

HUMAN CAPITAL RESOURCING IN KOGI STATE PUBLIC SERVICE (2004 – 2009): IMPLICATIONS FOR UTILIZATION, EFFICIENCY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Within the mandate of the state to deliver public services to the citizens lies the responsibility of government to deliver such within the canons of effectiveness and efficiency. While the quality of the workforce is fundamental to the realization of this goal, the process of acquiring these workers must be objective, fair and transparent. Despite the existence of formal procedures for recruitment, selection and placement in Kogi State, this paper has observed interferences of environmental factors. The consequences observed among the public sector agencies in Kogi State included inflow of ill-equipped workforce; absorptive fatigue among the ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and wide spread manpower underutilization in the state's public service. Given the implication of these on National Development, this paper recommended the adoption of a more objective approach in order to enhance the stake in conformity among the manpower resourcing decision makers in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

INTRODUCTION

Even though the meaning and nature of state has remained elusive as a result of the divergent perceptions of the scholars of social sciences, it has remained a dominant phenomenon in the vocabulary of the respective disciplines, probably because within its nature and purpose, the daily life of an average citizen is ordered or re-ordered by its activities. From whatever side of these intellectual differences on the phenomenon, scholars seemed to be of the shared opinion that state had progressed with human civilization as its conceptualization emerged with the common reasoning that within needs, greed or appetites of men, every man was at risk if the activities of individuals continued to be dominated by their private instincts and whims.

According to Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, state emerged out of the necessity to enforce common liberty or general good of the people in a given political community (Burke in Mukerjee and Ramaswami (2008). State as described above remains essentially latent or anonymous without the institution of government. Government is therefore the instrument through which the character and mandates of the state are expressed. Accordingly, in modern days, the state's mandate on the citizens' socio-economic welfare and security are delivered by the institutions of government. Thus, whether as a Ministry, Department or Agency, the modern state can only guarantee greater happiness for the greatest number if government is successfully operated within the laws dispassionately created, interpreted and executed by operators of public institutions. Thus, the major concerns of administrative scholars in recent times have gone beyond just how government should be composed or what proper thing it should do to how it should do these proper things more effectively and efficiently (Wilson 1887 in Shafritz and Hyde, 1978). The question of effectiveness and efficiency, according to these Scholars, is more readily answered by the quality of those who operate the structures than the actual structure or technology of the

service organizations. It is on this note that they contended that no resource is worthy of any equal premium with that of human resources.

Gbosi (2003) in Agabi and Ogah (2010), refer to organization's manpower as the bulk of labour that is available for any particular responsibility in the organization's drive towards a given purpose. To him, such collection of individuals must possess the relevant skills, energies, knowledge, and attitudes that are committed towards the production or distribution of goods or services which the organization is designed for.

The importance of manpower to the efficient delivery of public goods and services is therefore measured within the context of the objectives of public sector and the resources at its disposal. Thus in the delivery of public services such as provision and maintenance of law and order, defense of territorial integrity and provision of infrastructural facilities, e.t.c., the public service employees in the respective outfits are required to plan and deliver these services responsively, responsibly and at the least possible cost. Thus, the question of how the Nigerian ports, public hospitals, public schools, armed forces and security services, etc, have fared over the years may therefore be best answered by critical analysis of the manpower contents of these organizations as acquired through regular recruitment and selection procedures.

NATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hornby (1995) defined a nation as a large community of people, sharing a common history, culture and language and living in a particular territory under one government. By implication, a nation is characterized by a group of people with socio-political and geographical unity or identity deliberately evolved and sustained over time.

National development on the other hand may best be understood from the concept of development itself. According to Rodney (1972), development refers to increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. From this perspective, development is both multi-dimensional and all inclusive, while its purpose is to facilitate the improvement of the standard of living of a people within a particular territory.

From the above, national development may be defined as the process of projected and sustained improvement of the well-being of the citizens of a nation (Olu, 2011 in Alonge 2015). It includes the creation of facilities and opportunities for individuals and groups within a given territory to realize their full potentials both at home and abroad. Thus, while national development is characterized by a nation's capacity to regulate its internal relationships, in terms of meeting the basic needs and security, basic liberties and self-esteem for its citizenry, it equally includes the nation's ability to regulate its external relationships. While the creation of appropriate institutions is necessary for this purpose, manning these institutions are pivotal to the realization of the corresponding objectives.

