
Religious Factor in the Recruitment Process and its Impact on Public Service Delivery in Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study, “Religious Factor in the Recruitment Process and its Impact on Public Service Delivery in Nigeria” investigated the way religious sentiment plays a role in recruitment process and the impact of such role on public service delivery in Nigeria. Underpinned by the Weberian Bureaucratic Model, survey research design was adopted and the questionnaire used as the research instrument for data collection. Findings revealed that religion is still considered as a factor in public service recruitment in Nigeria to a great extent and the introduction of Federal Character Principle is the major factor that promotes this sentiment. Apart from religion, other primordial factors that influence public service recruitment in Nigeria are meritocracy, indigenization, godfatherism, ethnicity and bribery; however, among which meritocracy is considered the least factor. However, religious sentiment in the recruitment process adversely contributes to poor knowledge of the job, lack of discipline and integrity, dishonesty, lack of courage, apathy, lack of loyalty, poor performance and productivity in the public service of Nigeria to a great extent. From the findings, the study concluded that religion still plays an active role in the recruitment and has comprised meritocracy with grave impact on public sector outputs. The study recommended by calling for an urgent need to reposition public service recruitment process that will place meritocracy above religion and other primordial factors to prevent the service and indeed the entire economy from total collapse.*

Keywords: *Religious Factor, Recruitment Process, Impact, Public Service Delivery*

Introduction

The issue of recruitment has gained tremendous attention among public and business administrators as well as scholars due to its strategic position in the performance, growth and stability of organizations. Recruitment whose primary aim is "to create collection of talent candidates to enhance selection of best candidates for the organization, by attracting more and more prospective employees to apply in the organization" (Zirra, Ogbu & Ojo. 2017, p. 34) is found to have significant impact on the performance of both private and public organizations. It is pertinent to note that:

The efficiency and effectiveness of any work place (whether the private or the public sector) is largely dependent on the calibre of the workforce. The availability of a competent and effective labour force does not just happen by

chance but through an articulated recruitment exercise (Peretomode and Peretomode, 2001, p. 45).

No wonder, Nickels et al. (1999) in Biobebe (2007) opined that recruitment is a set of activities used to obtain a sufficient number of the right people at the right time from the right places (Nickels et al., 1999), and its purpose is to select those who best meet the needs of the work place, and to develop and maintain a qualified and adequate workforce through which an organization (such as the public sector) can fulfil its human resource plan (Biobebe, 2007). Etomi (2002) views recruitment as a method of appealing to an adequate number of persons with the precise profile with regards to experience, qualifications, skills and other pertinent attributes to indicate their interest and ability in working for the organization. That is why:

In the recent competitive job market, not only the job seekers are struggling for getting a suitable job but also organizations are striving for conducting effective recruitment and selection activities to place and retain highly qualified employees in the suitable position (Ofori and Aryeetey, 2011, p. 47).

It is affirmed that "an effective recruitment and selection programme ensures a right number of qualified employees for achieving organizational strategic goals in a cost-effective way" (Gamage, 2014, p. 39). It shows that 'a pool of competent employees helps in gaining competitive advantage by maintaining employees' high level of performance and commitment' (Storey, 1995; Dessler, 2013; Ballantyne, 2009; Ntiamoah, Abrokwah, Agyei-Sakyi, Opoku & Siaw, 2014). It means therefore that failure to recruit competent team of employees in an organisation will cause a huge damage to such an organization. In their observation:

The increase in the rate of business failure, closure and employees' poor performance in terms of productivity in Nigeria is alarming. For organization to be sustained, employees have crucial roles to play in order to ensure that organizations attain competitive advantage over the competitors across the globe (Zirra, Ogbu & Ojo, 2017, p. 32).

Just like Ballantyne (2009) who attests that effective organizational performances rely on the proper allocation of human resources in different functional areas. Proper recruitment and selection procedure helps an organization to allocate right type of qualified employees in the proper job position for ensuring organizational effectiveness. As a result, systematically designed recruitment processes help to identify people with the right set of knowledge, skills, and abilities for individual jobs (Liu, Combs, Ketchen Jr. & Ireland, 2007). Apart from that, recruitment is a tricky process because the suitability between a person and a job, as well as between a person and a company's culture and values, is important. Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson (2005) in their study reported that employees may feel dissatisfied with the organization and tend to leave the organization if their job does not fit with their knowledge, skill and ability (KSA). Besides that, the comprehensiveness of selection practices greatly affects employees' level of perceived fit, which enhances job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and reduces intentions to quit (Saks and Ashforth, 1997).

If recruitment is one of the crucial factors in ensuring effective organizational performance, a study on factors that guide the recruitment of process in the public-service-is-very important. Previous studies (Maidoki 2013; Mustapha, Ilesanmi and Aremu 2013; Aduma and Iyida 2016;

Zirra, Ogbu & Ojo 2017; Adisa, Osabutey, Gbadamosi & Mordi, 2017) indicate some disturbing findings about the recruitment process in organizations including public organizations as factors other than merit and competence mostly determine the suitability of the employees in Nigeria. For instance, Maidoki (2013) critically examined the recruitment strategy in India and Nigeria and found that, the Indian civil service is more efficient and effective in recruiting more qualified staff because their recruitment is based on qualification and merit system while the recruitment policy in Nigeria is highly controversial and complex in nature as emphasis is laid on quota system also known as Federal Character Principles where merit is being compromised. Adisa, Osabutey, Gbadamosi & Mordi (2017) also revealed that the Federal Character Principle and the Quota System Policy, favouritism, ethnicity, age and gender discrimination, as well as corruption significantly inhibit the recruitment and selection process in Nigeria. Consequently, the ability to hire the best workers to improve competitiveness is also inadvertently hampered. Aduma and Iyida (2016) found that recruitment policies and procedures in Enugu State Civil Service were not based on merit system but rather on subjective factors such as zoning, bribery represented by buying of jobs by applicants and nepotism. Zirra, Ogbu & Ojo (2017) in their study revealed that the use of recruitment agency and internal employee recommendation in the recruitment/selection process enables organization to recruit committed and productive employees while the recruitment through the influence of host community leads to organizational inefficiency. Mustapha, Ilesanmi & Aremu (2013) in their study found that there is a significant relationship between recruitment and selection based on merit and organizational performance; that effective recruitment and selection is a key to organizational commitment; that a well planned recruitment and selection contributes to organizational performance.

