

Non-meritocratic Factors and the Recruitment Process in Oyo State Civil Service, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study focuses on non-meritocratic factors that influence recruitment process. The main purpose was to investigate the factors that influence recruitment and selection in Oyo state civil service apart from merit, and ascertain perceived consequences of non-meritocracy in the recruitment process. The survey research method was adopted; quantitative and qualitative techniques were employed in the collection of data. Results show that the dynamics of the recruitment and selection processes in Oyo State civil service are driven more by non-meritocratic influences such as ethnicity, religion, statism, politicization etc. which have become embedded into the socio-economic and political organization/structure of Nigeria. Merit is undermined, thereby making efficiency and effectiveness difficult to achieve in the civil service. We suggest, like many others, that meritocratic principles should be firmly entrenched in the Oyo State Civil Service and that the recruitment process should be devoid of non-meritocratic factors.

Keywords: *Bureaucratic organization theory, Civil service, Meritocratic, Non-meritocratic, Recruitment*

Résumé

Cette étude porte sur les facteurs non méritocratiques qui influencent le processus de recrutement. L'objectif principal était d'étudier les facteurs qui influent sur le recrutement et la sélection dans la fonction publique de l'État d'Oyo, à l'exception du mérite, et de déterminer les conséquences perçues de la non-méritocratie dans le processus de recrutement. La méthode de recherche par sondage a été adoptée. Des techniques quantitatives et qualitatives ont été utilisées pour la collecte de données. Les résultats montrent que la dynamique des processus de recrutement et de sélection dans la fonction publique de l'État d'Oyo est davantage motivée par des influences non méritocratiques telles que l'ethnicité, la religion, l'étatisme, la politisation, etc. Nigeria. Le mérite est miné, ce qui rend l'efficacité et l'efficacités difficiles à atteindre dans la fonction publique. Nous suggérons, comme beaucoup d'autres, que les principes méritocratiques soient fermement ancrés dans la fonction publique de l'État d'Oyo et que le processus de recrutement soit dépourvu de facteurs non méritocratiques.

Mots clés : *Théorie de l'organisation bureaucratique, Fonction publique, Méritocratie, Non méritocratie, Recrutement*

Introduction

Every organisation is established with a definite goal or objective in view. The accomplishment of such goals and objectives lies in the hands of the organisation's workforce. They must therefore be well-suited to meet the requirements of the organisation. In an attempt to study the reasons for the inefficiency of the Nigerian civil service, scholars have examined various factors, among which is the recruitment process, in particular, the recruitment process to reflect the principle of Federal Character {Ishaq, (2013); Okeke-Uzodike and Suddan, (2015); Okereka, (2015); Igbokwe-Ibeto and Agbodike, (2015)}. This Principle is essentially non-meritocratic, yet, serve as the overarching recruitment policy in the civil service in Nigeria. In this study, we focus on non-meritocracy in recruitment in the civil service in Nigeria. Specifically, examine the non-meritocratic factors that influence recruitment process in the Oyo State Civil service, and determine the effects that these factors have on a rational bureaucratic organization.

It is however ironic that the processes provided for by the Constitution and the Civil Service Rules and Regulations (policy guidelines), emphasize key attributes such as transparency, uniformity, standardization and meritocracy, which are key features of the Weberian bureaucratic model. Despite all these, the composition of most Ministries, Departments and Agencies, reflects the recruitment of mediocre personnel (Eneanya, 2009), which seems to result from non-meritocracy in the recruitment process. These non-meritocratic factors have hitherto not been systematically studied as a core influence in the recruitment process. They have only been studied as causes of productivity and

inefficiency. It is against this backdrop that this study looked at the influence of non-meritocratic factors on recruitment process in Oyo State Civil Service as well as to identify the perceived consequences associated with the influence of non-meritocratic factors on recruitment processes in Oyo State Civil Service.

Effects of the Influence of Non-Meritocratic Factors on Recruitment Process.

Recruitment is important in the over-all productivity of an organization; it is linked to performance. The objective of every organization is to achieve productivity, which Igbokwe-Ibeto and Agbodike (2015) define as a measure of how well resources are brought together in an organization and utilized, to accomplish a set of results. To be productive is to reach the highest level of performance with the least expenditures or resources.

