

RECRUITMENT POLICIES IN THE NIGERIAN FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS ON EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Every organization regardless of its size, product or service must recruit applicants to fill vacant positions. The efficiency and effectiveness of any work place whether the private or public sector largely depend on the calibre of the work force. Within the framework of bureaucratic theory, the paper examined recruitment policies in Nigerian federal civil service and its implication on employee performance with a view of determining the challenges facing poor employees performance and recruitment of competent and qualified candidates into the service. The primary question that was explored is whether there is a relationship between recruitment policies in the federal civil service and employees' performance. It established that, there is a significant relationship between recruitment policies and practices and employees performance in Nigerian federal civil service. The paper concludes that federal civil service is faced with poor recruitment policies and practices which have affected service delivery in service. Given the identified constraints, it recommends among others, that the current recruitment policy in the civil service that calls for uniform qualifications do not specify classification of degrees, diplomas and certificates should be modified to make provision on preference for candidates with outstanding results at all levels of education.

Keywords: Civil Service, Recruitment, Policy, Performance, Selection

Introduction

Every organization depends on the effective use of its available resources in order to achieve its objectives. These resources, if they are to be effectively utilized, should be obtained in the right quantity, right quality, and at the right time. However, the human resources is considered as the most important, most valuable, most complicated and the least predicable. It is this resource that processes other resources in order that the results of these processes would constitute the goals of the organization (Mukoro, 2005). Thus, every organization regardless of its size, product or service must recruit applicants to fill vacant positions. The efficiency and effectiveness of any organization whether private or public sector largely depend on the calibre of the work force.

The availability of a competent and effective labour force does not just happen by chance but through an articulated job analysis and recruitment exercise.

The personnel employed in an organization serve as the hub around which other resources revolve. This allows the entire wheel of the organization to turn smoothly in order to perform more effectively, efficiently and economically. This is the reason why the personnel employed in any organization who eventually becomes the bread-winners of his family and an instrument of progress for the society, have to be well structured (Vickerstaff in Mukoro, 2005).

Recruitment for any organization is very important right through the entire lifespan of that organization. In the civil service for example that is governmentally controlled, especially in third world countries, governments should ever be self advised that good organization structure does not by itself guarantee good performance. There is the need therefore to match organizations or the civil service with very sound and quality staff so that performance would become more effective. Indeed, target setting; performance measurement and monitoring will be affected without the necessary impetus giving to systematic recruitment and selection mechanisms.

The Nigerian federal civil service emphasizes uniformity, standardization, transparency (Babaru, 2003) in recruiting competent applicants. Despite the elaborate provisions in the constitution as well as the civil service rules and regulations as regards the mode of recruitment and selection into the service, the staff composition of most Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) reveals that mediocre and quacks' get recruited against the tenets of merit and technical competence rooted in Max Weber's ideal bureaucracy (Eneanya, 2009). In 2007, the size of the Nigerian federal civil service was estimated to be about 220,000 (Briggs, 2007). Despite the large size of federal civil service, the service still manifests signs of low productivity due to incompetence of personnel and poor attitude of bureaucrats to work. The paper therefore, seeks to further interrogate why the federal civil service of Nigeria has not effectively utilized its large workforce to meet the needs of Nigerians, by taking a look at the recruitment policies and practices in the federal civil service and its implications on employee performance with specific reference to Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC).

Conceptual and Theoretical Orientation

Recruitment is "a set of activities used to obtain a sufficient number of the right people at the right time from the right places", (Nickels et al, 2007) and its purpose is to select and place those who best meet the needs of the work place, and to develop and maintain a qualified and adequate work force through which an organization can fulfill its human resource plan. Erasmus, Swanepoel, Schenk, Van der Westhuizen & Wessels (2005) conceive recruitment as "those activities in human resource management which are undertaken in order to attract sufficient job candidates who have the necessary potential, competencies and traits to fill job needs and to assist the civil service organization in achieving its objectives". Similarly, Cloete (in Motsoeneng, 2011) defines recruitment as about making sure that qualified people are available to meet the employment needs of government. Ineffective recruitment precludes any chance for effective candidate selection because when recruitment falls short of qualified applicants, selection must proceed with a pool of poorly qualified candidates. The task of recruitment is to generate a sufficient pool of applicants to ensure that there are people available with the necessary skills and requirements to fill positions as they arise.