Statement of the Problem

Public Service the world over is the engine that drives the economic process of every government. To achieve its objectives, the service employs competent men and women through a process called recruitment. There is said to be a significant relationship between recruitment and effective performance of the organisation as a careful and well-planned recruitment of employees ensure that only the right caliber of staff is employed in an organization (Ezeani, 2006). However, evidence has shown that in the developing world that is characterized by poverty, unemployment and underemployment the process that governs recruitment become very cumbersome and tasking for recruitment authorities. In Nigeria in particular:

Recruitment into the public service is based on quota system otherwise known as the federal character principles. This act has encouraged recruitment based on ethnicity, religious background, regionalism and other form of malpractice tendencies is being witnessed during recruitment process in Nigeria (Bhagwan and Bhushan, 2007).

Several other studies (Maidoki 2013; Mustapha, Ilesanmi & Aremu 2013; Aduma and Iyida 2016; Zirra, Ogbu & Ojo 2017; Adisa, Osabutey, Gbadamosi & Mordi 2017) revealed disturbing findings as "the Federal Character Principle and the Quota System Policy, favouritism, ethnicity, age and gender discrimination, as well as corruption significantly inhibit the recruitment and selection process in Nigeria" (Adisa, Osabutey, Gbadamosi & Mordi, 2017).

Although the recruitment process in Nigeria is said to be characterized by ethnic, religious and regional sentiments rather than merit and competence, there is paucity of empirical evidence on

the extent to which religion influence the recruitment process in the Nigerian public service and how this factor impacts on public service delivery in Nigeria. This study therefore investigates the extent to which religious factor influence the recruitment process in the public service in Nigeria and how it affects the public service delivery in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the impact of religious factor on recruitment of the employees in the Nigerian public service. Specifically therefore, the study is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- i. To identify the specific factors that promotes religious sentiment in the public service recruitment process in Nigerian.
- ii. To investigate the extent to which religious factor influences the process of recruitment in the Nigerian public service.
- iii. To find out what other factors apart from religion also influence the process of recruitment of employees in the Nigerian public service.
- iv. To determine which factor (between religion and meritocracy) influences the process of recruitment more in the Nigerian public service.
- v. To examine the specific ways religious factor in recruitment process in the public service affects public service delivery in Nigeria.
- vi. TO ascertain the extent to which religious factor in recruitment process in the public service affects public service delivery in Nigeria.

Research Questions

- i. What specific factors promote religious sentiment in the public service recruitment process in Nigerian?
- ii. To what extent does religious factor influence the process of recruitment in the Nigerian public service?
- iii. What factors apart from religion also influence the process of recruitment of employees in the Nigerian public service?
- iv. Which factor (between religion and meritocracy) influences the process of recruitment more in the Nigerian public service?
- v. What specific ways do religious factor in public service recruitment process affects delivery of the service in Nigeria?
- vi. To what extent does religious factor in public service recruitment affects the public delivery of the service in Nigeria?

Literature Review

All over the world, the services provided by governments are done through public servants. Public servants are those that work in the public service of any country or state. In Nigeria, public servants are made up mainly of senior and junior staff, as well as executive, technical and administrative cadres who are largely distinguished based on their educational qualifications, training, skills, ranks and the duties they discharge (Yaro, 2014 in Oladosu and Okofu, 2014). The term Public Service covers agencies of government (federal or state) civil service, the legislature and judiciary as well as their agencies and parastatals. It encompasses the civil

service in the strict sense of the ministries and departments of central or state government and the field administration. It also includes local governments, the military, the police and other security or paramilitary agencies. The Public Service is a dynamic structure of government which operates based on rules that are reviewed every five years in Nigeria so as to keep in tune with changing times to serve the current needs of society and to provide for the future requirements of the people (Yaro, 2014 in Oladosu and Okofu, 2014).

The indigenization of the public service that accompanied independence in the 1960s, which was coated with the perpetuated problems of sectionalism, nepotism, tribalism and religion, could be traced from the rationalization and popular purges which gave birth to competitions among ethnic groups in the country who want to favour their ethnic cleavages. Ever since then, these issues became and remain critical and never left the Nigerian Public Service (Oladosu and Okofu, 2014). However, there are a number of resources that contribute towards the success of any organization, such as manpower, money, machine, material, information, idea, and other inputs. While these resources are important, the human factor is the most significant one because it 'is the people who have to coordinate and use all other resources (Chandan, 1987 in Biobele, 2007).

Recruitment is an integral part of human resource, and involves the process of identifying and attracting or encouraging potential applicants with needed skills to fill vacant positions in an organization (Peretomode and Peretomode, 2001), matching them with specific and suitable jobs, and assigning them to these jobs (Chandan, 1987 in Biobele, 2007). Gberevbie (2008) notes that for any organization to experience enhanced performance, a competent workforce is required. According to Olaopa (2011):

The capacity of most public services in the world today to effectively and efficiently carry out their administrative functions is judged in global terms by the system of high performance management and progress (cited in Okeke-Uzodike and Chitakunye, 2014, p. 85).

The high performance management and progress can only be achieved with competent human resource. Competent workforce on the other hand as Gberevbie (2008) observed required appropriate staff recruitment and adequate retention strategies to bring into the organization the needed workforce and retain them for performance.

