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Public sector recruitment policies: efficiency, effectiveness and consequences

Abstract

A vast number of literature has documented how corruption, insecurity, education and ethnicity (amongst others) have served as obstacles to national development in Nigeria. These obstacles have posed serious developmental challenges which are evident in the dysfunctions in the management system leading not only to ineffective and inefficient delivery of public services, but also the instability of the socioeconomic and political well-being of the nation. Accordingly, this article attempts a re-examination of various government policies aimed at national development – particularly, human resources development. Human resources play a collectively vital role in the success or failure of any organization or nation. As such, this article revisits recruitment policies, processes and procedures drawing insight from federal government ministries in Nigeria. Within emerging economies, there are few (*albeit* growing) studies linking recruitment policies and efficiency of the workforce to the realization of official goals and objectives. The article presents a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods used in the data collection process. Data sets were collected from 78 randomly selected managers (comprising of lower, middle and top management levels) mostly involved in recruitment processes and procedures in Nigerian ministries. The results of the study provide insight into strategies for building human resource capacity and repositioning the Nigerian public sector (and Africa at large) towards resolving various enervating developmental challenges.

Keywords: recruitment, public sector, policies, efficiency, effectiveness.

JEL Classification: M51.

Introduction

Public sectors within African countries are facing challenges of professionalism mostly attributed to the context of their environment. The Nigerian public sector is not an exception to this predicament. Perceptions amongst the citizenry that bases for recruitment into the Nigerian public sector has largely shifted from the principles of meritocracy (educational qualification and experience) towards factors such as nepotism, political patronage (godfatherism), and ethnicity. As a result, the Nigerian public sector appears to have fallen short of expectations in terms of service delivery which have been mostly perceived from the government recruitment policies, processes and procedures. However, policy documents cited by Babaru (2003) stipulate that recruitment into the federal civil service of Nigeria is determined by three factors, *namely*: vacancies, qualifications and federal character principles and also emphasize uniformity, standardization and transparency. The extent to which these principles are applied during recruitment processes in the federal government ministries needs further investigation.

In the above subject, the public sector may have a qualified management team, but recruitment processes can face significant obstacles if not correctly implemented. Such obstacles noted by Cole and Kelly (2011) could be poor recruiting decisions resulting in a variety of problems such as poor performance, excessive cost to the

organization, labor turnover, absenteeism, low morale, ineffective management and supervision, disciplinary problems, dismissals and possible unfair dismissal complaints. Thus, the article aimed at the examination and understanding of the efficiency, effectiveness and consequences of the implementation of recruitment policies. Furthermore, it recommends strategies towards cultivating capable human resources for implementation of government policies and achievement of national, regional and international goals in the Nigerian public sector.

1. Literature review

Relevant to human resource management and the public sector the following excerpt from The African Human Resources Managers' Network (APS-HRMnet) has relevance in this context:

“The quality of human resources is critical to the development of any country. Global, regional and national commitments to sustainable and poverty reduction such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) need human capacities in the public, private, and civil society sectors to transform these commitments into results (UNPAN 2008-2010)”.

In the above context, employees are considered as the most essential and integral part of an organization, thus quality of the work force is critical to an organization's success. Although African countries are culturally diverse, government policies are often formulated to suit specific concerns of the environment and its people. The public sector is mostly recognized as the highest

employer of labor and has recruitment policies specifically formulated to ensure fair representation of all races, ethnicity, disadvantaged groups and gender. Given this context, the efficiency and effectiveness of the diverse workforce is a determinant factor in achieving developmental goals.

In developed and developing countries, human resources are considered one of the critical factors for economic development. In support of this statement, studies have shown that governments that desire to be effective are increasingly realizing that of varied factors contributing to the attainment of set goals and objectives, human resource is the most critical factor for enhancing service delivery and economic growth (Ayanda and Sani, 2010; Gberevbie, 2008). Recruitment and selection processes are vital for organizations competitiveness, performance and success. Recruitment policies are created within the environment an organization operates. According to Cole and Kelly (2011), recruitment is the process of locating, identifying and attracting capable applicants. Similarly, Reichenberg (2009) defines selection as the process of differentiating between applicants in order to identify those with a greater likelihood of success in a job. The recruitment process provides the organization with a pool of potentially qualified job candidates. Based on these qualified candidates, selection can then be made to fill vacancies. Thus, the selection process is the key phase in deciding on the most competent candidate for a post. According to Cole and Kelly (2011), policies are statements of conduct-principles designed to influence decisions and actions. Government policies are drawn within the context of the organization and its environment and from legislation. Similarly, recruitment policies in the public sector are drawn to reflect the cultural diversity of the country and cover specific issues such as merit, affirmative actions among others. Recruitment policy stipulates the objective of the recruitment and also provides a framework for the implementation of the recruitment program (Richards, 2011). Furthermore, recruitment policies in the public sector vary with respect to the size of the organization, and are affected by factors such as organizational objectives, personnel policies of the organization and its competitors, government policies on reservations, preferred sources of recruitment and needs of the organization (Richards, 2011).

