



MAINTAINING A COMPETENT WORKFORCE: THE EXTENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH RECRUITMENT POLICY GUIDELINES IN OYO STATE CIVIL SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to investigate the extent of compliance with policy guidelines by the recruitment bodies in Oyo State civil service. This is triggered by the consequences of negligence in the process of recruitment of employees. Thus, the modern structural organization theory which views organizations as rational institutions with the primary purpose of accomplishing established objectives was adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. The survey research design was adopted for this study and data was collected using quantitative and qualitative techniques. Analysis of data collected revealed that some respondents, for one reason or the other, did not go through all the processes stated in the recruitment policy guideline given for the compliance of recruitment bodies and that there are hidden or unspoken rules in the recruitment process of Oyo State Civil service. Based on these findings, it was recommended that prevailing principles that have promoted and enthroned various sentimental values should be de-emphasized and that unlawful discrimination should be avoided in the recruitment process.

Keywords: *Civil Service, Modern Structural Organization theory, Recruiting bodies, Recruitment policy guidelines*

INTRODUCTION

The productivity and survival of any organization mainly depends on the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce, among other factors. A competent and efficient workforce is not realized by the workings of a miracle, but by a systematic process of a well-articulated recruitment and selection exercise. Recruitment and selection involves the process of finding, attracting and engaging the people that an organization needs (Opatha, 2010). It includes all the processes involved in bringing the talents needed into the organization. The Civil Service is the force of policy implementation in Nigeria, with goals including social service delivery and development. Okereka (2015) posited that masses enjoy good life in developed countries such as France, Britain and Canada as a result of good governance and the product of an efficient public service that has risen beyond sentiments.

A justifiable argument premised by Adeyemo and Osunyikanmi (2009) is that negligence of laid-down recruitment policy guidelines will inadvertently lead to an open-gate entry of incompetent workforce, thus resulting to inefficiency in the system, which internal training modules might not be able to brush up. This is because training modules are developed using the fundamental benchmark of the evaluated competence of employees at the point of entry. This is why a good training might not make up for a bad selection, hence, resulting to gross inefficiency in the system. The objective of any



organization can only be achieved through the effective coordination of the human resource. The civil servants must be effectively coordinated for the civil service to achieve its objectives. While looking at the reasons policies have failed in Nigeria, Okpala (2012) posited that Nigeria has lost several billions of naira over the last few decades due to flagrant abuse of procedures, the lack of merit or non-transparency in the award of contracts. The Civil Service is a labour-intensive employ and the quality of its service is dependent on the quality and performance of its employees. Like so many other developing countries, the strength and life of development in Nigeria lies in the policy formulation of the government, and more importantly, the implementation of such policies. The Civil Service is the force of policy implementation in Nigeria, with goals including social service delivery and development.

The indigenization of the Nigerian Civil Service after independence in 1960 was accompanied by frequent purges and rationalization of the Civil Service. This encouraged the selfish national leaders, being ethnocentric, to base the recruitment of personnel on regional and ethnic cleavages, and likewise political patronage. Okeke-Uzodike and Subban (2015) traced the pattern of recruitment from the colonial rule *when* the government hurriedly replaced foreign staff with locals and found that many of the replacements were not properly equipped in terms of education or knowledge.

The selection process can be defined as the series of activities carried out to choose the most qualified applicants from the pool of prospective job candidates (Onwe, Abah and Nwoku, 2015). The recruitment process is likewise considered the means by which the business/organization sources and acquires its most precious asset – its people. Garner (2012) opined that when recruitment and selection is carried out hastily, it is fraught with dangers; however, when carried out with skill, it can be one of the most important investment that the organization makes. The main aim of recruiting must always drive the Human Resource personnel in the discharge of his/her duty, that is, to appoint the person who can do the job needed to the required standard of performance.