Dibie (2014); Erasmus, Swanepoel, Schenk, Van der Westhuizen & Wessels (2005) define “selection” as the process of trying to determine which individuals will best match particular jobs in the organizational context, taking into account individual differences, the requirements of the job and the organization’s internal and external environments. Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk (1992) defines “selection” as choosing from a number of candidates a person who, in the opinion of the selector, succeeds in meeting the required standard of performance. Robert (2005) claim that “selection” is basically a task of prediction. It presupposes a screening and sorting procedure in the course of which the candidates with the least potential are separated from those with the most potential. Selection is a complex procedure that comprises the following: collection of information, coding, interpretation, retrieval, integration of information and decision -making.

Essentially, selection is then the prediction of the future in terms of individual differences of individuals, the requirements of the job and the internal and external environment of the institution. Selection requires information about the job or work in question and about the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to do the job successfully. Selection decisions therefore require one to know how such knowledge, skills and abilities can be assessed, which makes the proper use of predictors in selection very important.

Obviously, this is not an easy task. In view of the complexity of the task, civil service employers need to take it seriously beforehand to avoid possibly enormous and incalculable costs due to faulty employee selections. Therefore selection can be defined as a process undertaken to identify a match between an individual and the job.

At this juncture, is important to define recruitment policy. According to Van der Westhuizen (2005) the recruitment policy stipulates broad guidelines for the way in which a public sector organization intends to deal with recruitment. In brief terms, the recruitment policy must indicate the organization’s position concerning the general objectives of recruitment and the principle of equal opportunities in recruitment. For the purposes of this study it is important to provide an example of a recruitment policy. The recruitment, selection and placement of personnel are done in terms of the legal framework applicable to the Nigerian civil service, namely: *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended 2011, the Public Service Rules 02201 (FRN, 2000 and 2000^D), Federal Character Principle Section 14(3) of the Constitution etc.*

Van der Westhuizen (2005) further states that management of the selection process according to the regulatory framework ensures accountability. Thus, all applicants who qualify are given an opportunity to compete for appointment, while serving officials may compete for promotion or transfer. The legal framework shall be underpinned by the following principles: fairness, equity, confidentiality, professionalism and human dignity. Productivity is the objective of all organization.

Productivity is a measure of how well resources are brought together in an organization and utilized for accomplishing a set of results. It is reaching the highest level of performance with the least expenditures or resources. Productivity also, refers to a comparison between the quantity of goods or services produced and the quantity of resources employed in turning out these goods or services. It is the ratio of output to input. But output can be compared with various kinds of

inputs: hours worked the total of labour and capital inputs, or something in between (Wayne in Motsoeneng, 2011).

The importance of productivity in an organization cannot be over emphasized. As an economic standard, productivity is an important factor in determining prices and wages. Economists are far from a full understanding of the relations among the variables, but there is substantial agreement on: The large increases in real wages that have come about over the long term in many countries are closely associated with large increase in labour productivity in these countries; in the absence of increase in labour productivity, a stable price level is inconsistent with persistent increases in money wages; industries in which sales of products are comparatively insensitive to price changes, increases in labour productivity will tend to reduce employment and possibly also reduce wages; and an increase in labour productivity or in the productivity of other factors usually brings with it a reduction in cost and hence tends to result in price reductions, wage increase, or both (See Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2012). Productivity is a product of performance.

Performance is simply the extent to which an individual, unit or department carryout task assigned to him or it. It is also a means by which an organization evaluate an individual employee input and out level especially in the area of attaining set goals or task assigned to him or her. It involves the execution of duties and responsibilities assigned by constituted authorities which one have promised to do, so as to achieve set goals. Performance of the Nigerian civil servants is measured in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

Performance is an important aspect of organizational behaviour because its level at any given time in an organisation is co-extensive with effectiveness or efficiency or otherwise. The conceptual reference for the effective performance of an organization in its statutory functions is productivity as defined above. For example, FCSC is effective when it successfully recruit qualified and competent candidates for ministries according to the terms of its statutory duty. It is effective when it can do so at a low cost.

