

STAFFING PROCESS AND EMPLOYEES' SERVICE DELIVERY: A STUDY OF EBONYI STATE CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM

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Abstract: This study titled “Staffing Process and Employees’ Service Delivery: A Study of Ebonyi State Civil Service System was born out of the desire to investigate the actual causes of the declining level of employees’ service delivery in the civil service system. Therefore, the study examined the relationship between staffing process and employees’ service delivery in Ebonyi State civil service system. Specifically, the study; investigated the extent to which inadequate employment planning affects employee service delivery in Ebonyi State Civil Service; examine the effect of quota system in the employment of quality workforce into Ebonyi state civil service, and; evaluate the effect of employment by executive fiat on the service delivery capacity of Ebonyi state civil service employees. The study formulated three hypotheses and adopted descriptive survey design with a sample size of 369 respondents. Data collected were analyzed using frequency distribution table with their corresponding percentage, while hypotheses were tested using Pearson product moment of correlation co-efficient. Major findings were among others; inadequate employment planning affect employees’ service delivery; quota system of employment affect the employment of quality workforce into Ebonyi state Civil Service; fiat method of employment affects service delivery capacity of Ebonyi state Civil Service Employees. The study therefore recommends among others, adequate employment planning; redefinition of quota system to take into consideration the competency of the person(s) projected for employment from each zone, states and/or regions; and zero tolerance to complementary cards and executive order during employment process.

Keywords: Staffing, Staffing Process, Service Delivery, and Civil Service System.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource is a critical input for the survival, growth, development, regeneration, and performance of an organization. Hence every organization spends much of their money; material and time to attract and secure quality workforce that would be instrumental to the organizational productivity (Okafor, and Udu 2011). Staffing process is the act of getting the right people, with the right skills, in the right number, in the right place, at the right time, and at the right cost (Okafor and Udu, 2011). Similarly, Robbin in Okpata (2009) define staffing as the process of having the right number and dividends of people capable of officially completing tasks that will help an organization to achieve its overall objectives. Toeing the above steps, Urom (2011) sees staffing as a process by which manpower resources are made available in an organization.

Although staffing processes start with employment planning and end with manpower placement and orientation, it comprises many other stages which can be grouped into three:

- i. The pre –recruitment stages
- ii. Recruitment stages, and
- iii. Post –recruitment stages

The pre-recruitment stages involve; human resource planning and forecasting, skill inventory and manpower auditing which aimed at establishing manpower requirement of an organization, and job analysis leading to job description and Manpower specification (Onah,2015). Sharma, Sadana and Kaur (2012) identified stages in the recruitment process to include; job requisition, designing of application forms, advertisement of the vacancies for which applications are invited, and scrutiny of the applications. The post- recruitment stages of staffing process according to Ezeani (2006), and Onah (2015) are: selection, placement, and orientation.

The neglect of one stage of the staffing process affects the service delivery capacity of the prospective employee (Omisore and okofu, 2014). For instance, poor manpower planning and inadequate job analysis will lead to wrong job description and manpower specification which will in turn attract application from wrong applicants. Also, inadequate skill inventory and manpower auditing could result to the choice of wrong source of recruitment and thus affect the performances of the existing employees. Siddique (2014) lend credence to the above view by adding that wrong selection and placement – caused by ethnicity, favoritism, religious sentiment, political interference and other extraneous factors – place “square” pegs in round holes” as wrong number of people might be selected, and placed in a wrong place at a wrong time leading to gross poor employee service delivery.

All over the world, civil service serves as an effective instrument through which government provides essential services to the citizenry (Nwokwu, 2015). However, employment of personnel that perform these government functions suffer allot of challenges both in developed and developing countries of the world. In the early stage of administration in United States of America, employment of men into government businesses was based on political patronage which permitted government employment base on party affiliation with little or no recognition for technical competence and merit system (Ezeani, 2006). The overbearing influences of political patronage in the administrative system of America resulted to a civil service reform- the Pendleton Act of 1883- which recommended among other things, merit system of entrance into the American civil service.