Furthermore, to ensure that the organization gets the “cream-off-the-top” of the applicant pool, there must be a successful recruitment. A successful recruitment is when a large number of potential candidates can be identified for a particular position. Hereafter, selection procedures are used to determine the most likely to fit both the position and the organization through series of structured or laid-down evaluation by the Human Resource department. This is why Omisore and Okofu (2014) opined that a successful recruitment is sine-qua-non for successful selection and staffing. Ineffective recruitment precludes any chance for effective candidate selection. Thus, this study sought to investigate the extent of compliance with the laid-down policy guidelines by the recruitment bodies in Oyo State Civil Service.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Civil Service in Nigeria

The civil service can be described as the professional branch of a state's administration that is established to impartially implement the state's policies and laws. It is made up of the individuals employed on the basis of professional merit as proven by competitive examinations. The civil service is made up of people who constitute the permanent staff of the ministries or departments of government (Kwaghga, 2014). The Civil service of Nigeria is divided into different ministries, departments/parastatals and agencies



(MDAs). A civil servant is someone who is recruited into the civil service. The functions of the civil service of any country make them very important to the development of that country. The civil service assists the government in the formulation and implementation of government policies, hence they must be capable to initiate and enforce them. The civil service also undertakes the development planning of a nation. They also coordinate, motivate and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector. The civil service also ensures the continuity of public administration. It is the store of knowledge of past government decisions and procedures.

Dobie (2015) identified core tenets that the civil service lives by. These tenets serve as the principles that guide the conduct of the Civil service. The principle of neutrality emphasizes that a civil servant must be politically neutral and not expected to engage in partisan politics unless they resign their appointment. The principle of impartiality emphasizes that civil servants must be fair and just to any government in power; irrespective of his or her personal opinion about that particular government. The principle of anonymity reflects that civil servants are not to be seen or heard; that is, they are not to take the praise or blame for any government policy. The principle of permanency provides for the longevity of employment security for a civil servant, whereby government and administrations may change, but the civil servant does not end his service with the expiration of a particular government tenure. The last principle is that of Merit; employment into the civil service must be based on merit since it is the vehicle trusted to enhance efficiency in their areas of performance.

The Civil Service Recruitment Process and Policy Guidelines.

The Federal Civil Service Commission and the State Civil Service Commission serve as the recruitment agencies for the Civil service of Nigeria. The Federal Civil Service Commission and the State Civil Service Commission have been given powers to recruit, dismiss, promote, discipline and control persons in the civil service. Apart from these commissions, powers have been delegated to the Personnel Management Board of ministries and extra-ministerial departments to recruit personnel into positions of grade level 01- 06. Federal civil Service Commission and the State Civil Service Commission have the exclusive rights to appoint into grade level 07-12 for the senior staff (Okereka, 2015; Igbokwe-Ibeto and Agbodike, 2015).

The process of recruitment and selection into the civil service as given by the Public Service rules are:

- i) Appointments into the Public service are made on the authority of the State Civil Service Commission. These appointments are made either by a letter written under the Direction of the State Civil Service Commission or by a formal agreement between the officer and the State Government or its appointed agents. Permanent Secretaries / Heads of Ministerial Offices / Personnel Management Board are authorized to appoint eligible candidates to posts in respect of which the powers of appointment have been delegated to them.
- ii) For new roles, positions must be advertised internally as well as externally.
- iii) A competitive civil service entrance examination must be conducted, especially for posts graded GL 07 – 10



iv) Structured Interview must be conducted for successful candidates of the entry examination.

v) For grade level 06 and below, interviews are conducted by the delegated body, which is the Junior Personnel Management Board of Ministries and Extra-Ministerial departments.

The recruitment policy guideline of the Nigerian Civil Service draws its strength from the process written above. They are stated as follows:

- i) There must be an assessment of the existing vacancies and the need for filling such vacancies before a call circular is sent to every ministry, parastatals and departments.
- ii) There must be a pre-approved personnel budget forecast for the vacant position(s) to evaluate if there is adequate fund to pay those that will be recruited.
- iii) For GL7+ hires, the job description and person specification must first be approved by the relevant commission or delegated service-wide authority.
- iv) Appointment must be based on merit: hence, there must be a pre-selection test which is the Civil Service Entrance examination.
- v) All eligible candidates for appointment must be interviewed by the appropriate personnel management board or committee. 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. (Igbokwe-Ibeto and Agbodike, 2015).
- vi) Be certified by a government medical officer as sound in health and medically fit for the government service.
- vii) The candidate must not have been convicted of a criminal offence before.

