

IMPACT OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ON RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION (A STUDY OF RIVERS STATE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, PORT HARCOURT)

ANELE, CLEMENT A., PhD.
Department of Business Administration
Niger Delta University
Wilberforce Island
Bayelsa State
Email: Aneleclement@Yahoo.Com
Tel: +2348070746570

And

UDU, GABRIEL O.C., PhD.
Department of Business Administration
Ebonyi State University
Abakiliki

Abstract

The research investigates the impact of political and economic environment on recruitment and selection in Nigeria. The major problem of this study is to determine the impact of political and economic environment as it affects recruitment and selection. The researcher adopted the descriptive – survey method, using cross-sectional data collection; via questionnaire to generate data from the respondents. Simple percentages were used in the analysis of data. Findings show that political interferences and economic crisis affect recruitment and selection. Findings also show that political and economic environment, which is dynamic and uncontrollable in nature, is external to the ministry. The study recommends that emphasis should be placed above paper qualification, as merit is proven to be the only criteria for recruitment and selection which the civil service has never adhered to. The study also recommends that performance, experience, skill, etc., should be considered above paper qualification in recruitment and selection exercise, and finally, sufficient funds should be made available for recruitment and selection exercises to enhance their efficiency.

Introduction

Over the years, many organizations may have been subjected to poor recruitment and selection practices, following the negative impact of political and economic environmental factors on such human resources practices. According to Akanwa (1997), no business exists in a vacuum and so cannot entirely control its destiny, as it is subject to external influence over which it has no direct control. For some years, Nigerian Companies have been in great difficulties. The business subsystem as part of the larger system called the Nigerian Society is modeled by the Nigerian environment.

Akanwa (2009) is of the view that the environment is usually conceptualized in terms of political and economic factors inherent to the environment that affects the subsystem therein. These environmental factors are political and economic factors which are considered external.

The Nigerian environment has been characterized by instability in the political and economic sectors. The frequent leadership changes have resulted in frequent changes in policies. Nigeria has implemented much consistent economic policies such as the Indigenization Act, structural Adjustment programme with several modifications, various fiscal and monetary policies, such as policies on taxation, credit expansion or contraction, interest rate structure, etc. the uncertainty in the environment is not conducive to the operation of business enterprises.

Akanwa (2009), maintains that the environment of organizations can be classified as internal and external. Internal environment consists of those factors within an organization which affect the management of the organization. These include the organization's mission, corporate culture, policies, and informal groups within the organization, unions, employees and management style of the top management. The external environment consists of those factors that affect a firm from outside its organizational boundaries. The external environments include economic forces, political forces, legal forces, socio-cultural forces, market competitive forces, technological forces and natural forces. Managers confront the changes in the external environment in two ways – proactive response (in which a manager takes an action in advancement of environmental changes, and reactive response) in which a manager simple reacts to environmental changes after they have occurred.

Indeed, the external environment is dynamics, complex and always changing and it affects managerial performance. However, the specific types of environmental forces vary with the type of industry and with time. These forces are crucial to the success or failure of all ministries. It is notable that the interaction of the environment with organization influences organizational strategies.

Political and economic environmental factors appear to have a relationship with employee recruitment and selection. Recruitment and selection constitute the staffing function in organizations. The goal of staffing is to ensure that organizations get the right number of qualified people they need to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible. According to Cascio (1981), recruitment is “the process through which the organization's job openings are clearly defined and prospective employees are found to fill those opening”.

According to him, selection is the process through which representatives of an organization define a job to be filled, asses the people applying for the job, and choose the applicant with the greatest potential to perform the job successfully”. This study on the impact of political and economic environmental on recruitment and selection is geared achieving stability in organizations.

Statement of Problem

Many political and economic environmental forces, such as the operations and policies of government in power, interest rates, inflation and high rate of unemployment have affected the employment of people in organizations and ministries. Such would be compounded by government interference when it comes to employment issues. Harsh political cum economic environment can pose threats on effective recruitment and selection exercises. The major

Problem of this study, therefore, is the task of determining the impact of political and economic environmental on recruitment and selection.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to identify the impact of political and economic environment on recruitment and selection. Specifically, the objectives were:

- i) To ascertain whether there is political interference in recruitment and selection in Rivers State Ministry of Education.
- ii) To ascertain the impact of economic environment on recruitment and selection in Rivers State Ministry of education.

Research Questions

The study seeks to address the following questions:

- i) What are the political and economic interferences in the recruitment and selection exercise in Rivers State Ministry of Education?
- ii) What are the impact of economic environment on recruitment and selection in Rivers State Ministry of Education?