The civil service which lies at the center of Public Administration structure is the major instrument through which Nigerian government, be it colonial, military or civilian administration manage development (Olu-Adeyemi, 2009). Civil service is comprised of all servants of the state other than holders of political or judicial offices, who are employed in a civil capacity and whose remuneration is paid wholly and directly out of money voted by parliament or legislature (Adu, 1995). Civil servant according to Kolawole (2008) is by law and professional orientation required to be apolitical and be loyal to the government of the day. The apolitical character he said; gave the civil servant an advantage of service till retirement age without the fear of vagaries and incessant turn-over in government. The only constraint in this respect is individual decision to resign or retire or be disengaged by disciplinary measures imposed by misconduct or other perceived act of omission or commission. It is a system of service, with recruitment on merit, security of tenure and due recognition of service and merit through timely promotion. This gave the state a class of non-political permanent corps of loyal and industrious officials who form the backbone of Public Administration (Basu, 2004).

Several theoretical approaches can be useful when applied to the issues of recruitment and its implication on employee performance. Max Weber Bureaucratic Approach which is one of several centers on a clear hierarchy of officials, clearly defined responsibilities and spheres of authority and officials appointed on the basis of merit (their competency and qualifications) to

carry out their functions. In addition, there exists a unified system of discipline and control which is based on a relatively fixed body of established rules and standardized procedures.

For Weber (1947) the ideal bureaucratic organization was essentially the well-designed machine within which all the component parts work efficiently and without distraction, towards clearly defined goals. The high points of Weber's arguments are that an ideal bureaucracy is one in which there exist functional specialization, hierarchy, impersonal relationship, standard procedure and rules, authority, legitimacy and competence or fitness. However, all theories are born refuted, bureaucratic theory is not an exception. The psychological consequences of the theory ignored individual goals and aspirations; it rather treated their goals as derivational that tend to subvert organizations rational needs and ends. Yet, tension between the authorities of position of skill is unexamined.

Recruitment and Selection Process in the Nigerian Civil Service

In the Nigerian Federal civil service, recruitment and selection assumes these formats. The Department of Establishment under the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation sends out call circular to each of the ministry, parastatals and departments under the management of the federal government. This is subject to the fact that there must exist vacancies and the need for filling such vacancies. There must also be adequate funds to pay those that may likely be recruited. Finally, there must be the authority to recruit. Once these conditions are met and by the provisions of the civil service (Reorganization) Decree, No 43 section 9 (1)d of 1998, which states as follows: Each ministry will undertake the appointment; discipline and promotion of its staff under general" and uniform guidelines to be provided by the Federal Civil Service Commission.

For each ministry or department to function in this capacity, it is expected to have its own Personnel Management Board to be supported by different Committees. However, while the Civil Service Commission appoints senior personnel on salary grade level 08-10 to reflect the federal character, the various ministries appoint junior officers on grade level 01-07 under the supervision of the Civil Service Commission Decree 43 (1988).

The Nigerian civil service places a lot of premium on the interview method for selection, Decree 43 of 1988 states that "all eligible candidates for appointment shall be interviewed by the appropriate personnel management board or committee. Whatever the case, the principles of merit, that of quota system and federal character are always enforced to determine who to recruit and whom to select. This to a large extent and in the view of Nze (1988) downplays the inevitability of bureaucracies to efficiently and effectively 'deliver the good' as advocated for by Weber. Competence and job specialization cannot thrive where sentiments are brought to play. In any case, successful candidates are notified through letters of appointment duly signed by an officer designated to do so by the ministry concerned or by the civil service commission.

The Nexus between Recruitment Policies and Employee Performance

According to Collins & Druten (2003), researchers have produced compelling evidence for the causal link between how people are managed and employee performance. They argue that the effectiveness of human resource practices, particularly employee selection procedures, performance appraisals, rewards and benefits management, and employee training and development (the matching model of HRM) often have a direct bearing on organisational

performance. It has been argued that, the result of effectively managing human resources is an enhanced ability to attract and retain qualified employees who are motivated to perform (Schuler & Macmillan, 1984). To them, the benefits of having the right employees motivated to perform include greater profitability, low employee turnover, high product quality, lower production costs, and more rapid acceptance and implementation of corporate strategy. These invariably lead to higher productivity.