In addition, the Oyo State Civil Service incorporates the strategy of the Federal Character Principle as a quota system in their recruitment process. The Federal Character Principle operates in a way such that there is regional (or state) balance in the appointment of key positions in Nigeria. For instance, ministers in Nigeria are chosen from the 36 states in Nigeria. Also, the position of the President, Vice President, Senate Leader of the country are rotated such that the six geo-political zones in Nigeria are equally represented from time to time; and no zone controls the three seats together at one point in time. As stated in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, under section 153(1), "The composition of the government of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and also common national loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall not be predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or any of its agencies."

In this vein, the thirty-three local governments of Oyo state are distributed into six (6) zones so that when recruitment is conducted, it will embrace all the six zones. This means that recruitment of personnel must not be dominated by just one zone. The six (6) zones are:

I. ***Ibadan Main city***



II. ***Ibadan Less city***

Akinyele, Egbeda, Lagelu, Ido, Oluyole, Ona – Ara,

III. ***Ibarapa***

Ibarapa Central, Ibarapa East, Ibarapa North

IV. ***Oke – Ogun***

Atisbo, Irepo, Iseyin, Itesiwaju, Iwajowa, Kajola, Olorunsogo, Oorelope, Saki East, Saki West

V. ***Oyo***

Afijio, Atiba, Oyo East, Oyo West

VI. ***Ogbomosho –***

Ogbomosho North, Ogbomosho South, Ogo-Oluwa, Oriire, Surulere.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The modern structural organization theory was adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. The opinions of modern structural theorists such as Tom Burns, and G.M Stalker, Peter M. Blau and W. Richard as well as Henry Mintzberg were drawn from the views of Frederick W. Taylor, Henri Fayol, Luther Gullick and Max Weber who were classical structuralists. The word “modern” is used to distinguish between the Pre-World War II classical structure theories and the structural organization theorists whose ideas became popular in the second half of the 20th century. According to Shafritz, Ott and Jang (2011), the modern structural organization theory views organizations as rational institutions with the primary purpose of accomplishing established objectives. Thus, rational organizational behavior can best be achieved through systems of defined rules and formal authority. Rationality within the organizational setting can therefore be maintained through continuous control and coordination of organizational activities. Also, the theory upholds the view that there is a best structure for any organization, or at least a most appropriate structure in light of its given objectives, the environmental conditions surrounding, the nature of its products and/or services and the technology of the production process.

The view of Blau and Scott (1962) is very fundamental to the explanation of this theory. They emphasize that all organizations include both a formal and informal element. The informal organization by its nature is embedded in the formal structure and supports its formal organization by establishing norms for the operation of the organization that cannot always be spelled out by rules and policies. It is therefore



pertinent to properly understand the informal structure of the organization in order to properly grasp the in-depth nature of its formal structure

The Civil Service is a labour - intensive employer, and the quality of its service is dependent on the quality and performance of its employees. Like so many other developing countries, the strength and life of development in Nigeria lies in the policy formulation of the government; and more importantly, the implementation of such policies. The desire to achieve organizational performance starts from the choice or selection of who to recruit. The strength of an organization lies in her human resource. The theory points out the importance of rationality in the organization. One of the first steps in the planning for the recruitment of employees into the organization is to establish adequate policies and procedures. A recruitment policy represents the organization's code of conduct in this area of activity. The recruitment policy is the laid-down principles that guide the conduct of the recruitment process in an organization. In the process of recruitment therefore, it is necessary that the core tenets of the recruitment policy be adhered to strictly as that is the first step in ensuring proper coordination of organizational activities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design: The survey research method was adopted for this study because the method is well suited for the study of large population. A field research was conducted, triangulating both the quantitative and the qualitative methods of survey research. This study employed the non-experimental and cross-sectional research design. It was cross-sectional in design because it took a sample or cross-section of the entire civil servants at a point in time. Moreover, since the research study dealt with individuals, non-experimental research design was employed because it does not involve the manipulation of variables or controlled settings. The study was carried out at the Oyo State Civil Service which is located at the Secretariat of Oyo State, Agodi, Ibadan.