In Nigeria Ebonyi State inclusive, the employment of men that perform government/public functions is base on quota system, and executive fiat arising from political, religious and ethnic affiliations to the alter neglect of merit system of entrance into Weber’s ideal bureaucracy (Ekwoaba, Ikeije, and Ufom, 2015).

The creation of Ebonyi state on 1st October 1996 gave rise to the establishment of Ebonyi State civil service. At the inception, the State civil service was plagued with personnel problems as there were no enough qualified, experienced and skilled personnel within the state to man the state civil service (Nwambe, 2011). This according to Nwokwu (2015) is because the state inherited poor and ill equipped staff from the old Enugu and Abia state services due to the low educational status of the areas that constitute Ebonyi State as at 1997. In a bid to reverse the ugly situation, successive governments of the state, especially since the new democratic dispensation that started in 1999, have made efforts to improve on the availability of qualified, skilled and experienced personnel in the state civil service in order to boost efficiency in performance, and effectiveness in public service delivery in the state (Okpaka, 2009).

However, in spite of the mean efforts of successive governments to move Ebonyi State civil service away from the condition of backwardness, cases of irregularity in the process of employment into all cadre of the state civil service still abound (Nwokwu, 2015). The governments has been accused of interfering unduly with the employment process thereby staffing the state civil service with their brothers and political allies, and making appointment of the political and administrative heads of the state civil service base on party affiliation to the utter neglect of technical competence and merit. This has plunged the state civil service into perpetual administrative backwardness, inadequate public service delivery, and gross poor employee performances hence, the need to conduct a study on the staffing process and employee service delivery in Ebonyi State civil service system.

Statement of the Problem

In every country Nigeria inclusive, civil service is seen as an effective instrument through which government provides essential services to her citizenry. Hence, Nwokwu (2015) defines civil service as an important instrument of the state through which the daily needs and aspirations of the citizens are met. Therefore, employment of quality workforce for a productive, efficient and effective civil service system is imperative since we cannot improve as a nation without attracting our best and brightest human resource to the public sector (El-Rufai, 2013).

However, it is worrisome to note that the performance of employees in Ebonyi State civil service system is abysmally poor, as service delivery by the state civil service apparatus has continued to be at its lowest ebb (Nwokwu, 2015). This ugly trend is attributed to the over staffing of the state civil service by mediocre who are technically and skillfully incompetent.

The issue that agitates mind for solution is how these unproductive personnel gain entrance into Ebonyi state civil service system despite the merit –oriented process of entrance into civil serve system as recommended by the Pendleton Act of 1883, Weber’s features of ideal bureaucracy and the Nigerian Public Service Rule (PSR), and the effects of this on employees’ service delivery.

Also begging for attention is why the quota system of employment and executive fiat should be given priority during staffing process at the expenses of technical competence.

It is pertinent to note that top government officials of the state have not given the employment authority the free hands to discharge their staffing responsibilities. They see state civil service as an avenue for settling their political allies and friends irrespective of their low qualifications, technical incompetence, and unskillfulness. Also, the employment authorities are not free from the above issue, as their friends and allies are often given priority during employment process at the expense of merit. In the selection and placement process for instance, both the political leaders and employment authorities struggle to manipulatively select and place their friends and allies in a “Juicy position” with little or no consideration of their capacity to perform optimally in such position.

Objective of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the relationship between Staffing process and employees’ service delivery in Ebonyi State civil service system.

Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Find out the extent to which inadequate employment planning affect employees’ service delivery in Ebonyi State Civil Service.
2. Examine the effect of quota system in the employment of quality/competent workforce into Ebonyi state civil service.
3. Evaluate the effect of employment by executive fiat on service delivery capacity of Ebonyi state civil service employees.

Hypotheses

1. Ho1. Inadequate employment planning does not affect employees’ service delivery in Ebonyi State Civil Service.
2. Ho2. Quota system does not affect employment of quality/competent workforce into the Ebonyi State civil service system.
3. Ho3. Employment by executive fiat does not affect employees’ service delivery in Ebonyi state civil service.

