

PRIMORDIAL ISSUES AND RECRUITMENT IN IMO STATE CIVIL SERVICE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The use of primordial factors of religious affiliation and political party loyalism in recruitment in Imo State Civil Service, Nigeria, were examined in this study. For the purpose of this study two hypotheses were formulated in line with the objective. Literatures were reviewed to determine what was done previously in the area, under study. The researcher chose a sample of 420 Civil Servants from selected ministries in Imo State Civil Service. Data for the study were collected through questionnaire, interview, and secondary sources. The data gathered were analyzed using tabular modes of presentation including frequencies and percentage, while the Chi-square (X^2) was used to test the hypotheses. The findings showed that primordial issues of religious affiliation and political party loyalism affected workers recruitment in Imo State Civil Service. Therefore, the study recommended that there should be a reorientation and sensitization of the members of Service Commission members to the effect of the use of primordial issues in recruitment, that those guilty of this should be punished and examinations into civil service be conducted and published for transparency.

Key words: Primordial Issues, Recruitment, Party loyalism, Religious Affiliation Civil Service

1.1 Introduction

Every organization depends on the effective use of workers to achieve its objectives. These workers, if they are to be effectively utilized, should be obtained through due process. The efficiency and effectiveness of any organization, whether private or public sector largely depend on the caliber of the work force (Okoye, 2009). Thus, every organization, regardless of its size, product or service, must recruit applicants objectively to fill vacant positions. In Nigeria, the Civil Service at whatever level of consideration (Federal, State and Local Government) remains the vital instrument or structure for the rapid socio-economic development of the nation. Since her independence in 1960, the Civil Service still occupies the most significant position as the dominant instrument of change. In Nigerian, the Government is one of the major employers of labour, major principal for the provision of infrastructure and social services, a major player for growth and development of industries. Sidney (2010) stated that primordial issues include such as zonal consideration, political party loyalty, cultural grouping, corruption, religious affiliation, god-fatherism, results to inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the Civil Service in Third World countries. For Adiele (2010) “recruitment, selection and placement of workers are politicized and this tend to breed indiscipline and indolence in the Civil Service. In Nigeria, top administrators and political office holders perceive public appointments as opportunity to either reward or compensate relations, friends and loyalist by filling existing vacancies irrationally in the public offices within their sphere of authority. In the foregoing circumstances, powerful elites in concert with government agents politicize the recruitment process; are left with the control of the policy initiation, formulation and in most cases implementation devoid of the critical input of the Civil Servants (Adeyemi, 2008). The consequence of this untoward practice against the merit philosophy is the up-holding of mediocrity as standard performance. It is in relation to this that the major objective of this study is to examine the influence of primordial issues in recruitment in Imo State Civil Service; which will be satisfied through providing answer to the following questions:

1. To what extent has religious affiliation determined workers’ recruitment in Imo State Civil Service?
2. To what extent has political party loyalism determined workers’ recruitment in Imo State Civil Service?

2. Literature review

Adiele (2010) conceives 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 public service organization in achieving its objectives. Similarly, Motsoeneng (2011) defines recruitment as about making sure that qualified people are available to meet the employment needs of government. He added that Ineffective recruitment exercise precludes any chance for selection 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. Osaghae (2011) sees recruitment of personnel as an exercise of choosing par excellence through the process of rejecting or matching of applicant; first against the attitude, which will make for success on the job and second, matching of the candidates, against another until one is ranked overall suitable for the job. Simply put, recruitment is the process of selecting and attracting of personnel or right candidates into job position of an organization. Dozie (2010), suggests that the criteria that support effective recruitment are adequate: job analysis, manpower planning, job description and job specification rather than extraneous primordial variables such as: ethnic affiliation, religious affiliation, cultural grouping and federal character principle that dictate the essence of hiring of workers, thus, making it to recruit staffs that are not qualified, thereby faced with problem of inefficiency in Civil Service delivery.