Population of Study: The study population comprised all Oyo State Civil servants. The Oyo State Civil Service consists of workers in three categories: the junior staff, senior staff and the administrative staff. Level 01-06 represents the junior staff while grade level 07-14 represents the senior staff. Staff between grade levels 15-17 occupies the administrative level. There are 13 ministries, and 42 agencies and parastatals present in the Oyo State Civil Service. However, this research work will only focus on the 13 ministries which represent the core civil service, leaving out the 42 agencies, departments and government parastatals. The thirteen ministries include Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; Ministry of Environment and Water Resources; Ministry of Finance and Budget; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism; Ministry of Works and Transport; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban development; Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs; Ministry of Trade, Industry, Investment and Co-operatives; Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare and Ministry of Youth and Sports. The population comprised workers between grade levels 01-14. The basis for this grouping is because those who fall within this category should have undergone the recruitment process conducted by either the Oyo State Civil Service or the Personnel Management Board of each ministry. The total population for workers in the core ministries at the State Secretariat are 4676 (Bureau of Statistics, Oyo State Secretariat, 2016).



Sample Size and Sampling Technique: The sample size of 350 was used for the study. This study adopted the probability proportional to size sampling technique. Since all the selected ministries are not the same in size (population figure), the probability proportional to size and weighing average was utilized in determining the sample size of respondents in each of the ministries. This method provided equal chance of representation for the respondents.

Instrument of Data Collection: The questionnaire, which is a series of well-structured questions that is used to obtain relevant data from the respondents, was employed to elicit information from the Oyo state civil servants in different ministries and parastatals. Since the civil servants are wary of the press and are meant to uphold the principle of anonymity, this method guaranteed their confidentiality. A number of respondents were interviewed one-on-one to explore their perspectives on the phenomena being studied. This method made it possible to probe deeply on the areas in which the questionnaire may not have covered. A total of eight respondents were interviewed, four from the junior cadre and four from the senior cadre. The reason for the division between the junior cadre and the senior cadre is because the recruiting bodies for both cadres differ, hence, a richer knowledge will be obtained from the perspectives of the two cadres.

Key Informant Interview instrument was also utilized and it focused on workers from the Oyo State Civil Service Commission and the members of the Personnel Management Board. These two bodies are in charge of recruiting for the civil service at the senior and junior cadres respectively. The interviewees were people who are directly involved in the recruitment and selection process in the state. Four (4) respondents were chosen for the Key Informant Interview; two (2) from the Civil Service Commission and two (2) from the Personnel Management Board.

Method of Data Analysis: The quantitative data for this study was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to allow for a descriptive analysis of univariate and bivariate distributions that are relevant to the study. Qualitative data, collected through the In-Depth Interview and Key Informant Interview method was transcribed; and data was analyzed using content analysis. Also, verbatim quotations were used in the course of the analysis where appropriate. It is important to note that throughout the analysis, triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data was adopted.

Ethical Considerations: Finally, ethical standards were adhered to as a great deal of confidentiality was ensured in order to protect participants who willingly gave out information that might offend the top echelons. As regards willingness, no respondent was compelled to give information. Hence, this research aimed at guaranteeing that the parties concerned understood the trends of this issue and start working on the solution in order to achieve better efficiency in our civil service.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The socio-demographic data which forms the background characteristics of the participants in this study consisted of age, sex, marital status, level of education, grade level cadre, religion, and ethnicity particularly their state of origin. Majority of the respondents' ages were observed to be in their 30s (42.2%) followed by those in their 40s (35.5%). Only about a tenth of respondents represent civil servants who were in



extreme ages (that is in their 20s or close to retirement). This signifies that most of them are in their productive ages in the labour force, and are not yet close to retirement. An analysis of their gender showed that 56.6% are males and the remaining 43.4% are females, showing a predominance of males among the sampled respondents. This is not surprising as Damina, Osagbemi, Dongurum and Laka (2012), Gberevbie (2010), opined that there is a dominance of males than females in the population figure of civil servants in Nigeria.

