey, 150 HR professionals and business owners shared information regarding the recruitment and selection process at their organizations. The results have showed that even though there are some positive signs, professional HR practices are still underdeveloped in Lebanon, with local organizations in particular still far behind international standards. The usage of modern selection tools in particular is quite low, where there is still a heavy reliance interviews and reference background checks, and disregarding advanced methods such as role-plays, simulations, and business case analysis. Even though regional and multinational companies are also facing some difficulties, they are far better off than local ones, and have either reach or are close to reaching international HR standards.

CONTENTS

Appendix

ILLUSTRATIONS

x

TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Evolution of HR

Originally, human resources started as personnel management, and had mainly administrative functions (Nayab, 2015). It was concerned with filling the organization's staffing needs in order to assist it in meeting its objectives. In other words, personnel management viewed employees simply as a means to an end; as tools for the organization to achieve its goals. For example, when hiring an employee, there would be no follow up on his personal development, nor on enhancing his skills and abilities. Organizations were only concerned with filling their vacant positions, and thus their HR practices were confined to mundane and routine practices such as staffing and remuneration (Afiouni & Nakhle, 2016). Therefore, there was no regard to the employees' long term, sustainable development, and advanced HR functions such as talent management, training & development, and integrating HR as a strategic partner to the organization (Surbhi, 2015).

Now, however, personnel management has evolved to human resources, where employees are viewed as the most important asset to the organization, and there is an emphasis on their personal and professional development (Nayab, 2015). They are not merely a means to an end, but are valuable to the organization and must be nourished and sustained. New functions have been developed that are more advanced than the traditional personnel management functions, such as retention plans for high performing employees, training & development, and compensation & benefits schemes that are an upgrade on the payroll and remuneration process of personnel management. Among

others, selection methods are one of the core HR functions that have been affected by this shift from personnel management, where new methods have been utilized over the years to select employees (Surbhi, 2015).

HR in Lebanon

Before discussing the concept of HR in Lebanon, it is important to provide some background information on the country. Even though it is an Arab country, Lebanon differs greatly from most of its neighbors, mainly due to its exposure to western values during the French Mandate. Indeed, most of Lebanon's legal system is based on French civil law. Moreover, unlike many Arab countries, Lebanon is a democratic republic, and has a diverse social composition.

As to the economy, the country follows a free market system, and is mainly a service-based economy, where the banking sector is the main pillar. Being a service based economy, Lebanon is in need of strong human capital, and indeed, most of the Lebanese population is educated, and many citizens are trilingual, speaking Arabic, English, and French (Afiouni & Nakhle, 2016). Moreover, due to the country's more liberal nature than its Arab neighbors, Lebanese women are more involved in social, economic, and political activities (Chemali, 2017).

Most organizations in Lebanon are family businesses, where they comprise around 90% of companies in the private sector, (Bechara, 2013). This has hindered the development of professional human resources practices in the country, as a lot of these organizations do not have HR departments (IRC, 2016). Indeed, up until the year 2000, the concept of HR was practically non-existent in the country, where the concept of personnel management was dominant and was only concerned with hiring, administrative functions, and payroll (Afiouni & Nakhle, 2016). Thus, there was no

emphasis on the operational and strategic function of HR, such as training &

development, compensation & benefits, and talent management.

Since then, there has been a relative shift from PM to HR, since Lebanon is a

service economy and is in need of HR practices to develop and sustain its human capital

(Hejase, Rifai, & Tabsh, 2012). In addition, the introduction of HR concentrations in

universities has played an important role, especially in graduate education (Hejase *et al*.,

2012). However, given Lebanon's social and political composition, HR practitioners in

the country are still prone to biases when selecting candidates, which provides further

incentive to go deeper into this subject and highlight how organizations carry out their

selection practices. These issues, among others, will be further discussed in the

literature review and data analysis sections.

Objective

The objective of this research proposal is to better understand the selection

practices followed by organizations in Lebanon, and covers local, regional, and

multinational organization of small, medium, and large sizes. The aim is to discover

what are the most common selection methods used by these organizations during their

selection process, and to see especially if advanced selection methods such as

assessment centers, simulations, role plays, and psychometric tests are used.

I believe studying a variety of organizations, whether in terms of size or type,

offers more credible data and assists in producing generalizable results. Moreover,

selection is a core human resources function, and there is not a clear understanding of

what selection methods are most applied in Lebanon. It is commonly known that

interviews are the most preferred selection method by organizations worldwide, but the

aim of this study is to discover what other methods are also applied, especially the

modern ones.

Thus, this study will tackle the following research questions:

- What are the most common selection methods adopted by organizations in Lebanon?

- Do these methods differ between organizations depending on their type and size?

- How often are advanced methods such as assessment centers, psychometric tests, simulations, and work samples used in Lebanon?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recruitment and Selection Process

Recruitment and selection is one of the core functions of human resources, and is responsible for fulfilling the organization's staffing needs (Gusdorf, 2008). Before beginning the process, the organization must first identify a hiring need, due to a position that has been either newly established or vacated. Next, the company must conduct a job analysis, which is comprised of the job specifications and the job description. The job specifications are related to the applicant, where they state the required criteria to be eligible to apply for the position, such as skills, work experience, and education. As to the job description, they are related to the job itself, where they specify the responsibilities and functions of the job (Doyle, 2018).

After the mentioned steps are completed, the recruitment process begins, where the organization starts off by posting the job through its recruitment channels. Naturally, the job is posted internally, so that the company's existing employees may apply to the position. As to the external recruitment channels, they may include the company website, job fairs, professional media sites such as LinkedIn, and social media (Gray, 2017).

As defined by the Society for Human Resource Management, recruitment is "the process of attracting individuals on a timely basis, in sufficient numbers, and with appropriate qualifications, to apply for jobs within an organization" (Gusdorf, 2008). In other words, recruitment is advertising the job opening to the largest pool of candidates possible. However, recruitment planning must only be considered after eliminating

other alternatives, because the costs of recruitment and selection can be quite high. If the organization is experiencing a temporary fluctuation in work volume, then it may be best to seek out other options such as hiring part time or temporary workers, or have the existing employees work overtime (Gusdorf, 2008). In case the company expects a need for more employees in the long term, then it should proceed to recruitment planning.

As to selection, it is "the process of choosing from a group of applicants the individual best suited for a particular position and for the organization" (Gusdorf, 2008). Screening is the first step in the selection process, where organizations seek to narrow down the number of applicants. Here, candidates who do not meet the job analysis are eliminated from the selection process. This is an important step, because it spares the organization the cost of proceeding with applicants who may be unsuited for the role. Eventually, from the shortlisted applicants, the candidate who best suits the job is selected.

Importance of Recruitment and Selection

As previously mentioned, recruitment and selection is a core HR function that if mishandled, can have dire implications for the organization. One of the most important reasons for having an efficient recruitment and selection process is cost. Hiring an unqualified candidate can incur great expenses on the organization, where they include the resources spent on the recruitment process for this candidate, which may have been invested in other areas instead to increase productivity (Saez, 2018).

Also, other costs include the salary paid for this unqualified candidate during his time at the organization, in addition to other potential benefits such as transportation and healthcare (Saez, 2018). Moreover, the decreased productivity caused by this unqualified employee is another cost that is added to the organization, in addition to the

fact that it will have to start the recruitment process over again to replace him, which will also add more costs (Saez, 2018).

Another reason that signifies the importance of recruitment and selection is employee retention, where flawed practices may lead to high turnover rates within organizations (Leonard, 2018). Here, recruiters must pay close attention to the issue of "job hopping" by observing the length the applicant spent at each of his previous jobs. If he has a trend of changing jobs frequently, then it may be preferable to disregard that candidate (Leonard, 2018). Furthermore, errors can occur not just with unqualified candidates, but with qualified ones as well. For example, hiring an overqualified candidate for a certain position will most likely lead to demotivation with time, which will result in decreased productivity and eventually departure from the organization (Leonard, 2018).

Finally, legal repercussions must be taken into consideration. First of all, it is important to only include information that is required for the job when advertising the vacancy, and developing a job description that includes only the name of the position and the required tasks and functions (Leonard, 2018). Elements such as age, religion, marital status, and disabilities that are included in the job specifications may leave the organization vulnerable to discrimination charges.

However, it is important to note that if the organization has a diversity policy, it may be able to defend itself from such charges by claiming that this information is required for the policy and not for any other, possibly discriminatory purposes. Finally, the company must be able to justify its selection of one candidate over another by having clearly established job specifications and job descriptions that show why one candidate is a better fit than the other (Leonard, 2018).

The Interview as the Most Common Method

Organizations apply various selection methods in their hiring process. Traditional selection methods include interviews, CV's/ cover letters, application forms, and reference background checks, while modern techniques include psychometric tests, assessment centers, work samples, role plays, simulations, and business case analysis. There is no specific method that is best applicable to all situations, because it depends on the context, such as the organization's size, industry, and type of position. Nonetheless, universally, the interview method is the most preferred selection technique (Arnold & Randall, 2012). Interviews can be either structured, unstructured, or semi-structured, with each form having its advantages and disadvantages.

Structured interviews, also known as standardized interviews, are a set of interview questions that are prepared in advance by the interviewer, where all candidates are asked the same questions in the same order. The main advantage of this method is that it becomes easier for the interviewer to compare the different answers, and choose the candidate who best fits the job, according to the job analysis (Arnold & Randall, 2012). Also, structured interviews are objective and reduce bias, since they are a set of predetermined questions that the interviewee is assessed on, regardless of other dimensions such as race, religion, and gender. Indeed, they are the most valid type of interview method and have a high usage among employers (Arnold & Randall, 2012). However, the main disadvantage of structured interviews is that they are rigid and do not provide room for flexibility and asking probing/ hypothetical questions which may give the interviewer a better perspective of the candidate (Martic, 2014). Also, the interview questions are not easy to develop, where those developing them must have proper training and qualifications (Martic, 2014).

Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, are spontaneous in nature and arise during the conversation between the interviewer and interviewee (McLeod, 2014). Therefore, unlike structured interviews, different candidates are asked different questions with no particular order. The main advantage of unstructured interviews is that they are flexible and allow the interviewee to ask probing questions in order to delve deeper into issues that are of interest to him, which may enhance the interview experience. As to the disadvantages, unstructured interviews are more subjective than structured ones, especially since different candidates are asked different questions, which make it more difficult to compare their answers. This may leave space for bias and discrimination against the candidates (McLeod, 2014).

Finally, there is the semi-structured interview, which is a combination between the structured and unstructured interviews. Here, the interviewer does not only follow a set of prepared questions, but also asks hypothetical and probing questions (Martic, 2014). The main advantage of this type of interview is that it offers the candidate the chance to express himself properly. Also, the interviewer can follow up on a previous question, and the interviewee is able to provide clarification for his answers. However, as with unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews still contain a subjective element, which leaves room for bias and thus reduces reliability (Martic, 2014). More importantly, semi-structured interviews are not easy to conduct, where interviewers should be competent in interviewing techniques.

However, interview writing skills and interviewing techniques are two important issues that must be taken into consideration. Regarding interviewing techniques, there are several errors that interviewers are vulnerable against during interviews, with some common issues being confirmation bias and the halo effect (Bika, 2016). Confirmation bias is when the interviewer formulates an idea in their minds and

looks for proof to validate it, while the halo effect occurs when an impression given to the interviewer in one area influences his judgment in other areas (Bika, 2016).

As to interview writing, it is important to carefully devise the interview questions, especially in structured interviews where questions are prepared in advance. Questions about age, religion, marital status, and many others should not be included in the interview, and are even illegal in many countries (Heathfield, 2018). In short, the interviewer should stick to questions that are directly related to the job, and base their questions according to the job analysis (Heathfield, 2018). Also, the questions should be carefully devised to target the competency of interest. To sum up, it is important for interviewers to be competent enough to carry out this process, because as explained above, they may be prone to several errors and biases both before and during the interview.

Other Selection Methods

As to other methods, their usage varies depending on the organization's size, resources, culture, and nature of the position. However, there are some methods that are deemed less reliable than others, regardless of the context, such as CVs and cover letters (Daciuk, 2017). Even though they are requested often by recruiters, it is easy to include false information in them or have someone else write them, which is why they are an inefficient and unreliable selection technique if used alone (Daciuk, 2017).

To counter this issue, the organization may request that the candidates take standardized tests. For example, if a candidate claims to be fluent in English, the organization may ask him to take an English test to certify his claims (Leonard, 2018). Also, studies show that requiring cover letters leads to fewer candidates applying to a job, where on average, 30% of applicants won't apply to positions that request a cover

letter, as they are not willing to spend more than 15 minutes on filling out a job

application (Daciuk, 2017). Therefore, cover letters may hinder the recruitment process,

which is concerned with attracting the largest possible number of candidates for a

position.

       Reference background checks are another common selection tool. They are

obtained from current or previous employers, and are usually used in the final stages of

the selection process (SHRM, 2018). They can give recruiters the chance to corroborate

the interviewee's claims, such as their work experience, education, and performance

during their time at the company. However, despite their extensive usage, they have

low validity, as the information provided by employers is not usually accurate, due to

several reasons (SHRM, 2018). First, applicants may simple mention references they

know will say positive things about them, even though that information may not be true.

Also, applicants can tell references what to say in case the recruiter contacts them

(SHRM, 2018). Therefore, even though they have an extensive usage, recruiters should

reconsider the effectiveness of this due to its subjective element and the possibility of

including false information.

       Other methods include situational judgment tests, work samples, personality

measures, and cognitive ability tests, each with varying degrees of validity and usage.

However, since each method has its strengths and weaknesses, recruiters should use

more than one method, and make sure that these methods complement, and not

duplicate each other (Richter, 2011). This is why assessment centers are the most valid

selection method, as they usually include interviews, psychological tests, in basket

exercises, and group discussions, and candidates are assessed by trained assessors who

are usually senior managers at their organizations (Arnold & Randall, 2012).

However, assessment centers are costly and can take a long time to complete, which is why they have a moderate usage, as not all organizations can afford them (Richter, 2011). They usually take two to three days to complete, but can extend to as much as a week (Richter, 2011). Also, they can be quite expensive, as they usually include salaries paid to external consultants, and can require a large number of staff to maintain, which will incur indirect costs to the organization as these employees would not be working, which will lead to reduced productivity (Richter, 2011).

Challenges Facing Recruitment and Selection in Lebanon

The challenges facing the development of HR practices in Lebanon are numerous. First of all, most SMEs in Lebanon are family owned, which greatly hinders HR practices for two reasons (Deloitte, 2017). First, most of these businesses do not even have an HR department, and strictly stick with a personnel department to handle basic administrative functions, with the hiring process being carried out by the owners (Deloitte, 2017). Indeed, 75.9% of SMEs in Beirut and Mount Lebanon do not have HR departments (IRC, 2016).