Non-meritocratic factors in the recruitment process of a country's civil service will likely endanger the socio-economic development of the country. While looking at the challenges facing the Nigerian Civil Service, Okereka (2015) observed that the recruitment and selection system in the Nigerian Civil Service is bedeviled by factors that are hindering and stilling the climate of meritocracy that is critical to actualizing the potency of the civil service; in engineering administrative efficiency, organizational effectiveness and socio-economic development. The concomitant consequences of this untoward practice against the merit philosophy is the up-holding of mediocrity as standard performance. The civil service therefore is occupied with docile personnel whose faith is determined by politicians, right from the point of entry through the career ladder. It is therefore difficult for these caliber of civil servants to protect the profession against the overriding influence of the political leaders. Thus, their docility results in inefficiency and ineffectiveness.

Bureaucracy and Meritocracy

The civil service is a bureaucracy, which Weber conceived as the most effective form of organization because it is logical, and, does not allow for personalized, non-rational, emotional relationships to get in the way. Weber's bureaucratic theory has continued to influence the management and administration of both public and private large scale, social, economic and political organizations in the modern world (Clark, 2012).

In the pre-bureaucratic times, religion, customs and all other forms of sentiments defined people's attitudes and values. Giddens and Sutton (2013) posited that the idea of bureaucracy shows the transition of people from making decisions based on superstition, religion, custom and long-standing habit. However, decisions were now made by engaging

a rational, instrumental calculation that now takes efficiency and future consequences into account. Modern society should be disenchanted by sweeping away the forces of sentimentality and embracing rationalization. Therefore, in a bureaucratic structure, there is little room for sentiments but actions are taken according to the principles of efficiency and on the basis of technical knowledge. In order to achieve the greatest good for a large number of people, merit must be given prominence for tenure jobs, and a body of rational laws formulated by experts who must be impersonal in their approach to official duties are indispensable.

The principle of merit in appointment/recruitment as advocated by the Bureaucratic model must be recognized as a power for good. Even though meritocracy does not “conclusively” lead to the choice of the “most” competent, it is definitely a sure way of excluding the absolutely unfit that socio-cultural influences might bring in (Sundell, 2012). Meritocratic appointment will help to guarantee that those who attain office are qualified for their posts. Competitive examinations and educational and experiential requirements for office will help to screen candidates based on their abilities. Although some scholars such as Merton, have criticized the efficiency of the bureaucratic model as being too rigid and disallowing the use of initiative or discretion, however Sundell (2012) opined that the assessment of the risk level of patronage, nepotism (and other socio-cultural factors) should determine the best way to recruit. If there is a high risk of patronage and nepotism, then more meritocracy is needed in the recruitment process than the use of discretion. Nigeria, being a heterogeneous nation with issues of ethnicity, religion and political patronage bothering its affairs, would suffer most likely if the principle of meritocracy is sacrificed on the altar of use of discretion/initiative.

The theory identifies the importance of meritocracy in organizations, especially in the area of who to recruit, the strategies to be adopted for the recruitment process and how the workforce is prepared for performance. The bureaucratic model emphasizes the importance of rationality. Rational actions puts aside the institution of sentimentality which characterized what propelled decision-making in the pre-bureaucratic times. Recruitment managers (human resource managers) ought to consider the consequences that improper recruitment would do to the organization, in the long run. Rationality of decision, in recruitment process, involves carefully selecting the candidate that would contribute his/her own quota to the goals of the organization, hence leading to organizational performance.

Methods

The survey research method was adopted for this study because the method is well suited for the study of a large population. A field research was conducted, triangulating both the quantitative and the qualitative methods of survey research. The study employed

the exploratory research design. It was also non-experimental and cross-sectional in nature. The exploratory research design was considered appropriate because we sought to explore the subject matter, which has been long enduring, and, to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study. It was cross-sectional in design because it took a sample or cross-section of the entire civil servants at a point in time. Moreover, since the research study dealt with individuals, non-experimental research design was employed because it does not involve the manipulation of variables or controlled settings. We used the survey research method because of the large population.

The study population comprises employees of the Oyo State Civil Service. The Oyo State Civil Service has three categories of employees: the junior staff, senior staff and the administrative staff. Junior employees are graded from Level 01-06, while grade levels 07-14 represent the senior staff. Grade levels 15-17 are administrative staff grades. All the Oyo State Civil Service employees are employed in the state government ministries, state government agencies and parastatals. There are 13 ministries, and 42 agencies and parastatals with offices in in the Oyo State Secretariat. This research focused on the 13 ministries that form the core of the civil service; these are:

- i. Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development
- ii. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- iii. Ministry of Environment and Water Resources
- iv. Ministry of Finance and Budget
- v. Ministry of Health
- vi. Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism
- vii. Ministry of Works and Transport
- viii. Ministry of Justice
- ix. Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban development
- x. Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs
- xi. Ministry of Trade, Industry, Investment and Co-operatives
- xii. Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare
- xiii. Ministry of Youth and Sports

The participants for the study are workers on grade levels 01-14. This is because workers in this category would have undergone the recruitment process conducted by either the Oyo State Civil Service or the Personnel Management Board of each ministry. The total population for workers in the core ministries at the State Secretariat is 4676 (figure derived from the Bureau of Statistics, Oyo State Secretariat, 2016). The sample size of 406 was determined using the Taro Yamane formula.

