

REVIEW OF RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND PUBLIC SECTOR PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Lack of objectivity in the recruitment process could hamper viability, trust, and ease of doing business with the Nigerian public sector. This paper review literature on recruitment process and performance particularly in the public sector. While empirical studies revealed that, proper recruitment process can lead to the hiring of skilled employees and increase the performance of both employee and the organization. We observed that there are few empirically studies on the subject in the Nigerian public sector. The authors recommend that politicians, business giants, religious and other elites, should allow, the departments, agencies saddle with the responsibility of recruitment to do their job without internal or external interference.

Keywords: recruitment, performance, public sector, employees, processes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the Nigeria public sector has been experiencing poor service delivery due to lack of transparency in the recruitment process. Innovative human resource management practices foster employee flexibility and the availability of employees with the right skills to perform their job (Nwachukwu and Chladkova, 2017). Organisations need to develop and renew capabilities to sustain performance (Nwachukwu and Vu, in press). In this context, objective recruitment process can enable ministries, department and agencies to achieve superior performance. Likewise, to build and sustain competitive advantage adequate staffing is important (Djabatey, 2012). Evidence shows that people who are not qualified are considered for employment, either into the civil service or public service. Recruitment is a process designed to provide an organization with an adequate number of qualified candidates (Shafritz, Russel and Borick, 2011, Aibeye, 2010). In Nigeria, the recruitment process in the public sector is marred with irregularities. Most times, incompetent people are hired based on political affinity or recommendation from high profile personalities. This influence has a negative implication for productivity, job performance and the services rendered to the public. The less privileged ones who have no alternative sources to these services are mostly affected. Lack of merit in the employment process has continued unabated for decades. This may be responsible for the socio-economic problems the country is experiencing. Despite the importance of recruiting qualified personnel to organisational and employee performance, most ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) prefer to hire less qualified individuals. This stems from unethical conduct such as religion, tribal sentiment, neighbourhoods syndrome among others. Besides, some questions remain unanswered concerning the recruitment process in the Nigerian public sector context. Some of these questions include; why do we need to recruit? Is there manpower shortage? is there a growing trend of expansion of activities that we need to meet up with? Arguably, subjective recruitment process may lead to underperformance and low productivity. This study attempts to propose recommendations to managers and policymakers based on the review of the recruitment process in Nigeria public sector.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Clarification of Recruitment Process

Organizations need to attract individuals with the right qualifications, in sufficient numbers and at the right time (Ekwoaba et al., 2015). Cloete (2007) assert that recruitment focus on making available people to meet the job needs of the government. Ineffective recruitment process can provide firms with a pool of poorly qualified candidates. According to Bratton and Gold (2007), recruitment is the process of getting a pool of qualified people to apply for job vacancies in an organisation. Recruitment is a positive process of generating a pool of individuals by inviting the right audience to fill a vacancy. Sangeetha (2010) note that recruitment process involves the sourcing, advertising and interviewing of future employees. The purpose of recruitment is to provide a group of candidates that is large enough to enable managers to select qualified applicants. Aibiye (2010) submitted that recruitment provides many candidates for managers to select from. Recruitment process ensures that organisations get the appropriate number of suitable and qualified candidates at minimum cost (Armstrong, 2006). Firms attract candidates by identifying, assessing and using the most appropriate sources of applicants. It would be disastrous to considered applicant(s) who do not meet the basic requirements for interview and appointments. Boxall, Purcell and Wright (2007), identified five different questions an organization should answer to have an effective recruitment strategy. These questions are “Whom to recruit?”, “Where to recruit?”, “What recruitment sources to use?”, “When to recruit?” and “What message to communicate?”

Factors Influencing Recruitment

Kemunto (2011) note that culture, economic conditions, size, the financial position of a business, corporate strategy, technological advancements and legal frameworks are some of the factors influencing recruitment process in Kitale municipality.

Political

This is the main determinant of the recruitment process in organizations, especially in Nigeria public sector. Winnie, (2017) posit that activities of trade unions’ and senior management interference significantly affect recruitment practices in an organization. Constitutional provisions for special groups, political compulsions and special consideration for displaced people hinders effective recruitment process (Florea and Mihai, 2014). Most times these people are employed without considering if they have the right skills, experience and qualifications. Nigeria politicians influence the recruitment process to compensate party faithful's and loyalists who have no basic requirement to work in the public sector. This influence has done more harm than good to the nation’s recruitment process. Ineffective recruitment process as a result of political influence negatively affects employee performance. This calibre of employees are not ready to perform assigned duties within the laydown procedures believing that the political system would protect them from sanctions. We reason that political influence is a major cause of public sector underperformance in Nigeria.

Socio-Cultural

Social organisations are strong factors that affect the recruitment process. Social organisations include; clubs, age group, secrets societies, community associations, groups interest among others. These groups have a significant impact on the recruitment process in Nigeria. Religious institutions (Christians, Muslims, traditionalists) ensures that their members are gainfully employed, in the public sector, whether they are qualified or not. This compromise has caused low productivity in the public sector, which have grave implications for the majority of the citizenry. Major social changes often cause organisations to place increased emphasis on recruitment. Winnie (2017) suggests that the human resource

department must find a way to deal with social factors such as workforce demographics during recruitment. Corporate culture affects ethical standards and behaviour of managers. Culture influence productivity and performance in organisations. A socio-cultural system such as the community development association (CDAs), force their indigenes on the public and private sectors on the basis that the organisation is sited in their locality. Most times the organisations have no option than to accept without considering if they are qualified for the job. Arguably, the socio-cultural system has hindered productivity and the public sector capacity to deliver better services to the people of Nigeria. This issue will continue to happen in the recruitment process if not addressed.