The second problem is the issue of nepotism. Those businesses who do have an HR department still face this issue on a consistent basis, where several HR practitioners in family business have complained of having been forced to hire unqualified relatives or nephews of the owners (Shami, 2015). Therefore, if HR departments do exist in these businesses, in practice they do not have a role in the hiring process, and are just like any other personnel department, because the power of decision making can be deprived from them at any instance by the owners (Shami, 2015).

Moreover, even though Lebanon fares better than other Arab countries, females are still greatly underrepresented in economic or political activities (Rishani, Mallah,

Houssami & Ismail, 2015). Indeed, only 6 out of 128 parliament members are women, while only 1 female minister exists in the current cabinet of 30 (WEF, 2017). Also, the country's gender gap index stands at 0.596, ranking it 137th worldwide (WEF, 2017). However, the problems go much deeper than that, where the presence of the glass ceiling in Lebanon is quite strong, which is hindering women's progression into senior positions within organizations (Rishani *et al.*, 2015).

Also, despite being less conservative than its Arab counterparts (Ariss & Sidani, 2016), Lebanon's society is still patriarchal, where females are perceived as emotional and ill-equipped to handle leadership roles (Ariss & Sidani, 2016). Furthermore, females are encouraged to pursue careers that provide a work-life balance, since they are also responsible for raising the children and taking care of matters at home, while males are directed towards pursuing their academic and professional development (Rishani *et al*, .2015).

Moreover, since the end of the civil war, Lebanese citizens have been divided by political affiliations, and the private sector has suffered as a result, where several SMEs are politically affiliated, either owned or financed by political parties (Shami, 2015). Alarmingly, this issue has spread to the country's strongest sector; the banking sector. Some banks are politically affiliated, where a lot of politicians have multi-million dollar accounts in these banks, thus granting them a hold over their practices (Shami, 2015). Employees at these banks have reported that the bank reserves a hiring quota for people connected to certain political parties (Shami, 2015). Thus, a lot of HR practices in these organizations are plagued with biases related to political affiliation, which has caused these SMEs to become a smaller representation of the inefficient Lebanese political and economic structure.

In addition to politics, religious background also plays an active role in the selection practices of many organizations. Lebanon has 18 officially recognized sects by the government, which is a unique characteristic not found in neighboring countries (Ariss & Sidani, 2016). However, as with the issue of political affiliations, Lebanese society continues to be divided by sectarianism, where this is even evident in the country's geography, where the South has a predominantly Shia population, the North a Sunni one, and the East a Christian one, with only the capital Beirut having a multi-sect combination (Ariss & Sidani, 2016).

The private sector has been greatly affected by this phenomenon, where a lot of private institutions such as schools, universities, sports clubs, and businesses have a sectarian nature, which has prevented the development of professional HR practices in many Lebanese organizations (Ariss & Sidani, 2016). Thus, even though Lebanese organizations have a diverse labor pool to choose from, they have opted to imitate the practices of the Lebanese public sector, and confine themselves to a specific sect of Lebanese society, according to factors such as geographic location and the sect of the owner of the organization (El Jardali, Tchagchagian & Jamal, 2009).

Finally, discriminatory practices are widespread, specifically towards females and minorities (& Nakkache, 2015). Veiled women are not welcome in many organizations, especially companies operating in the services industry, where there is constant contact with clients, with banks in particular showing reluctance to hire veiled women as tellers (Ismail & Nakkache, 2015). If these organizations do hire veiled women, they are usually hired for back-office positions, such as administrative roles or call centers, where there is no contact with customers. Also, discrimination in salaries is common, where it is not unusual for women to receive lesser salaries than males for the same position. Finally, minorities face several obstacles in their pursuit of jobs,

especially if they live in areas dominated by a specific sect, since that sect will acquire

most of the positions in the area (Ismail & Nakkache, 2015).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Recruitment

Participants where contacted via email to ask for their participation consent. The objective of the study was explained to them, and they were assured full anonymity and confidentiality through the consent document attached to the email. The HR contacts where retrieved from an online directory www.lbkompass.com. This online directory includes all phone numbers and contact information of companies in Lebanon which makes it a credible and reliable contact information website. Personal contacts were also contacted to take part in the study.

Research Design

The main research method used was the survey, and as such a quantitative approach was followed. Surveys are efficient, economical, and ensure anonymity, which is why they are one of the most common methods used. Since confidentiality and anonymity are essential for this study, the survey method is the most suitable tool for data collection. However, their drawback is that they do not offer a chance for clarification, which is why the survey questions were carefully devised in order not to include any ambiguity, or questions that the participants may find offensive or irrelevant to the study.

Sampling

The population here is HR professionals within organizations. In case companies did not have HR departments, individuals who are familiar with the company's recruitment practices were contacted, such as owners or managerial level employees. The goal of the study is to produce generalizable results, which is why employees at organizations of different types and sizes were contacted. Small organizations are those who include 1-49 employees, medium ones include 50-249, and large organizations include more than 250 employees. The sample is 150 HR professionals, or other employees who are aware of the recruitment practices in case an HR department does not exist.

Survey Design

The survey was administered through Lime Survey at the American University of Beirut, and was mostly comprised of closed ended questions. It was an online survey sent to participants via email, along with the consent document ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. Therefore, participants had to have access to an internet connection to fill the survey. Also, participants were given the option of saving their progress and returning at a later time.

The survey is comprised of three sections. The first section is concerned with demographic data, such as gender, work experience, job title, and education, whereas the second section includes questions about the organization, such as type of the organization, its size, and the existence of an HR department. As to the final section, it includes questions related to the organization's recruitment and selection practices, such as the most common selection methods used, existence of job descriptions, and a rating of the company's selection practices through a 5 point Likert Scale.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Demographic Data

Out of 280 online surveys sent, 150 individuals fully completed the survey, generating a 54% response rate. The online survey included questions about the participants, which are gender, education, job title, and years of experience in the job. The below figures will illustrate the findings related to the demographic data.

Figure 1

Gender Distribution
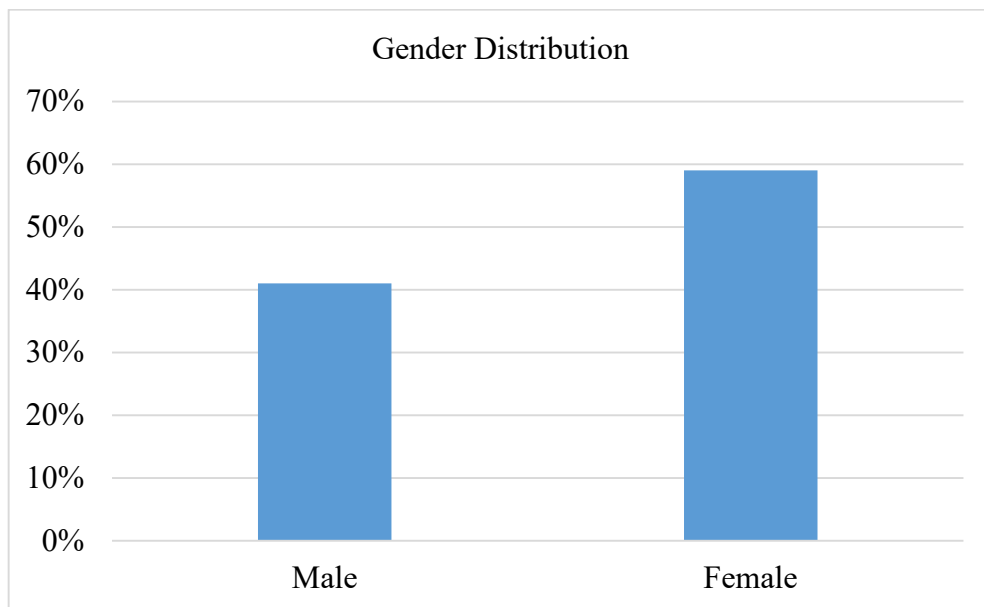
The chart above demonstrates the gender distribution of the participants, where 41% are males and 59% are females. It is important to note that there is a stereotype in

Lebanon about HR being a profession practiced mainly by females. While this is not necessarily true, the data shows that there are more female HR professionals than males. However, this number does not include only HR professionals, but also business owners, and since most of them were males, then the actual number of males who are strictly HR professionals is less than 41%.

Figure 2

Gender Distribution - HR Professionals
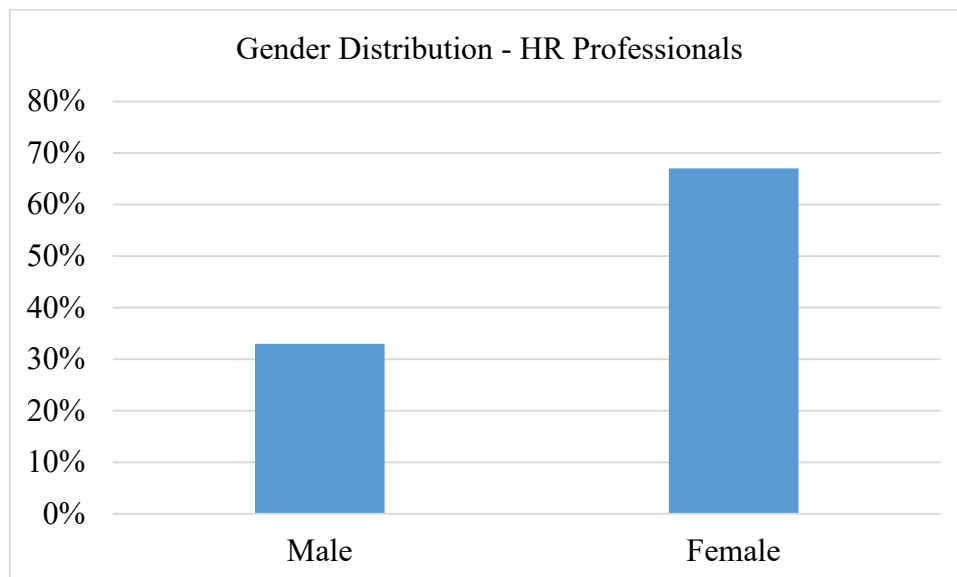
This graph shows the gender distribution for HR professionals only. We can see that the percentage of male participants drops to 33%, while that of females increases to 67%. Therefore, even though this stereotype is certainly misplaced, the results of this survey have added to the notion that HR in Lebanon is a career that is practiced more by females than males.

Figure 3

Education Level

The above chart shows the education level of the participants, where 98% of them have attained some level of a university education, with 66% holding bachelor's degrees, 30% holding master's degrees, 2% holdi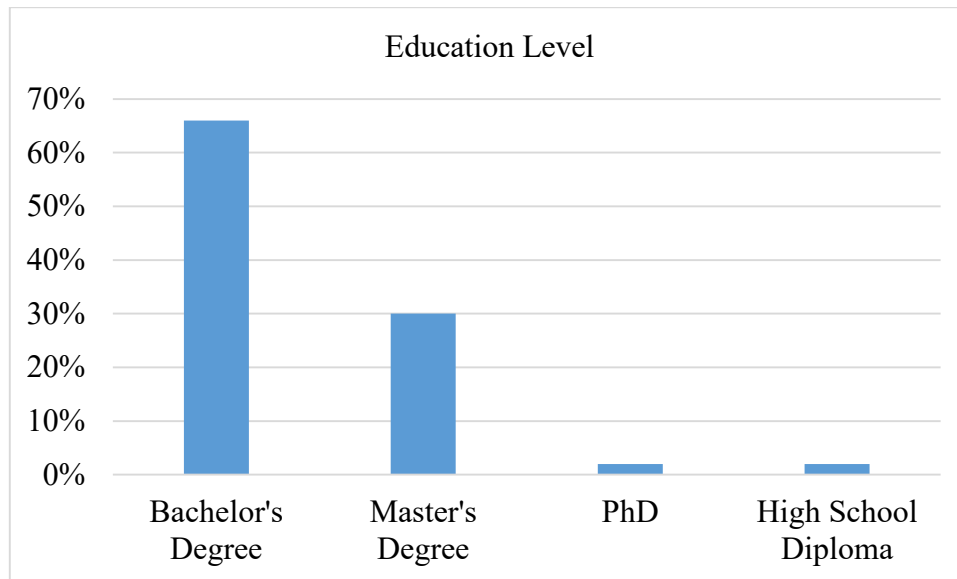ng PhD's, and only 2% not completing a university education. This does not come as a surprise, as these days, increased awareness, in addition to more people being able to afford education, have contributed to an increase in university enrollment rates in Lebanon.

However, participants who hold a bachelor's degree are more than 2 times those who hold a master's degree, which may be an indicator that the concept of graduate studies in Lebanon is not as developed as undergraduate education, especially in the HR field. In fact, a lot of universities are yet to introduce human resources into their graduate programs, even the country's top universities. The American University of Beirut, for example, established the master's in human resources management only 7 years ago, bearing in mind that the university has been around for more than 150 years.

As to the 2% who only hold a high school diploma, they are individuals who preferred to start their professional career early at their family business instead of pursuing a tertiary education. While this practice is not as common as it once was in Lebanon, there are still individuals who prefer to start working within their family business at a young age, in order to be better prepared for the time when they will have to assume management of the organization.

Table 1

Job Titles

Job Title	Percentage
HR Manager	12%
Recruitment Coordinator / Specialist	9%
HR Generalist	3%
HR Director	4%
T&D	3%
HR Officer	9%
HR – Other*	26%
Admin - Non HR	10%
Business Owner	18%
CEO/COO	8%

*Employee relations, coordinators, assistants, administrators, etc…

The above table demonstrates the job titles of the participants. Out of 150 participants, 12% are HR Managers, while 9% are specialized in recruitment roles, and thus are only concerned with a specific HR function, as opposed to more general positions such as HR Officers or HR Generalists who are responsible for several tasks.

Only 3% of the participants are HR Generalists, who are knowledgeable and active in several functions at the same time. This small percentage may be an indicator that companies in Lebanon prefer human resources professionals who are specialized in a specific area, since this may be more productive. For example, recruitment may be more efficient if carried out by a recruitment specialist rather than an HR Generalist.

As to HR Directors, 4% of the participants occupy this role. Organizations in Lebanon that do have HR departments rarely have directors, with a manager being the top position in the department. As such, this is an indicator that a strategic view of HR is not yet developed in Lebanon, since not having a director means that the human resources department lacks an executive level representative on the company's board of directors, and thus is not involved in planning the company's strategy. However, banks and some private universities do have HR directors, which is why it is not a coincidence that these 4% of the participants are in fact active in those two industries.

