

CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF PRESSURE FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE NIGERIAN FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE

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Abstract

The paper examined the causes and effects of pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service. Secondary data were used as the predominate sources of data collection. The causes of pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service were adapted from Briggs (2007) survey research findings. The paper identified public sector driven economy, high budgetary allocation for recurrent expenditure, violation of federal character principle and lack effective implementation of human resource planning as the prevalent effects of pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service. As a result, it was recommended that the federal government should initiate policies and programmes that would induce shift from the public sector driven economy to the private sector driven economy as well as promote entrepreneurship development reforms in the country. It was also recommended that appointment in the federal civil service should be merit based. These recommendations would curtail the pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service and address other economic and social problems in the country.

Keywords: causes of pressure for appointment, effects of pressure for appointment, Nigerian federal civil service.

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Introduction

Olusegun Mimiko, the governor of Ondo State of Nigeria posits that good governance is achieved where there is a well informed civil service with high quality workforce and a focused leadership (Aborisade, 2012). This requires that appointment in the civil service be made on a merit based process which necessitates a sound human resource planning that determines the manpower requirements (Armstrong, 2001).

Human resource planning as defined by Vetter (1967) cited in Peretomode and Peretomode (2001) is the process by which management anticipates staffing requirements now and in the foreseeable future and therefore seeks ways to ensure that the right persons in the right mix and number are available for the right jobs at the right time. Therefore, human resource planning in the civil service balances the projected demand for and supply of labour (Torrington, Hall and Taylor, 2005).

The demand for labour is influenced by the corporate strategies and objectives, the environment and the way staff are utilized within the system. The supply of labour is projected from the internal labour market (stock and flows of current employees to meet future needs) and from the availability of the required skills in the external labour market (Armstrong, 2001; Torrington, Hall and Taylor, 2005). This implies that environmental forces affect labour market and recruitment process of the private and public sectors.

In Nigeria, the supply of labour exceeds the demand for labour in the structure and functioning of the internal and external labour markets (Casio, 1986). This phenomenon exerts pressure for appointment and hampers both private organizations and public institutions from having pertinent information about the most suitable manpower required now and in the foreseeable future. Regarding the Nigerian public sector, the situation affects the appointment of the right people with the needed knowledge, skills, abilities, values and interest (Saif et. al., 2013) in the system.

To this end, this paper examines the causes and effects of pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service. The recommendations of this paper will contribute to the appointment of the right civil servants in the right number who are competent to help the government deliver effective and efficient services. The paper has economic and social significance that will be of benefit not only to the public service officials but also to the actors of private sector as well as to researchers.

Appointments in the Nigerian federal civil service

In the Nigerian federal civil service parlance, appointment is often synonymous with recruitment (Al-Gazali, 2006). Section 153(1) (d) of the 1999 constitution has vested in the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) the powers to appoint persons to offices in the federal civil service

and to dismiss and exercise disciplinary control over persons holding such offices. FCSC comprises a chairman and not more than fifteen commissioners of unquestionable integrity and sound political judgment who are appointed by the president subject to confirmation by the senate.

Appointment in the federal civil service is done through recruitment (Briggs, 2007), promotion (FRN, 2008: Rule 020701), transfer and secondment (Babaru, 2003). Recruitment in the federal civil service is the filling of vacancies by the appointment of persons not already in the federal civil service. This however, excludes the transfer of officers from other public service in the federation to the federal public service (FRN, 2008: Rule 020201).

Promotion involves change in position that assumes greater responsibility and authority in return for higher pay, benefits and privileges (Casio, 1986). In the Nigerian federal civil service, no promotion shall become effective until they have been approved by FCSC except where powers of appointment and promotion have been delegated (FRN, 2008: Rule 020701). Transfer is a permanent release of an officer from one schedule service to another or from one class to another within the same service, while secondment refers to the temporary release of an officer to the service of another government, approved body or any recognized international organization or body for a specified period (FRN, 2008: Rule 020501).

Section 170 of the 1999 constitution empowers FCSC to delegate any of its powers and functions in order to guard against possible delays and allows for the devolution of administrative powers in view of the crucial role the commission is expected to perform as a regulatory authority of the federal civil service. Though, FCSC delegates powers to Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to recruit the junior staff to posts graded GL 01-06, it has the reserved right to exclusively appoint the entry grades of the senior staff on posts graded GL 07-10. Appointment to posts graded GL 12-14 are done directly by the commission after due advertisement as the need arises and appointment of directorate staff which are posts graded GL 15-17 are made by FCSC in consultation with the head of the federal civil service and in response to the advertised vacancies (Al-Gazali, 2006).