Significance of the Study

The study is relevant to Ebonyi State government and employment authorities, as it exposed the evils of manipulative staffing process and thus make them to avoid such practice

Scope of the Study

This work covers staffing process and employees’ service delivery with central focus on Ebonyi State civil service system between the periods of 1999 to 2019.

2. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

2.1.1 The Concept of Staffing

Available literature has shown that different scholars permissively use the terms Staff, Manpower, Human Resources, workforce and Personnel interchangeably. Also uses in the same manner are the concepts of staffing, employment, manpower procurement, personnel appointment, and human resource acquisition. We shall in this work use the terms alike.

In the words of Akinwale in Monanu (2015), staffing process is a general term which refers to “obtaining the personnel required to fill the existing vacancies in an organization. Similarly, Nwatu in Siddique (2014), states that personnel staffing involves the determination of the quality, number, experience, and qualification of people needed to man an organization. To flippo (1980) procurement of staff is the first operative function of personnel management whose overall objective is to secure the proper number and kind of personnel for the organization. He further states that successful employment will result not only in the organizations acceptance of the person employed, but also in the person’s acceptance of, and satisfaction with the job and the company. To Hiew (2013), procuring and retaining high-quality talent is critical to an organization’s success since the provision of the high-quality goods and services begins with the employment process”.

However, a critical review and analysis of related literature shows that staffing process involves several stages which can be grouped into three; Pre-recruitment; Recruitment; and Post-recruitment stages. Each of these stages comprises many sub-stages and processes the combinations of which ensure satisfaction of the personnel needs of organization (Yousif, 2015).

The Pre-recruitment Stages: This stage comprises the human resource procurement practices carried out to establish the personnel requirements/needs of an organization (Omisore and Okofu 2014). Sub-stages in pre-recruitment stage include; human resource planning and forecasting; Manpower inventory and auditing and Job analysis and workforce analysis

The Recruitment Stage: Popular language uses the term recruitment as a synonym of appointment, but this is not correct since in the technical phraseology of administration, recruitment means attracting the proper and suitable type of candidate for the post to be filled (Sharma et al 2012). In the same view Okpata (2011) defines recruitment as the process of getting potential employees willing to apply for a job(s) in an organization. Toeing the above steps, Kumari (2012) conceptualize recruitment as the process of attracting prospective employees and stimulating them to apply for job in an organization. The principal purpose of recruitment according to Cole in Onah (2015) is to attract sufficient and suitable potential employees to apply for vacancies in the organization.

Source of Recruitment

There is meeting of the minds among scholars that recruitment can be sourced “internally or externally”. The internal source of recruitment according to Okafor and Udu (2011) envisage the availability of the needed potentials within the organization. While external source of recruitment is embarked on to fill positions whose specifications cannot be filled by existing personnel, or sometime, organization rely on external sources to fill vacancies created by expansion. Ezeani (2006) identified external sources of recruitment to include direct advertisement, government employment agencies, private employment bureau, educational institutions, and search firms. Other sources of external recruitment are unsolicited applicants, schools and colleges, labour unions, casual applicants, and recommendations of the present employees (flippo 1980).

The Post – Recruitment Stages are; selection; placement and orientation.

Selection Stage: According to Okafor and Udu (2011), although selection may form part of the recruitment exercise, it is not the same as recruitment. The Duo posits that selection involves choosing from the whole mass of applicants, those who in the opinion of the organization are qualified for the position(s) to be filled. In a bid to make a clear separation of selection from recruitment, Anatasi in Odaro(2012) confines selection to the acceptance or rejection of an individual applicant. Concurring to the above position, Odaro (2012) states that selection involves picking for hire a subset of workers from the total population of workers available for hire at any given time. **Placement:** Placement according to Okafor and Udu (2011) is the assignment of the selected employees to positions or offices, which is done with respect to already established format bearing in mind the fundamental needs for the procurement exercise in the first instance. Manpower placement is an important aspect of personnel management. This was rightly put by Tyagi (2004:442) when he asserts;

However sound may be our system of recruitment and examination, and however capable personnel we might have secured, much of the value to be drowned from them would be lost by poor assignments. An employee can give his best to the service only when he gets the proper opportunity to use his knowledge skills and abilities. A wrong assignment may make his capacity useless.

