

THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SECTOR TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT PROCESS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

O PROCESSO DE TREINAMENTO E RECRUTAMENTO DO SETOR PÚBLICO NIGERIANO: UMA REVISÃO DA LITERATURA

EL PROCESO DE CAPACITACIÓN Y CONTRATACIÓN DEL SECTOR PÚBLICO NIGERIANO: REVISIÓN DE LA LITERATURA

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ABSTRACT: Lack of objectivity in the recruitment process can undermine the durability, trust and ease of doing business with the Nigerian public sector. This article reviews the literature and training related to the recruitment process and performance, especially in the public sector. While empirical studies have shown that the proper training process can lead to the employment of skilled employees and increase the performance of employees and the organization. We see that there are few empirical studies on this subject in the Nigerian public sector. The authors recommend that politicians, business leaders, religious elites and other elites should allow departments and organizations to carry out recruitment responsibilities without internal or external interference, with an emphasis on training leaders.

KEYWORDS: Employees. Performance. Processes. Public sector. Recruitment. Education.

RESUMO: *A falta de objetividade no processo de recrutamento pode prejudicar a durabilidade, a confiança e a facilidade de fazer negócios com o setor público nigeriano. Este artigo faz uma revisão da literatura e treinamento relacionados ao processo de recrutamento e desempenho, especialmente no setor público. Já os estudos empíricos têm demonstrado que o processo de treinamento adequado pode levar à contratação de funcionários qualificados e aumentar o desempenho dos funcionários e da organização. Vemos que existem poucos estudos empíricos sobre este assunto no setor público nigeriano. Os autores recomendam que políticos, líderes empresariais, elites religiosas e outras elites devem permitir que departamentos e organizações realizem responsabilidades de recrutamento sem interferência interna ou externa, com ênfase no treinamento de líderes.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Funcionários. Desempenho. Processos. Setor público. Recrutamento. Educação.*

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RESUMEN: *La falta de objetividad en el proceso de contratación puede socavar la durabilidad, la confianza y la facilidad de hacer negocios con el sector público nigeriano. Este artículo revisa la literatura y la capacitación relacionadas con el proceso y el desempeño de la contratación, especialmente en el sector público. Mientras que los estudios empíricos han demostrado que el proceso de formación adecuado puede conducir al empleo de empleados calificados y aumentar el rendimiento de los empleados y la organización. Vemos que hay pocos estudios empíricos sobre este tema en el sector público nigeriano. Los autores recomiendan que los políticos, los líderes empresariales, las élites religiosas y otras élites permitan que los departamentos y organizaciones lleven a cabo sus responsabilidades de contratación sin interferencias internas o externas, con énfasis en la formación de líderes.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Empleados. Desempeño. Procesos. Sector público. Contratación. Educación*

Introduction

Over these years, the Nigerian public sector has been experiencing poor service delivery due to a 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; CHLÁDKOVÁ, 2017). Organizations need to develop and renew capabilities to sustain performance (NWACHUKWU; VU, 2020). In this context, an objective recruitment process can enable ministries, departments, 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 in the civil service or public service. Recruitment is a process designed to provide an organization with an adequate number of qualified candidates (SHAFRITZ; RUSSEL; 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 recommendations 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 and is responsible for the socio-economic problems the country is experiencing. Despite the importance of recruiting qualified personnel to organizational and employee performance, most ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) give more consideration to recruiting incompetent individuals. This stems from unethical conduct such as religion, tribal sentiment, neighborhoods' 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 a manpower shortage? is there a growing trend of expansion of activities that we need to meet up with? Arguably, a subjective recruitment process may lead to underperformance and low productivity. This study attempts to propose recommendations to public sector managers and policymakers based on the review of the recruitment process in Nigeria's public sector.

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) asserts that recruitment focus on making available people meet the job needs of the government. An 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 organization. Recruitment is a positive process of generating a pool of individuals by inviting the right audience to fill a vacancy. Sangeetha (2010) notes that the 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) submits that recruitment provides many candidates for managers to select from. The recruitment process ensures that organizations 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 the considered applicant(s) who do not meet the basic requirements for interviews and appointments. Boxall, Purcell and Wright (2007) identify 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) notes that culture, economic conditions, size, the financial position of a business, corporate strategy, technological advancements, and legal frameworks are some of the factors influencing the recruitment process in Kitale municipality.