Methodology

Basically, there are two major sources of data collection available to this paper. These are primary and secondary data. To supplement the data from primary source, secondary materials were sourced from academic literature on the subject matter. Thus, because of the need to generate primary data to achieve the objectives of this study, survey research was adopted with focus on the opinion and factual information. Survey obtains information from a defined population of people. Typically, they are based on questionnaires because they can provide more powerful data than other methods. Based on this, self-administered questionnaires were used to gather information from the sample population. The rationale for using self administered questionnaires was to allow the respondents to answer at their own pace without taking them away from their work. The study used closed (fixed-alternative) questions that require a 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Undecided', 'Disagree', and 'Strongly Disagree'. The method named after Rensis Likert the US sociologist who invented them, ask respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statement.

In addition, this study adopted the case study method. Case studies provide precedence as well as a source of reference for future cases. Because of the usefulness of the case study method, as enumerated above, the uniqueness of the circumstances of FCSC, and the fact that there is no clear single set of outcome on how specific HR practices impact on performance, the case study method of data collection was used for this study.

Population and Sample

The population were constituted of the officials from all departments in FCSC since recruitment and selection exercise is a cross-departmental collective responsibility. The actual population of the commission's staff as at the time of this study is 586. Due to limited resources, the researcher had to select a sample of one hundred (100) participants from the Commission through the principle of randomization. This method is employed in order to have representation of various categories of the grade levels because the population does not constitute a homogenous group.

Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instruments

Validity of data refers to the extents to which the data measures what it is intended to measure. In other to ascertain the validity of the data collection instrument; a pilot study was carried out among 10 employees of Federal Civil service Commission Lagos Liaison Office to test the validity of the questionnaire. Also, the instrument guides was passed to some professional colleagues and intellectual giants for vetting so as to assess the suitability. Therefore, the validity of the research instrument is determined by content validity.

Reliability of research instrument simply means the degree to which the instrument consistently measures what it intend to measure. This study therefore employed the test-re-test method to assess the survey instrument in which the same measuring instrument is applied in taking two

separate measurement on the same elements at different times using the same methods. The result of the pilot survey was compared with that of the final survey and gets the same result.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no relationship between performance and transfer and secondment as recruitment policy and practice in the Nigerian civil service.
2. There is no relationship between delegation of recruitment functions by Federal Civil Service Commission to ministries and extra-ministerial departments as recruitment policy and employee performance.
3. There is no relationship between performance and quota system in the Nigerian civil service.

Analysis of Surveyed Data

The study adopted the quantitative technique using the chi-square tool in the analysis of information collated and to establish the degree of dependence or otherwise of variables under consideration. The results of the returned questionnaires were captured on Microsoft Excel and then exported to Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) for analysis and interpretation. The results were used to draw deductions and conclusions on the subject matter of the paper.

Preliminary Analysis

The researcher distributed a total of one hundred (100) questionnaires of eight (8) items each to both junior and senior staff of FCSC. As a result of frequent persuasion on the importance of responding fully and honestly to the questionnaire, the researcher was able to achieve questionnaire return of seventy-six (76) responses while twenty-four (24) were not returned out of the total distributed one hundred (100). Out of these numbers, two (2) copies of the questionnaire were not properly filled, leaving a total of seventy-four (74) usable questionnaires yielding a response rate of 82 percent. The researcher proceeded with the analysis of the data as 82 percent response rate is regarded as satisfactory for this study. Some rules of thumb about the response rate is that a response rate of 50 percent is adequate for analysis and reporting, 60 percent is good while 70 percent is very good (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

Respondents Characteristics' and Classification

Analyses of the demographic characteristics' of respondents indicate that, 67.6 percent respondents were male while 32.4 percent were female. Even though the sex of the respondents was skewed toward males, this imbalance is representative of the commission's workforce. In Nigeria, most organizations are dominated by men. The age distribution on table 4.2 indicates that 21.6 percent were in the age bracket of 21-30 years, 39.2 percent were between ages 31-40; 31.1percent falls in-between ages 41-50; age 51 and above represent 8.1 percent. We could categorically state that majority of the work force falls between 31-50 years and these are the most active years of an average workforce life in any organization (Field Survey, 2012).