METHODOLOGY

This paper employs documentary research (Obodoeze, 1996) as the predominate sources of data collection. Documentary research is a necessary and valid secondary data that has passed through the statistical process by someone else (Kothari, 2004) and as such does not require field work by the researcher (Nwana, 1979 cited in Obodoeze, 1996). The paper reviews current related literature from textbooks, journals, internet, newspapers and magazines to examine the causes and effects of pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service. The causes of pressure for appointment are adapted from a survey research conducted by Briggs (2007). In the

context of this study, appointment is delimited to recruitment and does not include transfer and secondment.

Causes of Pressure for Appointment in the Nigerian Federal Civil Service

Briggs (2007) identified rate of unemployment, pensionable appointment, job security, porous and flexible federal civil service system, and remuneration as the prevalent factors that influence increasing pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service (Table 1).

Rate of unemployment: Unemployment rate is the percentage of workforce in the labour market that is able and willing to work but does not currently have any job. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the rate of unemployment in Nigeria stood at 23.9% in 2011 and may increase by 2% in 2014 (Chima, 2014). NBS posits further that the youths of the nation are the most affected with a youth unemployment rate of 54%. The high rate of unemployment in Nigeria exerts undue pressure for appointment in the federal civil service since Nigeria's supply of labour exceeds the demand for labour (Casio, 1986).

Pensionable appointments: Pension is a periodic income or annuity payment made at or after retirement to an employee who has become eligible for benefits through age, earnings and service (Ayegba and James, 2013). Pension is a way of providing positively for the welfare of retirees. Prior to the enactment of the pension reform Act of 2004 in Nigeria, the public sector pension scheme was funded by the federal government through budgetary allocations and the final entitlements were based on the length of service and terminal emoluments (Ayegba and James, 2013). In contrast, many employees in the private sector were not covered by the pension schemes put in place by their employers and many of these schemes were not funded (Ojo, 2013). Thus, the pension scheme in the public sector attracts potential applicants and induces gratuitous pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service.

Contributory pension system was introduced in Nigeria in July 2004 (Gunu and Tsado, 2012) in order to ensure that every employee in the public and private sectors receives pension benefits as and when due, and to establish uniform rules, regulations, standards and laws for the administration, management and payment of pension funds in the country. While the extent of compliance in the public sector is commendable, as at July 26 2012, only 346 firms in the private sector have complied with the contributory pension scheme based on the list released by the National Pension Commission (PenCom) which is considered insignificant (Ayegba and James, 2013) in view of the number of enterprises operating in the country.

A survey of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) undertaken by NBS and Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN) of Nigeria on the number of enterprises in the country revealed that there are 17,261,753 micro enterprises, 21,264 small enterprises and 1,654 medium enterprises in the country (Businessday, 2012 cited in Ayegba and

James, 2013). This data substantiates that the 346 private firms that has complied with the contributory pension scheme is relatively insignificant thus, mounting pressure on civil service appointment for welfare purposes after retirement.

Job security: According to the businessdictionary.com, job security is the assurance that an employee has about the continuity of gainful employment for his or her work life arising from the terms of the contract of employment or labour legislation that prevents arbitrary termination, layoffs, and lockouts. Employees in the Nigerian private sector are threatened by unemployment (Hartley, Jacobsson, Klandermans and Van Vuuren, 1991) resulting from job losses and job discontinuity (De Witte, 1999). Conversely, employment in the public sector carries extremely low risk of dismissal and high job security and respect (Bteddini and Heidenhof, 2012). Accordingly, this state of affairs invokes increasing pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service.

Flexible and porous civil service system: The Nigerian civil service framework is built on bureaucratic foundation that affects all the arms of government including Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) at the various tiers of government (Eme and Onwuka, 2010). Bureaucracy exists as part of government machinery for executing policy decisions and delivery of services that are of value to the citizens. It emphasizes on rationality, predictability, impersonality and technical competence (Njoku and Nwosu, 2010).

The problem affecting the civil bureaucracy in Nigeria is discussed in aspects namely structural, political and economic, and administrative attitude and behaviour (Eme and Onwuka, 2010). Regarding the administrative attitude and behaviour, the Nigerian civil service exhibits a laissez-faire leadership approach (Njoku and Nwosu, 2010) and a non-committal attitude to work orientation because of the porous and flexible (Briggs, 2007) nature of the system. It was observed in a significant number of federal MDAs that issues of late coming, absenteeism and employees productivity are not considered vital. Also, some civil servants use their official status and offices as an advantage to engage in personal commercial activities. The flexibility in the Nigerian federal civil service system in addition to the personal benefits derived from its porous nature induces pressure for appointment.

Remuneration: Remuneration is the reward an employee receives in exchange for the work or services performed. Before the wage review of 1998 in Nigeria, the public sector employees had a pay disadvantage of 6.78% but on implementation of the wage review, the public sector employees enjoys a pay premium of 35.07% (Aminu, 2011). Aminu (2011) asserts that the implementation of the 1998 wage review succeeded in making public sector workers better remunerated than their private sector counterpart which also induces pressure for appointment in

the Nigerian federal civil service. Aminu's affirmation in addition to the federal government's ability to pay the wage regularly stimulates pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service.