Significance of the Study

The study will help the personnel department in the ministry to realize the need for greater efficiency and productivity from all categories of employees through valid recruitment and selection programmers. Also, the study will help the ministries to understand the need for personnel department to receive and select candidates based on merit.

Review of Related Literature

A. Approaches to Recruitment and Selection of Employees

As noted by Hippo (1980), the goal of recruitment is to create a large pool of persons who are available and willing to work for a particular organization and the selection process involves the sorting out or elimination of those judged unqualified. In other words, recruitment tends to be positive, in that it seeks to persuade people to apply to work in that company, whereas selection tends to be somewhat negative as it rejects a good portion of those who apply. He maintains that the process of searching for a new employee is customarily initiated by a manager who decides that there is need to add to his staff or to replace someone who is leaving the organization.

According to Cowling and Mailer (1990), recruitment describes the process and various stages of searching for suitable candidates to fill vacancies in the work place. Schemer tom (1986) noted that recruitment is a set of activities designed to attract a qualified pool of job applicants to an organization. Effective recruitment brings employment opportunities to the attention of persons with abilities and skills appropriate to job specification. According to Akanwa (1996), recruitment refers to the process of searching for would-be employees, and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the firm or organization. Recruitment is positive in the sense that it increases the number of applicants per job opening.

An organization needs to have an idea of how many managers and operatives to recruit within a given period. This can be done easily if the organization has a complete up to date

organizational chart. This chart will enable the job analysts to determine both the present and future manpower needs of the organization to be able to know the number of selection in a year. If an organization is to do a proper inventory with respect to existing staff, it must generate data on candidates who are almost about to retire and candidates to be replaced.

Nwachukwu (2009) stated that an adequate personnel recruitment programmer anticipate vacancies as fast as possible in advance. Recruitment involves all prospective applicants for job position in an organization. A good recruitment programmer is one that is properly planned and well operated as poor recruitment efforts would lead to poor selection of applicants. After prospective applicants have been recruited, a systematic effort is made to identify the most suitable candidates to fill identified positions.

In most cases, recruitment starts when a manager initiates an employee requisition for a specific vacancy (or anticipated vacancy). However, the requisition should contain the basic information of the position to fill, the duties to be performed, the experiences and qualification required of the candidate for the job.

Nwachukwu further stated that the factors that influence the type of recruitment to be made include:

- i) The quality and number of staff and position to be filled;
- ii) The financial position of the company;
- iii) Availability of staff within the country
- iv) Peculiar circumstances of the staff required. Some quality staff required are often pending or have other commitments that would make the assumption of duty in the company not immediately possible.

B. Sources of Recruitment of Applicant

Organizations source for applicants through internal and external sources (Eze, 2003). Whether management should use the internal or external sources of recruitment or both is determined by the following factors:

- i) Organizational policy regarding recruitment
- ii) The availability of the required staff within the organization and its effect on the overall organizational efforts
- iii) The level of position to be filled
- iv) The number of job position to be filled

Nwachukwu (1988) observes that in many organizations, there are often individuals who are qualified to fill the advertised positions or who could do so with minimum training. Recruitment from inside encourages inbreeding. It must, therefore be emphasized that the specific source to be utilized depends on factors such as the size of the enterprises, the financial resources available to it, economic condition and time factor.

Nwachukwu outlines the major sources of recruitment as follows:

- i) Within the company
- ii) Other companies (competitors, and non-competitors)
- iii) Advertisement
- iv) Educational institutions

- v) Employment agencies
- vi) Unsolicited applicants
- vii) Professional organizations
- viii) Employee referrals
- ix) Unemployed labour

Onah (2003) noted that if the needed human resources are not available from within the company, outside sources must be tapped. However, Akpar (1982) posts that advertisement in newspapers or trade journals is a means to secure new applicants. On the other hand, Onah (2003) observed that most organizations try to fill job openings from within whenever they have qualified people in the organization with personnel inventory. The first step is often a review of the inventory. But sometimes, it is necessary to hire from the outside. They may not have enough people qualified to fill the staff vacancies or management may believe that ideas are needed. In many cases, organizations have to secure employees from outside, because no one in the current work is qualified or is interested in the job to be filled.

Advertising in newspapers and in trade or professional journal is commonly used to recruit new employees. Public employment agencies also try to find job for people and organizations wishing to fill certain vacancies are normally required to list their job opening with this agency. Private individuals who register with private employment agency pay fees for the job rendered.