Induction/Orientation

Public administration according to Tyagi (2004) is an intricate “Labyrinth” in which every newcomer would lose himself even before entering it. Hence, the modern practice is that every operating agency provides the newcomers with employee handbooks/service manual describing the entire working environment of the agency, rules, regulations and processes of the agency and other monographs, maps & Charts. The above assertion informed the need for orientation of new entrants into an organization.

According to Flippo (1980), induction is concerned with the problem of introducing or orienting a new employee to the organization. He maintains that proper induction/orientation can do much to reduce the problem of early resignations and its accompanying costs. To Bedeian in Ezeani (2006), orientation is the process that introduces new employees to their job, supervisors and peers.

2.1.2: The Civil Service System

Like other social science concepts, the concept of civil service elude precise definition hence, there are many definitions, explanations and clarifications of the concept of civil service as there are many scholars and practitioners in the field of administrative studies. To Adamolekun in Obikeze and Obi (2004) civil service is “a body of permanent officials appointed to assist the political executive in formulating and implementing government policies”. He also sees the second usage of the term as referring to the ministries and departments within which specific aspects of government are carried out. Similarly, Abah (2011) defines civil service as an administrative structure employed in civil capacity to fulfill government policies and programmes.

In another sense, civil service is used to cover those public servants who are direct employees of the federal and state governments, other than the police, the armed forces personnel, the judicial personnel, the local government employees and the teachers. Its usage excludes also employees of statutory corporations and boards (Nwosu, in Ezeani, 2006). Similarly, Adebayo in Siddique (2014) sees civil service as comprising all servants of the state, other than those holding political appointments, who are employed in a civil capacity and those whose remunerations are paid out of money voted by the legislature. Tyagi (2004) defines civil service as “a professional body of officials, permanent, paid and skilled”. The civil service is guided by the maxims of anonymity, neutrality, impartiality, and permanence.

Functions of Civil Service: Civil service is the centre of government function such that the success or failure of government in providing the needs and aspirations of the public depend largely on the quality of her civil service system hence, a saying that “no nation grows more than its civil service”.

The Nigerian civil service according to Ezeani (2006) performs the following functions; policy implementation; policy formulation; advisory role; continuity in government ; investigative and regulatory functions; and informative role. In the same vein, Abah (2011) identifies the following as the function of civil service; advisory function; programme planning and implementation; drafting of executive bills; Policy formulation and implementation; budget preparation; quasi – judicial function; organization and method; delegated legislation; and production/service delivery.

Employee Service Delivery

Service delivery according to Oronsaye (2010) is the process of serving the needs of the citizens through prompt and efficient procedures. To Akhakpe in Siddique (2014), public service delivery is the provision of goods and other life supporting amenities by government to maximize the welfare and well being of the people.

In the words of Johan in Okeke-uzodike, Chikakunye, and Phiri (2014), “he who fails to plan for service delivery, plans to fail delivering services to the public; and if it cannot be measured, it cannot be improved”. This demonstrates the importance of service delivery in the conduct of both government and private businesses

Indicators of Quality Service Delivery

Service quality according to Parasuram (2011)

Accessibility: Services that are not accessible are regarded as being of poor quality and those that can be easily accessible are regarded as high quality services.

Reliability: the ability to provide the service promised accurately and as expected. For example if a battery is to give 1.5 volts either in the mornings or evenings. This voltage should be 1.5 volts, if it varies, the battery will be unreliable and considered poor by not delivering the required services.

Completeness: For a service to be perceived as service, it should contain all the features that satisfy the customers' expectation. It should have all its primary operating characteristics with all the measurable attributes so as to be ranked as high service.

Timeliness: Delay in service delivery will make the services to lose the meaning hence, a service should be offered in time before it becomes irritating to the consumer. Services which are delivered in time are said to be of good service and those that are not delivered in time are said to have poor service.