In this era of globalization and technology, recruitment and selection are taking new shape and placing competitive pressure on the labor market. The competition has forced organizations whether in the private or public sector to be sensitive towards

hiring workforce. Managing organizations requires recruiting people who can think and act from a global perspective to achieve the aims and objectives of the organization. Public sector policies and programs are geared towards providing and maintaining quality services for the betterment of the citizenry. Quality of the workforce reflects in the quality of the services being provided. However, the need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) requires improving on the quality of their workforce. To support this, Aijala (2001) stated that the application of correct recruiting strategies which include increasing transparency, opening the recruitment system, assessing leadership and other skills are current areas targeted for improvement in the public sector. These strategies will not only position the public service to achieve their objectives, but also will enhance the effectiveness of the public sector to gain a competitive edge and increase its market share.

However, the Nigerian public sector seems not to be exempted from the inefficient and ineffective public services. The public sector human resources management has been tagged with inefficiency in delivering basic services. The developmental challenges facing Nigeria has been mostly attributed to incapacity of the available human capital. Literature reveals that substantial work is needed in the human resource management practices in the Nigerian public sector (Okpara and Wynn, 2008). Nigeria has opened its doors to foreign investments as part of the Nigerian vision to be one of the world leading economies by the year 2020. There is still need to establish a deeper understanding of the implementation of recruitment policies, thus efficient and effective human resource requires participation at all levels of management.

1.1. Human resource management models.

Literature has documented that effective government requires good people must be hired, trained and rewarded along with a properly designed system for managing people Berman et al. (2010). Given that the decision regarding the abilities and quality of people hired are critical to the performance and achievement of organizational goals, this article adopts a combination of three human resource management models. The first is the Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna model or Michigan Model which emphasizes on selection (matching people to jobs) as one of its components (Bratton and Gold, 2003). The second is the Harvard model, focusing on human resource management policy choices and human resource outcomes. Ultimately, human resource outcomes which include individual well-being, organizational effectiveness and societal well-being might lead to

positive long-term consequences. These variables interact with and influence the situational factors and the stakeholder interests. This is in line with Kumar and Garg (2010) argument that the human resource score card, which include high performance work system consisting of human resource policies, processes, and practices reflecting in effective organizational performance. Thus, the significance of efficient and effective implementation of recruitment policies in the Nigerian federal government ministries and the consequences of poor recruitment decisions cannot be overlooked. However, insights from these theoretical frameworks are used to develop a deeper understanding of recruitment practices in the federal government ministries in Nigeria. Within this context, the formulated hypotheses are read as follows:

Ho: There is no relationship between efficient recruitment process and organizational productivity.

H₁: There is a relationship between efficient recruitment process and organizational productivity.

1.2. The context of the Nigerian civil service and recruitment system. Establishment of the Nigerian Civil Service dates back to 13th March 1862 by the British colonial masters. As a result of interest of the British government declared in the Port and Island of Lagos, a government was constituted and provision was made for various posts such as Governor, Chief Magistrate Colonial Secretary and Senior Military Officers. Following this, was establishment of instruments of Law and Order such as Departments of Judiciary, Police, Prisons, and Public Works. However, the real structure of civil service was put in place by Sir Hugh Clifford who succeeded Lord Lugard and was appointed Governor of Nigeria (OHCSF Hand Book, 2011). In response to the growth of nationalism and demands for independence, successive constitutions legislated by the British government moved Nigeria towards self-government on a representative and increasingly federal basis which led to independence in October 1960. Following independence in 1960, Nigeria altered its relationship with the United Kingdom by proclaiming itself a federal republic in October 1963, and promulgated a new constitution which marked the beginning of the birth of a new Nigerian civil service (The World Fact Book, 2010).