Onyekwere (1959) writing on the survey conducted by Bureau of National statistics revealed that walking was the most frequently used method of recruiting non-college employees (mentioned 99 of percent firms). Newspaper advertisements were used by 89% of the companies, employee's referrals, 85% and employment agencies by 74%. Stoner and Freeman (1992) indicated that whichever source a human resource department turns to meet its recruitment needs depends on the availability of the right people in the local pool, as well as on the positions to be filled. However, if the people with the appropriate skills are not available within the organization or in the local labour pool, they may have to be sourced from other sources.

Beach (1975) expressed that one convenient way of classifying inside source of supplying is to divide the source categories: Inside sources and outside sources. Thus, if a particular job vacancy occurs, it can be filled by transferring or promoting another employee from within the company to that post. In filling vacancies from within, it is still necessary to match job requirements with employee qualifications. Nevertheless, the principal sources and methods for obtaining manpower are public employment agencies, labour unions, unsolicited applicants and advertisement in schools and colleges. In the view of Stoner and Freeman (1990), candidates are usually located through newspapers, professional journals, advertisement, employment agencies, and visits to college's university campuses.

C. The Selection Process

According to Peretomode and Peretomode (2001), selection is the process of identifying from the pool of those recruited, the applicants with the best requirements for the job and choosing the best individuals for the jobs. Cowling and Miller (1990) also noted that selection

represents the final stage of decision making in the process. To them, selection takes place once an appropriate shortlist has been drawn up. It means a wide range of techniques are available to assist in interviewing tests and references.

Since the primary objective of selection is to hire the best employees, the methods adopted should make prediction with reasonable accuracy and consistency with the applicant likely to prove satisfactory. In the same vein Peretomode and Peretomode (2001) stated that in selecting employees for a position, the concern is predicting applicant's satisfactory performance on the job. In order to do this, we establish a selection process consisting of selection techniques or instruments. As expressed by Stoner and Freeman (1992), selection involves using application forms, resume, interviews, employment and skill test and the checks to evaluate and screen job candidates for the managers who will ultimately select and hire candidates.

To them, events in the selection process are completed job application, initial screening interview, testing, and background investigation, in dept. selection, interview and physical examination. Selection process, ideally, involves decision making. The organization decides whether or not to make a job offer and how attractive the offer should be, leaving the candidate to decide whether job offered fits his or her needs and goals. Ojo (1998) and Ojo (2006) added that effective selection of personnel is an objective analysis of the requirement of each position and the job must be designed to meet the needs of the organization and the needs of the individual. Hans (1979) further noted that a typical selection process will involve preliminary screening of applicants and completion of an application form, followed by interview(s).

Organizations also may use employment tests, reference checks and physical examinations, prior to making selection of candidates for a given position. This is in line with Peretomode and Peretomode (2001) who stated that selection activities typically follow a pattern beginning with an initial screening interview and concluding with final employment decision.

An applicant who passes the preliminary screening usually completes an application blank. An application blank is used to obtain information that can help in reaching an employment decision. On the other hand, Okpara et al (1999) pointed out that there is no stereotyped screening device for all firms at all times, as the procedure to choose and use is dependent on the size of the firm, the types of the job, the philosophy of the company personnel management unit, and the quality of the applicants, etc. Stoner and Freeman (1992) observed that in reality, the process is often more one-sided. Meanwhile, when jobs market is extremely tight, several candidates will be applying for each position, and the organization will use a series of screening devices to hire the candidate if feels suitable.

Steps in the Selection Process

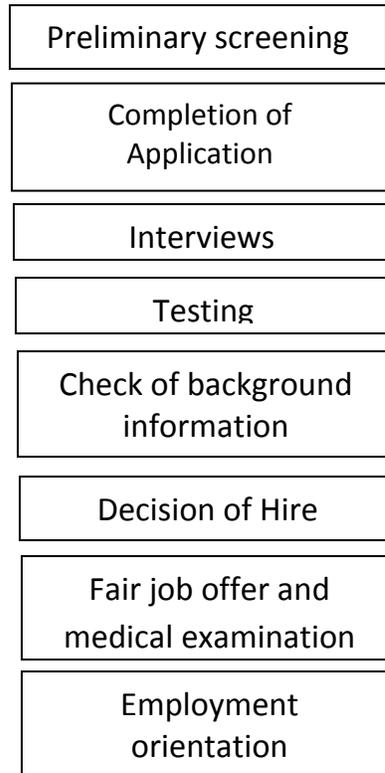


Fig. 1. Steps in the selection process

Materials and Method

Research Design: This is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevant research purpose with economy in procedure (Kothari, 2006). This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, using cross – sectional data collection. Structured questionnaire was administered to selected staff of Rivers State Ministry of Education, Port Harcourt.