MANPOWER, RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Recruitment may be defined as the process of generating a pool of qualified applicants for organizational jobs (Mathis and Jackson (1979) in Onah (2003). To Cole (2002), recruitment involves all the activities whose purpose is to attract sufficient and suitable potential employees to apply for vacancies in an organization. The above definitions implied that inherent in a successful recruitment programme are comprehensive staff auditing, job mapping, job description and job specification.

While the purpose of recruitment is to provide a pool of opportunities for efficient staffing decisions, selection covers the entire process of taking advantage of these opportunities to make the right choices from the available alternatives. Thus, Armstrong (2009), demonstrated that the purpose of recruitment would largely remain unachieved if the condition for competitive selection is compromised at any stage of the selection process. Thus, while recruitment is the gateway for the in-flow of raw human resources into the organization, the selection process represents the point at which the 'grains are separated from the chaff (Udeze 2000).

Reinforcing this position, Armstrong (2009), defined selection as involving the process of deciding on the degree to which the characteristics of applicants in terms of their competencies, experiences, qualifications, education and training, match the person specification and using this assessment to make a choice among candidates. In other words, the aim of selection is to assess the

suitability of candidates for the post viz-a-viz the extent at which he/she is capable of carrying out the expected role more successfully than his/her competitors.

Alec Roger (1950) in Beach (2002), identified the practicable personal attributes to be examined for selection as follows: Physical make-up (required health, strength, energy and appearance); Attainments (required education, training and experience); General intelligence (the required thinking and mental effort); Special aptitudes (required on-the-job skills); Personal interest (required personal interest that is relevant to the job); Disposition (the required personality); and Circumstances (required capacity to cope with special circumstances required by the job).

PROCEDURE FOR MANPOWER PLACEMENT

Cascio (2003) defined placement as an assignment of individuals to jobs. To him, as an outcome of selection process, placement may be based on the employee's outright demonstration of convincing potential to succeed in the general requirements of the job. It is often at the discretion of the organization to assign them to specific jobs within the broader job families.

To Onah (2003), placement is the process of appointing or investing an appointee with the authority to perform the role. To this scholar, at the point of placement, the employment process has entered a legal phase in that, the employer-employees relationships are defined in terms of rights and obligations. According to him, these include offer and acceptance, terms of remuneration, the effective date of commencement, the conditions of engagement or disengagement and benefits or forfeitures of employees, etc.

MANPOWER UTILIZATION IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

Balogun (2003) defined manpower utilization as the hour of productive work as a percentage (%) of the total work paid for. While this definition notes that not all hours spent in work period are necessarily productive, it equally emphasized that even the productive hours should be properly measured against the cost of labour to determine the manpower utilization rate.

Codjia (2011) defined manpower utilization as the percentage (%) of production (billable hours) versus paid labour. To him, manpower utilization rate is obtained by dividing the total productive hours by the total hours of labour paid for. From the foregoing, manpower utilization simply means the ability of an organization to make the best use of an employee without incurring any additional cost. In other words, such employee should, be available both for present and future use. Thus, Cascio (2003), Labardi (2011) and Codjia (2011), were of the opinion that such employee is not only useful in his/her present capacity but should equally possess the potentials to fit into the future needs of the organization.

From the fore-going, any process driven manpower resourcing practice is expected to generate the right quantity and quality of personnel for effective and efficient service delivery.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: PRISMATIC-SALA MODEL BY FREDRICK RIGGS

Riggs' Prismatic-Sala Model was a reaction to the simplistic assumption of the classical modernization Scholars that the application of artifacts of western civilization such as free market economic system, democracy or bureaucracy, etc, could guarantee universal predictability of administrative behaviours. To Riggs more than importation of western structures, administrative in environments wield enormous influences on the administrative behaviour. Thus, though Riggs did not contradict the regularity of bottle necks of administrative systems in transitional states, he however carefully identified ecological factors as the major causes (Mccurdy 2012).