This study adopted the probability proportional to size sampling technique. Since all the selected ministries are not the same in size (population figure), the probability proportional to size and weighing average was utilized in determining the sample size of respondents in each of the ministries. To ensure proportionate representation of the

respondents, the total number of administered questionnaires (406) was multiplied by the population of staff in a specific ministry and divided by the total population of workers in Oyo state ministries. Table 1 shows the distribution of questionnaires according to the selected ministries. Thirteen ministries were used in this study, representing the core formulation and implementation agencies of the government. A total number of 406 respondents were sampled using the simple random sampling technique. This method provided equal chance of representation for the respondents.

Table 1 The distribution of respondents according to different ministries (using the probability proportional to size technique)

Ministry	Population figure	Proportion	Sample
Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development	736	$\frac{406 \times 736}{4676}$	64
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	874	$\frac{406 \times 874}{4676}$	76
Ministry of Environment and Water Resources	228	$\frac{406 \times 228}{4676}$	20
Ministry of Finance and Budget	153	$\frac{406 \times 153}{4676}$	13
Ministry of Health	401	$\frac{406 \times 401}{4676}$	35
Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism	186	$\frac{406 \times 186}{4676}$	16
Ministry of Works and Transportation	736	$\frac{406 \times 736}{4676}$	64
Ministry of Justice	152	$\frac{406 \times 152}{4676}$	13
Ministry of Trade, Industry, Investment and Co-operatives	266	$\frac{406 \times 266}{4676}$	23
Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development	562	$\frac{406 \times 562}{4676}$	49
Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs	120	$\frac{406 \times 120}{4676}$	10
Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare	201	$\frac{406 \times 201}{4676}$	18
Ministry of Youth and Sports	61	$\frac{406 \times 61}{4676}$	5
Total	4676		406

Source: Researcher's Computation (2016)

Data was collected using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Both methods helped to derive a richer information, where the limitation of one method was covered by the other. The quantitative technique gathered information from a vast group of civil servants in different ministries who have undergone the recruitment and selection processes of Oyo State, whereby they offered their evaluative perception of the conduct of the recruitment process. While the qualitative method offered an in-depth knowledge of the processes of and influences involved in the recruitment processes of the Oyo State Civil service, as those who are involved in the recruitment processes were interviewed.

The quantitative data for this study was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to allow for a descriptive analysis of univariate and bivariate distributions that are relevant to the study. Qualitative data, collected through the In-Depth Interview and Key Informant Interview method was transcribed; and data was analyzed using content analysis. Also, verbatim quotations were used in the course of the analysis where appropriate. It is important to note that throughout the analysis, triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data was adopted. Concerning confidentiality, this research ensured a great deal of confidentiality in order to protect participants who willingly gave out information that might offend the top echelons. As regards willingness, no respondent was compelled to give information. Hence, this research aimed at ensuring that the parties concerned understood the trends of this issue and start working on the solution in order to achieve better efficiency in the civil service.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

From the 406 administered questionnaires, only 350 questionnaires were retrieved; this is a response rate of eighty-six percent (86%). The socio-demographic data presented in Table 2 which forms the background characteristics of the participants in this study consisted of age, sex, marital status, level of education, grade level cadre, religion, and ethnicity particularly their state of origin. On the average, sampled civil servants were 39 years old with their ages ranging from 21 to 56 years. This provided higher chances of receiving sufficient information from civil servants across a wider age range. Majority of the respondents were in their 30s (42.2%); those in their 40s make up 35.5% of the study population. A tenth of the respondents are either in their 20s or close to retirement. The bulk of the study population can thus be considered as in their 'productive' years. An analysis of their gender showed 56.6% male and 43.4% female; male employees are generally more than female employees as Damina, Osagbemi, Dongurum and Laka (2012) and Gberebie (2010) have highlighted with regard to employment figures in the Nigerian civil service.