The Nigerian civil service was mainly made up of employees in the Nigerian government agencies other than the military. The civil service consists of federal civil service, the autonomous state civil services, the unified local government services and several federal and state government agencies or parastatals (OHCSF Hand Book, 2011). The federal and state civil services were organized around

government departments, or ministries, and extra-ministerial departments and each of the federal and state civil services was spear headed by ministers and commissioners respectively who were appointed by the president and governors (The World Fact Book, 2010). Gradually, the post-1960 federal civil service role involved settling and coordinating state policies and programs in social and economic management, and the establishment of public enterprises for the provision of social services. Literature documented that this development resulted in a more direct role of the federal civil service in the development of the country (Ogundiya, 2007). According to Briggs (2007), civil service recruitment is the process through which suitable candidates are induced to compete for appointment into government jobs. In Nigeria's public sector, recruitment into the federal government ministries and parastatals are done by the Federal Civil Service Commission as reflected under Section 153(1) d, Paragraph 11b of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Nigeria Public Service Rules, 2000, Rule 02102). The policy document stipulates meritocracy and ethnicity *amongst others* as basis for recruitment into the public sector. It appears though that adherence to the basis of recruitment and selection especially educational qualification still remains a challenge facing human resource professionals and the Nigerian public sector. Scholars have traced the recruitment pattern back to the colonial rule when the government hurriedly replaced foreign staff with locals, many of which were not properly equipped in terms of education or knowledge, but were employed on the basis of ethnicity, godfatherism and nepotism (Budhwar and Debrah, 2001). Recent studies also have shown that recruitment processes in the Nigerian public sector are influenced by factors such as political consideration/godfatherism, nepotism, quota system, ethnicity (federal character principle) and government discretion (Inyang, 2011; Gberville, 2010; and McOliver, 2005). In addition Fajana et al. (2011), suggested that factors such as culture, language, religion, gender and educational qualifications are part of the basis for determining who get employed in the civil service. The question still remains 'to what extent are recruitment steps such as advertisement, test/interview and selection applied during recruitment in the Nigerian public sector?'

Given this context, the subjective move away from merit based recruitment processes in the public sector. There have been various reforms launched by the past and present administration aimed at improving public sector human capacity to deliver services. Huge amounts of money have been spent

on administrative reforms such as training, improved conditions of service, flushing of 'ghost' workers in the system. Irrespective of these efforts; Nigerian civil service system still remains characterized by its inefficiency and ineffectiveness in delivering basic social services (Nwanolue and Iwuoha, 2012; Thomson, 2005). In the words of President Goodluck Jonathan, the developmental challenges Nigeria faces today is inextricably tied to the capacity of Nigeria's public service to deliver promptly and efficiently the public goods that Nigeria needs to achieve evident accelerated development (NigeriaFirst, 2011). This overwhelming inefficiency of the Nigerian public sector calls for re-examination of processes of recruitment into government ministries. However, any amount of money spent on training the wrong candidate will not yield any significant positive result.

2. Methodology

A mixed methods approach was adopted for data collection which includes a survey, in-depth interviews and a review of secondary data. Mixed method approach was used and considered helpful in eliciting information from the respondents from diverse cultural backgrounds. The research participants in this study fall within the categories of:

- ◆ top management executives;
- ◆ middle managers;
- ◆ lower level managers; and
- ◆ human resource practitioners.

The researchers' idea to involve different levels of managers was to incorporate insights and views from different levels management. It is also believed that these managers are mostly involved in the recruitment process and are familiar with the management environment within the context of Nigeria public sector. Data were collected across 9 federal government ministries including federal civil service commission in Nigeria which granted permission to access for research purposes. The population under the study consists of 150 management employees and human resource professionals employed in 9 federal government ministries including federal civil service commission in Abuja, Nigeria.

The measuring instruments used for this study were questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Respondents were required to complete the questionnaires and return them to the administrator. The majority of the questions contained in the questionnaire were closed-ended with a few open-ended questions. The questions were made simple and coherent. The questionnaire has six sections addressing the objectives of the study. Section A covers introduction and respondents biography; Section B covers recruitment procedures; Sections C and D cover possible challenging factors facing human resource management and professionals; Section E and F covers control mechanism and improvement strategies respectively. The interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview schedules to explore and explain themes, which emerged from the problems under study. Semi-structured interview schedules also provided an opportunity for both the interviewer and the study participants to create a relaxed atmosphere.