From his assessment of transitional societies, (Thailand and Philippines,) certain peculiarities with public administration in transitional societies which gave birth to his three articles viz. the Ecology of Public Administration (1961), Administration in Developing Countries and Theory of Prismatic Society (1964); and Thailand; the Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity (1966).

From his assessment of transitional countries, Riggs agreed that though all societies have structures that perform certain functions (Make rules, settle disputes, cure diseases, and dispose the garbage, etc), they differ from society to society. According to him, in traditional (fused) societies, few of such structures are needed while in industrial (modern) societies, large numbers of these structures are

needed with each carrying out specific functions. Thus, to him, the process of modernization involves increasing structural differentiation.

Tenets of the Theory

Riggs contended that, Prismatic societies are neither traditional nor modern and therefore share the features of both. Thus, to him, transitional societies often manifest the characteristic behaviours of heterogeneity, formalism and overlapping (Peng, 2008 and King, 2007).

Heterogeneity

By heterogeneity, Riggs means simultaneous presence of different kinds of principles, practices, traditions and view points within a given system. To him, existence of such contradiction make prismatic societies to contend with multiple and conflicting needs and interest among the competing categories of the population.

While Riggs agreed that efficiency can only be maximized when administrative decisions are value neutral, he contended that heterogeneity impedes on administrative rationality in that, official relationships under such conditions are often imbued with frictions or imperfections occasioned by "*familiaristic ties*". For instance, Riggs observed that the heterogeneous environment of a prismatic society exposes heads of agencies to moral dilemma and because of poly-normativism of such environment, official decisions are more often than not "selectivistic" than "universalistic" (Riggs 1961). Here, rules are usually bent to suit the interest of a particular individual or group.

Formalism

Riggs referred to formalism as the loss of the underlying sacral beliefs or essence which gives vitality to any existing forms, structures, or practices. To Riggs, formalism measures the extent to which discrepancy exists between the prescriptive and descriptive; between formal and effective power; between the impressions given by the constitution, laws, regulations, organizational charts, statistics, etc, and actual practices and facts of government and the society. Thus the greater these discrepancies, the more formalistic the system is.

Riggs identified various forms of formalism as: Constitutional formalism, Administrative formalism and Educational formalism, etc. Riggs idea of administrative formalism was premised on the inability of the formal power to sufficiently impose effective control over the bureaucracy, given the enormous latitude of decision space at the disposal of the strategic bureaucrats. For instance, in administrative decisions such as recruitment, promotion or training, etc, Riggs noted that they could either rigidify or relax the prescribed rules to accommodate certain interests (Riggs, 1964)

Overlapping

Riggs observed that in a transitional society, socio-political or economic institutions are not autonomous in decision making as individuals' social backgrounds often interfere with public decisions. Here considerations are given to those from influential backgrounds, class mates, friends, brothers or a political associate, etc. Riggs thus described public institutions in transitional societies as '*Sala*' which in Spanish Parlance, means both an office where formal businesses are conducted as well as a private chamber in one's home where traditional functions are performed. Summing up the common characteristics of prismatic society, therefore, McCurdy (2012) pointed out the followings: Numerous legal rules exist with variety of enforcement variations; Person from high status (cliques, sects or elects) may enjoy access to all manners of privileges to which they have no legal right while the lawful rights of those of low status are rarely protected by any effective legal procedure; Public Officials are subjected to multiple loyalties as a result of the prevailing moral dilemma of the heterogeneous and overlapping societal structures; There is irregular application of rules by the officials among themselves and the entire citizens as a result of the absence of objective criteria; Deliberate attempts to accommodate 'minority' interests through 'Quota' or 'Reservation' system are made to mitigate expression of disaffection by the underprivileged groups.

Just like the bureaucratic model predicted that productive efficiency of social interaction stands to be violated at any point the rationality of the social relationship is interfered by non-rational sentiments, Riggs contested that, given the characteristics competing moralities of the *poly-non-nativistic* prismatic society, greater good is rarely preferred above private interests. To him, the process of growth and development in such societies is chaotic, tortuous and slow.