Table 2 also reveals the ethnicity of civil servants. The three major ethnic groups in Nigeria seemed not to be well represented in the state civil service. Virtually all

the respondents are Yoruba, no Hausa and only one out of the 350 respondents is associated with the Igbo ethnic group. It appears ethnicity in the civil service was more of a constant than a variable. Another interesting aspect of respondents' background characteristics is that one may expect that since almost all the sampled civil servants are Yoruba, there will be an even representation of the workers from the five south-western states where the Yoruba people are located. However, this was not the case. Table 2 shows that about 91.6% reported to be indigenes of Oyo state leaving out just 8.4% of the respondents to other states within the country; which comprises respondents' whose state of origin is within the south-west region (7.5%) and those outside the south-west region (0.9%). This signifies the predominance of state indigenes over non-indigenes in the Oyo State Civil Service. The implication of these figures corroborates with the assertion of Akinwale (2014) that there is often discrimination in state civil service for non-indigenes who seek employment.

Data on the marital status of respondents showed that four out of every five civil servants that were interviewed were currently married, leaving out less than 20% who are single (that is, not married). This is not surprising as most of the respondents are in their middle ages, and culturally expected to be married at such ages. The educational categorization shows that majority of the respondents are graduates (64%) and about a quarter have received a post-graduate degree, cumulatively, about 88% have gone through tertiary education. This figure is also not alarming since most of the civil servants represented in the study fall under the senior cadre (73.4%), and as such, they are expected to have a minimum qualification of tertiary education to occupy such position. Two cadres of civil servants were represented in this study; a quarter of the respondents (25.1%) are in the junior cadre, and 73.4% are in the senior cadre.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Background Characteristics of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	197	56.6
Female	153	43.4
Marital status		
Single	61	17.9
Married	276	81.2
Widowed	3	0.9
Age		
20-29	32	11.3
30-39	119	42.2
40-49	100	35.5
50+	31	11.0

Religion		
Christianity	198	56.6
Islam	152	43.4
Ethnicity		
Yoruba	346	99.7
Igbo	1	0.3
Hausa	-	-
Educational qualification		
Primary	1	0.3
Secondary	39	11.4
Tertiary (1 st Degree)	219	63.8
Tertiary (Postgraduate)	84	24.5
State of Origin		
Oyo State	317	91.6
Other state (within South-West)	26	7.5
Other state (outside South-West)	3	0.9
Grade level		
Junior cadre	88	25.1
Senior cadre	257	73.4
No response	5	1.5

Source: *Field Survey (2016)*

Meritocracy in the Civil Service

Presented in Table 3 is the respondents' opinion about appointment into the Civil service. This question sought to understand if meritocracy was the only route through which an applicant can be recruited into the Oyo state civil service. Only 7.5% and 22.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively while 8.1% of the respondents were undecided. However, 48.4% disagreed while the remaining 13.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the claim that merit is the only consideration or route through which an applicant can be recruited. This suggests that there is a presence of other factors besides merit in Oyo State Civil Service recruitment. Maidoki and Dahida (2013), Akinwale (2014), Gbervbie (2010), Igbokwe-Ibeto and Agbodike (2015) had posited that the recruitment policies and procedures in the Nigerian Civil service is highly controversial and complex in nature. Hence, the tenet of merit and technical competence as rooted in Weber's bureaucratic model seems not to be predominantly applied in the Oyo State Civil Service.

A qualitative analysis of this section also buttresses the opinion that merit is not the only consideration to securing an appointment with the Oyo State Civil service. Some of the interviewees expressed their opinions on the issue-

“no. it is not all about merit. Just like we have the VC list and Deans’ list in the University system during admission; so also we have the Governor’s list, the Commissioner’s list, the Permanent Secretary’s list and more like that when recruitment is conducted. Will you say that is merit?”

(IDI, male, senior cadre, GL 12)

“Well, merit is said to be the major consideration but there are other ways for those who know their way.”

(IDI, female, junior cadre, GL06)

“Yes, I think merit is a major consideration. You cannot deny the existence of other factors but I think Oyo state civil service commission tries their best to recruit based on merit.”

(IDI, female, senior cadre, GL14)

Non-meritocratic factors influencing Recruitment Process in Oyo state Civil Service

In Table 3, various non-meritocratic factors influencing recruitment process in Oyo State civil service were identified. From the factors identified, a high proportion of respondents asserted that being an indigene of the state (statism) was the most crucial factor affecting recruitment process. This was evident as the average mean score of respondents’ rating for statism was 3.96 out of a total of 5. The influence of ‘godfatherism’, nepotism and ethnicity were rated next to being an indigene of the state in the recruitment process with an average mean of 3.93, 3.88, and 3.18 respectively. On the other hand, religion was indicated by respondents to be the least non-meritocratic factor to be considered in civil service recruitment process. As established, religious factor has the lowest mean of 2.03. Similarly, recruiting based on payment of bribe was also one of the factors that respondents perceived to least influence recruitment process.

