

APTITUDE TEST PERFORMANCE-BASED RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION ON SERVICE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISE IN RIVERS STATE**Dr. Charles Mebom****Department of Employment Relation and Human Resource Management
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Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria****ABSTRACT**

The objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between aptitude test recruitment and selection requirements and staff performance in PEs in Rivers State. Descriptive survey design was adopted and a total population of two thousand eight hundred and six seven (2867), drawn from the area of the study was used. The sample size of the study was 351 which was calculated from the total population using Taro Yameni formula. Structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Data collected for the study were analysed using frequency distribution tables, and simple percentage method while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to empirically test the hypotheses formulated for the study. Findings revealed that there is no significant positive relationship between poor service delivery of public enterprises in Rivers State is related to making selection decisions without adherence to aptitude test performance and capacity of job applicants to perform among others. The researcher therefore, recommended that in order to improve the competency of staff of PEs in Rivers State, there is urgent need to always conduct aptitude test to make selections based on performance before job offer among others. The implication of the study is that public enterprises have failed to fulfill the roles to which they were created hence the need to revive the entire enterprises in the study area.

Keywords: Aptitude-Base Test, Recruitment, Selection, Competency, Service Delivery

INTRODUCTION

Considering the fact that recruitment and selection gives the organization the opportunity to fill job positions with people who possess requisite qualifications and experience towards the accomplishment of the stated organizational goals. It is apt to argue that the performance of public enterprises is strongly tied to its adherence to recruitment and selection requirements for sourcing of members of her staff. Hence, Onah (2015) submits that the importance of having efficient and effective procedures for recruitment and selection can hardly be over exaggerated. If organizations according to him are able to find and employ staff who constantly fulfill their roles and are capable of taking on increased responsibilities, they are immeasurably better placed to deal with the opportunities and threats arising from their operating environment than competitors who are always struggling to build and maintain their work force. Ekwoaba, et al, (2015) in this regard observes that recruitment and selection criteria have significant effect on organization's performance and that the more objective the recruitment and selection criteria, the better the organization's performance. It provides the opportunity for the human resource managers to stock the organization with persons with relevant skills and human capital.

The criteria, procedures or steps that must be taken or principles that should be considered in conducting an efficient recruitment and selection in the organization are what the researcher referred to as requirements. Recruitment and selection process consists of various requirements stages, according to Pita (2004) and Grobler, Wamich, Carrel, Elbert, and Hatfield (2005) in Onyeaghala and Hyacinth (2016), which is considered pertinent in the pursuit of sound and valid recruitment and selection exercise. They are outlined as follows: carry out human resources planning, job analysis, description and specification; application blank/soliciting for/receiving application; short listing of qualified candidates and screening out the unqualified applicants; arranging for and conducting preliminary interview or initial screening; employment test designed

to find out how well an individual can do a job such as aptitude test, checking of reference source, medical/physical examinations to ensure that the individual is in good health; the selection decision; and final approval/placement/engagement. What the above implies is that recruitment and selection of persons to fill job positions in the organization should be based on merit (educational qualification, experience, etc), competency and the ability of applicants to fit in and be able to perform their assigned tasks if employed.

Also, very important in the public sector recruitment in Nigeria including Rivers State is the consideration of quota system. The quota system draws from the federal character principle of recruitment and appointment of persons into respective positions in the public service of the federation including Rivers state The Federal character principle became a constitutional matter in the 1979 Constitution and was later internalized in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as amended. For instance, section 14 subsection 3 of the constitution states that:

Sequel to the above recruitment into state owned enterprises and other government institutions are made to reflect the diverse cultural and tribal components of state in Nigeria especially in Rivers State. Obielumani (2008) in Omeje, Egwa and Adikwu (2016) defined quota system as any selection method (for employment, school admission, among others whereby a certain set of percentage of those selected must be given ethnic or racial background and/or of a particular sex. Quota system is applicable in multi ethnic states such as Rivers State in order to accommodate interests in the process of recruiting persons to man respective positions in government establishments. As laudable as the provisions of the quota system may seem, it has been bastardized by the influence of tribe, gender, religion, and class status among others, as a means of facilitating equal representation of the various ethnic groups in government establishments, in a bid to give everybody sense of belonging. Hence most PEs seem to be filled with people who are not qualified or competent to perform their assigned responsibilities, this appears to manifest in the performance of PEs in Nigeria and Rivers State in particular over the years.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the course of the study.