A simple random sampling technique was adopted for this study. Due to the representativeness of a sample obtained by simple random sampling, it is reasonable to make generalizations from the results of the sample back to the population. Another advantage of simple random sampling is that it permits an estimate of the error present that is the sampling error which can be minimized and calculated. In addition, the simplicity of simple random sampling also makes it relatively easy to assemble the sample, conduct the survey and interpret data collected (Yates et al., 2008). A trained research assistant was hired and charged with the responsibility of distribution and collection of the questionnaires.

3. Results and discussion

In Table 1, the response rate is presented as per the ministry or parastatal participated in the study. Questionnaires were administered to 100 management employees but 67 questionnaires were considered ideal for the analysis. Similarly, a total number of 15 management employees were identified for interview but only 11 participated in the interview. The response rate for the study is 67.82% which is considered adequate and representative of the population under study.

Table 1. Responses from the federal government ministries of Nigeria

Ministries	Questionnaires administered	Questionnaires analyzed	Interviews booked	Interviews conducted
Nigeria National Assembly	8	6	2	1
Nigeria investment and promotion commission	15	12	2	2
Federal civil service commission	10	5	2	2
Mines and steel	7	6	1	1
National agency against trafficking In persons (NATIP)	8	5		

Table 1 (cont.). Responses from the federal government ministries of Nigeria

Ministries	Questionnaires administered	Questionnaires analyzed	Interviews booked	Interviews conducted
Women affairs	10	8	1	1
Sports commission	9	5	2	1
Science and technology	10	4	2	1
Foreign affairs	8	6		
Labor	15	10	3	2
	100	67	15	11

Source: Filed survey (2008).

3.1. Test of research hypothesis. The results of this study were obtained by analyzing the data using descriptive statistics and presented in different tables in this article. The research hypothesis was tested using non-parametric test called chi-square test and Randomization test of goodness-of-fit for administered questionnaires and the interview session respectively. Five questions from the questionnaire were used to test the research hypothesis. The test statistics shows that the calculated $X^2 = 40.65$ at Degree of freedom 4 and Asymptotic significance of 0.03. To determine the critical value beyond which the researcher would want to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) in favor of the alternate hypothesis (H_1), the critical value for the chi-square at $\alpha = 0.03$ and $v \approx 4$ is 11.14 which is less than the calculated $X^2 = 40.65$. At this level, the researchers reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis indicating the relationship between efficient recruitment process and organizational productivity.

Similarly, the qualitative data was analyzed using Statistical Analysis System (SAS) version 9.3 software by implementing the PROC FREQ procedure. The data from the test statistics for the interview session shows an average value of Randomization test of goodness-of-fit of 4.19 at Degree of freedom 1.71 and Asymptotic significance of 0.05. Based on the statistical result, the p-values are greater than 0.05 suggesting the rejection of null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternate hypothesis implying that there is a significance between efficient recruitment process and organizational productivity.

3.2. Statistical analysis for reliability and validity of the study. The reliability of this study for both the administered questionnaire and the interview session was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19 software package. The scoring for sections B, C, D, and E of

the questionnaires were mostly made on Likert-type scale. The possible answers provided in sections B, C, D of the questionnaire to enhance the quantitative analysis ranges from ‘poor to excellent’, ‘very unsatisfied to highly satisfied’ and ‘disagree to agree’. For the purposes of this study, Guttman Split-half method was implemented, variables (odd number questions in the questionnaire) were keyed in as item ‘a’ and even number questions as item ‘b’. According to Carmines and Zeller (1979), highlighted in O’Connor (2006, p. 7), “the average correlation of one item with all the other items in the domain is called a reliability coefficient”. The reliability coefficient for item 1 is symbolized r_{11} , for item 2, r_{22} , for item 3, r_{33} , and so forth. Reliability coefficient varies between 0.0 and 1.0; Split half reliability varies between 0 and 1. When the coefficient is equal to 0.0, it means there is no correlation of the item with the other items in the domain; that is no reliability. When the coefficient is equal to 1.0, it means that the item correlates perfectly with all the other items in the domain; that is perfectly reliable (O’Connor, 2006, p. 6). He further stated that for a study to be reliable the coefficient has to be close to 1 and for research purposes, a reliability of 0.70 is acceptable. The reliability of this study is calculated using the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula as follows:

Reliability of scores on total test (xx) = $2X$ reliability for $\frac{1}{2}$ test (xx); $1 +$ reliability for $\frac{1}{2}$ test (xx),

where xx is the reliability coefficient for the whole test and xx is the split-half correlation (O’Connor, 2006, p. 6).