There are a number of empirical studies that clearly define the relationship between recruitment and service delivery/performance. While some of these studies focused on the general relationship that exists between recruitment and the performance of organizations, others looked at factors that influence such relationship. According to those studies, recruitment based on meritocracy and transparency leads to effective performance and enhanced outcomes while recruitment based on factors that are sentimental and non-meritocratic in nature leads to poor performance and reduced outcomes. This aligned with the observation by Aduma and Iyida (2016) which indicated that recruitment policy and procedure of any organization determines the level of productivity in that organization. Therefore, the success or failure of organization depends largely on the quality of workforce attracted by the organization. Ekwoaba, Ikeije & Ndubuisi (2015) in their study found that recruitment and selection criteria have significant effect on organization's performance ($X^2 = 35.723$; $df = 3$; $p < 0.05$). Their (Ekwoaba, Ikeije & Ndubuisi, 2015) finding further revealed that the more objective the recruitment and selection

criteria, the better the organization's performance ($X^2 = 20.007$; $df = 4$; $p < 0.05$). Saddam and Mansor (2015) in their study also found a strong relationship between recruitment & selection and firm performance of oil and gas sector in Iraq (although has failed to indicate the direction and nature of the relationship).

Likewise Mustapha, Ilesanmi & Aremu (2013) whose study revealed that there is a significant relationship between recruitment and selection based on merit and organizational performance; that effective recruitment and selection is a key to organizational commitment; that a well planned recruitment and selection contributes to organizational performance. Gberevbie (2008) in his study revealed there is a significant relationship between staff recruitment, retention strategies and performance in the public and private organization. It further revealed that "private organizations institute better strategies to aid staff retention hence their enhanced performance, which was manifested in increased profit.

In Kenya, a study by Omolo, Oginda & Oso (2012) revealed that the overall average performance of SMEs in Kisumu Municipality was 60.71%. There was a significant positive correlation between recruitment and selection, and performance of SMEs at $\alpha = .01$. The average performance of SMEs with good recruitment and selection was 81.90%; with moderate was 67.94%, with poor was 53.90%. Recruitment and selection account for 40.8% of the total variance in performance of SMEs. This study by Omolo, Oginda & Oso (2012) concluded that recruitment and selection has a significant effect on the performance of SMEs in Kisumu Municipality. Another study by Kavoo-Linge and Kiruri (2013) in Kenya also revealed that there is strong associations between performances on the one hand and job information, training and guidance on the other.

In their part, Ntiamoah, Abrokwah, Agyei-Sakyi, Opoku & Siaw (2014) have investigated and found a positive significant relationship between recruitment and promotion towards employees' job satisfaction but only at a moderate level. Singh and Kassa (2016) also found that human resource practices: recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal and compensation have a significant relationship with university performance. Opayemi and Oyesola (2013) in their study found that having the right employee on the right job and enforcing sound performance climate are significantly related to employee performance.

In Indonesia, a study by Sutanto and Kurniawan (2016) revealed that the recruitment, retention, and labor relations have significant effect on employee performance. On the other hand, the recruitment and employee retention found a significant effect on employee performance. In Kenya again, Ombui, Elegwa & Gichuhi (2012) found that a correlation between employee performance and recruitment and selection was highly significant at 0.374 ($P=0.000$) in their study, Okeke-Uzodike and Mogie (2015) found that there has been a move away from the concept of meritocracy in recruitment processes due to political considerations, nepotisms and ethnicity. As such these factors have impacted negatively on national developments and economic growth. However, these variables hold strong in staff recruitment processes and in turn affects public sector ability to recruit capable workforce to carry out government policies and programmes.

In Nairobi, Kenya, Shuku (2015) in his study revealed that recruitment channels meaningfully influence retention in international primary schools in Nairobi County, key among them of which include; personal connections, institution websites, Press media (e.g. newspapers or magazines)

and public agencies. The results further revealed that Selection Practices significantly influence retention of teachers in international primary schools in Nairobi County, majorly through such channels as interviews, IQ tests, personality tests and work sample tests and job knowledge tests.

Similarly, Ikwesi (2010) in his study revealed that the recruitment and selection procedures in public service in Nigeria are not strictly followed during employment of staff; politicization and other informal processes dominate the established recruitment and selection procedures during employment of staff; merit principle do not always count to secure employment in public service rather the use federal character, quota system, indigeneship, son of soil syndrome, etc. are mostly considered; there is an established relationship between inefficiency of the Nigerian public service and weak recruitment and selection processes. Okeke-Uzodike and Mogie (2015) in their study found that there has been a move away from the concept of meritocracy in recruitment processes due to political considerations, nepotisms and ethnicity. As such these factors have impacted negatively on national developments and economic growth. However, these variables hold strong in staff recruitment processes and in turn affects public sector ability to recruit capable workforce to carry out government policies and programmes. Igbokwe-Ibeto and Agbodike (2015) also that there is a significant relationship between recruitment policies and practices and employees performance in Nigerian Federal Civil Service but concluded that Federal Civil Service is faced with poor recruitment policies and practices which have affected service delivery in service. Daryl (2014) in his study found some issues with the current recruitment and selection process. While Onyeaghala and Hyacinth (2016) study found that, there is a significant difference between the selection process employed by the private and public sector organizations and the productivity they achieved by employing such selection process. Aduma and Iyida (2016) also revealed that recruitment policies and procedures in Enugu State Civil Service were not based on merit system but rather on subjective factors such as zoning, bribery represented by buying of jobs by applicants and nepotism. Karanja, Ndunga & Mugambi (2014) in their study found that employee selection in public service was highly influenced by academic qualifications and background checks. Murage, Sang & Ngure (2018) have researched on ethical issues in recruitment, selection and employee performance in Public Universities in Nyeri County, Kenya and found that ethical issues in recruitment and selection had positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance with discrimination being ranked the most unethical practice in recruitment and selection.

