RECRUITMENT PROCESS: A CATALYST FOR EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SERVICE. AN EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE LAGOS STATE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

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Abstract

The Nigerian public service as a machinery of government is empowered to deliver public service to its citizenry. For the public service to achieve its activities geared towards the attainment of its pre-targeted goals, emphasis is therefore, being laid on the calibre of its work force. The process of having calibre workforce in the public service does happen through effective recruitment and selection process which determines the type of employees that exists in the public service thereby determining the job performance of the public service. This study examined the impact of the recruitment and selection process on performance in the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This study involved an in-depth inquiry involving a structured questionnaire to collect data from the respondents. The findings revealed that a good recruitment and selection process helps employees in identifying problems in the organization; makes employees arrive early to meetings; helps employees in taking appropriate actions on problems as necessary; promotes prompt arrival to work and takes appropriate actions on issues. This study concluded that all qualified candidates should therefore of necessity be treated with fairness and equity and as much as possible, the elements of nepotism, tribalism, favouritism, gender discrimination, ethnicity, godfatherism and corruption must be eroded thereby giving equal opportunities to all qualified applicants. This study recommended that public services should upgrade their recruitment and selection procedures to meet up with the rising demands of the competitive labour forces.

Keywords: Recruitment Process, Employees' Performance, Nigerian Public Service, Empirical Evidence, Internal Revenue Service.

1.   Introduction

The Nigerian Public Service as a product of the British Administrative System has its root in the colonial administration of Britain. After independence in 1960, the administrative system

of Nigeria grew and transformed tremendously into a multifaceted structure which has fostered the socio-economic growth of the country with the aid of its well-endowed economic resources (Inyang, 2008).Though Ijewereme (2018) argued that the public sector lacks effective and productivity in its service delivery.

Mustapha and Omorede (2017) opined that the capacity of a nation's development rests on the capacity of its public service. In a bid to further develop the public service system of Nigeria, the service had over the years been subjected to several reforms. These reforms were undertaken with the sole aim of strengthening the administrative system and engender the development of society through the effective provision of service delivery in an effective manner. The reforms were criticized not to have effectively reformed the service delivery of the public administrative system. These reforms were characterized as weak and ineffective as a result of the politicization of the public service, absence of neutrality of the service, weak human resources policies and management, poor recruitment process, etc. The public service is filled with individuals who lack merit, professional and administrative skills and knowledge to handle public servicing functions (Inyang &Akaegbu, 2014).

The public service was established to provide goods and services to its citizenry most effectively and efficiently. As opined by Karimi, Teimouri, Shahin and Barzoki (2019), the survival of any organization is evident on its human factors. For any organization to carryout activities geared towards the attainment of its pre-targeted goals, the emphasis is laid on the calibre of its workforce. The process of having calibre workforce in an organization does happen through an effective recruitment and selection process.

The Nigerian public service is a machinery of government assigned with the task of executing governmental responsibilities of transforming her natural resources to deliver public services to meet the demands of political independence (Mamser, 1992). The Nigerian public service over the years has therefore grown to become an influential vehicle of delivering public services and attaining development (Kauzya, 2001). This is because the public service delivers products and services to the people, thereby enhancing their conditions of livelihood (Excellence-Oluye, Gberevbie, &Ibietan, 2019).

Over the years, the Nigerian public service had gone through various reforms to develop its service delivery. These reforms have been said to be more structural, paying little or no attention to human recruitment processes. Human resources managers/professionals were not engaged to hire personnel strategically which in turn does not translate to strategic recruitment of personnel into the service.

Lasisi (2019) noted that the Lagos State Public Service as an organization of government was established and saddled primarily with the responsibility of delivering public amenities to its citizenry in a well-organized way. The Lagos State Public Service as an apparatus of government was established to pragmatically execute the administrative responsibilities and activities of the Lagos State government. The Lagos State Public Service is saddled with the responsibility of managing the activities of government, executing her tasks and performing her roles of administering the public affairs.

The Lagos State Internal Revenue Service is an arm saddled with the responsibility of generating funds for the Lagos State Government by gathering taxes and revenues internally within the state (LIRS, 2020). Therefore, the effective and efficient performance of the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service is to a large extent dependent on the level of management of its recruitment exercise. Hence, according to Sharma and Bajpai (2010), a high level of organizational commitment to the employee's recruitment will lead to a higher level of employees' performance and effectiveness as well as a higher level of organizational productivity.