Regarding training and development, only 3% of the participants are specialized in that role. This may mean that training programs, if present, are usually developed by the human resources department as a whole, rather than being delegated to a specialist. As to HR Officers, they comprise 9% of the participants. Similar to HR Generalists, HR Officers may be active in several department functions, although a generalist is usually a more senior position than an officer.

As to other human resources roles, they represent 26% of the participants. These roles include human resources associates, coordinators, administrators, sourcers, employee relations specialists, information specialists, assistants, compensation and benefits specialists, and consultants. Thus, we can conclude that 66% of the participants are human resources professionals, which is an indicator that the human resources field is growing in Lebanon. In addition, participants demonstrated diversified job titles, with

most of them being specialists in a specific function, rather than generalists.

Regarding administrative positions, they comprise 10% of participants who work at organizations that do not have human resources departments. In these cases, participants indicated that either department managers or the owner of the organization would carry out the recruitment process, even though they did not have any experience in this function, and lacked training in interview techniques and interview questions writing.

Moreover, 18% of participants are owners of a business, either family business, startups, or SMEs. These individuals personally carry out the recruitment and selection process, mainly through personal contacts. This practice is followed by many in Lebanon, were owners usually fill their staffing needs through family members or close friends, or ask them for referrals. Similar to the above situation, most of these individuals are not qualified to carry out such a task.

Finally, 8% of participants are either CEOs or COOs, specifically at startups, and they personally carry out the recruitment and selection for their companies. Similar to owners of a business, most of these individuals have had no exposure to recruitment practices, and do not have the required competencies to fulfill this role. Thus, we can conclude that 34% of the participants are not HR professionals.

Figure 4

Participants' Position Level
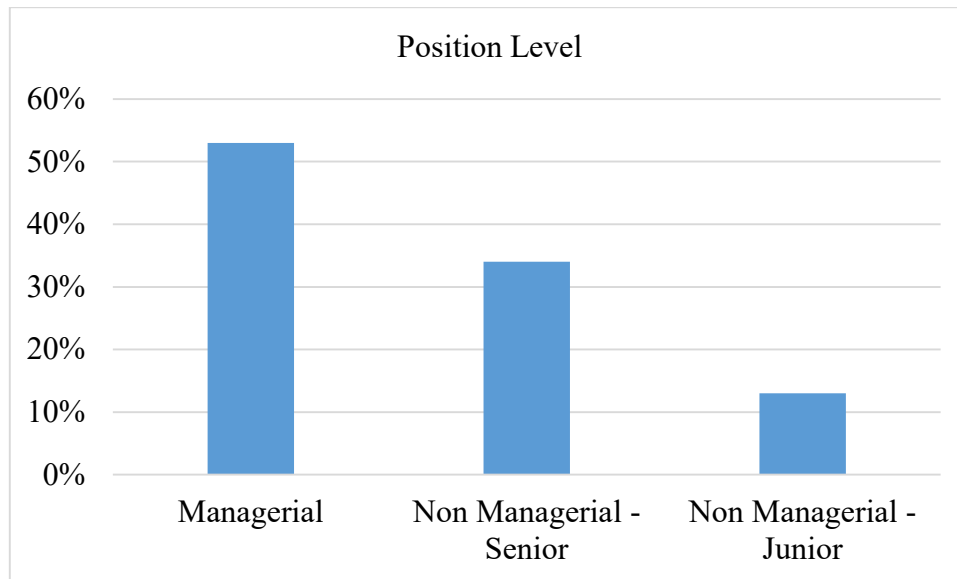
The above chart illustrates the position levels of the participants, with 53% holding managerial positions, 34% holding non managerial – senior positions, and only 13% holding non managerial – junior positions. Senior employees were those having at least 3 years of experience, while junior ones were those having 0-2 years of experience. It was preferable to target employees in senior positions, as they would have a better understanding of their organizations' HR practices, regardless if they had HR departments or not, and thus would be able to offer more credible results.

Indeed, 87% of participants were either managers or senior employees, which makes them better suited to answer the specific questions regarding the recruitment and selection practices that were present in the survey. This is important, as the aim is to obtain credible results that can be generalized in order to acquire a better understanding of the HR practices of organizations in Lebanon.

Figure 5

Participant' Years of Experience in Position
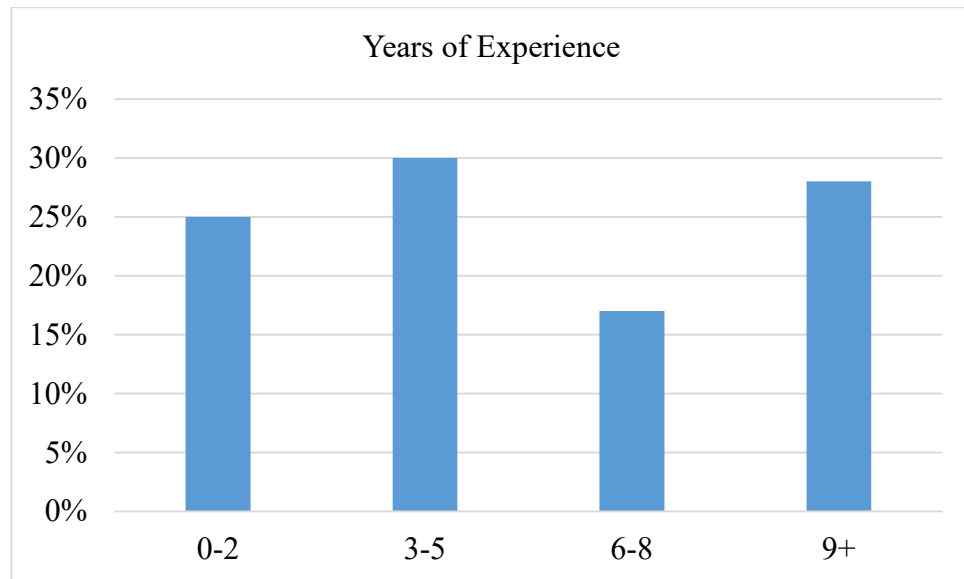
The above chart shows the years of experience the participants have in their respective positions. These statistics do not include their total years of experience since they joined the workforce, but only the years of experience in their current positions. 25% of participants have 0-2 years of experience, 30% have 3-5, 17% have 6-8, and 28% have more than 9 years of experience. The importance of these statistics is that more experienced HR professionals may offer more reliable information, which will add more credibility to the research study.

Organization Data

This data is concerned with information regarding the organization, including its industry, size, profile type, the existence of an HR department and the most common recruitment and selection methods. The below figures will demonstrate the statistics related to these aspects of the organization.

Table 2

Organization Industry

Industry	Percentage
Consulting	15%
Food and Beverage	12%
Retail	12%
Professional Services	9%
Media and Advertising	9%
Pharmaceutical/Healthcare	9%
Education	7%
Hospitality and Tourism	6%
Manufacturing	6%
Construction/Engineering	5%
Banking	4%
Insurance	4%
NGO	4%

The above table shows the industries of the organizations. As shown, a diversified group of industries exists, which was one of the objectives of this research study. Since each industry has its own context, human resources practices may differ from industry to industry. For example, consulting firms almost always use business case analysis as a selection tool when assessing candidates, which is a tool that may never be used by companies in other industries, such as manufacturing companies. The consulting, food and beverage, and retail industries in particular are quite active in Lebanon, with 15%, 12%, and 12%, respectively.

Table 3

Organization Size

Size	Percentage
1-49	33%
50-249	31%
250+	36%

The above table demonstrates the sizes of the targeted organizations, where 33% are small, 31% are medium, and 36% are large. One of the objectives was to include organizations of different sizes, because the size of the organization can greatly influence its human resources practices, especially the recruitment and selection function. For example, since assessment centers are costly, small organizations will most likely not have the required resources to use them. Therefore, targeting organizations of different sizes gives us a better understanding of the human resources profession in Lebanon.

Figure 6

Organization Size – Profile Type
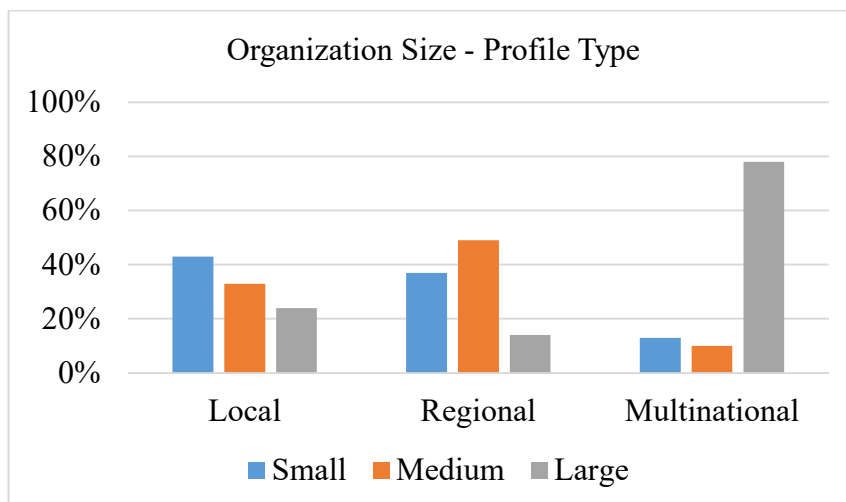
This graph shows the sizes of organizations according to profile type. We can see that small organizations are the most dominant in local companies, which is expected, as a lot of Lebanese firms are SME's or startups. As to regional organizations, the medium sized companies are the most common. However, the distinguished feature is that of multinational companies, with 78% of companies being large ones.

Figure 7

Organization Profile Type
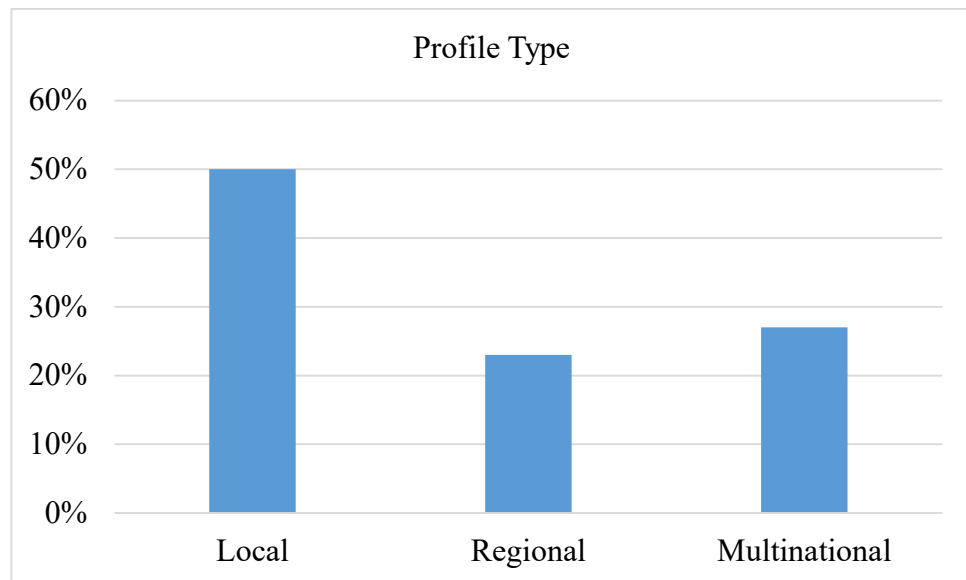
This chart demonstrates the profile type of the organizations, with 50% of the organizations being local, 23% being regional, and 27% being multinational. Similar to size, one of the objectives of this research study was to target organizations of different types, because this too can greatly influence human resources practices. This is especially true for local organizations, due to the several challenges facing human resources practitioners in Lebanon which were discussed in the literature review.

Therefore, due to this study focusing on selection methods in Lebanon, more emphasis was given on local organizations, which is why they comprise 50% of the sample, with the other 50% being divided almost equally between regional and multinational companies. After all, it would be interesting to discover if first, local organizations do in fact have HR departments, and second, if the HR role has evolved past personnel management.

Figure 8

Existence of HR Department
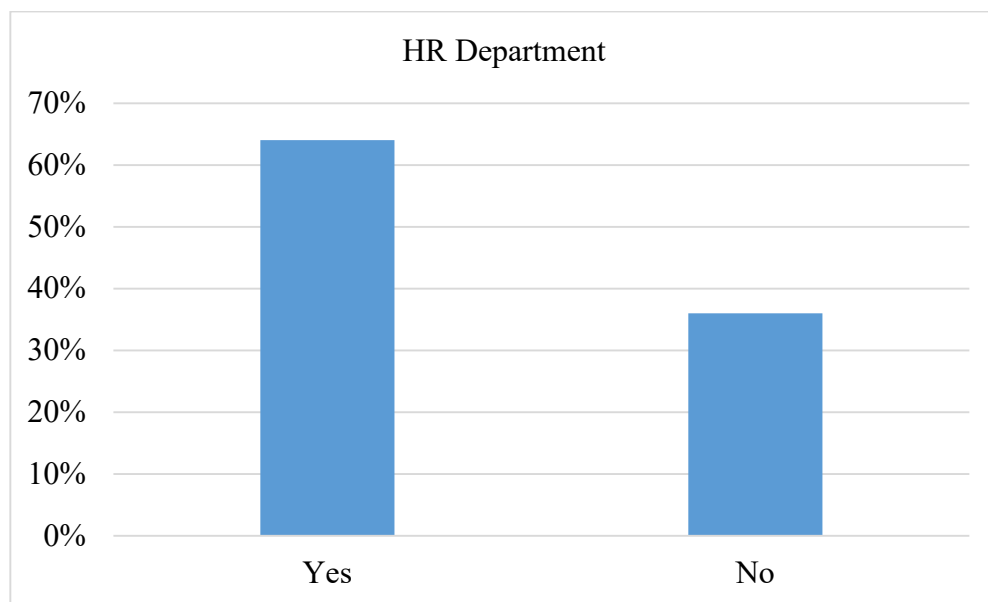
This chart shows whether the organizations have human resources departments, where 64% do, while 36% do not. As discussed before, there are several obstacles that are hindering the development of professional human resources practices in Lebanon, which is why it did not come as a surprise that the vast majority of these 36% organizations are local companies.

As to the 64%, they are largely comprised of regional and multinational companies, in addition to some local organizations, mainly banks, academic institutions, NGOs, and hotels. A common theme between these organizations is that they are all in the services industry, whether education, banking, or hospitality, which explains their need of a human resources department, since their business revolves around constant and direct contact with people.