Zirra, Ogbu & Ojo (2017) in their study revealed that the use of recruitment agency and internal employee recommendation in the recruitment/selection process enables organization to recruit committed and productive employees while the recruitment through the influence of host community leads to organizational inefficiency. Maidoki (2013) has critically examined the recruitment strategy in India and Nigeria and found that the Indian civil service is more efficient and effective in recruiting more qualified staff. This is so because their recruitment is based on qualification and merit system. On the other hand, the recruitment policy in Nigeria is highly controversial and complex in nature as emphasis is laid on quota system also known as Federal Character Principles where merit is being compromised. A recent study by Adisa, Osabutey, Gbadosi & Mordi (2017) revealed that in addition to the Federal Character Principle and the Quota System Policy, favouritism, ethnicity, age and gender discrimination, as well as corruption significantly inhibit the recruitment and selection process in Nigeria. Consequently, the ability to hire the best workers to improve competitiveness is also inadvertently hampered. Biobele (2007) in his study identified factors such as increasing pressures for employment, utilization of

informal sources of recruitment, long military era, federal character principle, lack of independence of the service commission and delegation of recruitment functions as the prevalent problems affecting recruitment in Nigerian federal civil service. As results of these problems, job description and standard personnel requirements were not adequately used in the recruitment process, especially at the lowest category of grade levels. George and Slabbert (2014) found that the functions of recruitment and performance management are poorly managed within the industry. Adu-Darkoh (2014) findings were that out of the 16 identified recruitment and selection methods, the most frequently used medium of employee selection, in the order of highly recognized method includes newspaper advert, in-house (internal recruitment), labour office, employee referrals, radio advert and lastly intern& recruitment. In-house recruitment, Initial job offers, internet recruitment, newspaper advert and radio advert were five key quantifiable recruitment and selection methods, which influence construction workers' performance. A number of challenges were identified as barriers hindering effective recruitment and selection of workers, which includes: poor human resource (HR) planning, ineffective job analysis, competency level on the part of employee, cost of recruitment and selection of employees, lack of human resource department and poor working conditions of workers. Oladosu and Okofu (2014) revealed that merit is often jettisoned on the altar of ethnicity and religion in recruitment into the public service in Nigeria.

Yaro (2014) in his study revealed that sentiment and other primordial issues like ethnicity, nepotism and favouritism are given more consideration in terms of employment than merit. This adversely led to labour turnover and increased costs of governance. Yaro concluded that in order to refurbish sanity in the exercise, the Nigerian Public Service should lay more emphasis on meritocracy irrespective of applicant's background and/or affiliation and the issue of political obstruction should be brought to a halt. Candidates to be considered for recruitment should have good and moral attitude in addition to skills and recruiters be accorded the desired independence and freedom as this will enable them to use appropriate methods of conducting the exercise in order to get it right. That is why Edobor (2012), in his study recommended that multiple selection criteria to be set in order to get the right people for the right positions. Teaching certification should be less emphasised as most people with the qualification are underperforming. Interest and experience should play a major role as such people can go for on the-job training and CPD.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the **Weberian Bureaucratic Model** which emphasized on the application meritocracy public administration including recruitment for the realization of organizational goals. This is in view of the fact that merit-based recruitment and promotion through predictable, rewarding career ladders improve civil servants' capability and performance (Anderson et al. 2003 in UNDP, 2015) and are valued by citizens as an accountability mechanism (McCourt 2000 in UNDP, 2015). A merit-based system can also help attract well-educated individuals. This is important as higher educational attainment among civil servants is linked to higher tax revenue mobilization, reduced corruption, better public financial management and higher economic growth (Arezki and Quintyn 2013; Arezki et al. 2012; Rao 2013, in UNDP, 2015).

From Weber's point of view, an organisation is efficient in achieving objectives such as service delivery if and only if it is bureaucratic, that is: (i) it has a legal-rational leader; (ii) positions are hierarchically organized; (iii) division of labour and specialisation is emphasised; (iv) tasks assigned to employees are on merit that based on knowledge, qualification, output, productivity and performance; (v) tasks are performed in accordance with laid down rules, regulations, procedures and methods (Alornyeku, 2011). This model is relevant to the present study because it provides the ideal principles for consideration in public administration which will help in the evaluation of how such principles are applied in the recruitment process of public civil servants in Nigeria.

The gap envisaged in the previous literature reviewed here is that while enough literature existed generally on the recruitment and organizational performance in the public and private organizations, none of those studies was specifically concerned about how religion affects public service recruitment process and the way it has affected public service delivery in Nigeria. Although, some of the previous studies reviewed in this work were broadly on either the impact of recruitment on performance of organizations, factors that influence recruitment process in organizations or the challenges facing the process of recruitment in organizations, such studies were not adequate enough to clearly define how religion as a factor influences the recruitment process in the public service and how that has affected service delivery in the system. That is why the present study is founded to provide those missing gaps envisaged in the previous literature on this phenomenon.

Research Methodology

In this study, descriptive survey research design was adopted to investigate into the extent to which religion is a factor in the recruitment process and how it affects public service delivery in Nigeria. Survey research was used because of its ability to enable large amount of data to be obtained from the respondents on the chosen subject of investigation with relative ease. Although survey research has its shortcomings, the method was more suitable for this study because it is: (i) faster in data collection than other methods; (ii) relatively inexpensive data collection method; (iii) survey data can be very accurate if sampling is probabilistic; (iv) provides access to a wide range of participants; (v) It is more ethical than experiments; (vi) It uses the methods, materials and setting of the study of the real-life situation which is under investigation to ensure ecological validity; (vii) It is the sole way of retrieving information about a respondent's past history; and (viii) It is the only method where generalized information could be collected from almost any human population (Mathiyazhagan & Deoki, 2010).

The population of the study comprised the Federal Civil Servants from Akwa-Ibom State (4416), Imo State (5825), Ogun State (4669), Kogi State (5186), Kaduna State (3199), and Borno State (1822) which were 25117 (<https://www.nairaland.com/4032380/number-federal-civil-servants-state>). Since this study covers the entire Nigeria, one state with the highest number of Federal Civil Servants from each of the six geo-political zones was selected in the study. The population of this study therefore was twenty five thousand one hundred and seventeen (25117) Federal civil servants in Nigeria. A sample size of 394 was statistically drawn from the 25117 population of the study using Yamane, Taro (1967) statistical method of sample size determination which requires that when the population of the study is 25117 the sample size of the study under the precision level of $\pm 5\%$ and the confidence level 95% should be 394.