Table 1 also reveals the ethnicity of civil servants. The three major ethnic groups in Nigeria seemed not to be well represented in the state civil service. Virtually all the respondents are Yoruba, no Hausa and only one out of the 350 respondents is associated with the Igbo ethnic group. It appears ethnicity in the civil service was more of a constant than a variable. Another interesting aspect of respondents' background characteristics is that one may expect that since almost all the sampled civil servants are Yoruba there will be an even representation of the workers from the five south-western states where the Yoruba people are located. However, this was not the case. Table 1 shows that about 91.6% reported to be indigenes of Oyo state leaving out just 8.4% of the respondents to other states within the country; which comprises respondents' whose state of origin is within the south-west region (7.5%) and those outside the south-west region (0.9%). This signifies the predominance of state indigenes over non-indigenes in the Oyo State Civil Service. The implication of these figures corroborates with the assertion of Akinwale (2014) that there is often discrimination in state civil service for non-indigenes who seek employment.

The data on the marital status of respondents showed that four out of every five civil servants that were interviewed were currently married, leaving out less than 20% who are single (that is, not married). This is not surprising as most of the respondents are in their middle ages, and culturally expected to be married at such ages. The educational categorization shows that majority of the respondents are graduates (64%) and about a quarter have received a post-graduate degree, cumulatively, about 88% have gone through tertiary education. This figure is also not alarming since most of the civil servants represented in the study fall under the senior cadre (73.4%), and as such, they are expected to have a minimum qualification of tertiary education to occupy such position. Two cadres of civil servants were represented in this study; a quarter of the respondents (25.1%) are in the junior cadre, and 73.4% are in the senior cadre.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Background Characteristics of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	197	56.6
Female	153	43.4
Marital status		
Single	61	17.9
Married	276	81.2
Widowed	3	0.9



Age		
20-29	32	11.3
30-39	119	42.2
40-49	100	35.5
50+	31	11.0
Religion		
Christianity	198	56.6
Islam	152	43.4
Ethnicity		
Yoruba	346	99.7
Igbo	1	0.3
Hausa	-	-
Educational qualification		
Primary	1	0.3
Secondary	39	11.4
Tertiary (1 st Degree)	219	63.8
Tertiary (Postgraduate)	84	24.5
State of Origin		
Oyo State	317	91.6
Other state (within South-West)	26	7.5
Other state (outside South-West)	3	0.9
Grade level		
Junior cadre	88	25.1
Senior cadre	257	73.4
No response	5	1.5

Source: Field Survey (2016)

Compliance with the Guidelines for Recruitment process in Oyo State Civil Service

Respondents were asked about certain processes they had to go through when they were being recruited. Their responses were revealed in Table 2. It was observed in each of the following cases that over eighty percent of the respondents submitted an



application for a specific job advert before applying went through assessment interview and also underwent medical tests during recruitment. Although there are stated recruitment policy guidelines given for the compliance of recruitment bodies in Oyo State civil service, however, some respondents for one reason or the other did not go through all the processes included in Table 2. It is less likely that civil servants will write entrance examination and more likely that they will go through assessment interview, however, a little above ten-percent did not go through the interview process. In addition, close to one-fifth of respondents reported that they were recruited without submitting an application for a specific job role.

Table 2:Percentage distribution of respondents' recruitment processes in Oyo state civil service

Recruitment Processes	Yes	No
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Wrote entrance examination	161 (46.5)	185 (53.5)
Went through assessment interview	300 (86.7)	46 (13.3)
Got job description before applying	147 (50.0)	147 (50.0)
Submitted an application for a specific job role	248 (82.7)	51 (17.0)
Went through medical test during recruitment	287 (85.7)	47 (14.0)

Source: Field Survey (2016)

From the Civil Service rules of 1999, all candidates must go through a structured interview and medical test before being recruited. However, a deviance of 13.3% and 14% is discovered from the respondents who were asked directly if they went through these processes. Akinwale (2014) opined that the most widely used technique of the Nigerian Civil Service recruitment is the selection interview method; and this is reflected in the positive response of 86.7% from the respondents. Most surprising of all is the fact that 53.5% of the respondents reported that they did not write an entrance examination at all. All other things being equal, this deviance from the recruitment policy should not have received a high figure since most of the respondents claimed to have a tertiary education (88.3%) and are occupying positions in the senior cadre (73.4%). This same premise holds true for the issue of “job description and person specification”.