2.1. Origin of the Nigerian Civil Service

The Nigerian civil service of today has its origin in the amalgamation of the colony and protectorate of Northern and Southern Nigeria. Prior to the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria in 1914, there was in existence some form of administration in the colonies/territories of what later became Nigeria (Adeyemi, 2008). The root of the early Nigerian Civil Service could be traced to 1847 when Mr. John Beecroft was appointed consul for the Biafra with headquarters in Fernando Po, which was a Spanish colony. The responsibilities of the consul then were essentially those of prosecuting legitimate commercial activities and observing commercial treaties. (Adeyemi, 2008).

The Nigerian Civil Service was conceived as an apparatus or instrument of British rule to serve British interests. It had an upper service echelon, occupied by the colonialists and the Junior

Service position occupied by Nigerians. This situation remained, till 1945 when agitation by Nigerian nationalists reached its peak. Generally, Nigerians began to take over the functions of the colonialists until the Civil Service and all other organs of government were completely indigenized (Akande, 2009).

2.1.1 Primordial Issues and Recruitment in Nigerian Civil Service.

The degree of external influence and intrusion within and outside the Civil Service by the politicians is worrisome. Political interference into recruitment exercise emanated from spoil system which is the practice of appointing political supporters into government post after successful political exploits of winning election, (Ikeanyibe 2009). The concept derives from a war terminology where the victor in a war feasts on the spoils of the victim. Its usage in public personnel administration is credited to President Jackson of the USA even though it had been practiced before his time. The spoil system therefore, does not make a distinction between political positions that would be filled after every election and those that should be filled by permanent career administrators. All government posts are to be filled after elections by the winners and their supporters (Ikeanyibe, 2009).

The major disadvantages of spoil system include the tendency to create superfluous administrative jobs to pay off the party faithful, thereby leading to a bloated public service, a thorough intermixing of public administration and partisan politics. It leads to corruption and decline in administrative ethic because of the uncertainty of tenure in other words, because people in government are not sure of staying long in office, they tend to corruptly enrich themselves before leaving office. But on the positive side, the political interference into recruitment exercise is credited with the fact that it affords the political leaders a measure of firm control and realization of administrative responsiveness by choosing loyalist and people with the same kind of ideology to work for them in every sensitive position in the Public Administration.

According to Ikeanyibe, (2009) patronage system is usually confused with the spoil system. But it is somewhat different. While both systems underscore the giving of public jobs to loyalists, the spoil system specially underscore political patronage. The patronage system can otherwise be practiced outside the context of political relations. Thus, patronage jobs can be given to classmate, relations and other affiliations like ethnicity, religion, race, sex etc. Both systems are operating with similar consideration and have corresponding advantages and disadvantages.

However, 1988 Civil Service Reforms formally recognized the politicization of the upper echelons of the Civil Service. Whatever may have been the motives behind it, politicization has negative effect on the Civil Service. As Olowu, Otobo, and Okotoni (2013) rightly point out that politicization of the top Civil Service in an environment of high political instability and high turnover officials has not only been wasteful of personnel, it has also led to a weakened role for the public organization.

Recruitment of workers into the public organization, as well as training and promotion of workers were sometimes influenced by political leaders to the total abandonment of merit. Patron-client relationship exists in Nigeria public organization; it leads to recruitment of mediocre and incompetent people. If it persist, the public organization will gradually cease to be innovative, goal setting and problem solving (Nwosu, 2013).

Indiscipline in the Nigeria public organization is caused by patron-client relationship as practiced in the lower cadre of public organization. Commenting on indiscipline among junior Civil Servant, (Nwosu, 2013) said, an awareness on the part of subordinate that they have “god father” who will protect them at all times, leads to disturbing growth of insubordination and disobedience in carrying out lawful instructions or directives of supervisors who are not well in hierarchy of a ministry or department.

The spoil system is injurious to the state; it weakens the system by stuffing it with those loyal, not to the system but to the party or the leader. It subverts the universal merit system and encourages mediocrity. A system based on patronage is unlikely to recruit the best available; the insecurity of tenure diminishes loyalty and commitment to the services; the lack of independence by the Civil Service makes it a virtual party or factional machine; efficiency and honesty are diminished to the extent that new appointees must serve their employer’s interest first before any principles; with constant personnel changes, it would be difficult to build up a stable service experience and tradition.