In distributing the sample size to respondents, a multi-stage technique was used. In the multi-stage sampling using already existing geo-political strata, stratified sampling technique was used to group the country (Nigeria) into six geopolitical zones. In each of the geopolitical zones therefore, purposive sampling technique was used to sample one state; bringing the total number of states sampled in the study to six (6) as follows: Akwa-Ibom State (South South), Imo State (South East), Ogun State (South West), Kogi State (North Central), Kaduna State (North West), and Borno State (North East). Purposive sampling technique was used to sample the 6 states because it assisted us to sample states with the highest number of civil servants in the various geo-political zones of the country. This is in consonant with the explanation made by Neuman (2014, p. 273) which indicates that “it uses the judgment of an expert in selecting cases, or it selects cases with a specific purpose in mind.”

After sampling the six states, proportionate sampling technique was used to sample respondents proportionate to the population size of each of the state sampled using the formula thus:

$$\frac{s \times n}{N}$$

Where;

S = Size of State

N = Sample Size

N = Total population of the study

The proportionate sampling was done using the above formula as follows:

Imo State	$\frac{5825}{25117}$	\times	$\frac{394}{1}$	$=$	91
Kogi State	$\frac{5186}{25117}$	\times	$\frac{394}{1}$	$=$	81
Ogun State	$\frac{4669}{25117}$	\times	$\frac{394}{1}$	$=$	73
Akwa Ibom State	$\frac{4416}{25117}$	\times	$\frac{394}{1}$	$=$	69
Kaduna State	$\frac{3199}{25117}$	\times	$\frac{394}{1}$	$=$	51
Borno State	$\frac{1822}{25117}$	\times	$\frac{394}{1}$	$=$	29

Questionnaire was the research instrument used for data collection in this study. Both closed and open ended techniques were used to construct the questionnaire and the method of administration was face-to-face. The face-to-face method of administration was used to minimize the mortality

rate of the questionnaire which has actually helped to achieve high return rate of the in the study. Data collected were analyzed through the use of inferential statistics.

Data Analysis

A total of 394 copies of the questionnaire were administered on respondents in this study but not all of them were available / suitable to be used for analysis. In Imo State, 91 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents but only 87 representing (95.6%) copies of the questionnaire were returned and used for analysis; 81 copies were administered on respondents from Kogi State but only 76 representing (93.8%) copies of the questionnaire were - returned-and found usable; in Ogun State, 73 copies-of-the-questionnaire were administered but only 71 representing (97.3%) copies of the questionnaire were returned and found usable; 69 copies of the questionnaire were administered on respondents in Akwa Ibom State but only 65 representing (94.2%) copies of the questionnaire returned were found usable; in Kaduna State, 51 copies were administered and only 49 representing (96.1%) copies of the questionnaire were returned and found usable; while in Borno State, 29 copies were administered but only 28 representing (96.6%) copies of the questionnaire returned were usable. It means therefore that 394 copies of the questionnaire were administered on respondents in the 6 selected states but while 376 copies representing 95.4 percent of the questionnaire were returned and found usable for analysis, 18 representing 4.6 percent suffered mortality and were not included in the analysis. It implies therefore that the instrument used in this study upon administration has achieved a significant confidence level of 95 percent and can be used for analysis, while an error margin of 5 percent was highly insignificant to affect our data in this study. The analysis was therefore based on 376 representing (95%) questionnaire return success rate achieved in this study.

Research Question One: *What specific factors promote religious sentiment in Public Service recruitment process in Nigeria?*

Table 1: Specific Factors that Promote Religious Sentiment in the Public Service Recruitment in Nigeria

	Frequency of Respondents						
Response	Imo state	Kogi state	Ogun State	Akwa Ibom	Kaduna State	Bornu state	total
Whether religion is considered as a factor in recruitment process in the Nigeria Public service							
Yes	87(100)	76 (100)	71(100)	65 (100)	49 (100)	28 (100)	376(100)
No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Specific Factors that Promote Religious Sentiment in Recruitment in the Nigerian Public Service							
Introduction of Federal Character Principle	55 (63.2)	51 (67.1)	45 (63.4)	41 (63.1)	31 (63.3)	19 (67.9)	242 (64.4)
Personal	24	19(25.0)	21(29.6)	20(30.8)	14(28.6)	6(21.4)	104(27.7)

relationships	(27.6)						
One's physical appearance and attitude	8(9.2)	6(7.9)	5(7.0)	4(6.1)	4(8.2)	3(10.7)	30(8.0)
Total	87(100)	76 (100)	71 (100)	65 (100)	49 (100)	28 (100)	376 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table one is concerned with specific factors that promote religious sentiment in recruitment in the Nigerian public service. Data revealed that all the 376 (100%) respondents have agreed that religion is considered as a factor for recruitment in the Nigerian public service; 242 respondents representing (64.4%) were of the opinion that the introduction of Federal Character Principle, 104 (27.7%) respondents said personal relationship, and 8 respondents representing (9.2%) were of the opinion that one's physical appearance and attitude are the specific factors that promote religious sentiment in recruitment in the Nigerian public service. It implies therefore that religion is considered as a factor in recruitment and the introduction of Federal Character Principle is the major factor that promotes this sentiment while personal relationships and one's physical appearance and attitude are other factors that promote this sentiment in recruitment process in the Nigerian public service.

Research Question Two: *To what extent does religious factor influence the process of recruitment in the Nigerian public service?*

Table 2: The Extent Religion is a Factor in the Public Service Recruitment in Nigeria

Response	Frequency of Respondents						Total
	Imo State	Kogi state	Ogun state	Akwa Ibom	Kaduna State	Bornu state	
To a great extent	75 (86.2)	69 (90.8)	64 (90.1)	57(87.7)	46 (93.9)	27 (96.4)	338(89.9)
To a little extent	87(100)	76 (100)	71(100)	65 (100)	49 (100)	28 (100)	376(100)
Difficult to say	7 (8.0)	4(5.3)	3 (4.2)	3(4.6)	2(4.1)	1(3.6)	20 (5.3)
Total	87(100)	76 (100)	71 (100)	65 (100)	49 (100)	28 (100)	376 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table two is concerned with the extent to which religious factor influence the recruitment process in the Nigerian public service. Data revealed 338 respondents representing (89.9%) were of the opinion that religious factor influenced recruitment process in the Nigerian public service to a great extent, 18 respondents representing (4.8%) of the respondents were of the opinion that

religious factor influenced recruitment process in the Nigerian public service to a little extent, while 20 respondents representing (5.3%) found it difficult to comment on the extent religious factor influence recruitment process in the public service. It implies therefore that religion is considered as a factor in recruitment of employees in the Nigeria public service to a great extent.