After inputting the variables and running the program using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19, the results are shown in Tables 2 (for administered questionnaires) and 3 (for interview session).

Table 2. Reliability statistics for the administered questionnaires

Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value	0.185
		Number of items	9 ^a
	Part 2	Value	0.602
		Number of items	8 ^b

Table 2 (cont.). Reliability statistics for the administered questionnaires

	Total number of items		17
Correlation between forms			0.169
Spearman-Brown coefficient	Equal length		0.289
	Unequal length		0.290
Guttman split-half coefficient			0.283

Source: Adapted by the researchers.

Reflecting on Table 2, the correlation between the items in the two halves of the survey for administered questionnaires at the value of $r = 0.169$. Substituting

this value into the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula gives: $r_{sb} = 2(r_{AB}) / (1 + r_{AB}) = 2(0.169) / (1 + 0.169) = 0.338/1.169$; Spearman-Brown Coefficient = 0.289.

Table 3. Reliability statistics for the interview session

Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value	-2.833 ^a
		Number of items	9 ^b
	Part 2	Value	0.269
		Number of items	8 ^c
	Total number of items		17
Correlation between forms			0.420
Spearman-Brown coefficient	Equal length		0.592
	Unequal length		0.592
Guttman split-half coefficient			0.550

Source: Adapted by the researchers.

Also from Table 3, substituting the value of the correlation between the items in the two halves of the survey for interview session at the value of $r = 0.420$. Substituting this value into the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula gives: $r_{sb} = 2(r_{AB}) / (1 + r_{AB}) = 2(0.420) / (1 + 0.420) = 0.84/1.42$; Spearman-Brown coefficient = 0.592.

Thus, the Spearman-Brown coefficient which determines the level of reliability of the study is $0.289 + 0.592 = 0.881$. The value was achieved by adding the Spearman-Brown coefficient for both administered questionnaires and the interview session. This value indicates that to an extent, the item a, correlates with item b in the domain meaning that the reliability of the scale is reasonably high because there was consistency in the study and the items measured. Thus, the value indicates that the study is reliable.

Furthermore, to measure the consistency of the result and need to increase the sample size, the Cronbach's Alpha method was implored. According to Coakes and Steed (2003, p. 140), Cronbach's Alpha, "which ranges from 0 to 1 is based on the average correlation of items within a test if the items are standardized. If the items are not standardized, it is based on the average covariance among the items". The Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for all the questions which have the same scales. For the administered questionnaire, (see Table 2) the average Cronbach's Alpha is $0.185 + 0.602 = 0.787$. Moreover, the Cronbach's Alpha for the interview

session (see Table 3) is 0.269 (*please note that the negative value in Part 1 shows that the number of items are not standardized*). Thus, the Cronbach's Alpha for the study is 1.056. This shows that the same result will apply during the survey if the sample size is increased.

However, it is of utmost importance to calculate the validity of the study. According to Rubin and Babbie (2011), validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measured adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration. The validity for this study was enhanced by means of triangulation which requires that various data sources, several investigators and various research methods should be used. To ensure that the validity was achieved, the researchers used primary and secondary data sources. Different respondents at different levels of management were used to provide different perspectives on the issue being investigated. In addition, the study relied on the survey method and in-depth interviews for the data collection. As such, the validity of this research is achieved.

3.3. Outline of results. This study gave insights into recruitment policies and its implementation processes and procedures in the federal government ministries in Nigeria. The outcome of the study is the call for reinforcement of merit-based principles in addition to federal character principle in the processes of recruitment for effective human capacity, performance management and achievement of deve-

developmental goals. A significant finding emerging from the respondents is that ethnicity still precedes merit (educational qualification and experience) within the system after over 50 years of independence. One would expect that there should have been a gradual move away from over dependence on ethnicity in building human resource needed to accelerate the country's required development. The findings of this study reveal that processes and procedures of recruitment reflect in the Nigerian public sector service delivery. This is mostly evident in the ability of the workforce to carry out government policies and programs in an open competitive environment. It was also evident from the study that though there are rules and regulations stipulated in the recruitment policy to guide the recruitment processes, implementation and adherence to these rules is a continuous challenge facing Nigerian public service human resource management and professionals. These challenges are attributed to the social structure and the political nature of the Nigerian system. Such variables which include political consideration, nepotism, and ethnicity influence recruitment processes in the federal government ministries in Nigeria and inhibits developmental goals. These variables hold strong in recruitment processes irrespective of merit system (educational qualifications and experience). These findings are consistent with previous studies existing in the literature (Fajana et al., 2011; Inyang, 2011; Gberevbie, 2011; Briggs, 2007; McOliver, 2005).