Figure 9

Existence of HR Department - Profile Type
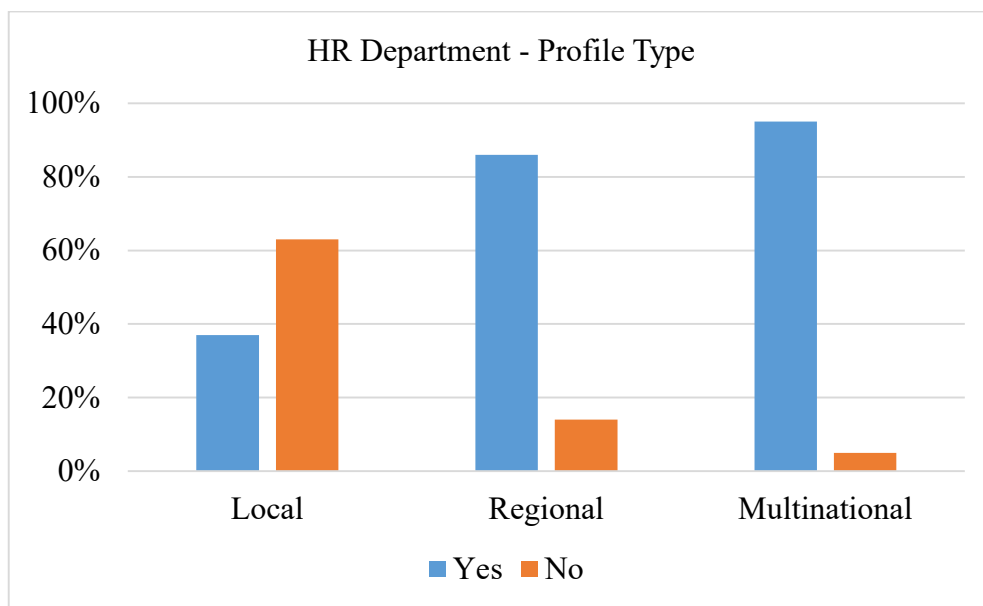
This graph shows the existence of HR departments according to the type of organizations. Regarding local companies, 63% did not have HR departments, while 37% did. This is a sign that local companies are still not aware of the importance of human resources to the organization's success. The organizations that do not have HR departments are mostly small organizations, mainly family businesses and startups. As

to the companies who do have departments, they are larger organizations, especially banks and academic institutions.

As to regional companies, 86% have HR departments, while 14% do not. Those who don't are all small organizations, which may justify the absence of human resources departments. Finally, 95% of multinational organizations have departments, with only 5% not having. This small percentage is comprised of small branches of the organizations operating in Lebanon, where the branch itself does not have a department, but the head office most probably does.

Figure 10

Existence of HR Department - Size
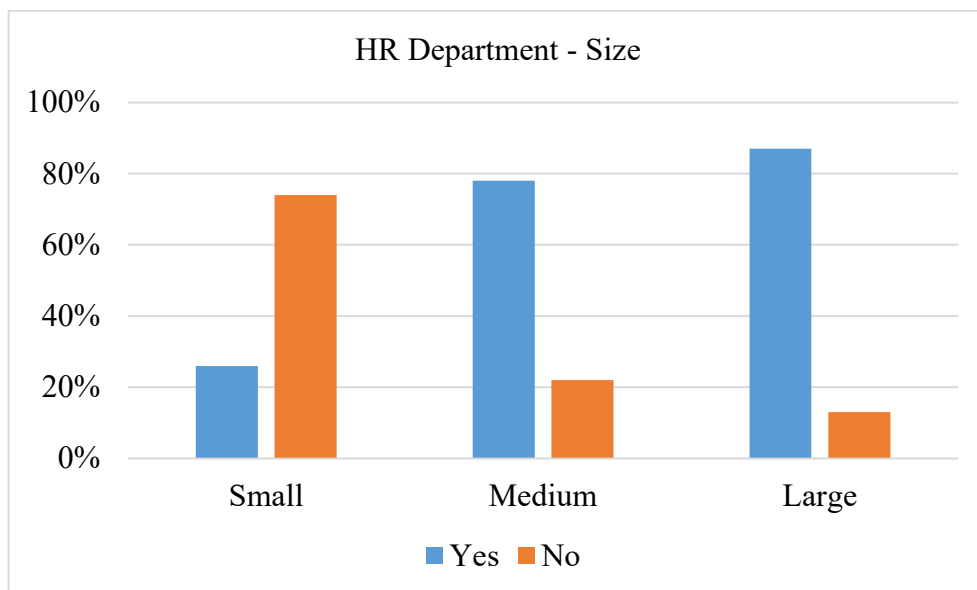
This graph shows the existence of HR departments according to organization size. The data shows that the larger the organization, the higher the existence of HR departments.

Figure 11

Size of HR Department
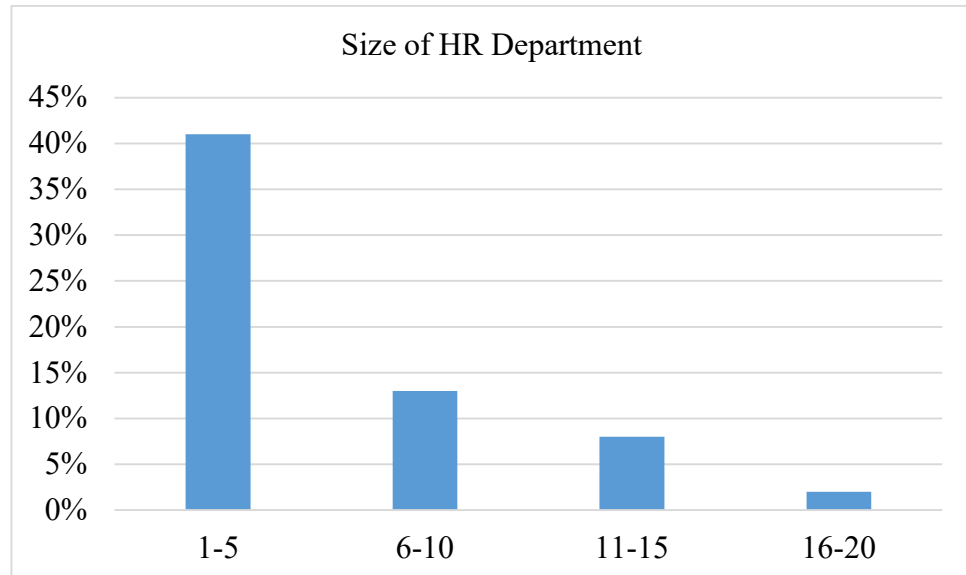
The above chart shows the respective sizes of the HR departments of the

organizations. 41% of organizations had an HR department of a size 1-5, 13% had 6-10,

8% had 11-15, and 2% had 16-20. It is not only important to have an HR department,

but it is also necessary to have it of a convenient size, according to the size of the

organization. It may be enough to have 1-5 employees for small sized organizations, but

that is not the case for larger ones. For example, a staff of 1-5 human resources

personnel will be overwhelmed in an organization that has 500 employees, due to the

high workload related to the administrative tasks of HR, in addition to the functional

tasks such as recruitment and selection and training and development.

Figure 12

Size of HR Department - Organization Size
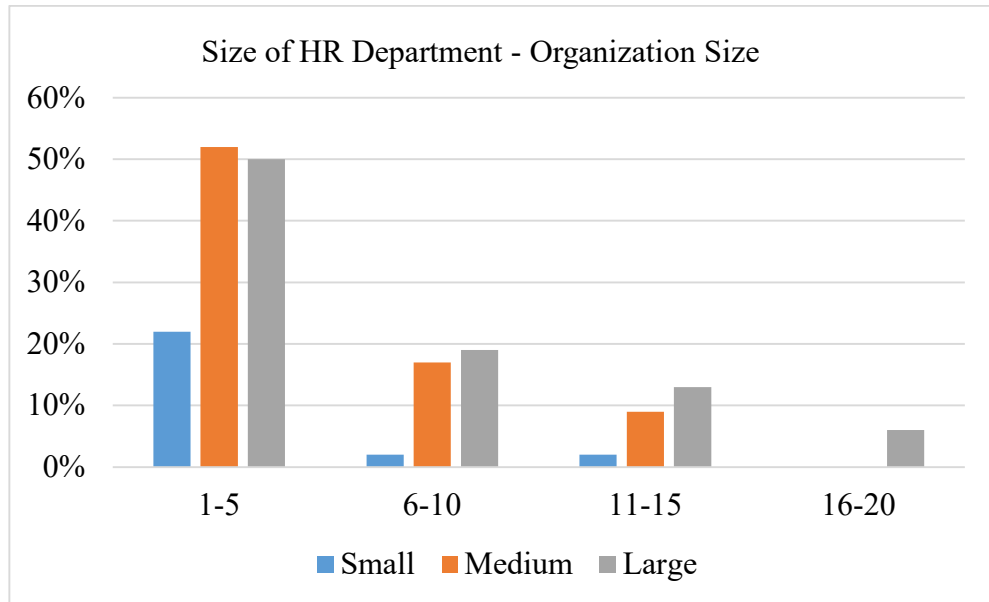
This graph shows the size of HR departments according to organization size, where it is clear that 1-5 employees is the most common size for all organizations, which is a negative indicator, as larger organizations are in need of more HR personnel to meet their staffing demands.

Table 4

Practices of HR Department

HR Practices	Percentage
Recruitment & Selection	64%
Administrative/Personnel	55%
Training & Development	53%
Compensation & Benefits	47%
Employee Relations	33%
Legal Compliance	33%
Health & Safety	32%

This table previews the HR practices of the organizations in this research study. Keeping in mind that only 64% of the target organizations have HR departments, recruitment & selection is the most common practice with 64%, meaning that all organizations that do have HR departments have recruitment and selection as one of their practices. This is expected, as recruitment and selection is a core function of HR. Next come the administrative and the training & development practices, with 55% and 53%, respectively. Administrative tasks include payroll, attendance, sick leaves, data entry, filing, and other tasks related to employee records. This percentage is also expected, given that human resources do have an administrative side, in addition to its other functions.

As to training & development, which comes in at 53%, most multinational and regional organizations in this research study have it as one of their practices, but that is not the case with local organizations. A lot of local companies have not yet developed training programs for their employees, which is a negative indicator to the HR situation in Lebanon, as with today's dynamic and ever changing business environment, employees need to be constantly trained and developed to remain up to date with the market's latest trends. Exceptions include banks, universities, and some retail companies.

Regarding compensation and benefits, 47% of organizations have it as a practice. As with training and development, this is the case with multinational and regional organizations. Most of local organizations, on the other hand, have still not reached this concept, and still follow the payroll system. This is also a negative indicator, because HR is not just about paying salaries, but much more than that. Compensation and benefits schemes include important aspects that can greatly affect organizational and individual performance, such as internal and external equity in terms

of pay, remuneration systems, and industry benchmarking against other competitors. As with a lot of previous exceptions, the exceptions here are local banks, which do have compensation and benefits schemes.

As to employee relations, 33% of companies have it. This number is somehow surprising, as the idea of employee relations is still not very common in Lebanon. Regarding legal compliance, 32% of companies have it as a practice. Not all companies delegate legal matters to HR, where they may have a separate legal department that handles such issues. As to health and safety, also 32% of organizations have it. This practice does not necessarily have to be part of the HR department, but may simply be part of the organization's rules and regulations.

Table 5

HR Practices

HR Practices	Local	Regional	Multinational
Administrative / Personnel	36%	74%	73%
Recruitment & Selection	37%	86%	95%
Training & Development	21%	74%	93%
Compensation & Benefits	21%	60%	85%
Employee Relations	15%	51%	68%
Health & Safety	12%	43%	60%
Legal Compliance	15%	40%	60%

This table shows the HR practices of local, regional, and multinational corporations. We can see that local organizations have low percentages, given that only 37% of companies have HR departments in the first place. Thus, this is another area that local organizations are outperformed in by regional and multinational companies.

Figure 13

Role of HR Department
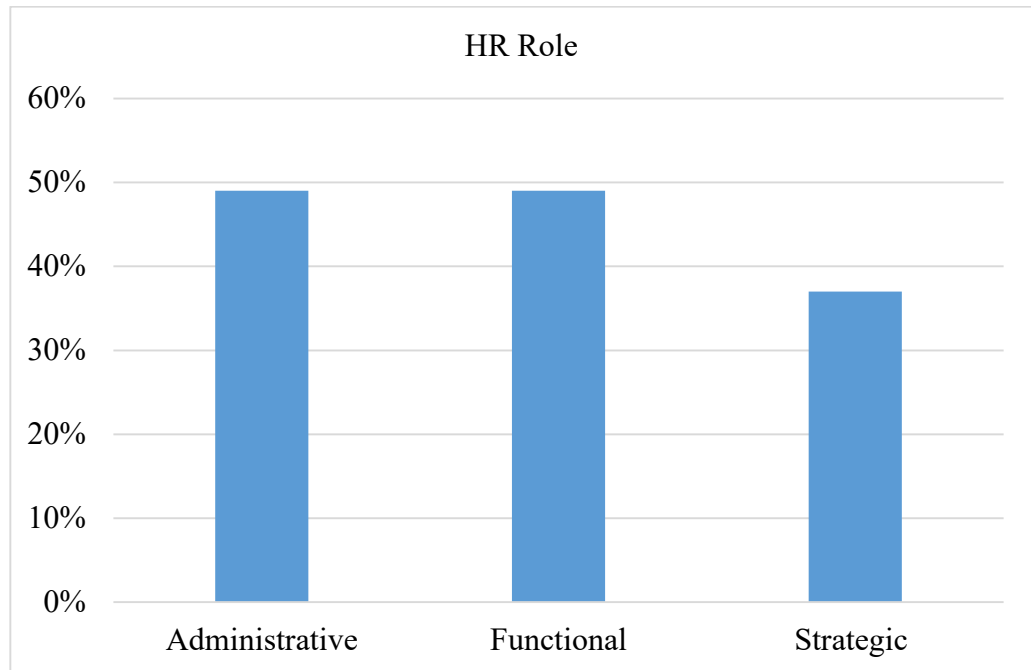
The above chart describes the main role of human resources departments. The administrative and functional roles are equal with 49% each. As described before, the administrative side of human resources is concerned to employee records such as filing, attendance, and sick leaves. As to the functional side of HR, it includes roles such as recruitment & selection, training & development, and compensation & benefits.

The reason both the administrative and functional roles have the same percentage is that most participants who selected one also selected the other, which is a positive sign, since this means that HR in Lebanon is evolving past the concept of personnel management and into the true functions of human resources. Unlike the previous issues, local organizations, and not just multinational and regional ones, score well on this matter, which shows that even though a lot of work is still needed, there are

organizations that are starting to realize the importance of professional human resource

practices.

        However, human resources in Lebanon still lack a strategic approach, as shown

by the percentage in the table, amounting to 37%. This can be linked to the previous

table of job titles of participants, where only 3% of participants were HR Directors. The

lack of HR directors means that human resources departments do not have a

representative on the company's board of directors, and thus do not participate in

shaping the organization's strategy.