Research Question Three: *What other factors apart from religion influence the process of public service recruitment in Nigeria?*

Table 3: Factors other than Religion that Influence the Public Service Recruitment process in Nigeria

	Frequency of Respondents						
Response	Imo State	Kogi State	Ogun state	Akwa Ibom	Kaduna State	Bornu state	total
Weather factors Oder than religion also influence the reqiutment process the Nigeria public service							
Yes	87(100)	76 (100)	71(100)	65 (100)	49 (100)	28 (100)	376(100)
No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	87(100)	76 (100)	71 (100)	65 (100)	49 (100)	28 (100)	376 (100)
Factors other than religion that process of requirement of employees in the Nigeria public service							
Meritocracy	7(8.0)	3(3.9)	8 (11.3)	7 (10.8)	9 (18.4)	2 (7.1)	36 (9.6)
Indigenization Factor	21 (24.1)	19(25.0)	20(28.2)	17(26.2)	12(24.5)	7(25.0)	96(25.5)
Godfatherism	19(21.8)	17(22.4)	11(15.5)	12(18.5)	8(17.8)	5(17.9)	72(19.1)
Ethnicity	25(28.7)	24(31.6)	25(35.2)	23(35.4)	15(30.6)	10(35.7)	122(32.4)
Bribery	15(17.2)	13(17.1)	7(9.9)	6(9.2)	5(10.9)	4(14.3)	50(13.3)
Total	87(100)	76 (100)	71 (100)	65 (100)	49 (100)	28 (100)	376 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table three is concerned with factors that influence recruitment process in the Nigerian public service other than religion. Data revealed that, first other factors influenced the recruitment of people in the Nigerian public service apart from religion. 36 respondents representing (9.6%) were of the opinion that apart from religion, meritocracy is another factor for recruitment in the Nigerian public service, 96 respondents representing (25.5%) said indigenization is another factor for recruitment in the Nigerian public service apart from religion, 72 respondents representing (19.1%) were of the opinion that godfatherism is another factor for recruitment in the Nigerian public service, 122 respondents representing (32.4%) said apart from religion, ethnicity is another factor that influence the recruitment process in the Nigerian public service, and 50 respondents representing (13.3%) were of the opinion that bribery is another factor that influence the process of recruitment in the Nigerian public service apart from religion. It implies therefore that meritocracy, indigenization, godfatherism, ethnicity and bribery are some of the factors that influence the recruitment process in the Nigerian public service apart from the religion but meritocracy is considered a least factor among them.

Research Question Four: Which factor (between religion and meritocracy) influences the process of recruitment more in the Nigerian public service?

Table 4: Factor (between religion and meritocracy) that influences the process of recruitment more in the Nigerian public service

	Frequency of Respondents						
Response	Imo State	Kogi state	Ogun state	Akwa Ibom	Kaduna State	Bornu state	total
Religious Factor	4 (51.7)	43(56.6)	41(57.7)	39(60.0)	26(53.1)	19(67.9)	213(56.6)
Meritocracy	31(35.6)	27(35.5)	23(32.4)	21(32.3)	17(34.7)	6 (21.4)	125(33.2)
No Idea	11(12.6)	6 (7.9)	7 (9.9)	5(7.7)	6(12.2)	3(10.7)	38(10.1)
Total	87(100)	76 (100)	71 (100)	65 (100)	49 (100)	28 (100)	376 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table four is concerned with comparing between religion and meritocracy, the factor that influences recruitment process more in the Nigerian public service. Data revealed that 213 respondents representing (56.6%) were of the opinion that religious factor influences the process of recruitment in the Nigerian public service more with the respondents in Bomo State having the highest (67.9%) highest rate of responses that indicate that, 125 respondents representing (33.2%) were of the opinion that meritocracy is a factor that influences the process of recruitment in the Nigerian public service more compared to religion with Imo (35.6%), Kogi (35.5%) and Ogun (34.7) States have the highest responses rate which indicated that, while 38 (10.1%) of the respondents said they have no idea on which one influences the recruitment process of public servants in Nigeria more. It implies therefore that religion is placed above meritocracy as a factor in the recruitment process of public servants in Nigeria.

Research Question Five: *What specific ways do religious factor in the recruitment process in the public service affects public service delivery in Nigeria?*

Table 5: Specific ways Religious Factor in the Recruitment Process affects Public Service Delivery in Nigeria

	Frequency of Respondents						
Response	Imo State	Kogi state	Ogun state	Akwa Ibom	Kaduna State	Bornu state	total
Poor Knowledge of the job	4 (4.6)	3(3.9)	2(2.8)	1(1.5)	-	2 (7.1)	13 (3.5)
Lack of honesty	1(1.1)	3(3.9)	1(1.4)	-	3(6.1)	-	9 (2.4)