However, Nigeria is a country rich in both human and natural resources. Nigeria is home to an estimated population 150 million people (United Nations Children's Fund, 2007). In terms of natural resources, Nigeria is endowed with huge deposits of natural resources making it one of the world largest producers of crude oil. One would expect a high spate of development in terms of provision of basic amenities such as accessible roads, regular water and electricity supply, quality medical services, improved standard of education, and so on, but, rather the opposite is the case. According to a World Bank report (2008), at the dawn of the third millennium, 'approximately 70% of Nigerians live on less than US\$1 a day'. In support of this assertion, a United Nations Development Report in 2009 sighted by Ikenna, (2009) noted that Nigeria had degenerated further, with 87% of its citizens living on less than US\$1 per day resulting in the rating of 154 on the world's marginal poverty index out of 172 countries. Various reforms have 'come and gone' and some are still going on, aimed at achieving national, regional and international goals. Most of these reforms are characterized with inefficiency which is assumed to be a reflection of the capacity of the public service work force (Nwanolue and Iwuoha, 2012). The effect of

political consideration, nepotism and ethnicity in recruitment processes has hindered effective management in the public sector and development in Nigeria. It is without doubt that education and training will go a long way in reducing the effect of nepotism in the public sector recruitment practices. However, the first step would be an overhauling of the perception that once a family member or friend is in a government office (for example an elected governor), it becomes an avenue for acquiring wealth opportunity for recruitment of siblings and friends. Thus, the key to efficient public sector lies on the human resource management policies and programs for staff recruitment and development.

During the course of the research, important research questions were identified for future research purposes, as follow:

- ◆ How does recruitment policy affect the realization of national goals?
- ◆ What is the impact of recruitment policies on building capacity for developing countries?
- ◆ Is there a gap between the recruitment process in the public and private sector in developing countries?
- ◆ What is the impact of recruitment policies on service delivery in the public sector?

These questions require further in-depth investigation to ascertain the level of achievement of the various Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria and Africa at large as the targeted year is imminent. Future research may be conducted to identify the efficiency and effectiveness of recruitment policies at state and local government level in the Nigerian public sector. It might be worthwhile to study the efficiency of recruitment process in the private sector as a comparative analysis with the public sector in other African countries. This study provides a reasonable picture of the efficiency of recruitment processes as a measure of employees' capacity and organization's productivity within the Nigerian system. It sheds light on the extant of recruitment policy and processes from a developing country's perspective.

Conclusion

This article focused on public sector recruitment policies in Nigeria and highlighted on the efficiencies and effectiveness of recruitment processes. It also discussed the consequences of influencing recruitment procedures. The study contributes to the knowledge of human resource management practices in Nigeria. Results reveal that there has been a move away from the concept of meritocracy in recruitment processes due to political considerations, nepotisms and ethnicity. As such these factors have impacted negatively on national developments and economic

growth. However, these variables hold strong in staff recruitment processes and in turn affects public sector ability to recruit capable workforce to carry out government policies and programs. As opined by Agbodike (2003, p. 185) “the result of the undue application of quota and lack of regard for merit in the application of federal character principle is that standards and professionalism are compromised and endangered”. The standards and professionalism needed in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Nigeria’s vision for 2020 that has been severely damaged. The net outcome had been introduction of reforms aimed at re-positioning public service image. Though these reforms such as SERVICOM (Service Compact with all Nigerians) are in place, much will not be achieved if capable human resources are not in place. The intention is to move beyond the Millennium Development Goals towards Sustainable Development Goals as envisaged in this research study.

To achieve short or long term organizational goals, there is need for efficient workforce which can only be attained by recruiting people with the appropriate skills, qualifications and experiences. Strengthening appointments on merit which requires that the capable human resource be employed for governments to be able to execute their policies, become efficient and effective in delivering services is one simple and powerful way in which governments can improve the quality of their services and gain a competitive advantage (McCourt, 2007; Brewster et al., 2003). Until the federal civil service of Nigeria acknowledges these statements, the efficiency of recruitment processes will remain an enduring challenge facing the country. This is because standards are compromised for political reasons and nepotism with the result that the state continues to experience setback in physical and economic development growth.

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