By this position, Riggs did not justify the prismatic point as the destination of a transitional society. Rather, as McCurdy (2012) puts, the entire process of 'Tillering through the prism' was premised on the possibility of advancing towards a greater defraction. While submitting that no matter how advanced, every society carries a given level of prismatic traits, Riggs however posited that the more a society advances towards defraction, the more the purpose of its evolution is achieved.

THE CHARACTER OF MANPOWER PROCUREMENT IN NIGERIA

For the realization of the mandates of the public service, procedures for the need – based procurement of its workforce are clearly stipulated. For instance, within the proper meanings of sections 14(3 and 4), 15 (2 and 5), 16(1) and 17 (3a) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Ngu (1990:17-24), Babaru (2003) and Aina (2010) have interpreted the mandates of the Federal and States Civil Service Commissions in section 197 (a) and 3rd schedule (part II) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to, within the planned needs and objectives of the Federal or State government: Identify the required jobs to be done (job description) and the characteristics of the required personnel (job specification); Set up general and uniform guidelines for appointment, deployment, promotion, training and discipline of staff employed in the Federal/State government services; Appoint persons to offices in the Federal or State service; Dismiss and exercise disciplinary control over persons holding those offices; Monitor and co-ordinate the activities of each of the Ministries, Departments, and Agencies to ensure that the service guidelines are strictly adhered to by the respective MDAs.

Public Service Rules (02201 & 02102) equally empowers the Civil Service Commission to perform these roles directly or delegate to the appropriate Ministries, Parastatals or Agencies in conjunction with the office of the State's Head of Civil Service as appropriate.

Despite the abundance of these rules and prescriptions, public service in Nigeria had acted more contrary to the popular expectations. For instance, while commenting on the alleged recruitment scam in the Nigeria Immigration Services (NIS) in late 2012, Ajayi (2013), described the exercise as "the general misuse of hiring process in government". The analyst noted that in sheer spoil and patronage fashion, the merit principles were grossly undermined.

Ajayi recounted that of the 5,000 personnel approved to be recruited into the service, 250 slots were allocated to the Presidency; 100 to the President's wife; 100 to the minister of interior; 250 to the Federal Character Commission; 60 to the two commissioners of Immigration Board at 30 each; and 40 to the President's mother. Other allegations he recalled from his survey of other agencies include the followings among others: Appointment into government positions have been done in secret against the criteria of open recruitment and merit; Applicants have sometimes been asked to buy scratch cards that cost between ₦1, 000 and ₦5, 000 for access to pin for downloading application forms for jobs they might never be taken; Letters of appointments and job positions are offered to family members, relatives and friends before the selection process commences.

The consequences of these process abuses, according to him, is that those who really needed the job don't get it while those who are least interested are offered job positions they never really needed

In other words, like Riggs observed in Prismatic societies of Thailand and Philippines, the selection process in Nigeria carries the traits of formalism (where the rule exist, only in the record rooms), heterogeneity (where the recruitment actors are subjected to moral dilemma) and heterogeneity (where ascriptive privileges give some candidates undue advantages above others). Just as the process is chaotic and arbitrary, the purpose is more of empire building than effective and efficient service delivery of state agencies.

MANPOWER RESOURCING IN KOGI STATE, 2004 – 2009

Analysis of Sally Tibbot Report of 2009 in Kogi State revealed substantial evidences of procedural irregularities as a result of interferences of non-administrative variables. For instance, between 2004 and 2009, the staff strength of Kogi State public service had surged from 23,344 to 34,000 without proper

approval for such expansion. It was also discovered that of 2,357 personnel employed between 2004 and 2009 by the eleven MDAs understudied in the course of putting this paper together, it was only Kogi State Sanitation and Waste Management Board that got approval for only 50. Even this agency that got the approval for 50 slots, overshot the approved limit by 245 as it employed a total of 295 candidates. Teaching service commission (TSC), Hospital Management Board (HMB), and Science Technology and Technical Education Board (STTEB) employed 707, 506 and 305 candidates respectively without any approval.