Having the wrong personnel in an organization would jeopardize both individual and organizational development. However, having the right personnel would enhance the development of the individual as well as the organization. Unless and until management stops hiring bad habits, individuals and organizational development would become more and more frustrating (Obisi, 1996).Obisi further asserted that the management of any organization had always been to get the most qualified personnel, but problems of nepotism, tribalism, favouritism, corruption and godfatherism have characterized the modern-day of recruiting public service personnel. For genuine utilization of human resource personnel, a vigorous recruitment, selection and placement policy is desirable in ensuring that the right and qualified candidate get the job. According to Cole (1997), the ultimate goal of any recruitment process is to attract competent candidates to occupy the workforce of the organization. Recruitment involves the process of inviting applications from appropriate candidates to occupy positions in an organization. The recruitment process in an organization affects the efficiency and effectiveness of employees' performance (Karia, Omari, Mwanaongoro & Ondieki, 2016). This process begins when the possibility of using alternatives to recruitment is ruled out. It is against this backdrop that this study was undertaken to examine the impact of the recruitment process on employees' performance in Lagos State Internal Revenue Service.

2.   Literature Review
Recruitment and Selection
Favour and Tamunomiebi (2020) stated that organizations compete with other organizations in the same business line and as thus, the success of the organization depends largely on its employees (Ogbogu, 2017). This is why Lasisi (2019) stated that employees are required for the effective achievement of the pre-targeted goals and objectives of the organization. The effectiveness of an organization's recruitment and selection process will have an impact on the decision-making process of the organization as the decision will affect the performance of the organization(Suwarto&Subyantoro,2019). Kanu (2015) stated that the practice of recruitment and selection process over the years is meant to pool potential qualified employees with merit to occupy vacancies in an organization. Motsoeneng(2011) sees recruitment asa process of ensuring that qualified professionals are harnessed to meet the rising needs of the government. Recruitment activities are used to derive the required number of people and at the right time, to produce the required workforce that can help the organization attain its organizational goal (Nickels, McHugh & McHugh, 2012).

According to Obisi (1996), the desire of any rational management is geared towards ensuring that the qualified candidate gets the job but recently, management has been faced with

problems of nepotism, tribalism, individualism and management unpredictability in place of sincere recruitment and selection exercise. To put the qualified candidate in the job, a strong recruitment and selection strategy is needed. Obisi (1996) noted that putting the wrong personnel on the job will retard the development of individuals as well as the organization. Whereas, putting the right personnel on the job will foster the development of individuals as well as the organization. Recruitment and selection exercise deals with the searching of qualified candidates suitable for the vacancy as indicated in the job specification (Matolo, Iravo&Waititu, 2019).The recruitment exercise is a vital element of human resource involving identification and attracting qualified candidates to fill up vacancies in an organization with corresponding roles (Peretomode&Peretomode, 2001).Recruitment links job provider and job seekers (Anitha&Kiruba, 2020).

Recruitment takes place in two different sources which are internal and external. These sources of recruiting employees in an organization rest on the nature of the organization and its philosophy. Internal recruitment occurs when employees recruited are already members of the organization who seeks to move from one job level to another. When employees are recruited into a new position internally, it promotes such employee's morale and also increases their performances thereby boosting productivity. In most organizations, external recruitment is used for the lower cadre which is mostly the entry-level in most organizations (Anitha&Kiruba, 2020; Acikgoz, 2019; Delgadová, Gullerová&Ivanová, 2017).

Recruitment in the Public Service of Nigeria
The Nigerian public service is an institution in the executive arm of government with the basic obligation of ensuring the delivery of basic services to various segments of its society(Rasul &Rogger, 2018).Omisore and Okofu (2014) stated that in the Nigerian public service, distinction has been traded and sacrificed for sentiments, tribalism, nepotism, ethnicity and undue favouritism. They noted in their study that in recruiting employees into the Nigerian Public Service, the federal character principle has been largely adhered to. They, therefore, concluded that the recruitment and selection policy should be strictly followed to bring about productive service delivery for the betterment of the citizenry. This can only be done by ensuring that professionals with merit are recruited to handle governmental activities.