Political

This is the main determinant of the recruitment process in organizations, especially the Nigerian public sector. Winnie (2017) posits 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 hinder the effective recruitment process (FLOREA; MIHAI, 2014). Most times these people are employed without considering if they have the right skills, experience, and qualifications. Nigerian politicians influence the recruitment process to compensate party faithful and loyalists who have no basic requirement to work in the public sector. This influence has done more harm than good to our nation's recruitment process. Ineffective recruitment process as a result of political influence negatively affects employee performance. This caliber of employees is 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 organizations are strong factors that affect the recruitment process. Social organizations include clubs, age groups, secret societies, community associations, groups' interests among others. These groups have a significant impact on the recruitment process in Nigeria. Religious institutions (Christians, Muslims, traditionalists) ensure 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 has grave implications for the majority of the citizenry. Major social changes often cause organizations 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 the ethical standards and behavior of managers. Culture influence productivity and performance in organizations. A socio-cultural system

such as the community development association (CDAs) forces their indigenes on the public and private sectors on the basis that the organization is sited in their locality. Most times the organizations 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 in 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 organizations in terms of whether or not to hire as well as the remuneration of candidates. The organization is forced to recruit internally or to select candidates from the database if the economic situation is unfavorable. This influence is more or less a policy control of an organization because of its investment in the economy. They used their investment capacity to dictate whom the organization should employ. The business-economy factors are paramount to any organization that wants to keep or maintain customer service relationships, as well as strong patronage in the national economy. The influence of the business economy on the recruitment process has a strong control mechanism on the performance of an organization and its employees. This influence can make or mar a nation's political, socio-economic system. The recruitment of unqualified employees in the public sector to perform a very sensitive task or duty can expose a country to serious economic problems.

Empirical review

Okusanya and Oseji (2016) find that recruitment and selection criteria have a significant effect on an organization's efficiency. According to Roma (2016), the recruitment and selection process is the foremost pillar of success in any organization. Thus, firms must seek to attract and retain a 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) examine the relationship between recruitment, selection, and organizational performance. They have concluded that an

objective approach to recruitment can lead to better organizational performance. Gamage (2014) notes that the recruitment and selection practices will determine who is hired, shape employee behavior and attitude. If properly designed, it will identify a competent candidates and accurately match them to a job. Amegashie-Viglo (2014) recommends that the recruitment and selection processes into public sector organizations should be done with maximum credibility and integrity to reduce perceptions of influences or factors other than merit. Olatunji and Ugoji (2013) find the recruitment procedures used by firms impact employee behavior and performance. Mustapha *et al.* (2013) conclude 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) observe that recruitment and selection influence the performance of employees in research institutes in Kenya. Ezeali and Esiagu (2010) report that efficiency in service delivery depends on the quality of employees recruited by organizations. Rauf (2007) reports that sophisticated recruitment procedures are significantly associated with performance in organizations. 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) propose a holistic model of recruitment, emphasize the importance of the process of recruitment and the interdependence of its parts (SINHA; THALY, 2013). Subbarao (2006) identifies 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 the organization well-established or less established. To get the best human resource, firms must adopt an efficient and well-planned strategy. This can be achieved through organizational and managerial processes available to organizations (NWACHUKWU; CHLÁDKOVÁ, 2019). Arguably, organizations that employ competent people have better performance and productivity. While reporting that recruitment is the only component, Unwin (2005) emphasized the importance of the recruitment process in attracting and retaining knowledge workers. Similarly, Sen and Saxena (1997) emphasize the importance of quality in the recruitment and hiring process. Arguably, hiring quality candidates is crucial for successful organizations. Huselid (1995) observes that recruitment criteria have a significant impact on organizational performance due to the provision of a large pool of qualified applicants.

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 organizational 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.

Conclusions

To sustain a competitive advantage, organizations need to develop and implement strategies that can enable optimize 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 organization is crucial to achieving superior performance. Conversely, the subjective recruitment process can lead to low employee morale, low productivity, and underperformance. Studies on the recruitment process in the Nigerian public sector are scanty. It is obvious that the recruitment process in the sector is biased and lacks 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 organization. If these undue influences are not checked it may destroy and weaken employees and performance in the public sector. Employee commitment is important to execute an effective recruitment strategy (NWACHUKWU; ŽUFAN; CHLÁDKOVÁ, 2020). As such public sector managers must show commitment to recruiting competent people to vacant positions. Therefore, we propose the following recommendations to policymakers and relevant stakeholders in the public sector.

Recommendations

– The continuous resistance of an unpalatable system of recruitment and awareness should be a paramount campaign of civil societies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other relevant authorities to curb this menace.

- Ministries, agencies, and parastatals should advertise available vacancies openly so that qualified applicants can apply.
- The recruitment process should be transparent free from undue influences that will jeopardize the process.
- The public sector must not only have a well-defined recruitment policy but must also adhere strictly to the policy.
- Recruitment to the public sector should be based only on merit.

This study uses 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 the recruitment process and public sector performance. Nevertheless, the applicability of this study adds to human resource management literature in the public sector.

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