The length of service shows that 9.5 percent had put in 5 years and below in the service; 45.9 percent had put in between 6-10 years while 29.7 percent had served for between 11-15 years; and 10.8 percent represents those who had put in between 16-20 years; the percentage of those who had served 21 years and above was 4.1 percent. This shows that majority of the workforce has put in between 6-15 years of service, the implication is that majority of them still have more years before retiring because of the present policy which sets retirement age for civil servants at 35 years of service or 60 years of chronological age whichever comes first (Field Survey, 2012).

Official status of respondents indicates that 2.7 percent were commissioners, directors/deputies and assistants' respondents were 5.4 percent. Principal Managers were 9.5 percent, senior managers and managers were 6.8 percent while deputy and assistant managers were 14.9 percent. The Administrative Officers 1, 2 and 3 who responded were 25.7 percent. Secretary cadre respondents were 9.5 percent while executive clerical officer that responded were 27 percent. The educational qualification reveals that 23 percent of the respondents had postgraduate degree while 40.5 percent had first degree/HND, with another 25.7 percent who had NCE/ND. 10.8 percent of the respondents had WASC/SSC/NECO. Evidentially, 89.2 percent of the respondents had acquired one skill or the other (Field Survey, 2012).

Test of Hypotheses

The study adopted the quantitative technique using the chi-square tool in the analysis of information collated with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) for analysis and interpretation.

Hypothesis I

H0: There is no relationship between employee performance and transfer and secondment as recruitment policy and practice in the Nigerian federal civil service.

H1: There is no relationship between employee performance and transfer and secondment as recruitment policy and practice in the Nigerian federal civil service.

Cross tabulation

Count

	Performance not Dependent on Transfer and Secondments				Total
	Strongly Agree	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	
DEPARTMENT Accounting	1	8	10	9	28
T Personnel	0	7	15	10	32
Statistics	2	2	16	10	30
Budget	0	3	7	2	12
Total	3	20	48	31	102

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.925 ^a	9	.444
Likelihood Ratio	10.746	9	.293
Linear-by-Linear Association	.010	1	.921
N of Valid Cases	102		

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Pearson Chi-Square	8.925 ^a	9	.444
Likelihood Ratio	10.746	9	.293
Linear-by-Linear Association	.010	1	.921
N of Valid Cases	102		

a. 6 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .35.

Research Result: From the computation above, the Pearson chi-square (X^2c) is **8.925** while the chi-square tabulated (X^2t) is **10.745**. Thus, the chi-square calculated is less than chi-square tabulated. On the basis of this, we can therefore accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is no relationship between productivity and transfer and secondment as recruitment policy and practice in the Nigerian civil service.

Policy Implication: The policy implication of the result of hypothesis one which states that organizational performance is dependent on transfer and secondment is that although, the study did not establish a significant relationship between performance and transfer and secondment; however, it is imperative to note that these are not valid and reliable method and sources of recruitment and selection and therefore can hardly guarantee performance and productivity in the Nigerian federal civil service. This is because majority of the people seeking transfer and secondment are high grade level existing employees who are either seeking for lateral moves or promotion. Since informal sources and connections dominate recruitment and selection process in the federal civil service, these sources do not possess attributes of objectivity, standardization, uniformity and transparency.

Hypothesis II

H0: There is no relationship between delegation of recruitment functions by Federal Civil Service Commission to ministries and extra-ministerial departments as recruitment policy and employee performance.

H1: There is a relationship between delegation of recruitment functions by Federal Civil Service Commission to ministries and extra-ministerial departments as recruitment policy and employee performance.

Cross tabulation

Count

	There is no relationship between delegation of recruitment functions by FCSC to ministries and extra-ministerial department and performance				Total
	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	
LENGTH Below 5 Years	2	5	25	18	50
6-10 Years	7	4	23	14	48
11-15 years	0	1	2	0	3
16-20 Years	0	0	1	0	1
Total	9	10	51	32	102

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.706 ^a	9	.559
Likelihood Ratio	7.755	9	.465
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.369	1	.124
N of Valid Cases	102		

a. 12 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .09.