Igbokwe-Ibeto & Agbodike (2015) noted that employees' performance in public service can be linked directly or indirectly to its recruitment practices. They concluded that the Nigerian public service is characterized with poor recruitment policies and practices which had negative implications on its service delivery. They, therefore, recommended that recruitment qualifications should not be uniform and provision should be made for candidates with excellence and outstanding performances.

Adisa, Osabutey, Gbadamosi and Mordi, 2017; Mustapha and Omorede, 2017; Ikwesi, 2010 revealed that there have been a series of politicization of the recruitment procedures in the Nigerian public service. Recruitment exercise in the public service has led to sacrificing merit on the altar of nepotism and tribalism by political office holders and top bureaucrats. He recommended that stricter measures should be introduced to ensure meritocracy in the recruitment and selection exercise of the Nigerian public service. Ekwoaba, Ikeije and Ufoma

(2015) asserted that public service delivery is dependent on the value of the personnel employed into the service during its recruitment and selection exercise.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the competency-based model of recruitment. A competency model refers to a set of competencies essential for a particular job (Stuart-Kotze &Robbins, 1987).competency-based theory helps organisations to recruit the best candidates that will help in achieving organisational goals. The competency-based model paid more emphasize on prescribed and quantifiable competencies.Reddy and Reddy (2012) opined that a competency-based recruitment process is expected to be just because the requirements are already stated and these are tested from the prospective employees during the recruitment exercise thereby eliminating favouritism of one candidate over the other. This process has been said to be the most used in the public service. Employees recruitment based on competencies allowed the development, measurement and management of equal basis among competitors (Spychała, Goliński, Szafrański & Graczyk-Kucharska, 2019).

4. Methodology

The data utilized for carrying out this study were obtained through the administration of questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured to examine the impact of recruitment on performance in Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS). A multistage sampling procedure was employed for this study. At the first stage, the purposive sampling method was used to select departments from the head office. This is because these departments are majorly located in the head office. The departments were Legal, Finance & Account, Human Resource & Administration, New Growth and Directorate of Special Duties. The second stage involved the use of quota sampling technique to select 8 respondents from the selected 5 departments to draw out an equal number of staff from each of the departments in the head office. This led to the selection of a total number of 40 respondents from the 5 departments in the head office. The third stage comprised the use of purposive sampling technique to select 3 tax stations from the 38 tax stations distributed across the LGAs which are under the Personal Income Tax (PIT) department in the Head Office. They included Ketu, Allen and Ikeja tax stations. The fourth stage involved the use of quota sampling technique to select respondents from the 3 tax stations. In each of the tax station, 23 respondents were selected each to assure that an equal number of respondents were drawn from each of the selected tax stations. This amounted to a total number of 69 respondents being drawn from the selected tax stations. The members of staff at the tax stations were members of the Personal Income Tax (PIT) department and they constituted the largest number of respondents sampled because the PIT had the largest strength of the workforce.109 staff across the six departments were drawn as a sample for the study. From the head office, 40 respondents were selected from the five departments, aside PIT. On the other hand, 69 respondents were selected from the PIT stations that spread across the LGAs. This is because members of staff of the PIT constituted over 75% of the staff strength of the service.The study adopted the use of tables, a statistical measurement of simple percentage and descriptive content approach in analyzing the data collected for this study.

5.   Results and Discussion

This section presents the descriptive analysis of the process through which workers are recruited in Lagos State Internal Revenue Service. It further examined how the recruitment process affects employees' performance in Lagos State Internal Revenue Service.

A total of one hundred and nine (109) copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents, while ninety-eight (98) representing 89.9% of the total respondents were retrieved and used for the analysis.