In Nigeria, ethnicity among other factors has been identified as one of the major influences on the further diminishing in dependence of the recruiting bodies. It is an indispensable fact that every leader is a product of a particular ethnic group. But beyond that, it has been proven beyond doubt that popular development can only be achieved through the development of civil identity, which is in conflict with ethnic differentiation. The concomitant effect of this unwholesome

recruitment practice is the placement of incompetent employee that will be efficient. According to Kolawole (2007) efficiency in the Civil Service can only be achieved when, recruitment is geared towards developing civil identity in the staff employed. A recruitment policy devoid of ethnic consideration must be implemented, money induced recruitment, party loyalty, religious bigotry; all of which make the Civil Service Commission and other recruiting bodies not to be independent in performing its statutory role of recruiting competent staff for the Civil Service should be eschewed. Based on the literature reviewed, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- (i) There is a significant relationship between religious affiliation and workers recruitment exercise in Imo State Civil Service.
- (ii) There is a significant relationship between political party loyalism and workers recruitment exercise in Imo State Civil Service.

3.Area of the study

This study was conducted in Imo State Civil Service, Nigeria. The Imo State Civil Service started in 1976, after the creation of Imo State from the then East Central State in Nigeria. The Imo State Civil Service performs its functions as stipulated in section A Part (ii) of the Third Schedule of the 1999 constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Imo State Civil Service Secretariat is located along Owerri-Port Harcourt road. The Ministries that make up the Imo State Civil Service, which are: Head of Service, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Non-Formal Education, Imo State Secondary Education Management Board, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Internal Resources and Pension Affairs, Imo State Board of Internal Revenue, Civil Service Commission, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Bureau for Public Procurement and Price Intelligence (Due Process), Ministry of Works, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Lands Survey and Urban Planning, Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Ministry of Commerce and Market Development, Ministry of Industry and Non-Formal Sector, Ministry of Public Utilities, Youth Empowerment and Public Safety, Ministry of Health and Hospital Management Board, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Information and Strategy, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Imo State House of Assembly, Government House, Office of the S. S. G.

According to Imo State Statistical Agency record of 2011, the Imo State Civil Service staff population size is six thousand eight hundred and six (6806) personnel.

4. Methodology

The study made use of exploratory survey research design. The essence of this research design was to draw samples from the population and findings from them were generalized to the entire population. In addition to making it possible for the study to infer from the characteristics of the samples to the population, the survey, as Afonja (2008) indicated, in essence, helped to ensure greater accuracy, and speed, as well as reduction of cost involved in data collection. Four-point Likert Scale questionnaire and interview schedule were used to gather data for the study, in using interview, the top executive of the selected ministries was interviewed to elicit intricate and information about recruitment in the Imo State Civil Service not covered by the questionnaire. The study made of simple random sampling technique to select three ministries and the sample size was calculated using Taro Yamane formula with 95% confidence level to arrive at the sample of 450 for the study. But the total number of questionnaire returned by the respondents was a total of 420. Thus, the sample for the study was based on the 420 responses of the respondents. Chi-square (χ^2) statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses formulated for the study.

Table 1: Sample distribution of the respondents

Ministry	No	%
Civil Service Commission	105	25
Information and Strategy	240	58.1
Youth and Sports	75	17.9
Total	420	100

Table 1 depicted that out of the 420 respondents that completed and returned the questionnaires, 105 (25%) belong to Civil Service Commission, 240 (57.1%) were in the information and strategy while 75 (17.9) were in the youth and sports ministry.

5. Result and Discussion

Table2: Number of Years in the Ministry.

No. of Years in Establishment	No	%
10 years - above	345	82.1
5years to 10 years	45	10.7
5years - less	30	7.3
Total	420	100

The table2 above shows that out of the 420 respondents, 345 (82.1%) have been in their ministries for more than ten years. Respondents in the ministry for five to ten years were 45 (10.7%) while only 30 (7.2%) have been in their ministry for a period below five years. The implication of this to the study is that more than 90% of the respondents knew the subject matter under investigation very well. The study represents workers with experience and knowledge about the primordial factors militating against Imo State Civil Service recruitment exercise. These workers perception is vital to the study.