Godfatherism

As indicated in Table 3, 76.3% of the respondents believe that a strong godfather can get his candidate an appointment into the civil service in Oyo state, irrespective of the candidate’s qualification. Also, 75.7% of the total respondents responded positively to the assertion that candidates in the merit list can be denied the job if a political godfather has his own candidate. This is in line with the studies conducted by Adeyemi and Osunyanmi (2015) and Onwe et. al (2015) who posited that the list of the political bigwigs in the society usually outweigh the results derived from the recruitment and selection exercise conducted by the recruiting bodies. This throws merit to the wind.

Onwe et. al (2015) further posits that “top citizens of the state” such as members of the state house of assembly, commissioners and special advisers to the governor, are given the privilege to present their candidates which gives them the opportunity to reward party loyalists.

When the issue of godfatherism was further probed during the interview session, it was discovered that it was accepted by most of the interviewees as the norm which operates in the Oyo state civil service recruitment –

“And the one you’re calling godfatherism and nepotism- how can you have an uncle or aunty in a top position that can help you get what you need and you will say no? In this economy that people are looking for job? Even those who are qualified are still on the streets, not to talk of those who are not really qualified. Yes it happens in the Civil service but it is not really so bad considering the state of the country.”

(IDI, male, senior cadre, GL12)

Further insight into this issue was sought from the Key Informant Interview respondent at the Civil Service Commission, who had this to say about the prevalence of godfatherism –

“In the typical Nigerian society, there is no place that such things don’t happen. The Commission tries her best to be impartial; but it is faced by strong pressures of political godfathers and personal pressures from family and friends. These things happen in an informal way but we try our best to curtail it.”

(KII, CSC staff, male, senior cadre, GL 14)

Statism

The opinions of the respondents were sought in order to investigate the prevalence of statism over merit. Although 78.4% of the total respondents posit that indigenes of the state are given more consideration than non-indigenes; 67.7% of the total respondents also opined that it is more advisable for non-indigenes to change their state of origin to Oyo state in order to be considered for recruitment. This depicts the prevalence of favouring state indigenes over non-indigenes. The Nigerian society, and the African society at large, hold family and tribal/ethnic values in high esteem which can be to the detriment of a sound and rational recruitment process and the unity of the nation at large (Salawu and Hassan, 2011). As seen above, what obtains is not a national unified identity but family and state identity. Edosa (2014) observed that states and

local governments in Nigeria often discriminate against people/applicants who do not hail from their geographical boundaries. The above clearly reflects the influence of sentiments and emotions in the recruitment processes of Oyo State Civil service.

Furthermore, some of the interviewees had this to say about the influence of statism in the recruitment process.

“The truth is that you cannot have food now, and see that your son is hungry and yet give the food to a neighbor or stranger. How can an Oyo indigene be denied and the job be given to an outsider? It is rather better for the non-indigene to then change his or her qualification to Oyo state.”

(IDI, male, senior cadre, GL14)

“There is no written policy anywhere that Oyo state civil servants must be indigenes of the state; although preference is given to indigenes of the state. However, in exceptional cases, employment is given to non-indigenes; for instance, if a serving corps member does exceptionally and excellently well, he can be given a full appointment (regardless of the state he hails from). In another way, if a non-indigene, female I mean, gets married to an Oyo man, then it will make it easier for the woman. Though we know that she is not from Oyo, but the husband’s origin as an Oyo man will make up for it.

(KII, CSC staff, male, senior cadre, GL12)

Apart from the “advice” given by the respondents that non-indigenes should consider changing their state of origin to Oyo state in order to stand a better chance for appointment, an interesting and recurring notion is that female non-indigenes could stand a better chance if they get married to a male indigene. This was also affirmed by a female interviewee:

“like I said earlier, all these things happen if you know your way. I’m from Osun state but since I married an Oyo man, but I had to claim my husband’s state of origin. That made it easier for me. And some other ladies that are non-indigenes did like that also. So yes, I believe the issue of ethnicity happens.”

(IDI, female, junior cadre, GL06)

Religious Factor

Religion, as a social factor, seems not to be an element influencing recruitment process in the Oyo State Civil Service recruitment. From Table 2, the distribution of the respondents shows an almost equal representation between the two major religions that the respondents posited that they practice; 56.6% Christian and 43.4% Muslims. Hence, their opinions on the influence of this social factor on recruitment process cannot be construed as being biased. The above data hereby suggests that candidates' religious affiliation does not influence the recruitment outcome in Oyo State Civil service. This position refutes the findings from the studies of Maidoki and Dahaida (2013) and Omisore and Okofu (2014) that religious factor has a strong influence on the recruitment processes in the Nigerian Civil service.