Figure 14

Role of HR Department - Profile Type
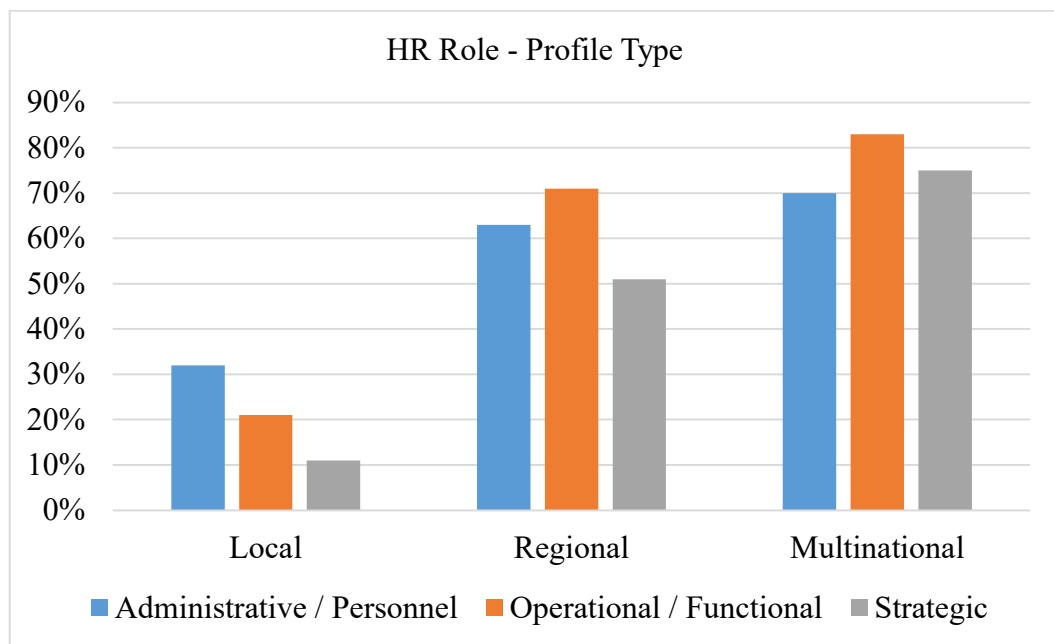
This graph shows the HR role of local, regional, and multinational

organizations. After conducting a separate analysis, we can see that local organizations

are the reason behind the low percentage of strategic role of HR in the previous table,

where only 11% of companies adopt this approach, since only 37% of companies have

HR departments in the first place. Regional companies, and more so multinational ones,

have a much higher percentage, which is another indicator of the big gap between the

standards of local companies and those of international ones.

Table 6

Recruitment and Selection for Organizations without HR Departments

Recruiter	Percentage
Owner	31%
Line Managers	8%
CEO	3%
External Consultants	2%

This table shows who is responsible for recruitment and selection at

organizations that do not have HR departments. Owners come first with 31%, followed

by line managers with 8%, CEO's with 3%, and external consultants with 2%. Since

most of the organizations that did not have HR departments where local family

businesses or SMEs, it is normal that the owners rank the highest, as it has become a

custom in Lebanon for owners to carry out the recruitment and selection process for

their organizations.

However, compared to the other options we can see that there is a big gap,

which is definitely a negative indicator, as it shows that owners rarely ask for expert

advice, or involve other managerial level employees in their decision making, especially

that the owners themselves have little to no HR knowledge. Involving line managers in

particular is very important, because they will be in constant contact with employees,

and are familiar with the qualifications necessary for them to succeed in the position.

Thus, as explained in the literature review, the nature of Lebanese organizations is

hindering the development of true human resources practices in the country.

Table 7

Recruitment and Selection for Organizations without HR Departments –

(Local/Regional/Multinational)

Recruiter	Local	Regional	Multinational
Owner	60%	11%	2%
Line Managers	11%	6%	0%
CEO	2%	0%	0%
External Consultants	2%	0%	0%

For organizations that do not have HR departments, this table shows who

handles the recruitment and selection process according to profile type. We can see that

regional and multinational companies have either very low or no percentages, given that

most of them have HR departments. Local companies, on the other hand, have higher

percentages, especially owners with 60%, given that a lot of them do not have HR

departments.

Table 8

Recruitment Channels

Recruitment Channels	Percentage
Internal Recruitment	71%
Company Website	57%
Personal Contacts	56%
Professional Media	51%
Job Fairs	37%
Social Media	25%
Recruitment Agencies	16%
Headhunters	11%

This table shows the most common recruitment channels that organizations use. Internal recruitment is the highest with 71%, which is normal, as internal recruitment is the most common recruitment method worldwide, where organizations first start from within, and then advertise the job externally if the internal candidates do not meet the requirements.

Next are company website and personal contacts, with almost identical percentages, 57% and 56%, respectively. A lot of organizations now have a career section on their websites for job applications, but this is less so in local organizations, as they lean more towards personal contacts. It is common practice for anyone who has a business to first start filling their staffing needs from their close circle of friends and relatives. While this is understandable, as hiring individuals they know may be less risky than hiring a stranger, but using it as the main recruitment channel shows that local organizations still follow traditional recruitment techniques, and are missing out on the modern ones that may be more efficient.

As to professional media, such as LinkedIn and Glassdoor, they have also become a common recruitment channel, where 51% of organizations use them. However, it is utilized more by regional and multinational organizations than local ones, since as explained above, a lot of local organizations are still following traditional methods, such as personal contacts, which is preventing them from keeping up with the current trends. However, there are some exceptions that include banks, educational institutions, media agencies, and hotels.

Regarding job fairs, they have a relatively low percentage, with only 37% using them as a recruitment channel. The reason for this is that a lot of local organizations, who comprise 50% of the targeted organizations in this research study, do not use this method, with the exception of banks, media/advertising organizations, and some NGOs. This is also another negative indicator to the HR situation in Lebanon, as job fairs give organizations access to a large pool of talent that local organizations are missing out on. After all, recruitment is about advertising the job in order to attract the largest number of applicants possible, and not just confine the job to a specific segment, such as personal contacts.

With the rise of professional media, the usage of social media as a recruitment source, such as Facebook and Instagram, has decreased, with only 25% of organizations using them. Again, most of these organizations are Lebanese companies. One reason may be that these organizations have limited resources and thus prefer to post on social media as it is for free, as opposed to professional media. As to recruitment agencies and headhunters, their usage is low, with 16% and 11%. This method of recruitment is not very common in Lebanon, and few organizations use it, whether local, regional, or multinational ones.

Table 9

Recruitment Channels – (Local/Regional/Multinational)

Recruitment Channels	Local	Regional	Multinational
Internal Recruitment	65%	66%	88%
Personal Contacts	79%	43%	25%
Job Fairs	11%	51%	73%
Social Media	25%	29%	23%
Professional Media	28%	69%	80%
Recruitment Agencies	5%	14%	38%
Headhunters	4%	14%	20%
Company Website	33%	80%	80%

In this table, we can see that local organizations still rely on traditional recruitment channels, mainly personal contacts, who in many cases are the personal contacts of the owner. Regional and multinational organizations, on the other hand, use more advanced methods, which is another indicator that local companies are still lagging behind and have failed to follow modern HR standards.

Figure 15

Existence of Job Descriptions
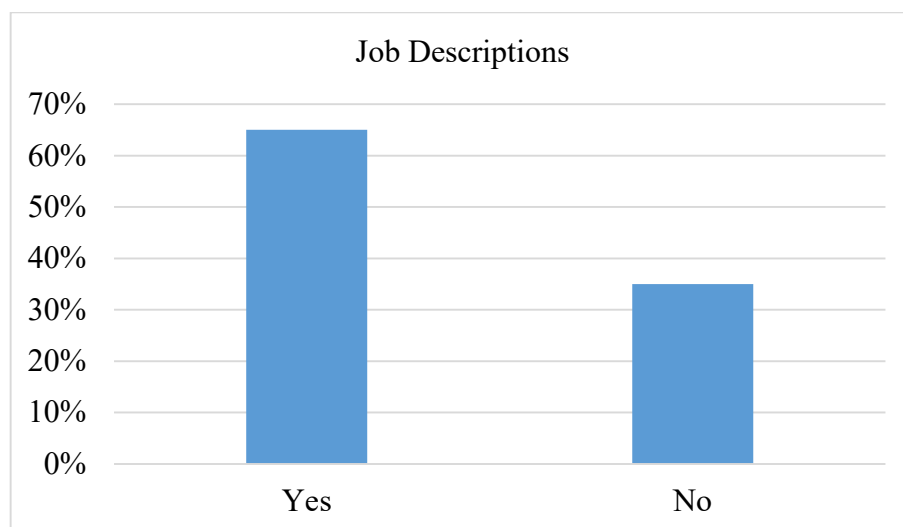
This chart shows whether organizations have fully developed job descriptions, with 65% stating yes and 35% stating no. Job descriptions are an essential part of the recruitment cycle, as they are part of the job analysis, which is the first step in the recruitment process. Expectedly, almost all of the organizations who do not have job descriptions are local ones, which can be explained by some of the statistics discussed previously. Not having HR departments, having owners carry out recruitment and selection, and relying on personal contacts as the main source of recruitment can justify why these organizations do not have job descriptions, as they find no need for it.

Figure 16

Existence of Job Descriptions - Profile Type
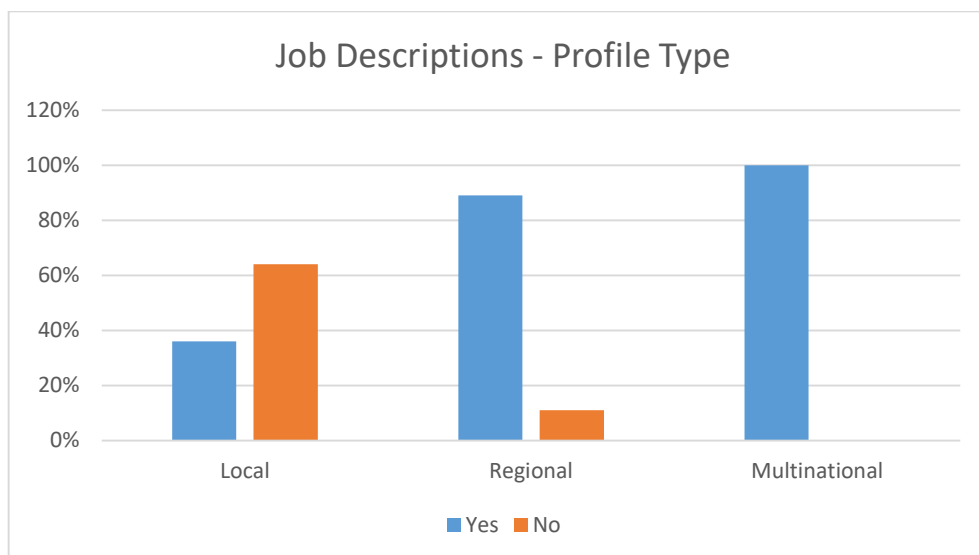
This graph is another sign of the situation of Lebanese organizations, where only 36% have job descriptions, and as we can see, there is a big gap between them and other organizations, with multinational ones in particular all having job descriptions.

Table 10

Job Description Development

Job Description Development	Percentage
HR	79%
Line Managers	18%
Department Managers	15%
External Consultants	11%
Owner	5%

This table explains who is responsible for developing job descriptions. Human resources departments rank the first, where 79% of organizations rely on their HR to develop them. This is normal, as it is one of the tasks of human resources, and is common in all types of organizations.

As to line managers, 18% of organizations take input from their line managers when developing job descriptions. As explained before, line managers can play a crucial role in the recruitment process, because first, they will be in constant contact with the employee, and second, they are aware of the job environment and can assist HR in drafting the tasks that will be required of the employee. Unfortunately, as with many previous cases, the results of this research study showed that local organizations rarely depend on line managers to develop job descriptions.

Regarding department managers and external consultants, 15% and 11% of organizations use them, respectively. Participants explained that their organizations rely on department managers or external consultants for managerial and sensitive positions, and not for entry level ones, where they delegate the task only to HR. This practice is also found in local companies, and not just regional and multinational ones. Finally, for

the few startups and family business that do have job descriptions, they are developed

by the owner.

Table 11

Selection Methods for Managerial and Non-Managerial Positions

Selection Methods	Non-Managerial Positions	Managerial Positions
Interviews	91%	86%
Assessment Centers	6%	25%
Psychometric Tests	15%	19%
Business Case Analysis	15%	17%
Simulations	9%	11%
Role Plays	11%	9%
Work Samples	15%	18%
Reference Background Checks	45%	46%

This table shows the most common selection methods used for managerial and

non-managerial positions. For both positions, interviews are the most common, with

91% of organizations using them for non-managerial positions, and 86% for managerial

ones. This does not come as a surprise, since as explained in the literature review,

interviews are the most common selection tool used worldwide.

Next come reference background checks with almost identical percentages,

with 45% of organizations using them for non-managerial positions, and 46% for

managerial ones. Reference background checks include references about the employee,

in addition to requiring official documentation, such as criminal records. Their usage is

relatively high, which shows that they are still a common selection method in Lebanon.

However, its extensive usage does not give it high validity, since as discussed

previously, reference background checks can be filled with biased and inaccurate information.

As to the other methods, they are all modern selection tools, where they share almost similar percentages, with only slight increases for managerial positions. The only selection tool to show a considerable difference in usage between non-managerial and managerial positions, where only 6% of organizations use them for non-managerial roles, compared to the 25% for managerial ones. While assessment centers are the most valid selection tool, they are expensive and can be very lengthy, which explains their low usage. When used, they are usually for managerial positions, not junior ones, which justify the increase in usage for managerial posts.

Table 12

*Selection Methods for Managerial and Non-Managerial Positions – (Local/Regional/ Multinational)*

	Non-Managerial			Managerial		
Selection Methods	**Local**	**Regional**	**MNC**	**Local**	**Regional**	**MNC**
Interviews	84%	97%	98%	84%	94%	83%
Assessment Centers	3%	9%	10%	9%	34%	45%
Psychometric Tests	5%	23%	25%	9%	31%	28%
Business Case Analysis	4%	17%	33%	7%	26%	30%
Simulations	3%	17%	13%	5%	11%	20%
Role Play	4%	20%	15%	3%	9%	23%
Work Samples	8%	20%	25%	11%	20%	30%
Reference Background Checks	63%	29%	25%	63%	29%	30%

This table shows the most common selection methods used by each type of organization, for managerial and non-managerial positions. It is clear from the data that local companies heavily use traditional methods, which are interviews and reference background checks, while the other, modern techniques have a very low usage. As to the other types, even though they show a significant increase in usage of modern techniques, they as well still depend mainly on the interview method.