Table 3: Religious Affiliation and workers recruitment in Imo State Civil Service.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	-	-
Agree	150	35.7
Disagree	180	42.9
Strongly Disagree	90	21.4
Total	420	100

In response to the statement that “Religious affiliation affects workers recruitment in Imo State Civil Service.”. The table showed that 150 (35.7%) of the respondents agreed, 180 (42.9%) disagreed while 90 (21.4%) strongly disagreed. The implication of this is that majority of the Civil Servants interviewed were of the opinion that religious affiliation cannot be said to affect workers recruitment.

5.1. Test of hypothesis one

To test if there is a significant relationship between religious affiliation and workers recruitment in Imo State Civil Service.

To test this proposition statistically, the responses to the statement in question which says that, “religious affiliation affects workers recruitment in Imo State Civil Service” was used and contingency table derived,

Table 4: Chi-square analysis of the relationship between religious affiliation and recruitment

Statement	S/A	A	D	S/D	Total
FO	0	150	180	90	420
FE	105	105	105	105	420

The test statistic here is the chi-square (X^2) and our level of significance is 0.05. This also involves a 2 x 4 contingency table and the number of degree of freedom is 3. Hence, the tabulated chi-square (X^2) value is 7.815. The result of the analysis reveals that the calculated x^2 value of 75 is higher than the X^2_C value of 7.815 at .05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore means that there is relationship between religious affiliation and work recruitment.

5.1.1 Test of hypothesis two

There is a significant relationship between political party loyalism and workers recruitment exercise in Imo State Civil Service.

The contingency table was derived from the responses to “Political party loyalism affects workers recruitment in Imo State Civil Service”

Table 5: Chi-square analysis of the relationship between political party loyalism and workers recruitment

Statement	S/A	A	D	S/D	Total
FO	75	135	165	45	420
FE	105	105	105	105	420

findings of this study is in line with the opinion of Adiele (2010) that “recruitment, selection and placement of workers are politicized and this tend to breed indiscipline and indolence in the Civil Service. This is also supported by Nwosu (2013) who stated that patron-client relationship exists in Nigeria public organization and leads to recruitment of mediocre and incompetent people. Furthermore, the findings of the second hypothesis revealed that political party loyalism affects workers recruitment in Imo State Civil Service. Ones an applicant demonstrates an affiliation to the political party in power such applicant is likely to be offered This hypothesis was also testied with the chi-square (X^2) at 0.05 level of significance and with 3 number degree of freedom. Thus, the table value of X^2 at 0.05 level of significance is given as 7.815. At 0.05 level of significance, the difference between the observed and expected frequencies X^2 at 3 degree of freedom is statistically significance since the computed value of chi-square, $X^2_c > X^2_t$. $X^2_c = 85.714$ is greater than the table value, $X^2_t = 7.815$. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and infer that Political party loyalism affects workers recruitment in Imo State Civil Service. At 0.05

level of significance, the difference between the observed and expected frequencies X^2 at 3 degree of freedom is statistically significance since the computed value of chi-square, $X^2_c > X^2_t$

6. Discussion of Research Findings

The findings of this study reveal that religious affiliation affects workers recruitment in Imo State Civil Service. The statistical data analysis reveals that 78.6% of all the respondents strongly agree, with the fact that religious affiliation is one of the major pre-determinacy factors for gainful employment in Imo State Civil Service. The executives responsible for employment at the Human Resources Department are biased towards religious affiliation. This is supported by the opinion of those interviewed who maintained that applicant from their preferred religion is offered employment against a better qualified applicant from a non-preferred religion. The employment as opposed to an applicant with neither political affiliation nor from opposition political party. This is supported by the opinion of Nwosu (2013) recruitment of workers into the public organization, as well as training and promotion of workers were sometimes influenced by political leaders to the total abandonment of merit. The study concludes that the choice of ones religion and the level of favoritism attributed to party loyalism, definitely corrupt the workers recruitment into Imo State Civil Service

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The use of religious affiliation and political loyalty in workers recruitment is highly prejudicial in nature. It encourages workers antagonism towards each other and consequently negatively effects productivity and performance, so there should be a reorientation and sensitization of the members of Service Commission members to this effect.
2. Members of the Civil Service Commission should be penalized when it is discovered that they compromised in the recruitment exercise.
3. Employment into the civil service should be based on written or oral examinations and the results published publicly to show transparency in the exercise.

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