According to Maidoki and Dahida (2013), the reason for the widespread use of the interview technique by the various civil service commission (CSCs) across the country is due to the assumption that it requires no specialized skills or knowledge which other more technical instruments like psychological testing (intelligence tests, aptitudes tests, attainment tests, and personality tests) could require. Concerning the issue of conduct of entrance examination exercise, officers coming into the senior cadre are expected to write an entrance examination.

The opinions of the Key Informant Interviewees concerning this deviance are –



"Normatively, I feel everyone should go through this process but unfortunately, not all applicants write an entrance examination".

(KII, PMB staff, male, senior cadre, GL

14)

*"There are several reasons why some candidates do not write an entrance examination. First, I feel it has to do with the level of importance that is attached to such entry position or cadre. Also, when there is a high number of people to be employed, having an entrance examination might be a bit cumbersome for the recruiting bodies. For instance, Administrative Officers these days write ASCON examinations at the Federal level, then the result is sent to each state where those who passed on merit list are called for two to three different phases of interview. However, such process/procedure is not carried out even for senior officers of grade level 8 who are just coming in. Some do not even write an entrance examination".***(KII, CSC staff, male, senior cadre, GL**

14)

Another reason given for non-compliance with recruitment policies is owing to the influence of non-meritocratic factors. An interviewee opined that the reason why some candidates might not follow these laid-down process is because of who is backing them up.

*"If you know those who can make things happen for you, who are the big people that can influence things, you can work your way in. Do you think that it is everyone here that wrote an entrance examination or did interviews upon interviews? No now."***(IDI, female, junior cadre, GL06)**

Furthermore, an open ended question was included in the questionnaire which provided this study access to the views of respondents about recruitment exercise in Oyo state. This gave respondents the liberty to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, although some transformed the opportunity into providing recommendations for the recruitment bodies of the state. From a general assessment of their written responses, one may say, the question seeking to know their views about recruitment exercise in the state has generated a lot of divergent responses that it almost becomes very difficult to observe a clear cut pattern. The best that could be done in this case is to present those who were either satisfied (positive view) or dissatisfied (negative view) alongside with their reasons.

For those whose views were positive; they responded using the following words to describe the recruitment process in Oyo state civil service, 'acceptable', 'outstanding', 'good enough', 'absolutely standard', and 'commendable'. In fact, one of the respondents acknowledged as follows: 'recruitment is usually based on the need of the government and often considerations are given to persons with disabilities'. Some of the reasons provided by respondents to justify their positive views about recruitment in Oyo State are revealed in the following statements; some said: 'it is in line with the civil service regulations and general order', 'it meets the standard required for modern requirement', 'it is well organized', some of the respondents also said: '...think it is based on justice, fairness and equity' this supported the views of those who said that 'the recruitment process gives all the 33 Local Government Areas equal representation'.

Respondents with a negative view about Oyo state recruitment exercise also reported their views with the following words; 'not encouraging', 'not satisfactory', and 'poor'. Some of the reasons provided by respondents to support their views about the process of recruitment are as follows: 'they do not follow due process', 'it is not based on merit but on favouritism', The issue of merit seems to be very disturbing, this keeps recurring among respondents who are not satisfied with the recruitment process. Some



of them said ‘merit is just a hearsay’ indicating that they only heard about it but not evident in practice. Respondents observed that politics has been misappropriated in the recruitment exercise. Some said: ‘everything seems to centre on political interference’. In fact those who feel positive about the whole process still refer to this as an existing problem. For example some said: ‘the process is good but marred with politics’. Some even said: ‘some people are above the rules, so their candidates are also above the rules’. The response that ‘positions are not usually advertised’ was similarly consistently mentioned by respondents. One of the interesting findings from this study is that respondents perceived the recruitment process as government pragmatic way of generating revenue for the state. This was revealed from the data as some of the respondents said: ‘the Oyo State civil service sells forms to people without recruiting them’, some also perceived that ‘the recruitment process now helps government to generate money’.