HA1: There is significant relationship between aptitude test performance-based recruitment and selection and service delivery of public enterprises in Rivers state.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between aptitude test performance-based recruitment and selection and service delivery of public enterprises in Rivers state.

The Concept of Recruitment

Searching for, and obtaining potential job candidates in sufficient numbers and quality and at the right cost is the best way for organisation to get the most appropriate people to fill its job vacant positions (Onyeagbala & Hyacinth 2016; Odor, Martins-Emeson & Bakwuye, 2019). Organisations nowadays are mere concentrating on acquiring appropriate human capital because the employees are the most valued and most precious assets of an organisation. It is the individual performance of employees that will converge to form the overall performance of an organisation (Oaya, et al, 2017).

Croft (1996) in Odor, et al, (2019) defines recruitment as "the analysis of a job and the features the organization will have for in a potential employee and attracting candidates to apply to the organization and offering of various terms and conditions of employment to a chosen potential employee. Berneth (2004) defined recruitment as the process of attracting a large opinion o Omale (2006) recruitment is that process which begins from getting an applicant motivated to invite an application for a particular job in a particular organization and the process stops when in his contribution Fatiregun (1992), in Onah (2015) sees recruitment as the process of assessing a job, announcing the vacancy, arousing interest and stimulating people to apply. Recruitment according to Mathis & Jockson (1997), is the process of generating a pool of qualified applicant for organizational jobs. To Okereka (2015) the essence of recruitment is to create a large pool of

persons who are willing and available to work for a particular organization. Cole & Kelly (2011) in Okeke-Uzodike & Subban (2015) see recruitment as the process of locating identifying and attracting capable applicants.

As explained by Opatha, (2010) recruitment is the process of finding and attracting suitable qualified people to apply for job vacancies in the organization. It is a set of activities an organization uses to attract job candidates who have the needed abilities and attitudes. In their contribution, Ofori & Aryeetery (2011) contend that recruitment is the process of generating a pool of competent individuals to apply for employment within an organization.

Recruitment is the organization's effort directed towards securing the right people for existing jobs in the organization. This in essence means that not any person with paper qualification is eligible for recruitment into the organization. A choice has to be made on who is the right candidate for the post; a person with majority, high sense of belonging, skills and good moral attitude. This is very much paramount due to the fact that it is through this process that the government or an organization can achieve its set goals and objectives. However, even those that are eligible are attracted and they applied; care should be taken selected only those that have the real and enthusiasm to make contributions to the organization (Newell, 2000, Varo, 2014).

- i. **Service Delivery:** Another important performance indicator of public sector organizations is service delivery. The quality of services rendered to the public and how they perceived these services is very important. Service delivery is crucial for the public sector as part of government social contract with citizens. Service delivery priorities in development include roads, power, wealth, education, water systems, and social protection among others (Kim, 2013). These services are usually provided by the public service institutions of the state, especially public enterprises. And it is apt to state that the performance of these institutions is measured against the extent they have fared in providing such service. Service according to Kotler (2000) in Kim (2013) is any act, performance or experience that one party can offer to another. They see it as economic activities that provide time, place, form utility, problem solving while bringing about a change in, or for, the recipient of the service. To Inegbenebor (2006) in Okechukwu Ukeje, & Ekwunine (2016) conceptualized services in broad terms to refer to intangible benefits provided to individuals or organizations through the performance of a variety of activities. It also involves the provision of physical facilities or products.

In view of the above, Mohammed, Aliyu & Mohammed (2013), see service delivery as a process of getting goods and services to people in a way that meets their expectations. World Bank in Okechukwu, et al, (2016) is of the view that service delivery is the manner in which business service functions to perform besides profit-making. Agboola (2016) highlights a list of activities, which will result in effective service delivery culture to include receiving of the past performance. They are to connect people to the service. In the context of governance service delivery is the result of the intentions, decision of government and government institutions, and the actions undertaken and decision made by people employed in government institutions (Martins and Ledimo, 2015). Analyzing the above view, public service delivery entails the process of meeting the needs of citizens through prompt and efficient procedures. It presupposes that the interaction between citizens and government results in value creation. Since public service delivery is the relationship between policy makers, service providers and the people, it encompasses social services (primary education and basic health services), infrastructure (water, sanitation, roads and bridges) and services that promote personal security (justice, police, etc). Public service delivery is also commonly understood to mean the provision of public goods or social (education, health), economic (grants) or infrastructural (water, electricity) services to those who need (or demand) them. Services delivered by PEs are expected to meet the expectations of the people and this are one of the best ways to justify their existence and guarantee trust from the public.