Table 1: Respondents' Opinion on the Stages in which Employees Must Pass Through Before Being Recruited into LIRS

S/N	Variables	Response	Frequency (%)	Mean
1	Short Listing	Yes (2)	37(37.8)	1.38
		No (1)	61(62.2)	
		Total	**98(100.0)**	
2	Selection Test/ Examination	Yes (2)	62(63.3)	1.63
		No (1)	36(36.7)	
		Total	**98(100.0)**	
3	Job Interview	Yes (2)	45 (45.9)	1.46
		No (1)	53(54.1)	
		Total	**98(100.0)**	
4	Background Checks / References	Yes (2)	49(50.0)	1.50
		No (1)	49(50.0)	
		Total	**98(100.0)**	
5	Selection Decision	Yes (2)	33(33.7)	1.34
		No (1)	65(66.3)	
		Total	**98(100.0)**	
6	Physical Medical Examination	Yes (2)	42(42.1)	1.43
		No (1)	56(57.1)	
		Total	**98(100.0)**	
7	Job Offer / Final Selection	Yes (2)	53(54.1)	1.54
		No (1)	45(45.9)	
		Total	**98(100.0)**	
8	Placement	Yes (2)	39(60.2)	1.40
		No (1)	59(60.2)	
		Total	**98(100.0)**	

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The analysis in Table1 revealed the mean scores and for each of the 8 items on respondents' opinion based on the stages in which job applicants must pass through before being recruited into LIRS. According to the table, the findings showed that the respondents agreed on 3 items as part of the stages in which job applicants must pass through before being recruited into LIRS, which are selection test/examination as ranked first with mean scored value of 1.63, followed by job offer/final selection as ranked second with mean scored value of 1.54 and background checks/references as ranked third with mean scored value of 1.50, while 5 items adjoined as inadequate, job interview as ranked forth with mean scored value of 1.46, followed by physical medical examination as ranked fifth with mean scored value of 1.43, this is also followed by placement as ranked sixth with mean scored value of 1.40, this is also followed by short-listing as ranked seventh with mean scored value of 1.38 and then trailed by selection decision as ranked eighth with mean scored value of 1.40. The decision implies that the mean scored of all the 8 items in the questionnaire which is less than 1.50 should be excluded. However, the finding from Table 1 revealed that the respondents agreed on 3 items as the stages in which job applicants must pass through before being recruited into LIRS, which are selection test/examination, job offer/final selection and background checks/references.

Table 2: Respondents' Opinion on the Impact of Recruitment and Selection Process on Employees' Performance in Lagos State Internal Revenue Service

S/N	Variables	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Very Poor	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Arrives for work on time	35	25.7	45	45.9	18	18.4	-	-	-	-
2	Arrives for meeting on time	22	22.4	53	54.1	22	22.4	1	1.0	-	-
3	Meets work deadline	17	17.3	53	54.1	27	27.6	1	1.0	-	-
4	Identifies problem	22	22.4	53	54.1	17	17.3	1	1.0	-	-
5	Take appropriate action on problem as necessary	21	21.4	51	52.0	19	19.4	6	6.1	1	1.0
6	Set appropriate actions on problems as necessary	20	20.4	41	41.8	29	29.6	5	5.1	2	2.0
7	Set appropriate priorities for tasks	17	17.3	46	46.9	32	32.7	2	2.0	1	1.0
8	Uses time effectively	12	12.2	42	42.9	38	38.8	3	3.1	3	3.1
9	Consult with supervisors and co-workers as necessary	20	20.4	43	43.9	28	28.6	5	5.1	2	2.0
10	Work without supervision as necessary	17	17.3	37	37.8	36	36.7	4	4.1	4	4.1

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 2 presents respondents' opinion on the impact of the recruitment process on employees' performance in Lagos State Internal Revenue Service. According to the first assertion inTable2, a large percentage of the respondents (45.9%) agreed to the assertion that arrival to work on time was good, this followed by 25.7% which was excellent. Also, 18.4% was fair. It could, therefore, be inferred from the data presentation that majority of the respondents (71.6%) agreed to the assertion that the recruitment process promotes prompt arrival to work by the employees.

As it could be seen in item 2 from the Table 2, 22.4% of the respondents ascribed to the statement that arrival to a meeting on time was excellent, 54.1% good, 22.4% was fair, while 1.0% was poor. However, majority of the respondents claimed that (76.5%) agreed to the

assertion that arrival to a meeting on time was good. This finding implies that a good recruitment and selection exercise makes employees arrive early to meetings.

The study also revealed in item 3 that 17.3% of the respondents agreed that meeting work deadline was excellent with 54.1% good, 27.6% was fair, while 1.0% was poor. About 71.4% of the respondents agreed that the recruitment process brings about good hands that work towards meeting work deadlines.