Research Result: From the computation above, the chi-square calculated (X^2_c) is **8.706** while the chi-square tabulated (X^2_t) is **7.755**. Thus, the chi-square calculated is greater than chi-square tabulated. On the basis of this, we can therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is a relationship between delegation of recruitment functions by FCSC to ministries and extra-ministerial departments as recruitment policy and employee performance.

Policy Implication: The policy implication of the result of hypothesis two which states that there is a significant relationship between delegation of recruitment functions by FCSC to ministries and extra-ministerial departments and employee performance is that such as a practice create room for recruitment of incompetent applicants into the civil service thereby making the system unproductive and at the same time inhibiting national growth and development. The immediate priority for policy makers therefore is to re-examine the reliability and validity of these delegated functions.

Hypothesis III

- H0:** There is no relationship between employee performance and the quota system in the Nigerian federal civil service.
- H1:** There is a relationship between employee performance and the quota system in the Nigerian federal civil service.

Cross tabulation

Count

		Performance is not dependent on the quota system				Total
		Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	
JOB STATUS	Top Level	0	1	2	0	3
	Middle Level	3	0	11	10	24
	Low Level	12	3	41	19	75
Total		15	4	54	29	102

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.129 ^a	6	.084
Likelihood Ratio	9.088	6	.169
Linear-by-Linear Association	.483	1	.487
N of Valid Cases	102		

a. 7 cells (58.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .12.

Research Result: From the computation above, the chi-square calculated (χ^2_c) is **11.129** while the chi square tabulated (χ^2_t) is **9.088**. Thus, the chi-square calculated is greater than chi-square tabulated. On the basis of this, we can therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between employee performance and the quota system in the Nigerian federal civil service.

Policy Implication: The policy implication of the result of hypothesis three which states that there is a significant relationship between employee performance and the quota system is that the country's image as well as national development is at stake if the quota system is not limited to a minimum acceptable standard. Thus, there is need to re-examine the reliability and validity of these recruitment and selection instrument in the Nigerian federal civil service.

Discussion of Findings

It is necessary to discuss the findings to be able to recommend best practices in ensuring sound and effective recruitment and selection practices. In review of relevant literature and the subsequent testing of the three stated hypotheses, we came to conclusion that there is no positive relationship between transfer and secondment as recruitment policies and organizational productivity. However, it established that there is a significant relationship between delegation of recruitment functions by FCSC to ministries and extra-ministerial departments and employee performance. Also, there is linked between the principles of federal character and quota system and employee performance.

Section 170 of the 1999 constitution as amended empowers the commission to delegate some of its functions as it deems fit since it plays the role of a regulatory authority. Based on this provision, FCSC delegated the functions of recruiting junior cadre (3-6) to ministries and departments. However, the study observed that such (policy) delegation is a problem in the federal civil service because it lacks control and gives room to heads of ministries and extra-ministerial departments to recruit without adherence to laid down policies and procedures.

The study discovered that some of the applicants are recruited as casuals by ministries and extra-ministerial department with plan of staffing them as time goes on. This explains the reason why federal civil service is over staff at the lower cadre. Report of the team set up by the federal government to investigate the federal civil service structure in 2006 reported excess staff (estimated to be 9,839) at junior cadre. This can be traced to delegation of recruitment functions by FCSC; this was also confirmed by Nasir El- Rufia, then member of federal executive council (See Briggs, 2007). The implication of this practice is the recruitment of incompetent applicants into the Nigerian federal civil service thereby making the system unproductive.