Table 3: The Prevalence of Non-Meritocratic factors in Oyo State Civil Service Recruitment

S/N	Influence of non-meritocratic factors on recruitment process in Oyo state civil service	SA	A	UN	D	SD
		Freq. (%)				
1.	A candidate can only get appointed into the Oyo State Civil Service by merit	26 (7.5)	78 (22.5)	28 (8.1)	168 (48.4)	47 (13.4)
2.	With a strong godfather, an applicant can get appointed into the Oyo State civil service regardless of his/her qualification	110 (31.4)	157 (44.9)	30 (8.6)	39 (11.1)	14 (4.0)
3.	Candidates on the merit list can at times be denied the job if a political godfather has his own candidate	118 (33.7)	147 (42.0)	34 (9.7)	45 (12.9)	6 (1.7)
4.	Indigenes of the state are given more consideration for appointment than non-indigenes	117 (33.7)	155 (44.7)	28 (8.1)	39 (11.2)	8 (2.3)
5.	Regardless of qualification, a candidate can be denied his employment if he/she is not Yoruba	54 (15.5)	107 (30.7)	57 (16.3)	111 (31.7)	20 (5.7)
6.	Regardless of qualification, a candidate can be denied his employment if he/she is not an indigene of Oyo state	41 (11.7)	113 (32.4)	57 (16.3)	123 (35.2)	15 (4.3)
7.	Your religious affiliation could determine whether you will get recruited into the civil service or not	14 (4.0)	24 (6.9)	37 (10.6)	157 (45.0)	117 (33.5)
8.	A job position could be created in order to employ a relative of a top government official	3 4 (9.8)	100 (28.7)	6 8 (19.5)	108 (31.0)	3 8 (10.9)
9.	Unnecessary offices are created to recruit people favoured by a politician or godfather	40 (11.5)	114 (32.8)	6 9 (19.8)	9 7 (27.9)	2 8 (8.0)
10	Appointment can be secured into the civil service by paying money to a government official	33 (9.4)	71 (20.3)	69 (19.7)	126 (36.0)	51 (14.6)

11	Lobbying an administrative cadre staff is one of the ways to secure appointment	22 (6.4)	86 (24.9)	65 (18.8)	128 (37.0)	45 (13.0)
12	For non-indigenes, changing one's state of origin to Oyo state gives candidate a higher chance of consideration for a job	36 (10.3)	201 (57.4)	44 (12.6)	49 (14.0)	20 (5.7)
13	Knowing someone in the administrative cadre will help you get a job in the Oyo State civil service	41 (11.7)	132 (37.8)	61 (17.5)	93 (26.6)	22 (6.3)
14	Knowing someone who knows someone influential in the Oyo state civil service can help you get a job	74 (21.2)	203 (58.2)	3 4 (9.7)	32 (9.2)	6 (1.7)

Source: *Field Survey, 2016*

Perceived consequences associated with the influence of non-meritocratic factors on recruitment process.

When recruitment exercise is permitted to be influenced upon by non-meritocratic factors such as statism, nepotism, ethnicity, religion, godfatherism instead of merit, the process of recruitment could best be described as poor and improper. This study investigated the perception of respondents on likely consequences of a poorly conducted recruitment process. The opinions of the respondents were sought on this issue because they have observed this phenomenon and its consequences in their workplace (Civil Service). As summarized in Table 4, 78.0% of respondents in the study believed that there would definitely be negative consequences attached to a recruitment process that is not guided by the principle of merit. However, 22.0% of respondents disagreed to the notion that negative consequences could result from recruitment of personnel based on non-meritocratic factors. This is represented in the table below:

Table 4: Percentage distribution of respondents' opinion on the consequences of non-meritocratic recruitment

Recruitment without merit will result in negative consequences	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	256	78.0
No	72	22.0
Total	328	100.0

Source: *Field Survey, 2016*

From these, respondents opined that if any of the aforementioned factors influences civil service recruitment, 67.4% agreed that such an individual will lack passion for the job he or she was employed to do and 58.4% reported that they would not always

meet targets and demands given to them, a large proportion (53.5%) also admitted that such an individual is unlikely to arrive early to work. With respect to knowledge about work roles, 53.5% disagreed that anyone whose recruitment was influenced by socio-cultural factors will have adequate knowledge of how to perform their duties. Work commitment may also be challenged if the due process of recruitment was not followed. The respondents report that regular presence at work, maintaining good relationship with other colleagues, time management skills and dealing with confidential information do not necessarily correspond to the recruitment process.