The study also affirmed in variable 4, Table 2 that 22.4% of the respondents believed that identifying problems was excellent with 54.1% as good, 27.6% was fair, while 1.0% was poor. However, it could be inferred from the data presentation that (76.5%) agreed to the statement that a good recruitment process help employees in identifying problems in the organization. Furthermore, it was shown in Table 2 in item 5 that 21.4% of the respondents agreed that taking appropriate action on problems as necessary was excellent, 52.0% was good, 19.4% was fair, while 6.1% was poor and 1.0% was very poor. 73.4% of the respondents agreed to the statement that one of the impacts of recruitment is that it helps employees in taking appropriate action on problems as necessary.

It could also be inferred in item 6 that 20.4% of the respondents said that setting appropriate actions on problems as necessary was excellent and 41.8% was good, 29.6% was fair, while 5.1% was poor and 2.0% was very poor. It could be highlighted from the analysis that the majority of the respondents (71.4%) agreed to the assertion that setting appropriate actions on problems as necessary were good. The implication of this is that when a recruitment exercise gives room for the best candidates into an organization, they will be able to take appropriate actions on issues.

Table 2, item7revealed that 17.3% of the respondents agreed that setting appropriate priorities for tasks was excellent and 46.9% was good, 32.7% was fair, while 2.0% was poor and 1.0% was very poor. Majority of the respondents (64.2%) agreed to the fact that setting appropriate priorities for tasks were good. This means that employees were articulate in setting priorities when faced with tasks in the organization.

Also, it was shown in the Table2, item 8 that 12.2% of the respondents indicated that using time effectively was excellent and 42.9% was good, 38.8% was fair, while 3.1% was poor and 3.1% was very poor. However, a little above average of the respondents (55.1%) agreed that using time effectively was good. This shows that the recruitment exercise in the service gives birth to employees who are good users of time and can manage time effectively in enhancing performance and organizational productivity.

The findings in item 9 showed that 20.4% of the respondents inferred that consulting with supervisors and co-workers was excellent and 43.9% of the respondents also said that consulting with supervisors and co-workers was good, 28.6% was fair, while 5.1% was poor and 2.0% was very poor. However, most of the respondents (64.3%) agreed that consulting with supervisors and co-workers was good. This data presentation implies that the recruitment process in Lagos State Internal revenue Service brings about a sense of belonging

and harmonious relationship among employees and their supervisors and between their co-workers.

The result of analysis also revealed in item 10 that 17.3% of the respondents agreed to the proposal that working without supervision as necessary was excellent, 37.8% also said that working without supervision as necessary was good, with 36.7% believed that working without supervision as necessary was fair, while 4.1% said that it was poor and the remaining percent also agreed that working without supervision as necessary was very poor. It could, however, be revealed from the findings that 55.1%of the respondents agreed to the assertion that working without supervision as necessary was good. This, therefore, implies that the recruitment process produces employees who can work with little or no suppression. It means that the employees are knowledgeable and have the necessary skills to carry out their given tasks.

6.   Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings above, this study made the following conclusion with the view that personnel are the life wire of an organization. When the employees are wrong every other thing about the organization gets wrong. That an organization is effective and efficient, it is the personnel and when it is ineffective and inefficient, it is the personnel. That it is productive or unproductive, it is the personnel. That it is growing or not, it is the personnel and that it is corrupt, it is the personnel. Therefore, the survival of any organization is highly dependent on this aspect of the organization. This was why Sanusi and Martadha (2011) maintained that in a public organization, the proper management of human material and financial resources would best be derived when qualified persons are recruited to handle administrative and managerial cadre of the service. This study, therefore, recommended that all qualified candidates should therefore of necessity be treated with fairness and equity and as much as possible, the elements of nepotism, tribalism, favouritism, gender discrimination, ethnicity, godfatherism and corruption must be eradicated thereby giving equal opportunities to all qualified applicants.

This study also recommended that public services in Nigeria should also upgrade their recruitment and selection procedures to meet up with the rising demands of the competitive labour forces. By so doing, professional will be recruited into the service and public service delivery will be enhanced.

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