Based on the foregoing, Obikeze & Obi (2004) argued that despite the seeming difficulties in the assessments of PEs, this could be meaningfully done using two criteria, these are the quality of service they deliver and their return on investment which often refers to financial profitability.

There is hardly an iota of doubt in the fact that most PEs in Nigeria are not leaving up to expectations. Over the years government enterprises have become as inefficient as epitomized by the epileptic services they render to the public. This inspite of the fact that the government has and still continues to pump in a lot of money into them; instead of improving most of them seem to be retrogressing and acting as drain pipes on the economy without making any meaningful contribution to our economic development via service delivery (Obikeze & Obi, 2004). The situation in Rivers state is not any different.

Efficiency: Another performance indicator which relates to the current study is efficiency. This criterion relates to both employees inputs and outputs. An efficient employee is able to maximize their productivity with minimum effort or expense. Costly mistakes are few and between, deadlines are met and quality of work is not sacrificed. Childs (2009) noted that empowerment of staff or individuals to do what is needed that can help achieve efficiency of employee. Efficiency answers the question of timeliness: How fast work is performed and services delivered to the people. In field service, the average customer's downtime is a good indicator of timeliness. In manufacturing, it might be the number of units produced per hour. Another important aspect of efficiency deals with cost effectiveness. This became imperative in view of the fact that wastages must be avoided in managing the enterprises operations. According to Hakala (2008), the cost of work should be use as a measure of performance only if the employee has some degree of control over cost. For example, a customer- service representative's performance is indicated by the percentage of calls that he or she must escalate to more experienced and expensive representatives.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

For the purpose of this study, descriptive survey design was adopted.

Population of the Study

S/N	Selected Public Enterprises	Saff
1	Notore Ltd	119
2	Siat Nigeria Ltd	102
3	Pabod Breweries Ltd	156
4	Delta Rubber Company Ltd	204
5	Rivers State Vegetable Oil Ltd	218
6	Rivers State Television Authority	149
7	Rivers State Newspaper Corporation	197
8	Greater PortHarcourt City Development Authority	183
9	Rivers State Broadcasting Corporation	245
10	Rivers State Fire Service	191
11	Rivers State Development Agency	166
12	Rivers State Microfinance Agency	112
13	Rivers State Waste Management Agency	144
14	Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Agency	181
15	Enlightened Public	500
	TOTAL	2867

Source: Personnel Departments of the Selected Government Establishments in the study area, 2020.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Due to the large size of the population, Taro Yamene's formula was applied to get the sample size

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was questionnaire instrument structured using Likert's four (4) point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The

instrument was structured into section A and Section B. Section A contained socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents while section B contained structured questionnaire items.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected for the study were analyzed using frequency distribution tables and simple percentage method. Also, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation through SPSS was used in empirical testing of the hypotheses that guided the study. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to find the relationship between variables that was measured on the interval scales. It measured the goodness of the fit of the least square lines. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was computed by using the following formula:

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2][n(\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Where r = Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient

n = Number of Paired Observations

$\sum x$ = Sum of squared scores on variables

$\sum y$ = Sum of scores on variables

$\sum y^2$ = Sum of squared scores on variables

The hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance. Hence, when the p-value is lesser than 0.05, the alternate hypothesis would be accepted whereas when the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis would be accepted.

Results

Test of Hypothesis one

HA1: There is significant relationship between aptitude test performance-based recruitment and selection and service delivery of public enterprises in Rivers state.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between aptitude test performance-based recruitment and selection and service delivery of public enterprises in Rivers state.

In test of hypothesis three, the data presented in tables 24, 25, 26 and 27 were collated and correlated with the data presented in tables, 28, 29, 30 and 31.