Lack of courage	11(12.6)	4(5.3)	-	2(3.1)	-	-	6(1.6)
Total	4(4.6)	1 (1.13)	2(2.8)	1.(1.5)	-	-	8(2.1)
Apathy	1(1.1)	-	2(2.8)	3(4.6)	1(2.0)	2 (7.1)	9(2.4)
Lack of Loyalty	5 (5.7)	3(3.9)	2(2.8)	4(6.2)	2(4.1)	1 (3.6)	17(4.5)
Poor performance	3(3.4)	2(2.6)	1(1.4)	-	1(2.0)	-	7(1.9)
Poor productivity	2(2.3)	1(1.3)	3(4.2)	-	-	-	6(1.6)
All of the above	65(74.7)	59(77.6)	58(81.7)	54(83.1)	42(85.7)	23(82.1)	301(80.1)
Total	87(100)	76 (100)	71 (100)	65 (100)	49 (100)	28 (100)	376 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table five is concerned with the specific ways religious factor in the recruitment process affects public service delivery in Nigeria. Data revealed that 13 (3.5%) of the respondents said poor knowledge of the job is one of the effects of religious factor in the recruitment process on public service delivery, 9 (2.4%) respondents were of the opinion that lack of discipline and integrity is one of the effects of religious factor in the recruitment process on public service delivery, 6 (1.6%) respondents said dishonesty is one of the effects of religious factor in the recruitment process on public service delivery, 8 (2.1%) respondents said lack of courage is one of the effects of religious factor in the recruitment process on public service delivery, 9 (2.4%) respondents said apathy is one of the effects of religious factor' in the recruitment process on public service delivery, 17 (4.5%) were of the opinion that lack of loyalty is one of the effects of religious factor in the recruitment process on public service delivery, 7 (1.9%) respondents were of the opinion that poor performance is one of the effects of religious factor in the recruitment process on public service delivery, 6 (1.6%) respondents said poor productivity is one of the effects of religious factor in the recruitment process on public service delivery, while 301 (80.1%) respondents were of the opinion that all of the above are the specific ways that religious factor in the recruitment process affect the public service delivery. It means therefore that the use of religion as a factor rather than merit in the recruitment of public servants adversely affect public service delivery in different ways such as poor knowledge of the job, lack of discipline and integrity, dishonesty, lack of courage, apathy, lack of loyalty, poor performance and poor productive.

Research Question Six: *To what extent does religious factor in the recruitment process affects public service delivery in Nigeria?*

Table 6: Extent Religious Factor in the Recruitment Process Affects Public Service Delivery in Nigeria

Response	Frequency of Respondents						Total
	Imo State	Kogi state	Ogun State	Akwa Ibom	Kaduna State	Bornu State	
To a great extent	79 (90.8)	783(96.1)	65(91.5)	59(90.8)	45 (91.8)	27(96.4)	348 (92.6)
To a little extent	1(6.9)	2(2.6)	4(5.6)	5 (7.7)	3(6.1)	-	20(5.3)
Difficulty to say	2(2.3)	1(1.3)	2(2.8)	1(1.5)	1(2.0)	1(3.6)	8(2.1)
Total	87(100)	76 (100)	71 (100)	65 (100)	49(100)	28 (100)	376 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table six is concerned with the extent to which religious factor in the recruitment process affects public service delivery in Nigeria. revealed that 348 respondents representing (92.6%) were of the opinion that religious facto in Me recruitment process affects public servi0 delivery in Nigeria to a great extent 20 (3%) respondents were of the opinion that religious factor in the recruitment process affects public service delivery in Nigeria to a great extent, while 8 (2.1%) respondents found it difficult to comment. It shows therefore that religious factor in the recruitment process affects public service delivery in Nigeria to a great extent.

Findings and / Discussion

Based on the data analysed, the following are the specific findings of the study:

Religion is considered as a factor in recruitment and the introduction of federal character principle is the major factor that promotes this sentiment while personal relationships and ones physical appearance and attitude are other functions that promote religious sentiment in public service recruitment in Nigeria. This is evident in one where out of 376 respondents sampled in the study, 64% of them were of them were of the opinion that the introduction of Federal Character Principle, while 27.7% said personal relationships while 92% of the respondents were of the opinion that one’s physical appearance and attitude are other factors that promote religious sentiment in public service recruitment in Nigerian public service. This implies that religious factor is one of the most prominent considerations in the recruitment process in the Nigerian public service and the introduction of Federal Character principle is the major factor that promotes the sentiments while personal relationships, one’s physical appearance and attitude are other factors that promote the sentiment. This findings align with the findings of Tiemo and Arubayi (2012) that recruitment in Nigeria is governed by the Nigerian labour Act of 1974 and also the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria hence, section 14 (3) states that the composition of the government or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the Federal Character of Nigeria and the need to promote National Unity. And also, to command national loyalty by ensuring that there shall be

no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or in any agencies. Just like finding from the study conducted by Adisa, Osabutey, Gbadamosi & Mordi (2017) and Maidoki (2013). This findings also collaborates the one Ikvesi (2010) which revealed that:

Recruitment and selection procedures in public service in Nigeria are not strictly followed during employment of staff; politicization and other informal processes dominate the established recruitment and selection procedures are during employment of staff; merit principle do not always count to secure employment in public service rather they use federal character, quota system, indigeniesship, son of soil syndrome, etc. mostly considered; there is an established relationship between inefficiency of the Nigerian public service and weak recruitment and selection processes.

Religion is considered as a factor in recruitment of employees in the Nigerian public service to a great extent. This is evident in table 2 where out of 376 respondents sampled in the study, 89.9% were of the opinion that religious factor influenced recruitment process in the Nigerian public service to a great extent as against 4.8% who said religious factor influenced -recruitment process in the Nigerian public service—to a little—extent and 5.3% who found it difficult to comment. This implies that the recruitment process in Nigerian public service is still dependent on religion to a great extent. This finding collaborates with the one in the study conducted by Oladosu and Okofu (2014) which revealed that merit is often jettisoned on the altar of ethnicity and religion in recruitment into the public service in Nigeria which have grave implications on "national development and economic growth" (Uzodike and Mogie, 2015).

Meritocracy, indigenization, godfatherism, ethnicity and bribery are some of the factors that influence the recruitment process in the Nigerian public service apart from religion and meritocracy is however considered a least factor among them. This is evident in table 3 where out of 376 respondents sampled in the study meritocracy was rated the least factor by 9.6% in the recruitment process while ethnicity (32.4%), indigenization (25.5%), godfatherism (19.1%), and bribery (13.3%) were rated higher than meritocracy as factors that influence recruitment process aside religion in the Nigerian public service. This implies that apart from religion, factors such as meritocracy, ethnicity, indigenization, godfatherism and bribery influence recruitment process in the Nigerian public service; however, meritocracy is considered the least factor among them. This finding agrees with the one in the study conducted by Jkvesi (2010) revealed that the recruitment and selection procedures in public service in Nigeria are not strictly followed during employment of staff; politicization and other informal processes dominate the established recruitment and selection procedures during employment of staff; merit principle do not always count to secure employment in public service rather the use federal character, quota system, indigeniesship, son of soil syndrome, etc. are mostly considered. Uzodike and Mogie (2015) reported that there has been a move away from the concept of meritocracy in recruitment processes due to political considerations, nepotisms and ethnicity which tends to affect public sector ability to recruit capable workforce to carry out government policies and programmes. Yaro (2014) also in his study reported that sentiment and other primordial issues like ethnicity, nepotism and favoritism are given more consideration in terms of employment than merit. Just like Aduma and Iyida (2016) who revealed in their study that recruitment policies and

procedures in Enugu State Civil Service were not based on merit system but rather on subjective factors such as zoning, bribery represented by buying of jobs by applicants and nepotism.