What can be concluded from this table is that there is a low usage of modern selection tools, both for managerial and non-managerial positions, although with varying degrees. All organizations are all depending heavily on interviews as the main selection tool, and reference background checks as well for local companies. While interviews are certainly a valid tool, they alone are not enough, which is why triangulation is key. Incorporating modern techniques in particular is important, because they offer a new perspective and allow for better assessment of candidates.

Figure 17

When Are Interview Questions Developed
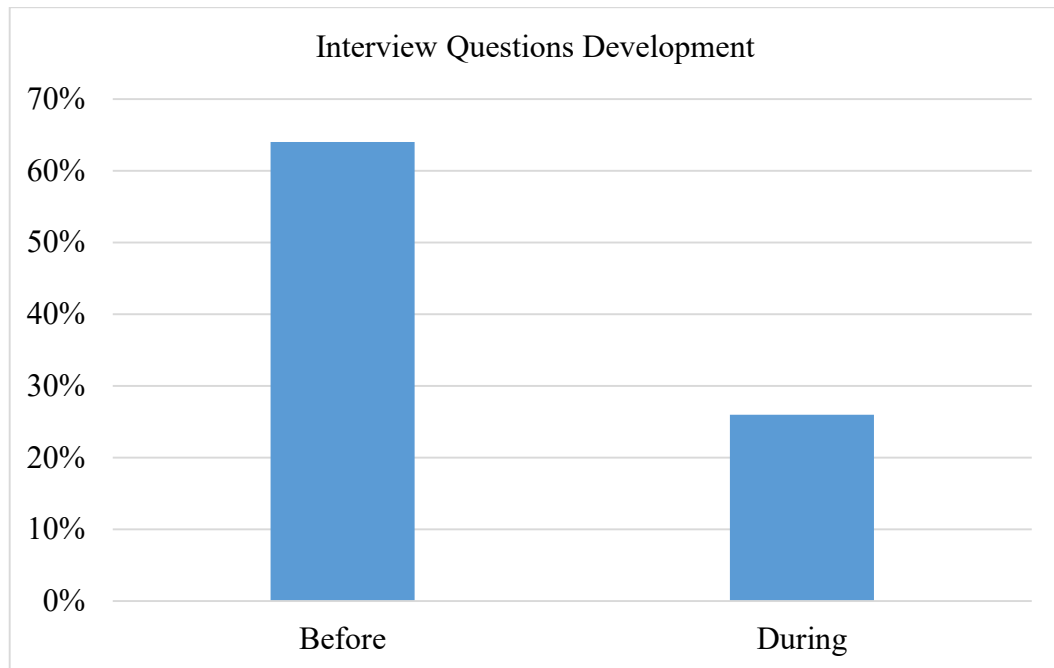
This chart shows whether organizations develop interview questions before or during the interview. 64% of organizations develop them before, meaning that they follow the structured interview method, where the questions are prepared in advance, and are asked to all candidates in equal order. While structured interviews have the highest validity, they are not the most common interview type worldwide, which happens to be the semi-structured interview. Thus, the situation in Lebanon is different, where the structured interview is dominant.

As to unstructured interviews, 26% of organizations follow this interview type, meaning that the questions arise during the interview from the conversation between the interviewer and interviewee. However, very few local organizations use this method, where they follow almost completely the structured interview method.

Figure 18

When Are Interview Questions Developed – Profile Type
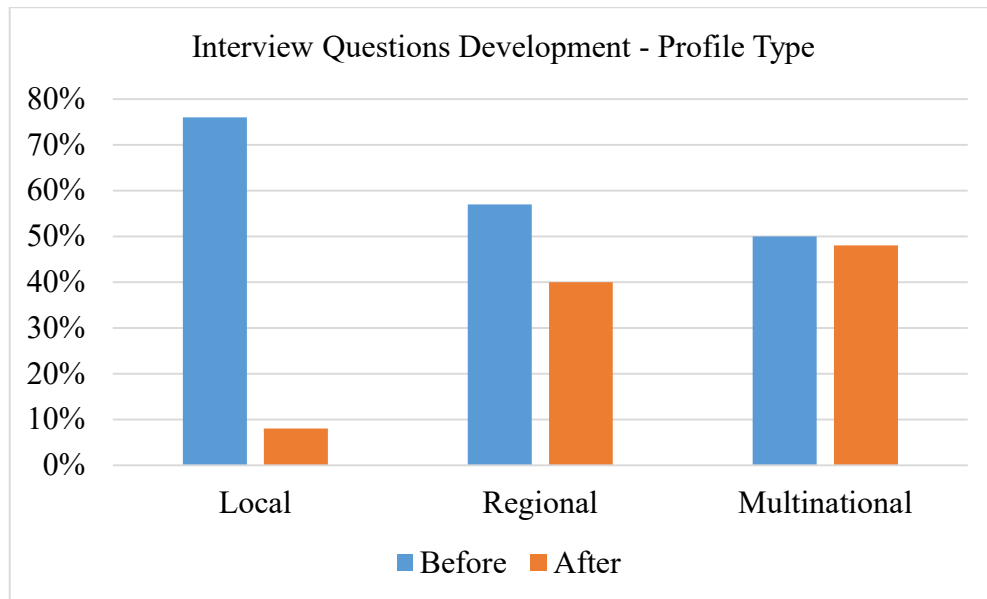
This graph shows a separate analysis of interview questions developed according to profile type. 76% of local companies develop interview questions before, meaning that they follow the structured interview format, whereas universally the semi-structured is the most common. However, this data may not be entirely accurate and is only the reported usage of this method, since a lot of interviewers have neither the training nor the qualifications to develop interview questions. As to regional and multinational companies, they have a combination between structured and unstructured interviews, especially multinational ones.
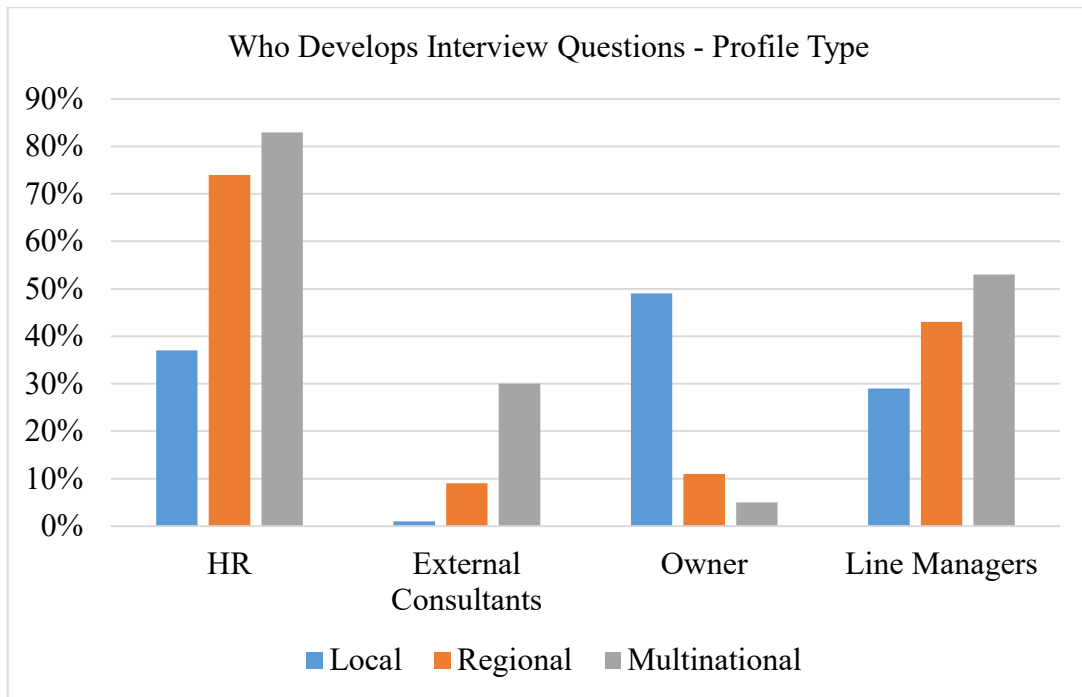
Table 13

Who Develops Interview Questions

Who Develops Interview Questions	Percentage
HR	58%
Line Managers	35%
Owners	23%
External Consultants	10%

This table explains who develops interview questions. HR has the highest percentage with 58%. This is logical, as this is one of the responsibilities of human resources departments. Next come line managers, with 35% of organizations involving their line managers in the interview process. This is a positive sign, because as said before, line managers can provide valuable input due to their knowledge of the job. Also, we can see that while line managers' contribution to job descriptions was somehow low, they have an active role in interview questions development.

As to owners, 23% of organizations had them develop their interview questions. Since owners themselves handle recruitment and selection for organizations that do not have HR departments, it is logical that they as well develop the questions. Finally, only 10% of organizations rely on external consultants for interview questions development, which shows that the management consulting industry in general, and HR consulting in particular, is not still developed in Lebanon.

Figure 19

Who Develops Interview Questions – Profile Type

Who Develops Interview Questions - Profile Type

        This graph shows who develops interview questions in each type of

organization. We can see that in the absence of HR departments, local organizations

rely on owners, and rarely involve external consultants or line managers in the process,

even though most of these owners are not qualified for this task. The HR departments of

regional and multinational companies, on the other hand, collaborate with other parties

in order to develop interview questions.

Table 14

Training in Interview Questions Writing and Interviewing Techniques

Training	Interview Questions Writing	Interviewing Techniques
Yes	47%	49%
No	44%	42%

For organizations that have interviews as a selection method, this table shows if interviewers are trained in interview questions writing and interviewing techniques. Regarding questions writing, 47% are trained, while 43% are not, which is a high number, and is an indicator of inefficient selection practices. As to interviewing techniques, 49% are trained, while 42% are not, which is also a high number.

Table 15

Training in Interview Questions Writing and Interviewing Techniques – (Local/ Regional/Multinational)

Training	Interview Questions Writing			Interviewing Techniques		
	Local	Regional	Multinational	Local	Regional	Multinational
Yes	20%	74%	75%	21%	71%	80%
No	64%	23%	23%	63%	26%	18%

This table shows whether interviewers have received training on the above competencies in local, regional, and multinational companies. Again, local companies rank low on this issue, as most interviewers are owners with no HR background, and thus it is expected that they have not been exposed to such training.
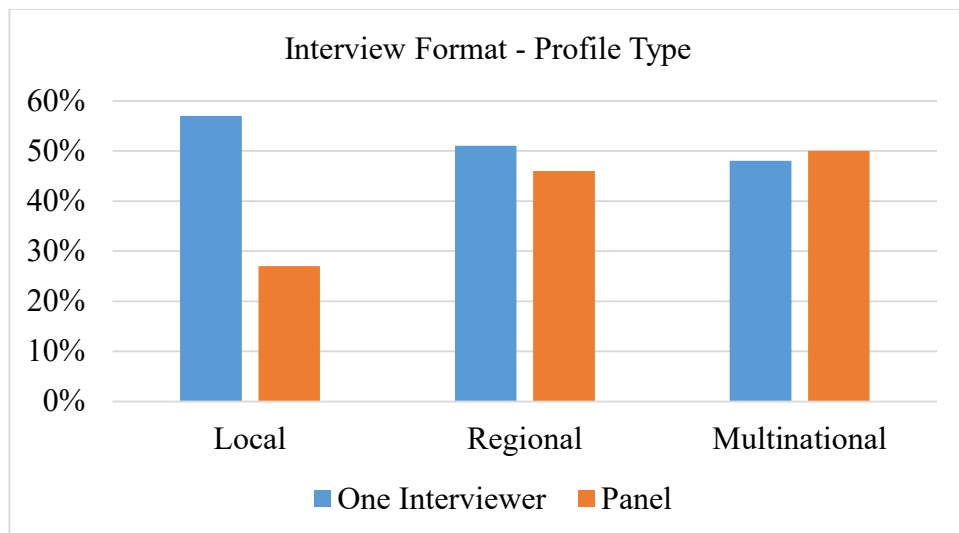
Figure 20

Interview Format
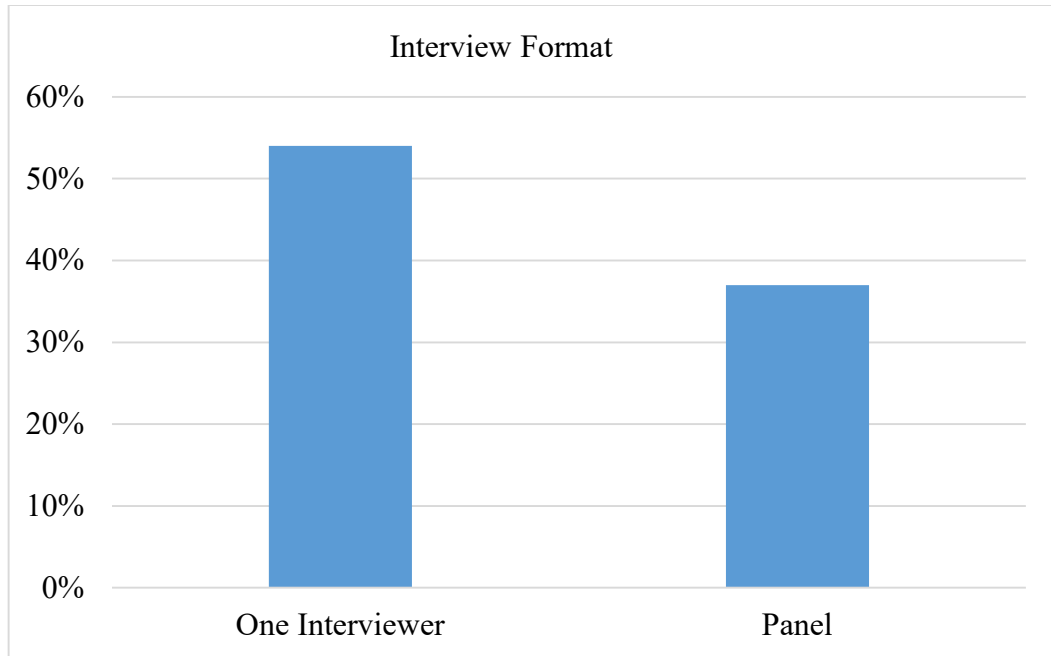
This graph shows the interview format that organizations follow, where 54% of companies use only one interviewer, and 37% use a panel.

Figure 21

Interview Format – Profile Type

The single interview format is heavily used by local organizations, since in a lot of cases owners themselves are doing the interviews, and they rarely involve other parties. As to the panel interview format, it is used more by regional organizations, and more so multinational ones, who are the only ones to have the panel interviewer format higher than the single interviewer format. Overall, it is preferable to have more than one interviewer in order to reduce bias.