Table 5: Frequency distribution of perceived consequence of non-meritocratic factors on recruitment process

Perceived consequences of non-meritocratic factors on recruitment	Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Lack of passion for the work	230 (67.4)*	77 (22.6)	34 (10.0)
Early arrival to work	101 (29.5)	183 (53.5)*	58 (17.0)
Commitment to work	110 (32.4)	189 (55.6)*	68 (12.0)
Absence from work	117 (34.3)	136 (39.9)	88 (25.8)
Always finish work on time	91 (26.6)	185 (54.1) *	66 (19.3)
Always meet work targets and demands given to them	81 (23.8)	199 (58.4)*	61 (17.9)
Adequate knowledge of their Responsibilities	160 (46.8)	132 (38.6)	50 (14.6)
Adequate knowledge of how to perform their duties	116 (34.1)	182 (53.5)*	42 (12.4)
Effective time management	110 (32.5)	144 (42.6)	84 (24.9)
Good working relationship with their colleagues	199 (58.2)	82 (24.0)	61 (17.8)
Consultation with supervisors when needed	197 (57.8)	89 (26.1)	55 (16.1)
Deals appropriately with confidential Information	147 (43.4)	128 (37.8)	64 (18.9)

Note: values in parentheses indicate percentages

*indicates aspects where over half of the respondents confirms a negative effect of socio-cultural factors of recruitment on job performance

From Table 5, these perceived consequences are measured with values of motivation and ability. Motivation, in order to examine if candidates who are recruited through non-meritocratic factors have an intrinsic drive for their work. One of the consequences of poor recruitment is employing people who lack a motivation for what they do, especially intrinsic motivation. Ability talks about the knowledge and skills to carry out the assigned tasks. Another consequence of recruiting people on other factors apart from merit is that they might lack the knowledge and skills required to carry out the tasks assigned to them. To buttress the above, the interviewees had these to say about the effects of recruiting personnel based on non-meritocratic factors –

“there are many instances that we have unqualified people in whom their sponsors believe that all they need is training on the job and they will know it. This is not always effective. Some of them don't even have the zeal for that job, they were just thrown into it because that was the space/place their godfather got for them. They end up not doing their job well.”

(IDI, female, senior cadre, level 14)

Also, another interviewee reported thus:

“I feel the major disadvantage to recruiting people on other basis rather than merit is that some of them will know what to do and how to go about their work yet they won't discharge their duties well or at the right time because they feel that their godfather will always be there for them. So, who can hold them to ransom? Or who dares to punish them? And the way civil service is structured is such that dereliction of duty by one person can affect the work of others; this will affect the overall performance of such department. It's a chain process. So if recruitment is based on merit, it will have a positive effect on the performance and efficiency of the Oyo State Civil Service.”

(IDI, male, senior cadre, level 12)

Another respondent opined that

“If true merit is applied, truly it would lead to better performance by the civil service generally. Since they are very skilled at what they do, they will apply that skill to their work.”

(IDI, female, senior cadre, level 14)

The Weberian principle provides the platform to ensuring efficiency of administration in the civil service. The ability of the government and recruiting bodies to absorb the best qualified, technically competent, disciplined and committed personnel, without being influenced by sentimental and primordial issues, would in turn help government to achieve the goals of governance and administration (Igbokwe-Ibeto and Agbodike, 2015). Such civil servants will be able to facilitate improved implementation of government policies and programmes.

Discussion

This study highlights the non-meritocratic factors in the Oyo State Civil Service recruitment process and the implications. The bureaucratic model suggests that a systematic set of laid-down rules guide the action of employees in a bureaucracy; recruitment process should be similarly guided by laid-down rules. Therefore, whom to recruit into the civil service should be a factor of a rational process carried out according to laid-down rules. The principle of meritocracy in recruitment ensures that there is a rational selection of candidate based on the ability, competence and skills of the individual. When personal bias and other forms of sentiment influence the recruitment process, it could have a negative consequence on the organization. Socio-cultural factors such as ethnicity or statism, political patronage, nepotism, religious affiliation etc. are mostly factors arising out of emotions/sentiments and personal bias. They constitute non-meritocratic factors that hinder a rational recruitment process. For example, non-recruitment of non-indigenes, qualified for a job on sentimental basis.