Effects of Pressure for Appointment in the Nigerian Federal Civil Service

Public sector driven economy: Increasing pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service affects sustainable development (Kim and Isma'il, 2013) since it promotes public sector driven economy. Globally, state controlled economies are being substituted with market oriented economies with the private sector as the main engine of growth (Osemeké, 2011). Job creation in the private sector is a spontaneous and circular process (Samuelson, 2012) that gives attention to economic, technological and social development of a nation.

High recurrent expenditure: Another effect of pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service is the outrageous recurrent expenditure (Nweke, 2014). The percentage of recurrent expenditure in the national budgets for four years indicates 74.4% in 2011, 71.5% in 2012, 67.5% in 2013, and 74% in 2014 (Tayo, 2014). According to the finance minister, Dr (Mrs.) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in her responses to questions raised by the House of Representatives subcommittee on finance attributed the high recurrent expenditures to the remuneration and other personnel costs (Tayo, 2014). Consequently, the high percentage of recurrent expenditure in the national budget reduces the size of funds available for investments in other viable sectors and capital projects.

The issue of federal character principle: Another effect of pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service is the violation of the principle of federal character. The principle of federal character promotes fair and equitable distribution of appointment in the Nigerian civil service (Federal Character Commission, 2011), and it is one of the key factors that determine appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service (Babaru, 2003). However, the pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil services induces leakages in the system that negates the appointment of manpower based on the principles of fairness, equity and merit. According to Shuaib (2009) cited in Edigin (2010), the situation promotes mediocrity, incompetence, corruption and ethnicity rather than nationalism.

Ineffective implementation of human resource planning: Human resource planning is the process by which employers appoint the right number and kinds of manpower at the right places and time (Nwachukwu, 2000) who are capable of performing their tasks effectively and efficiently (Njoku and Nwosu, 2010). Though the Nigerian federal civil service designs job description and personnel specification (Briggs, 2007) which are components of job analysis (Casio, 1986) and products of human resource planning (Peretomode and Peretomode, 2001), but increasing pressure for appointment in the federal civil service contributes to the ineffective implementation of human resource planning. This is because the pressure for appointment thwarts the successful forecast of potential surplus or deficits of manpower in the federal civil service which

subsequently frustrates the appointment of the right kinds of manpower with suitable skills, expertise, attitude and interest in the right quantity and at the right time.

Conclusion and recommendations

Civil service is a body or organ which enjoys continuity of existence that covers ministries and extra-ministerial offices (FRN, 2008: Rule 010103). Quality service delivery in the civil service is an outcome of sound human resource management because human resource is the most important asset in any institution (Njoku and Nwosu, 2010). Thus, appointment of the right people in the right mix into the Nigerian federal civil service sustains customer based service delivery in an effective and efficient manner in the system.

However, pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service propelled by high rate of unemployment, benefits derived from pensionable appointment, job security in the public sector, porous and flexible civil service system, and remuneration in the civil service affects the nation's economy, budgetary allocation, the federal character principle, the effective implementation of human resource planning and merit based appointment in the federal civil service.

Based on the causes and effects, the pressure for appointment in the Nigerian federal civil service will be curtailed if the federal government puts in place an institutional framework for a paradigm shift from the public sector driven economy to the private sector driven economy and initiates economic reforms that promote entrepreneurship development. This will enhance sustainable development in the economy, augment employment opportunities, reduce cost of governance, and address other social and economic pestilence in the country.

Appointment in the federal civil service should be merit based with equal employment opportunities for all employable citizens. This will attract only suitable applicants to apply for vacant positions, promote the principles of merit and equity and induce appointments of competent manpower that will deliver government programmes effectively and efficiently in a customer based approach.

Table 1: Factors Influencing Increasing Pressure from Appointments

Factors	Categories of Grade Levels				
	01-06	07-10	12-14	15-17	Total
Unemployment	72 (13.41%)	49 (9.12%)	36 (6.7%)	18 (3.35%)	175 (32.59%)
Pension	66 (12.29%)	46 (8.57%)	34 (6.33%)	10 (1.86%)	156 (29.05)
Job security	63 (11.73%)	29 (5.4%)	21 (3.91%)	8 (1.49%)	121 (22.53%)
Porous system	14 (2.61%)	17 (3.17%)	16 (2.98%)	6 (1.11%)	53 (9.87%)
Remuneration	19 (3.54%)	6 (1.11%)	4 (.74%)	3 (.56%)	32 (5.96%)
Total	234 (43.58%)	147 (27.37%)	111 (20.67%)	45 (8.38%)	537 (100%)
Mean: 537/190 = 2.83					
Source: Briggs, B.R. (2007). Problems of Recruitment in Civil Service: Case of the Nigerian Civil Service. <i>African Journal of Business Management</i> , 1(6), p. 147.					

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