Religion is placed above meritocracy in the recruitment process of public servants in Nigeria. This is evident in table 4 where out of 376 respondents sampled in the study, 56.6% were of the opinion that religious factor influences the process of recruitment in the Nigerian public service more as against 33.2% who said meritocracy was the factor that influences the process of recruitment in the Nigerian public service more compared to religion. This confirms what Oladosu and Okofu (2014) in their revealed that merit is often jettisoned on the altar of ethnicity and religion in recruitment into the public service in Nigeria.

Religion rather than merit as a factor in recruitment in the public service adversely affects public service delivery in different ways including poor knowledge of the job, lack of discipline and integrity, dishonesty, lack of courage, apathy, lack of loyalty, poor performance and poor productivity. This is evident in table 5 where out of 376 respondents sampled in the study, 80.1% were of the opinion that all of the above were the specific ways that religious factor in the recruitment process affects the public service delivery. It is on this note that Weberian Bureaucratic Model provided that an organisation is efficient in achieving objectives such as service delivery if and only if it is bureaucratic, that is: ... tasks assigned to employees are on merit that based on knowledge, qualification, output, productivity and performance (Alornyeku, 2011). This agrees with finding from the study conducted by Ikvesi (2010) which revealed that there is an established relationship between inefficiency of the Nigerian public service and weak recruitment and selection processes, meaning that weak recruitment process leads to inefficiency of the Nigerian public service. This also agrees with the finding from the study by Ogbu & Ojo (2017) which revealed that the use of recruitment agency and internal employee recommendation in the recruitment/selection process enables organization to recruit committed and productive employees while the recruitment through the influence of host community leads to organizational inefficiency. Mustapha, Ilesanmi and Aremu (2013) reported in their study that there is a significant relationship between recruitment and selection based on merit and organizational performance; that effective recruitment and selection is a key to organizational commitment; that a well planned recruitment and selection contributes to organizational performance.

Religious factor in the recruitment process affects public service delivery in Nigeria to a great extent. This is evident in table 6 where out of 376 respondents sampled in the study, 92.6% attested that religious factor in the recruitment process affects public service delivery in Nigeria to a great extent as a against 5.3% of the respondents who said religious factor in the recruitment process affects public service delivery to a little extent and 2.1 % who were indifference. This implies that religious factor in the recruitment process rather than merit adversely affects public service delivery through poor knowledge of the job, lack of discipline and integrity, dishonesty, lack of courage, apathy, lack of loyalty, poor performance and poor productivity to a great extent. Yaro (2014) finds in his study that sentiment and other primordial issues like ethnicity, nepotism and favoritism are given more consideration in terms of employment than merit which adversely led to labour turnover and increased costs of governance.

Conclusion

Religious factor is still considered as a factor in recruitment in the Nigerian public service to a great extent and the introduction of Federal Character Principle is the major factor that promotes

this sentiment, while personal relationships, one's physical appearance and attitude are also factors that promote religious sentiment in the process. Apart from religion, other factors that influence the process of recruitment in the Nigerian public service are meritocracy, indigenization, godfatherism, ethnicity and bribery; however, meritocracy is considered the least factor among them. Also, religion is placed above meritocracy in the recruitment process of public servants in Nigeria. However, religious sentiment in the recruitment process adversely contributes to poor knowledge of the job, lack of discipline and integrity, dishonesty, lack of courage, apathy, lack of loyalty, poor performance and productivity in the public service of Nigeria to a great extent.

Deducing from the above, it is pertinent to finally conclude that recruitment process based on religion and similar factors like indigenization, godfatherism, ethnicity and bribery rather than meritocracy contributes to poor knowledge of the job, lack of discipline and integrity, dishonesty, lack of courage, apathy, lack of loyalty, poor performance and productivity in the public service delivery.

Recommendations

- i. Rather than encourage and promote-religious sentiment in public service recruitment through Public Service Principle, the policy should be reviewed to ensure that aspects in the policy that promote religious sentiment against meritocracy are removed. For instance, recruitment forms for public service must deemphasize the categorization of religion which exposes the applicant's religion, while during recruitment interview; questions that expose applicant's religion should be avoided. Also, appearance and attitude of applicant during aptitude test or oral interview be strictly monitored to ensure that he/she does not put on appearance and attitude that reveal his/her religion. Anyone in personal relationship with applicant, if discovered, should be prevented from examining such an applicant to avoid favourism in the name of religion.
- ii. Apart from religious sentiment, government through its Federal Civil and State Civil Commissions should deemphasize ethnicity and indigenization in the recruitment process into public service as they promote mediocrity in the service rather than excellence meritocracy. It is true there are fears about some states dominating others in recruitment since such states are regarded being educationally advantaged than the others but effort should be made to support the states that are disadvantaged academically to catch up with others. In addition, the issue of "special list" and godfatherism which most favoured incompetent applicants should be discouraged introducing a provision that will place strict sanctions on violators.
- iii. Nigeria's complete national rebirth development cannot be possible if religious and similar other sentiments are placed above meritocracy in sourcing for and recruiting human resource that drives the engine that takes a country into the destination of national rebirth and development. Because meritocracy breeds values that promote effective performance and productivity which further contribute to nation's greatness. This paper is a call for an urgent need to reposition public service recruitment process that will place meritocracy above religion and other similar factors to prevent the service and indeed the whole country from total collapse.

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