Table 16

Panel Members

Panel Members	Percentage
HR	70%
Department Manager	48%
Partner/GM/CEO	28%
Line Manager	28%

For organizations who follow the panel interview format, this table shows the panel members present in the interview. HR ranks the highest with 70%, which is expected, as conducting interviews is one of the responsibilities of human resources. Department managers come next, with 48% of organizations having the heads of the concerned department in the interview. Partners, general managers, or CEOs come after, with 28% of organizations having one of them in the interview. This is especially common in multinational organizations in the professional services industry, such as auditing companies, where the partner is usually present in the final interview. Finally, 28% of companies have line managers in the interview. Having a line manager is important, because he will be directly supervising the potential employee.

Figure 22

Usage of Competency Based Interviews
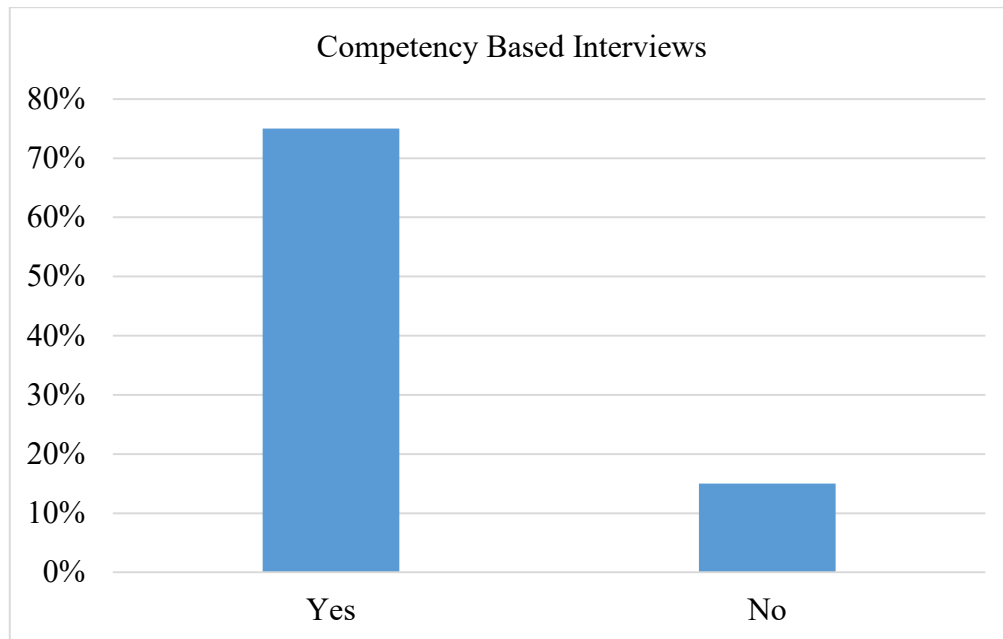
This graph shows whether organizations use competency based interview questions, with 75% stating yes, and only 15% stating no. This is an encouraging statistic, as it shows that organizations in Lebanon are shifting towards modern interviewing techniques, where they target specific competencies that are of interest to them, and that are related to the job. However, this also shows that there is a lot of inconsistency in HR practices, especially in local organizations.

On one hand, a lot of interviewers are untrained neither in interview writing nor interviewing techniques, while on another hand, most organizations use competency based interviews which are a somehow advanced form of interviews that require training. Also, it is important to note that this data is the reported usage of competency based interviews, so it is not evident if this percentage of organizations actually use them in practice.

Figure 23

*Usage of Competency Based Interviews - Profile Type*
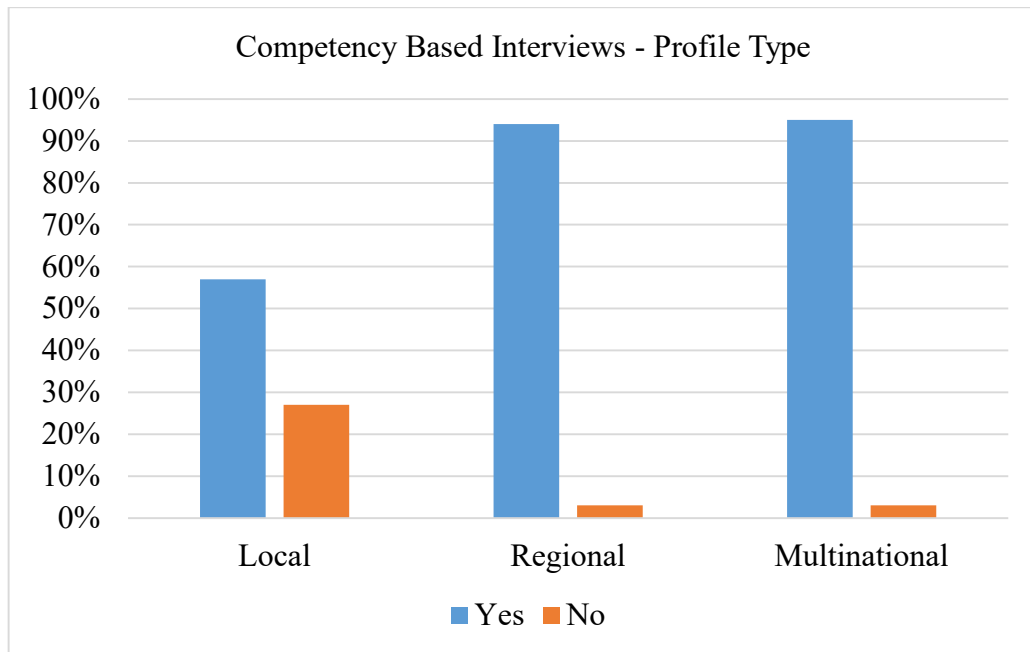
Through this graph, we can see that almost all regional and multinational companies use competency based interviews, with 94% and 95%. Local organizations, on the other hand, have 27% organizations who do not use such interviews. Again, we can see that local organizations are not keeping up with modern selection techniques.

Figure 24

Candidates' Assessment Methods
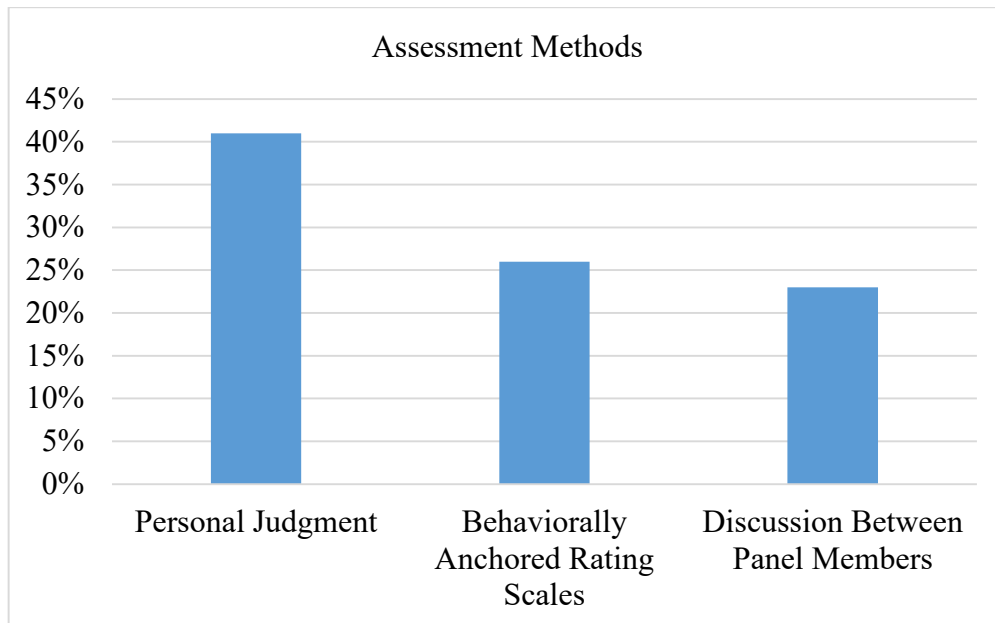
This graph explains how organizations rate their candidates after the interview. Personal judgment of the interviewer ranks the highest with 41%. Behaviorally anchored rating scales come next with 26%. This method can be a suitable replacement for personal judgment, because the candidate is objectively assessed based on a set of criteria, and so the subjectivity of the assessor is minimized. Finally, for panel interviews, 23% of organizations depend on discussion between the panel members to assess the candidate. While it is beneficial to have more than one opinion, discussions can still be highly subjective, which is why other options such as BARS are more efficient.

Figure 25

Candidates' Assessment Methods - Profile Type
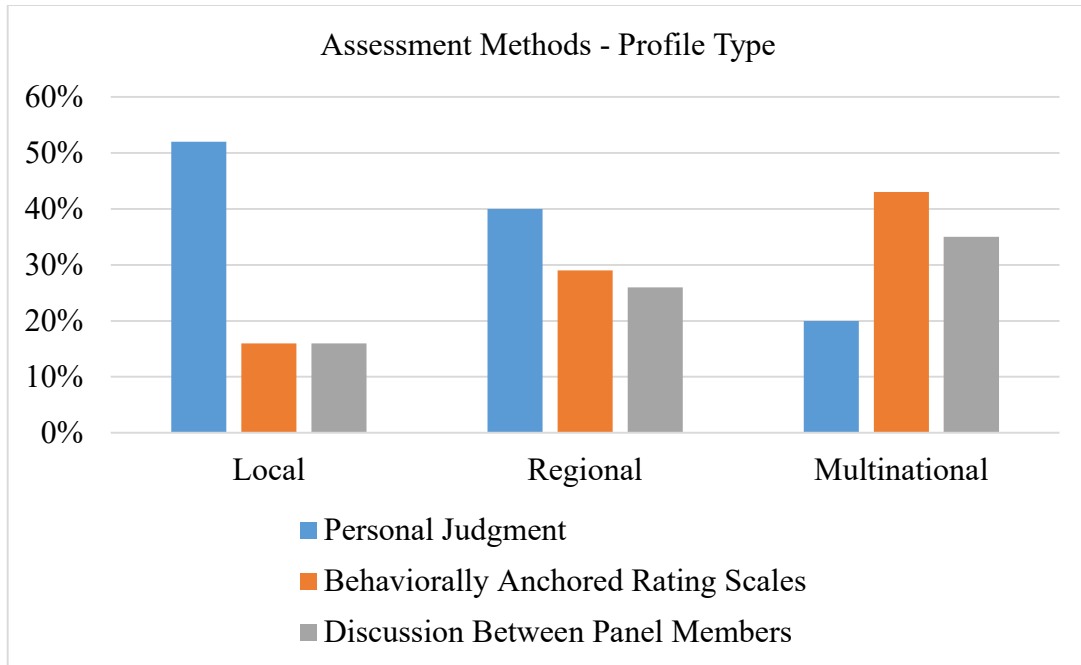
    This graph shows that local companies rely heavily on personal judgment, even though a lot of interviewers are not even HR professionals, and thus are not qualified to issue such judgments. Regional organizations depend on this method as well, but also use other methods more often. However, multinational organizations are the only ones to use behaviorally anchored rating scales more than the other methods. It is preferable to use this method, as it is objective and minimizes bias, as opposed to the subjective nature of the other methods.

Figure 26

Selection Process Rating
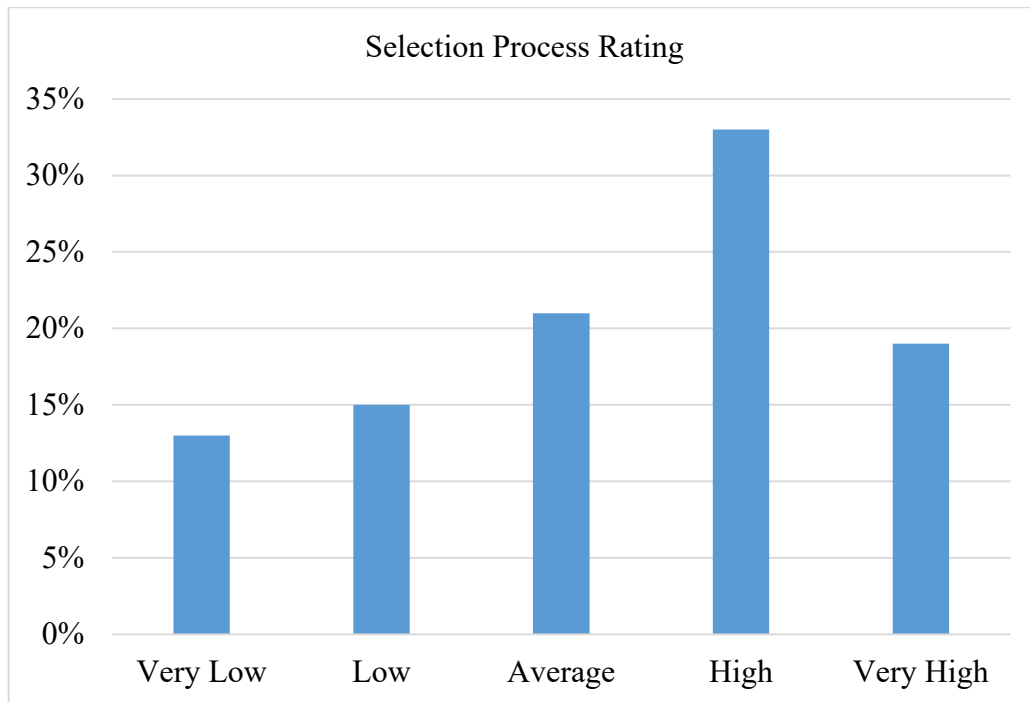
This graph shows how highly participants rate the selection process at their organizations. Surprisingly, a lot of participants actually gave a low or average rating to the selection practices of their organizations, with 13% giving a very low rating, 15% giving a low rating, and 21% giving an average rating. This is an important indicator, because it shows that organizations are aware of the challenges facing them, and are not denying the need for change and improvement. As to the high ratings, 33% of companies gave a high rating, and 19% gave a very high one. These ratings might be over exaggerated, because as shown in previous tables, there are several issues facing HR practitioners in Lebanon.