Population, Sample, Sampling and Procedure

The population of the study is 142, comprising of both the management, senior and junior staff of River State Ministry of Education Port Harcourt. The sample size for the population was gotten using Tayo Yamaani’s Formula. The formula is stated as follow

$$N = \frac{N}{1 + (e)^2}$$

Where,

- N = the desired sample size
- W = Population under study
- e = Accepted Error Limit 5%
- 1 = The Constant figure
- α = at 0.05 degree of freedom 142

$$n = 142$$

$$N = \frac{1 + 142(0.05)^2}{1 + 142(0.05)^2} = 105 = 105$$

Sampling Technique, Simple Radom

Sampling technique was adopted in the study; and to facilitate data analysis, the data categories were tabulated, and simple percentage was used to analyze the data. The formula for simple percentage is stated as follows:

$$\frac{X}{N} \times 100$$

Where,

X = Response of each Respondent

N = Summation of all Responses

Result and Discussions

- 1. Research Objectives I:** To ascertain whether there is political interference in recruitment and selection exercises in Rivers State Ministry of Education
- 2. Research Questions I:** What are the political interference in the recruitment and selection exercise in Rivers State Ministry of Education?

Table 1: Political Interference

Option	Frequency	Percentage
A	55	52
SA	28	27
D	15	14
SD	7	7
TOTAL	105	100

Sources: Field Survey, 2016

The table 1 above shows that (52%) of the respondents agreed that there is political interference for fairness in recruitment and selection exercise whereas (27%) strongly agreed. (14%) of them disagreed, while (7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 2: Influence of Political Environment

Option	Frequency	Percentage
A	75	71
SA	10	10
D	15	14
SD	5	5
TOTAL	105	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 2 above shows that (71%) of the respondents agreed that political environment affects recruitment and selection. (10%) of them strongly agreed, (14%) of the respondents disagree, while (5%) of the respondents strongly disagree that political environment affects recruitments and selection. It is observed that majority of the respondents of Rivers State Ministry of Education agreed that political environment affects recruitment and selection. It is also believed that the (5%) of the respondents who strongly disagree could be due to miss-presentation of questions.

Research Objectives II: To ascertain the impact of economic environment on recruitment and selection in Rivers State of Education, Port Harcourt.

Tables 3: Influence of Economic Environment

Option	Frequency	Percentage
A	80	76
SA	18	17
D	5	5
SD	2	2
TOTAL	105	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 3 above, shows that 98(93%) of the respondents agreed that economic crisis in the world affects recruitment and selection, while (5%) and (2%) of the respondents respectively disagreed that economic crises in the world affects recruitment and selection.

Table 4: Influence of Employees

Option	Frequency	Percentage
A	40	38
SA	35	33
D	20	19
SD	10	10
TOTAL	105	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 4 above, shows that (71%) of the respondents agreed that employees working agreed their relations, work in their offices, whereas 30(2%) of the respondents disagree that employees and their relations work in their offices.

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of the results, the researchers made the following findings:

- Political interference affects recruitments and selection
- Economic crises affect recruitment and selection
- Adequate or sufficient funds should be made available for recruitment and selection exercise to enhance their efficiency.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were made: that organizations or ministries do not exist in a vacuum. Therefore, it is subjected to external influences, over which it has no direct control.

The political instability, and economic recession, including the incidence of advancement in technology in Nigerian environment has affected recruitment and selection exercises.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers hereby made the following recommendations to the ministry.

- a) The study recommends that emphasis should be placed above paper qualifications, as merit is proven to be the only criteria for recruitment and selection, which the civil service has never adhered to. The study therefore, recommends that performance, experience, skill etc. should be considered above paper qualification in recruitment and selection exercises of staff.
- b) Goals and objectives as well as the guidelines for recruitment and selection should be clearly specified by the state government.
- c) Recruitment and selection should be done regularly i.e. at least once year to remove stagnation in the employment system which at times results to nepotism. Personnel audit should be carried out regularly to guide against ghost workers. This will enable the personnel department know when vacancies exist in any of their departments.
- d) More money should be voted into recruitment and selection exercise as this was found to be one of the impediments that seriously militate against their efficiency.

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