Conformance: This is the degree to which a service design and operating characteristics meet established standards. Good service is therefore expected to operate within a tolerable degree. The question here is that can the service achieve the core purpose for which it is intended? If the service performs as expected and intended, it will be considered good service offered.

Safety: How safe is it to use the service? Does it protect users before, during and after use? Some services are also not very safe when being used as they easily cause harm to the users. Services that are not safe to use are considered poor services and those that are safe to use are looked at as expected services.

Factors Affecting Service Delivery

In the words of Lawal in Aditiya (2017), poor service delivery remains an overwhelming challenge in Nigerian public institutions and many factors have been attributed to that. These factors include the following among others;

1. **Poor Manpower Planning:** manpower planning is the first step in ensuring that organization is staffed with a suitable workforce. Therefore, lack of proper manpower planning lead to employment of staff with low service delivery capacity.
2. **Quota System:** quota system of employment gives priority to states of origin, regions, and ethnic consideration during recruitment at the expense of technical competence and merit system of entrance into Weber's ideal bureaucracy.
3. **Employment by Fiat:** employment into Nigeria civil service system is now base on who do you know? Instead of what can you offer? (Nwokwu, 2015). Executive directives and complementary cards are the determinants of one's chances of employment into civil system irrespective of their ability to over quality service to public.
4. **Realistic Job Preview (RJP):** absence of realistic job preview as part of application form affects service delivery capacity of the prospective employees, as it attracts applications from unsuitable applicants and thus affects selection, placement process, and the system of service delivery.
5. **Poor Job Analysis:** job analysis is the study of job content to determine the human resource requirements for effective performance of such job (Hoi, 2013). Proper job analysis is a prerequisite for adequate job description and manpower specification for allow for self-evaluation before submitting applications. Therefore poor and inadequate job analysis will lead to poor job description and manpower specification which in turn affects the attraction of quality workforce into the civil service system.
6. **Lack of Manpower Inventory and Auditing:** skill inventory and staff audit is use to determine the strength of the existing workforce, locate the needed potentials from among the existing employees, and establish manpower needs of an organization (Onah, 2015).

Ways for Improving Public Service Delivery

To improve services, the state apparatus – the bureaucracy, and public service providers—must change the way it does business and become more user-friendly. Practical issues of institutional redesign and realigning incentives for service providers need to be addressed. This may sometimes require far-reaching civil service reform, which may include performance-based pay for civil servants and public service providers, as well as adequate sanction for unsatisfactory civil servants.

To Iyanyan and Shah (2013), public service delivery can be improved through the following:

- I. Merit system of entrance into civil service system to ensure the attraction of quality workforce into Nigeria civil service system.
- II. Strict adherence to the standard requirements for employment so as to employ technically competent and skillfully qualified men into civil service system.
- III. Improved capacity building process to boost the service delivery capacity of the existing employees.
- IV. Promotion of staff base in merit, seniority and length of service, as this service as a motivation for improved employee performance.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted “Structural Functionalism” as its framework of analysis. Structural functionalism is a sociological theory that explain why the society function the way it does by emphasizing on the relationship between the various social institutions that make up the society. The theory presents various parts of a society as an “organ” that work together towards the proper functioning of the “body”. Structural functionalism identifies structures of a system and defines the functions played by such structures.

The theory originated in 19th century from the work of Herbert Spencer (1820 - 1903) who explained the similarities between the society and human body. Other scholars that contributed to the development of Structural functionalism are (Spenser, 1898). Emile Durkheim (1858 – 1917). Radcliffe-Brown (1881 –1955), Robert Merton (1910 – 2003), Gabriel Almond (1911 – 2002) and Bingham Powell (1916 – 1997). Major component ideas of structural functionalism according to Spancer (1951:19-20) includes; Cause and effect idea which states that Y is a function of X where the states of Y are dependent on the states of X; Part – whole idea; Necessary condition idea; Positive values idea; Constant relation idea; and Functional requirement idea etc.

Theory Application

Structural functionalism is relevant to this study hence its adoption and applications as a useful guide to the study. The relevance of this theory to this study is that staffing process can be seen as a part (an organ) that works towards effective employee service delivery and performance of civil service as a body/whole.