Correlations Test of Hypothesis one

Correlations

		Apptitude_Test_B ased_Recruitment	Service_Delivery
Apptitude_Test_Based_Recruitm ent	Pearson Correlation	1	-.518**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	322	322
Service_Delivery	Pearson Correlation	-.518**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	322	322

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result of the correlation analysis above shows a negative correlation value of -0.518 and a probability value of 0.01 which implies a significant negative relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Since the PV of 0.000 is less than 0.05 at 5% level of significance, we then reject the null hypothesis, and conclude that there is significant negative relationship between aptitude test performance-based recruitment and selection and service delivery of public enterprises in Rivers state. On adherence to the requirements stipulating recruitment and selection of candidates based on their test performances has negative effects on the quality of service delivery in the study

area. The implication of the above result is that public enterprises in Rivers State violate the aptitude test performance-based requirements in the recruitment and selection of workers and this impedes on their service delivery in Rivers State. This is further explained by the result of the data presented in above.

Effects of Aptitude Test Performance-Based Recruitment and Selection on Service Delivery of Public Enterprise in Rivers State

Objective three examined the effects of aptitude test performance-based recruitment and selection on service delivery of public enterprises in Rivers state. As such, data was collected and analyzed using frequency distribution tables while hypothesis was empirically tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics. The result of the correlation test of hypothesis three revealed a negative correlation value of -0.518 and a probability value of 0.00 which implies a significant negative relationship between the dependent and independent variables. In view of the result, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is significant but negative relationship between aptitude test performance-based recruitment and selection and service delivery of public enterprises in Rivers state. Non-adherence to the requirements stipulating recruitment and selection of candidates based on their test performances has negative effects on the quality of service delivery in the study area. The implication of the above result is that public enterprises in Rivers State violate the aptitude test performance-based requirements in the recruitment and selection of workers and this impedes on their service delivery in Rivers State. This is further explained by the result of the data presented in Tables above.

Table 1 sought to determine whether public enterprises conduct aptitude test as one of the requirements for recruitment and selection of candidates of into offices in Rivers State. From the table, it was observed that 172 (53.4%) strongly agreed, 95(29.5%) agreed, 36 (11.2%) disagreed, 19 (5.9%) strongly disagreed. This implies that Public enterprises conduct aptitude test as one of the requirements for recruitment and selection of candidates of into offices in Rivers State. Table 25 also affirmed that the set aptitude tests reflect the job specifications like skills and abilities for given positions of public enterprises in Rivers. From the table above, it can be observed that 107 (33.2%) strongly agreed, 119(37.0%) agreed, 62 (19.3%) disagreed, 34 (10.6%) strongly disagreed. This implies that set aptitude tests reflect the job specifications like skills and abilities for given positions of public enterprises in Rivers. Table revealed that State Recruitment and Selection of candidates are often not strictly based on test performance required for service delivery in public enterprises in Rivers State. From the table, it was observed that 129 (40.1%) strongly agreed, 103(32.0%) agreed, 49 (15.2%) disagreed, 41 (12.7%) strongly disagreed. This State Recruitment and Selection of candidates are often not strictly based on test performance required for service delivery in public enterprises in Rivers State. However, Table 27 showed that oftentimes, candidates who fall short of aptitude test requirements are not disqualified in recruitment and selection process in public enterprises Rivers State. From the table, it was observed that 144 (44.7%) strongly agreed, 120(37.3%) agreed, 37 (11.5%) disagreed, 21 (6.5%) strongly disagreed. This means that oftentimes, candidates who fall short of aptitude test requirements are not disqualified in recruitment and selection process in public enterprises Rivers State.

CONCLUSION

Recruitment and selection taking as one process that centres on employee resourcing is a critical and very crucial human resource management function. Organizations can replace other resources such as money, materials, machines, among other things easily, but it is very difficult to replace skills, experience, professionalism and all other attributes that distinctively differentiate and set parallel lines between human resources and other resources of the organization. This is why scholars and authorities have continuously canvassed the inevitability of sound recruitment and selection to accomplishment of job-related tasks and overall performance of the organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. In order to improve the quality of service delivery of public enterprises in Rivers state, there is urgent need to always conduct aptitude test before job offer. Tests are increasingly becoming an integral part of the selection process because of its obvious advantages-ability and aptitude tests measure specific skill sets and the resultant score gives an indication of existing ability or potential to learn skills required for the job.
2. Educational qualifications should be given due attention if effective performance of task must be achieved. A situation whereby people are appointed to head sensitive board positions without taking cognizance of their educational qualifications, experience and professional knowledge should be discouraged. This has been the bane of public enterprises performance in Nigeria and Rivers State in particular.

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