One of the interviewees had this to say about the Oyo State recruitment process-

“Well, it is okay. But it is not as good as it is expected to be. When I came in, through the Civil Service Commission, we were told to buy forms. There was no written examination. After we did the oral interview and passed, it took them six months to confirm our appointment. To me, that is just an unnecessary long period of time. Also, after resuming, we were meant to get a letter of appointment but we did not receive it until two years later. The letter was then backdated to that effect. So, how do you want me to assess the recruitment process? It is not as standard as it should be.” (IDI, male, senior cadre, GL13)

Respondents’ Perception of the Existence of Hidden (Unspoken) Rules in the Recruitment Exercise

Hidden or unspoken rules can be described as issues that exist and can influence the outcome of recruitment process, though such rules are not usually spoken about. The opinions of the respondents were sought to know if the recruitment process in Oyo State Civil Service is marred by the existence of such hidden rules. Table 3 shows that 43.4% of the respondent posited positively to the above assertion while 42.3% denied its existence, and 14.3% decided not to respond.

Table 3: Respondents’ perception of the existence of unspoken rules in the Oyo State Civil Service Recruitment

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	117	43.4
No	148	42.3
No response	35	14.3
Total	350	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2016)

Apart from the 14.3% of the total respondents who refused to say anything about the existence of these unspoken rules, some of the respondents when asked to highlight some examples of such rules replied by writing “better not to say”. This somewhat



reluctance seems uncanny. However, from those who gave their opinions, non-meritocratic factors were identified from a whole lot of them, such as “big time connection”; “politics, man-know-man, godfatherism”; “favouritism among others”; “who your sponsors are”; “corruption”; “mostly relating to ethnicity and support from godfathers”. Non-meritocratic factors further presents itself as hidden or unspoken rules in the recruitment process of Oyo State Civil service. Furthermore, these non-meritocratic factors seem to be accepted as a norm. An In-depth interviewee opined that

“Can you be in a position of power and not help your family members? These things happen, only that they are not officially written down or spoken of. Most of the civil servants in Oyo state civil service are indigenes of Oyo state. How can your own people be in need of something and you will give it to outsiders? Also, the easiest way non-indigenes are considered is when they are females and they get married to an Oyo indigene. It is an unofficial and unspoken act and rule that operates in the Oyo state civil service; even everywhere in Nigeria.”

(IDI, male, senior cadre, GL14)

Concerning the issue of corruption, it is quite disturbing to discover that some civil servants posit that “you have to pay certain amount into their personal accounts if you want to secure a job”. However, there is a resultant effect to securing employment by corruption, as posited by one the interviewees, a member of the Personnel Management Board stated thus;

“As regards the issue of paying money to a government official, it is true that some people can generate appointment by doing so but the unfortunate thing is that such appointments would not last. They are fake appointments, they won’t receive the genuine appointment letters and they could be caught later on.”

(KII, PMB staff, male, senior cadre, GL14)

The processes through which every job applicants should go through were identified in Table 2. It is interesting to note that some respondents do not apportion the blame of compliance or non-compliance with the laid-down rules guiding recruitment to the recruiting bodies concerned. They are of the opinion that what determines the compliance to these rules are not the staff who conduct the recruitment but the forces that are higher and stronger than them, which they could do little or nothing about. For instance, an interviewee opined that –

*“The Civil Service Commission puts in their own best but full compliance to the policies might be a bit difficult when they have people higher than them who could determine how long they will last in their job, depending on whether they obey their wishes or not”***(IDI, male, senior cadre, GL12)**

“The final selection of candidates can be influenced by political godfathers and this makes it look like compliance to recruitment guidelines is absent”

(IDI, female, junior cadre, GL06)

In this vein, Onwe, Abah and Nwokwu (2015) opined that civil service commission receive express orders from the political heads in various ministries and extra ministerial departments to appoint their preferred candidates without recourse to laid down recruitment procedure. Consequently, the departmental heads, Personnel Management Board and the Civil Service Commission are handicapped in the enforcement of laid down rules and regulations lest they step on the toes of their god fathers.