Business-Economic

This type of influence is more complex, because of its inherent nature on the recruitment process. A stakeholder may be forced to quit the public sector, which can cause more harm than good. According to Winnie (2017), the shape of the economy affects the recruitment process in all organisations in terms of whether or not to hire as well as the remuneration of candidates. The organisation is forced to recruit internally or to select candidates from the database if the economic situation is unfavourable. This influence is more or less a policy control of an organisation because of its investment in the economy. They use their investment capacity to dictate whom the organisation should employ. The business-economy factors are paramount to any organisation that wants to keep or maintain customer service relationship, as well as strong patronage in the national economy. The influence of business-economy on recruitment process has strong control mechanism on the performance of an organization and its employees. This influence can make or mar a nation political, socio-economic system. The recruitment of unqualified employees in the public sector to perform very sensitive task or duty can expose a country to serious economic problems.

Empirical review

Okusanya and Oseji (2016) found that recruitment and selection criteria have a significant effect on an organisation's efficiency. According to Roma (2016), recruitment and selection process is the foremost pillar of success in any organisation. Thus, firms must seek to attract and retain quality workforce. Adeyemi et al (2013) posit that employees should all be treated equally in the recruitment and selection process as this could have a positive impact on performance. Ekwoaba, Ikeije and Ufoma (2015) examined the relationship between recruitment, selection and organisational performance. They concluded that an objective approach to recruitment can lead to better organizational performance. Gamage (2014) noted that the recruitment and selection practices will determine who is hired, shape employee behaviour and attitude. If properly designed, it will identify competent candidates and accurately match them to a job. Amegashie-Viglo (2014) recommends that the recruitment and selection processes into public sector organisations should be done with maximum credibility and integrity to reduce perceptions of influences or factors other than merit. Olatunji and Ugoji (2013) found that the recruitment procedures used by firms impact employee behaviour and performance. Mustapha et al. (2013) concluded that organizations must implement recruitment policies that are in line with their objectives and the expectations of the larger society. Using descriptive research designs, Kepha, Mukulu and Wattis (2014) observed that recruitment and selection influence the performance of employees in research institutes in Kenya. Ezeali and Esiagu (2010) reported that efficiency in service delivery depends on the quality of employees recruited by organisations. Rauf (2007) reported that sophisticated recruitment procedures are significantly associated with performance in organisations. According to Sarkar and Kumar (2007), organizational efficiency is hinged on the approach which the organization adopts in the recruitment and selection of employees.

Sarkar and Kumar (2007) proposed a holistic model of recruitment, emphasizing the importance of the process of recruitment and the interdependence of its parts (Sinha & Thaly, 2013). Subbarao (2006) identified the recruitment sources used by job seekers at various levels. The study further highlighted the importance of different types of approaches used at the time of recruitment which in turn makes organisation well-established or less established. To get the best human resource, firms must adopt an efficient and well-planned strategy. Arguably, organisations that employ competent people have better performance and productivity. Unwin (2005) emphasized the importance of the recruitment process in attracting and retaining knowledge workers. Similarly, Sen and Saxena (1997) emphasized the importance of quality in the recruitment and hiring process. Arguably, hiring quality candidates is crucial for successful organisations. Huselid (1995) observed that recruitment criteria have a significant impact on organisational performance due to the provision of a large pool of qualified applicants.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed the historical method. Data were collected from secondary sources. The authors used past and present research results to explore the recruitment process and its impact on organisational performance, especially in the public sector context. Peer-reviewed Journals, books, and other relevant publications on the subject were retrieved from various databases including Google Scholar, ProQuest, and Scopus databases. We used editorial, opinion, theoretical, qualitative and quantitative studies for the review of the subject.

4. CONCLUSIONS

To sustain competitive advantage, organisations need to develop and implement strategies that can enable them optimise their recruitment process. Decisions made during recruitment can have a far-reaching impact on the company in the future. The literature review suggests that an objective approach to recruiting employees to an organisation is crucial to achieving superior performance. Conversely, the subjective recruitment process can lead to low employee morale, low productivity and underperformance. Studies on recruitment process in the Nigerian public sector is scanty. It is obvious that the recruitment process in the sector is biased and lack merit. In most cases, employees are recruited based on undue influences from political, cultural, social, economic etc. These unqualified employees make little or no meaningful contribution to the organisation. Undue influences if not checked may destroy and weaken performance in the public sector. We propose the following recommendations to policymakers and relevant stakeholders in the public sector.

Recommendations

- The continuous resistance of unpalatable system of recruitment should be a paramount campaign of civil societies, non-governmental organization (NGOs) and other relevant authorities to curb this menace.
- Ministries, agencies, and parastatals should advertise available vacancies openly so that qualified applicant can apply.
- The recruitment process should be transparent and free from undue influences that will jeopardize the process.
- The public sector must not only have a well define recruitment policy but must also adhere strictly to the policy.
- Recruitment to the public sector should be based only on merit.

This study used insights from the literature to explore the subject. Future studies should empirically examine the recruitment process in the Nigerian public sector context. This may

provide useful insights into the relationship between recruitment process and public sector performance. Nevertheless, the applicability of this study adds to human resource management literature in the emerging country context.

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