Relative to federal character principle and quota system as recruitment policy, they are seen by employers as an unsavory strategy for rectifying the effects of past or present unfair discrimination (See Cascio, 2010). The major problem associated with this principle as observed in the survey is that the principle sacrifices merit in favour of quota. For instance, a respondent in a personal interview was disappointed with the principle stating that the country's image is at stake if the federal character is not limited to minimum acceptable standard. According to the respondent, "the worst of it is that the principle is also applied in the secondment of Nigerians for foreign services". It was discovered in the study that the reason why the principle is considered more important than merit in the recruitment of federal civil servants is because those in the disadvantaged areas – mainly the Northern parts as opined by Olowu, Otobo & Okotoni (1997) were the political leaders of the country. This made it possible for them to use their positions to protect their region using the principle. For instance, in the Northern Governors Forum (NGF) of 2007, Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu (Niger former State Governor) said that "one of the problems facing the region is education backwardness. Despite this problem, the study observed that people from the Northern region are significantly placed in the federal civil service because of the utilization of federal character principle plus the number of states in the region. This often led to recruitment of incompetent applicants which is one of the major reasons responsible for low productivity and poor service delivery in the federal civil service (See for example Briggs, 2007).

Yet, in the course of our interview, 87 percent of those interviewed disclosed that much emphasis is placed on all kinds of subjective and informal contacts (primordial issues) in recruitment and selection exercise. The quality of workers in any given organization to an extent determine the degree of success to be achieved, the adoption of federal character principle that compels governments at all levels to ensure spread in the recruitment and appointment of personnel into civil service has not helped the system. Although, this is not a bad provision in a federal state like Nigeria, but because of paucity of quality candidates in some states of the federation, less qualified people are given positions not suitable for them and in the final analysis, it is the public interest that suffers.

Conclusion

The main aim of the research was to examine the recruitment policies in Nigerian federal civil service and their implications on employee performance, with specific reference to FCSC. This study argues for the fact that the Nigerian government has to grow beyond that level of primordial sentiments in the making and implementation of rational recruitment policies and practices, if she really wants to achieve success in governance and administration. With the Weberian prescriptions of the ideal bureaucratic theory underlying the foundation for this study, it is posited that for governments to operate the most efficient and effective administrative organization that would be beneficial to all, her recruitment policies and practices into the civil service should be unfettered. It should also be capable of absorbing the best qualified, technically competent, disciplined and committed personnel that would in turn help government to achieve the goals of governance and administration. It was concluded from the findings of this study that Nigerian FCSC is faced with poor recruitment policies and practices which have affected service delivery in civil service.

Recommendations

To achieve recruitment of good quality (high flyers) graduates, this study recommends that the current recruitment policy in the civil service that calls for uniform qualifications do not specify classification of degrees, diplomas and certificates. This policy should be modified to make provision on preference for candidates with outstanding results at all levels of education. The Nigerian civil service should imbibe the prescripts of Marx Weber as regards to recruitment and the global best practices that place preference on recruitment of first and second class upper degrees, distinction and merit for diplomas and certificate holders.

Interpretation of rules is a common factor of distrust among formulators of public personnel policies and bureaucrats as implementers. Federal civil service has procedures and guidance for implementation of policies entrenched in civil service rules. Civil servants must be supplied with these guidelines for guidance. To achieve success in recruitment into the federal civil service, we should deemphasize the recruitment of generalist graduates to man personnel departments. This is because personnel department in the federal civil service are assigned with the responsibility of interpretation of rules and regulations. Thus, right interpretation of rules would only be successful if it is assigned to bureaucrats who are graduates of public administration, law, management or at least graduates of humanities and social sciences with professional qualification in management and administration from professional bodies such as Institute of Public Management, Nigeria (IPM), Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPM), Chartered Institute of Management, Nigeria (NIM) etc. Also, to achieve better

performance and higher productivity, new entrants into the civil service should be made to sign a performance contract with FCSC and ministries and extra-ministerial departments at the level of delegated recruitment functions.

The application of quota system should be contextualized within grade levels (03 -06) while recruitment into senior officers cadre and appointment should be strictly based on merit and not connections and informal contacts as revealed. Also, the federal government should increase the number of commissioners in FCSC as well as establish zonal or state offices to reflect the states of the federation. This will make the commission to be alive to its duties and responsibilities, monitor and reduce the extent of delegation of its functions to ministries and extra-ministerial departments. The FCSC in collaboration with heads of ministries and extra-ministerial departments should examine and redesign personnel requirements to match position classifications.

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