Moreover, Ebonyi State Civil Service as a social system have certain functional requirement that must be satisfied if the system is to effectively deliver services to the public, and to promote efficient service delivery , staffing process exist as a functional subsystem that work for that purpose. Also, some of the component ideas of structural functionalism are applicable to the study. For instance, the idea of “Cause and effect” states that Y is a function of x where the state of Y is dependent on the state of the said x. In this study, manpower procurement process can be seen as “Cause” that produces “effect” on employee service delivery. This implies that the efficiency of employees’ service delivery (Y) is dependent on the effectiveness of manpower procurement process (X). Also, effective staffing process is a necessary condition for efficient service delivery as the employment of quality workforce (which is a product of effective staffing process) will produce positive value in the service delivery capacity of the state civil service system.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive survey design, with a sample size of 369 respondents. Data were generated from primary source using questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while Pearson Correlation was used to test the hypotheses with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Hypothesis One

H0: Inadequate employment planning does not affect employees’ service delivery in Ebonyi State Civil Service System

H1: Inadequate employment planning affects employees’ service delivery in Ebonyi State Civil Service System

Table 10: Pearson Correlation for Hypothesis One

Correlations		Inadequate Employment Planning	Service Delivery
Inadequate Employment Planning	Pearson Correlation	1	.492
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.026
	N	350	350
Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	.492	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	
	N	350	350

Source: Usulor's field work, 2019

From the computation above, the probability value at .026 is less than 0.05 significant level. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that inadequate employment planning affects employees' service delivery in Ebonyi State Civil Service System

Test of Hypothesis Two

H0: Quota system does not affect the employment of quality workforce into Ebonyi state civil service system.

Hi: Quota system affects the employment of quality workforce into Ebonyi state civil service system.

Hypothesis two was tested using table 7 and 9 above

Table 11: Pearson Correlation for Hypothesis Two

Correlations		Quota System	Service Delivery
Quota System	Pearson Correlation	1	.368
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.0417
	N	350	350
Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	.368	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.0417	
	N	350	350

Source: Usulor's field work, 2019

From the computation above, the probability value at .0417 is less than 0.05 significant level. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that quota system affect the employment of quality workforce into Ebonyi state civil service system.

Test of Hypothesis Three

H0: Employment by executive fiat does not affects the service delivery capacity of Ebonyi State civil service employees.

H1: Employment by executive fiat affects the service delivery capacity of Ebonyi State civil service employees.

Table 12: Pearson Correlation for Hypothesis Three

Correlations		Employment by Executive Fiat	Service Delivery
Employment by Executive Fiat	Pearson Correlation	1	.795
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.033
	N	350	350
Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	.795	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	
	N	350	350

Source: Usulor's field work, 2019

From the computation above, the probability value at .033 is less than 0.05 significant level. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that employment by executive fiat affects the service delivery capacity of Ebonyi State civil service employees.

4. FINDINGS

1. Inadequate employment planning affect employees' service delivery in Ebonyi State Civil Service System
2. Quota system affect the employment of quality workforce into Ebonyi state civil service system
3. Employment by executive fiat affects the service delivery capacity of Ebonyi State civil service employees.

5. CONCLUSION

Civil service system is a veritable instrument through which government provides essential services to the citizenry. Consequently, having an efficient and effective civil service system at all levels of government is imperative, and having efficient and effective civil service implies staffing of public institutions with quality workforce that will perform optimally in delivering quality services to the public. This can only be achieved through effective staffing process devoid of all forms of manipulations, since we cannot afford to grow as a nation without attracting our best and brightest men into our public service system (El Rufai, 2013).

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There should be adequate employment planning to ensure that quality workforce are employed into Ebonyi State civil service system.
2. The quota system of employment should be redefined to take into consideration the competency of the person(s) projected from each zone, state and/or region.
3. There should be zero tolerance to complementary cards and executive directives (fiat) during employment. Thus, all prospective employees should be allowed to undergo thorough screening to ensure that the best are chosen for the job.

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