Analysis of staff distribution in Hospitals Management Board between December 2003 and April 2004 showed a significant difference between the objective needs of the board and the volumes of recruitments carried out by the board within the period under review. For instance, as at December 2003, out of the 2,294 staff on the payroll of the Board, 1,588 (70%) were support staff while only 706 (30%) were in the core staff category running the three shifts in its 65 hospitals spread across the state.

Out of the 706 of the core staff, doctors were 90 and pharmacists were 27. On the average, each hospital had 1.3 Doctors and 0.5 Pharmacists. In the event were any hospital had more than one doctors or pharmacists (which did happen), many hospitals were left without a medical doctor or Pharmacist. Between January 2004 and April 2009, this Board recruited a total of 506 employees, consisting of only 10 medical doctors, 5 pharmacists and 24 laboratory technicians. Further careful study of the employment showed that while the general (support) staff consisted of 308 (69%), those of core need were just 198 (31%).

In Ministry of Works and Housing, the situation was not different. The three core sections of the ministry are Civil, Electrical and Mechanical. As at December 2003, the analysis showed that the 474 staff of this ministry consisted of just 134 (28%) core staff, made up of 44 in civil, 46 in electrical and 44 in mechanical. Among these, there were just 17 civil engineers, 8 electrical engineers and 12 mechanical engineers. The rest 340 staff considered of support staff, made up of clerical and executive cadres in administration or accounts.

Between January 2004 and April 2009, the ministry recruited 76 new employees. Out of these, only 16 (21%) constituted the core staff while the remaining 60 (79%) consisted of support staff.

Going by the above analyses, it was clear that the recruitment done within the period under review lacked reasons to be characterized as being need - based. This study had also encountered one irregular method of filling vacancies called "replacement". Using this method, as soon as an officer left the service, he/she was quietly "replaced" by corresponding numbers of applicant whose salaries could be accommodated by the leaving officer/s. In Teaching Service Commission, for instance, 510 officials were recruited through this means between 2004 and 2009.

Summary

The practice as described above, significantly contradicted the procedures of systematic capacity auditing/identification of capacity gap; declaration of vacancies/advertisement; collection and short-listing of applications and interview, selection and placement, earlier described by Onah (2003), and Aina (2010). This was a huge violation of the citizens rights of equal opportunities and freedom from discriminations expressly defined in sections 14, 15,16, 17 and 42 of 1999 constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended).

The above violations in the face of the existing laws corresponded with the formalistic attitude earlier described by Riggs. In the same way, the use of public office by the political class and their strategic bureaucrats to satisfy private (political, ethnic or family) interests corresponded with the sala concept where office serves the dual purposes of formal state business and private court. All these were seen to have impeded on the validity of the resourcing process in the state public service.

The consequences of the above in the state's public service were that: employees inflow was more than the absorptive capacities of the MDAs; those employed lacked the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes for the job they were employed for; There were cases of protected indiscipline as a result god-fatherism; the wide spread disloyalty to constituted authorities had resulted in lack of prompt responses to lawful orders; there was increase in training needs and consequent high training costs; there were poor servicing of employees' entitlements and benefits and consequent industrial crises; and there were wide spread accommodation crises and consequent obstructions to completion of tasks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the observed consequences of violation of the resourcing procedure in the state's public service, the following recommendations were offered:

- (i) Regular staff auditing should be instituted among the respective MDAs
- (ii) MDAs should be compelled to declare their vacancies and make their recruitments open
- (iii) Selection of candidates should be strictly based on predetermined criteria
- (iv) Staff movements (turnover) should be sufficiently monitored and controlled by effective Personnel and Pay-Roll Information System (PPIS) with a highly centralized password
- (v) Civil Service Commission should be re-engineered by law and resources to enforce the appropriate recruitment laws
- (vi) Sanctions against offenders of resourcing procedures should be certain, swift and severe in order to make the stake in conformity with the extant rules high.
- (vii) Mass media, civil society and Human Right agencies should take special interest in the areas of recruitment from the perspectives of fundamental human rights/freedoms.

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