Figure 27

Selection Process Rating - Profile Type
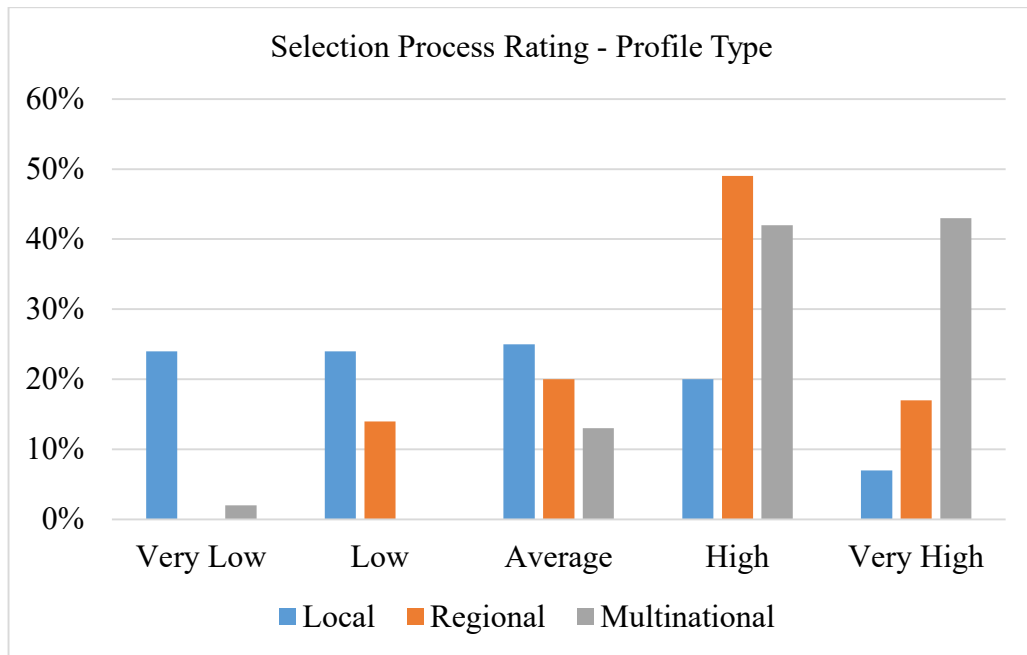
For local organizations, we can see that the percentages are mainly concentrated in the very low, low, and average ratings, which is expected, given the numerous issues in the HR practices of these organizations. However, it is also an encouraging sign that these companies are aware of these issues and gave themselves low ratings, so that they may work on improving their performance. As to regional and multinational ones, they rarely gave a below average rating, where most of them gave high and very high ones. Even though these companies are certainly performing better than local ones, these high ratings are somehow inaccurate, because they too are facing several issues in Lebanon, not just local organizations.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To sum up, the results of this study have shown that multinational companies are up to date with international HR standards. Regional organizations are better than local ones, but have not yet reached the level of multinational companies. As to local organizations, they are still far behind and require a lot of work to catch up. A lot of local organizations in this research study do not have HR departments, while those who do rarely adopt a strategic view of HR and are still functioning as personnel departments. Moreover, owners are highly involved in the recruitment and selection process, even though a lot of them are not well equipped to do so. Finally, there is still a heavy reliance on traditional recruitment channels, such as personal contacts, and traditional selection methods such as reference background checks, with few organizations adopting modern techniques.

Nonetheless, there are issues shared not only by local companies, but regional and multinational ones as well, such as the usage of traditional recruitment and selection techniques, size of HR departments in comparison to the size of the organization, unqualified interviewers, and usage of subjective assessment methods. However, due to Lebanon's complicated economic, political, and social structure, local organizations are affected more, since they are a part of Lebanese society.

Nonetheless, that is not to say that there are not some positive signs, especially in the banking, education, and hospitality sectors, where a lot of organizations operating in these industries have well developed HR practices, even though they still do not match the standards of international companies. Also, the integration of human

resources concentrations into universities, especially in graduate studies, is an encouraging sign. Finally, the presence of a human resources syndicate in the country is also an important matter, as it gives practitioners more credibility.

Therefore, what is required is for other organizations to follow the example set by these few companies, in order to develop true human resources practices. Family businesses in particular need to evolve, as they make up the bulk of the private sector in Lebanon. After all, the recruitment and selection function is constantly evolving, where the future of selection lies in the advanced methods explained in this research study, in addition to newly emerging areas such as HR analytics.

Thus, even though interviews are still set to be the most common method in the foreseeable future, organizations must move on from traditional methods into the modern ones, because in today's dynamic business environment, new tools are needed to remain competitive and achieve a sustainable presence in the market. More importantly, government intervention is essential, because the private sector is not capable of solving its problems on its own, many of which are due to the absence of a strong government in the first place.

APPENDIX I

SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to gain a better understanding of the selection practices of small, medium, and large-scale organizations in Lebanon.

Your participation is anonymous and highly appreciated.

Section 1:

1. Gender

    - Male
    - Female

2. What is the highest education level attained?

    - High School Diploma
    - Bachelor's Degree
    - Master's Degree
    - PhD

3. Job Title

    [   ]

4. What is your position level in the organization?

    - Managerial level
    - Non-Managerial Senior level
    - Non- Managerial Junior level

5. Please specify your years of work experience in this position

    - 0-2
    - 3-5
    - 6-8
    - 9+

6. What industry does your organization operate in? Please check all that apply

    - Banking
    - Consulting
    - Construction & Engineering

- o Education
- o Financial Services
- o FMCG
- o Food & Beverage
- o Hospitality & Tourism
- o Manufacturing
- o Media, Advertising & Communication
- o Pharmaceutical/ Healthcare
- o Retail
- o Telecommunications
- o Other (please specify)………………………

7. What is the profile type of your organization?

- Local
- Regional
- Multinational

Section 2:

1. What is the total number of employees at your organization?

- 1-49
- 50-249
- 250+

2. Do you have an HR department?

- Yes
- No
  If Yes, answer questions 3-5
  If No, answer question 6

3. How many employees does the HR department contain?

- 1 - 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 15
- 16-20
- Other (please specify)………………………

4. Which of the following practices is the HR department involved in? Please check all that apply

- Administrative/ Personnel
- Recruitment & Selection
- Training & Development

- Compensation & Benefits
- Employee Relations
- Health & Safety
- Legal Compliance
- Others (please specify)………………………

5. How would you describe the role of HR in your organization? Please check all that apply

- Administrative/ Personnel
- Functional/ Operational
- Strategic

6. Who is responsible for the recruitment and selection process in your organization?

- Owner
- External Consultants
- Line Managers
- Other (please specify)……………………..

Section 3:

1. Which of the following sources do you rely on to attract candidates? Please check all that apply

- Internal Recruitment
- Personal Contacts
- Job Fairs
- Professional Media
- Social Media
- Recruitment Agencies
- Headhunters
- Company Website
- Others (please specify) ………………………………….

2. Do you have clearly defined Job Descriptions?

- Yes
- No
  If Yes, please explain who develops them …………………………….

3. What are the most common selection methods used for non-managerial positions at your organization? Please check all that apply

- Interviews
- Assessment Centers

- Psychometric Tests
- Work Samples
- Role plays
- Business case analysis
- Simulations
- Reference Background Checks
- Others (please specify)……………………………

4. What are the most common selection methods used for managerial positions at your organization? Please check all that apply

- Interviews
- Assessment Centers
- Psychometric Tests
- Work Samples
- Role plays
- Business case analysis
- Simulations
- Reference Background Checks
- Others (please specify)…………………………..

5. Do you develop interview questions before or during the interview?

- Before
- During

If you selected interviews as a common selection method, kindly answer the following questions:

6.   Who develops the interview questions?

- HR
- Owner
- Line Managers
- External Consultants
- Others (please specify)...…………………………..

7. Do the people who write the interview questions receive training in "interview   questions writing"?

- Yes
- No

8. Do the interviewers receive training in "interviewing techniques"?

- Yes
- No

9. In what format is the interview conducted?

    - One Interviewer
    - Panel (please state who)

10. Do you use competencies as the basis of interview questions?
    - Yes
    - No

11. How do you rate the candidate's performance in the interview?
    - Personal judgment
    - Behaviorally anchored rating scales
    - Discussion between panel members

12. On a scale from 1 to 5, how highly do you rate the selection process at your organization?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Low	Low	Average	High	Very High

Thank you for your participation!

REFERENCES

Afiouni, F. & Nakhle, S. (2016). "Human resource management in Lebanon". In: Budhwar & Mellahi, Eds. *Handbook of Human Resource Management in the Middle East.* Edward Elgar Pub., November 25, Chapter 10; available from https://www-elgaronline-com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/view/9781784719517. 00019.xml; Internet; accessed on September 17, 2018.

Ariss, A. & Sidani, Y. (2016). "Understanding religious diversity: Implications from Lebanon and France". *Cross Cultural & Strategic Management 23*(3); available from https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/docview/ 2083825093?pq-origsite=summon; Internet; accessed on November 9, 2018.

Arnold, J. & Randall, R. (2012). *Work Psychology: Understanding Human Behavior in the Workplace.* (5th ed.). Pearson.

Babili, N.J. (2018). "A Dive into the Selection Practices of Large Scale Organizations in Lebanon." Thesis. American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon, May 3; available from https://ulib.aub.edu.lb/thesis/pj-1944.pdf; Internet; accessed on October 13, 2018.

Bika, N. (2016). "Interviewing techniques from experienced interviewers." Resources Workable , March 15; available from https://resources.workable.com/blog/job-interview-techniques-10-mistakes-experienced-interviewers-learned-avoid; Internet; accessed on November 14, 2018.

Chemali, M.C. (2017). "Employee Engagement Practices in Family-Owned Businesses in Lebanon". Thesis. American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon, April 1; available from https://ulib.aub.edu.lb/thesis/pj-1920.pdf; Internet; accessed on November 3, 2018.

Daciuk, E. (2017). "Cover Letter: Should You Require One & What Should It Include?" FitSmall Business: Get Your Business into Shape, September 20; available from https://fitsmallbusiness.com/cover-letter/; Internet; accessed on November 18, 2018.

Deloitte. (2017). "A new age for family businesses in the Middle East: Managing change and expectations." Deloitte; available from https://www2.deloitte.com/ lb/en/pages/finance/articles/new-age-me-familybusinesses.html; Internet; accessed on October 21, 2018.

Doyle, A. (2018). "Recruitment and Hiring Process." The Balance Careers; available from https://www.thebalancecareers.com/recruitment-and-hiring-process-2062875; Internet; accessed on November 12, 2018.

El Jardali, F., Tchagchagian, V. & Jamal, D. (2009). "Assessment of human resources management practices in Lebanese hospitals." *Human Resources for Health*

7(November 12): 84; available from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/ articles/PMC2784431/; Internet; accessed on October 18, 2018.

Gray, R. (2017). "What is the Recruitment and Selection Process?" Top Echelon, June 10; available from https://www.topechelon.com/blog/recruiter-training/ methods-recruitment-selection-process-example/; Internet; accessed on November 12, 2018.

Gusdorf, M.L. (2008). *Recruitment and Selection: Hiring the Right Person.* Staffing Management, Instructor's Manual. Society for Human Resource Management Publication; available from https://www.shrm.org/academicinitiatives/ universities/TeachingResources/Documents/Recruitment and Selection IM.pdf; Internet; accessed on October 17, 2018.

Heathfield, S. (2018). "Job Interview Questions That Are Illegal." The Balance Careers, October 28; available from https://www.thebalancecareers.com/job-interview-questions-that-are-illegal-1918488; Internet; accessed on November 14, 2018.

Hejase, H., Rifai, R. & Tabsh, H. (2012). "Major Forces Leading to the Shift in the HR Function in Lebanon". *British Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences 7*(1); available from http://www.academia.edu/2558201/Major_Forces_Leading_ to_the_ Shift_in_the_HR_Function_in_Lebanon_An_Exploratory_Research; Internet; accessed on October 19, 2018.

IRC. (2016). "Small & Medium Enterprises in Beirut & Mount Lebanon." International Rescue Committee, February; available from https://www.buildingmarkets.org/ sites/default/files/irc_and_building_markets_sme_market_overview_february_ 2016.pdf; Internet; accessed on October 19, 2018.

Ismail, H. & Nakkache, L. (2015). "Gender Differences at Work: Experiencing Human Resource Management Policies in Lebanese Firms". *SAGE Journals, 16*(6); available from http://journals.sagepub.com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/doi/10.1177/ 0972150915597592; Internet; accessed on October 27, 2018.

Bechara, L. (2013, May 1). Corporate governance in Lebanese family-owned businesses. Retrieved January 25, 2019, from https://ulib.aub.edu.lb/thesis/pj-1762.pdf

Leonard, K. (2018). "Importance of Effective Recruitment & Selection". Small Business. Managing Employees, June 29; available from https://smallbusiness. chron.com/importance-effective-recruitment-selection-55782.html; Internet; accessed on November 11, 2018.

Martic, K. (2014). "Difference between structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews". Talentlyft, January 24; available from https://www.talentlyft.com/ en/blog/article/92/difference-between-structured-unstructured-and-semi-structured-job-interviews; Internet; accessed on October 18, 2018.

McLeod, S. (2014). "The Interview Method." Simply Psychology, January 1; available from, from https://www.simplypsychology.org/interviews.html; Internet; accessed on October 1, 2018.

Nayab, N. (2015). "Personnel Management vs. Human Resource Management: What's the Difference?" Resource Management, August 6; available from http://www.brighthubpm. com/resource-management/75775-personnel-management-vs-human-resource-management-whats-the-difference/; Internet; accessed on December 18, 2018.

Richter, L. (2011). "The Use and Effectiveness of Assessment Centers." Bright Hub, September 14; available from https://www.brighthub.com/office/human-resources/articles/84774.aspx; Internet; accessed on November 18, 2018.

Rishani, M., Mallah, M., Houssami, S. & Ismail, H. (2015). *Lebanese perceptions of the glass ceiling*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 34(8); available from https://www-emeraldinsight-com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/doi/full/10.1108/EDI-11-2014-0082; Internet; accessed on October 28, 2018.

Saez, A. (2018). "Importance of Effective Recruitment & Selection." AZcentral, June 29; available from. https://yourbusiness.azcentral.com/importance-effective-recruitment-selection-4797.html; Internet; accessed on November 11, 2018.

Shami, F.M. (2015). "Talent Management in Lebanon in Relation to Regional and Global Practices." Thesis. American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon, February 10; available from https://ulib.aub.edu.lb/thesis/pj-1837.pdf; Internet; accessed on November 2, 2018.

SHRM. (2018). "Conducting Background Investigations and Reference Checks". Society for Human Resource Management Publication, October 20; available from https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/conductingbackgroundinvestigations.aspx; Internet; accessed on November 18, 2018.

Surbhi, S. (2015). "Difference between Personnel Management and Human Resources Management." Key Differences, May 30; available from https://keydifferences.com/difference-between-personnel-management-and-human-resource-management.html; Internet; accessed on October 17, 2018.

WEF. (2017). "The Global Gender Gap Report 2017." World Economic Forum; available from https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2017; Internet; accessed on October 26, 2018.