THEORETICAL DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Recruitment and selection involves the process of finding, attracting and engaging the people that an organization needs. It includes all the processes involved in bringing the talents needed into the organization. Negligence of laid-down recruitment policy guidelines will inadvertently lead to an open-gate of entry of incompetent workforce and thus resulting to inefficiency in the system, which internal training modules might not be able to brush up. This is because the training modules are developed using the fundamental benchmark of the evaluated competence of the employee at the point of entry. And this is why a good training might not make up for a bad selection, hence, it leads to gross inefficiency in the system. This study revealed that in spite of the stated recruitment policy guidelines given for the compliance of recruitment bodies in Oyo State civil service, some employees did not go through all the processes. This shows that the principle of merit was not applied in all cases of recruitment into the civil service. Also, results revealed that there are some non-meritocratic factors which are reflected in some hidden or unspoken rules in the recruitment process. This is in line with Blau and Scott's (1962) proposition of an informal element inherent in modern organizations.

These findings can be explained with the aid of the modern structural organization theory which posits that as rational institutions, rational behavior is expected in all organizational activities. However, with the presence of an informal element, which can present itself in the form of non-meritocratic criteria in the selection process, there is a tendency of certain instances of deviance from the policy guidelines in the recruitment process. It is therefore necessary to review the choices that have hindered the efficiency of the civil service and design new policies that will lead to a better performance of the civil service in Oyo state, and in Nigeria as a whole. The importance of recruitment process in an organization, especially in the civil service, cannot be over-emphasized. Therefore, attention should be paid to the process that brings in the personnel into the organization and it should be devoid of non-meritocratic factors.

CONCLUSION

Recruitment procedures consists of different steps or stages, starting from when the organization attracts its willing talents, through to the process of tests, interviews, medical check-ups and reference check. In respect to submitting an application for a specific job description and person specification, only one out of every two civil servants in Oyo state did so. This implies that half of the applicants did not submit an application for a position at their point of entry. The interview method seems to be the most used in the Oyo State Civil Service recruitment process. 86.7% of the respondents asserted that they were interviewed while 85.7% went through a medical test. This corroborates the report of Akinwale (2014) who opined that the most widely used technique of the Nigerian Civil Service is the selection interview method.

However, the least used recruitment method is the written examination as it is seen or judged important for some cadres and unnecessary for other posts or levels. It was discovered that some entry positions in senior cadre level 8 do not even write an entrance examination and most of them are the higher executive officers, implementing the will of the state/government. However, entry level positions between levels 07–10 should write an entrance examination. With a cumulative figure of 73.5% of the respondent representing the senior and administrative cadre, and only 46.5% of the respondent reported to have written an examination, there seems to be a disparity in the figure expected and the figure derived. Tests are meant to be the most objective method



of judging applicants competence since they are all exposed to the same test and under the same condition (Yaro, 2014). Compliance to recruitment policy in the Oyo State Civil Service seems to be affected by the influence of non-meritocratic factors. These factors were mentioned by respondents to be the unspoken rules that operates during the recruitment process and which hinders the recruitment bodies from discharging their duties as they should.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the findings of this study, it is necessary to make the following suggestions in order to improve compliance with the recruitment process in the civil service, not only in Oyo State, but in Nigeria as a whole. First, the agencies responsible for recruitment in Oyo state should try as much as possible to ensure that no unlawful discrimination occurs in the recruitment process. The determinant of getting employed should not be the Oyo indigene that a non-indigene female applicant is married to; Candidates should not be denied the opportunity because of the state they hail from. Prevailing principles that have promoted and enthroned these sentimental values should be de-emphasized. Also, apart from the interview method, recruiting bodies should embrace the use of tests (aptitude, psychometric, reasoning tests etc.). This is an objective way of determining the suitability of candidates when they are subjected under the same condition. Hence, candidates who are shortlisted for the interview would have been judged to have passed the minimal/basic requirements for the position.

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AJPSSI

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