The sentiments attached to decision-making in Nigeria have contributed to the low performance of the civil service in the country. Sentiments attached to recruitment process could lead to recruiting employees ill-qualified for a position. This point is clear in Weber's bureaucratic model; recruitment should be based on the technical competence of individuals and should be devoid of the traditional system which gave room for sentimentality and a system of ascription. Nepotism, statism, godfatherism, ethnicity are all factors arising out of sentiments and such has a negative consequence on the civil service when the principle of meritocracy is not allowed to run its course. The efficiency of the Civil service goes beyond a good organization structure. Despite the tailored structure of the Nigerian Civil Service, a good performance is not guaranteed if a credible recruitment process is not enthroned. One of the key principles emphasized upon in the Weberian Bureaucratic model is recruitment and promotion of officials based on merit. It is only when the principles of bureaucratic administration are adhered to that an effective decision making, optimum use of resources and attainment of organization goals can be realized. Hence, the recruitment of officials should be based on rationality – that is, merit and qualification. The traditional type of administration, which was the previous model, focused on appointment based on personal relations and preferences; whereas the bureaucratic model insists that every official should receive appointment only on the basis of merit and technical qualification. It is further characterized by the principle of impersonality that strongly counters the presence of undue influences which is a negative aspect of the traditional administration system.

Conclusion

The non-meritocratic factors that influences recruitment process in the Oyo State Civil Service was examined in this study. Concerning the influence of meritocracy as the determining factor of recruitment process in Oyo State Civil Service, 61.9% of the respondents believe that merit is not the only route/way through which a candidate can get employed into the service. This posits that three out of every five civil servants in the Oyo State civil service believe that there is the existence of non-meritocratic factors in the recruitment processes. This corresponds with the study of Maidoki and Dahida (2013) and Akinwale (2014) that the system of recruitment in Nigeria is based on the spoils system where merit is sacrificed.

Different non-meritocratic factors were examined such as statism, nepotism, godfatherism, religion, ethnicity and findings revealed that all these factors except religion have a strong influence on the recruitment process of the Oyo State Civil Service. Statism and ethnicity were separated because the study sought to check the dominance of indigenes as compared to non-indigenes. Statism seems to be the most prevalent non-meritocratic factor as even candidates from other states in the same Yoruba ethnic group/origin have just a representation of 7.5% out of the total population. It was further asserted from the analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data that Oyo indigenes cannot be denied recruitment just in the bid to favour non-indigenes. Edosa (2014) had likewise observed that states and local governments in Nigeria often discriminate against people/applicants who do not hail from their geographical boundaries.

Activities of patrons and their clients, usually referred to as godfatherism, seems also to be recurring in the Oyo State Civil Service. It is however a disturbing factor as candidates with the technical competence who made the merit list could at times be denied an appointment because a godfather has his own candidate who must be recruited at all cost. Qualification of the godfather's candidate might be irrelevant, depending on the position of such godfather in the society. This is in line with the assertion of Onwe et. al (2015), that the list of the political bigwigs in the society usually outweigh the results derived from the recruitment and selection exercise conducted by the recruiting bodies.

However, religion as a non-meritocratic factor seems not to be so relevant in influencing the recruitment process in Oyo State Civil Service. While eight of every ten civil servants believe that a candidate's religious affiliation has nothing to do with the recruitment process, only one out of ten civil servants agreed that it could influence recruitment process in Oyo State Civil Service, while the remaining one civil servant of the fraction stands undecided about the premise. This is in dispute with the assertions of Maidoki and Dahida (2013) and Omisore and Okofu (2014) that religious factor

do influence recruitment processes in the Nigerian Civil service. The consequences associated with recruiting people based on other factors apart from merit is seen in the performance of such people. Incompetence, inefficiency and low performance are the perceived major consequences attributed to recruiting civil servants on the basis of non-meritocratic factors.

From the foregoing, it has become necessary to review the choices that have hindered the efficiency of the civil service and design new policies that will lead to a better performance of the civil service in Oyo state, and in Nigeria as a whole. The importance of recruitment process in an organization, especially in the civil service, cannot be over-emphasized. Therefore, attention should be paid to the process that brings in the personnel into the organization and it should be devoid of non-meritocratic factors especially on the basis of statism or ethnicity. The system of corruption should be investigated and dealt with by the recruiting bodies and the government. Investigations should be made to discover officials who collect money from applicants on the basis of recruitment and proper justice meted out to them. Furthermore, the system of corruption where candidates change their state of origin to that of Oyo state should be frowned upon. Hence, it is the responsibility of the government and recruiting bodies to embrace diversity of prospective employees (candidates). Finally, meritocratic principles should be firmly entrenched in the Oyo State Civil Service.

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