

Human Resource Sourcing In Idah Local Government Council, Kogi State, Nigeria 2007 – 2011: The Issues

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Abstract

There is no gainsaying the fact that local government system is primarily created in Nigeria to bring government nearer to the people. However, this cannot be achieved in the absence of competent human resources who are the principal actors in any given organization. This paper lucidly discussed the extent to which Idah Local Government Council in Kogi State complied with the employment guidelines. It adopted secondary data as the major source of data and the Weberian Bureaucratic Model was used for analysis. One hundred and forty three (143) employees employed from 2007- 2011 by both Idah Local Government and the Kogi State Local Government Service Commission were sampled. Based on this, empirical data were collected and presented using Semi Text Method of data presentation, and content analysis which its validity was ascertained by consulting experts. The paper majorly identified that neither the Commission nor Idah Local Government advertised vacancies before employment was done within the period under review and strongly recommended among others that, appropriate laws should be enacted to check the excesses of political influence over matters that are purely bureaucratic in nature, especially employment/appointment, training, posting and discipline of employees.

Key Words: Personnel, Guidelines, Compliance, Local Government, Local Government Service Commission

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In the document of Kogi State Local Government Service Commission (LGSC) (2000), the official recognition given to the local government areas as a third tier government following the 1976 Local Government Reforms (when Idah Local Government was created) places the local governments in position of mobilization of human and material resources that will bring about sustainable development. Thus, local government like every other organization was established to achieve certain goals that Dabo (2007) referred to the provision of infrastructures to the rural areas which is targeted at improving the living condition of the grass root communities who constituted the bulk of the country's population (p. 190). Being a third tier government noted by Kaufman (1963), the most important objective of the local government is public service delivery. To be able to actualise its aims, the 1976 Local Government Reforms directed the State governments to set up Local Government Service Commission. Nwankwo (2000) perceived the objective as a way to see that there was improvement in the quality of personnel in the local government system. And where the right calibre of personnel could not be found locally, state governments were to send the right calibre of officers from the state government service (Bagaji, 2002).

Consequently, the appointment of the Senior Officers, that is, Grade Level 07 and above is done by the Local Government Service Commission of every state; while that of Junior Staff (GL 01- 06) is done by the Junior Staff Management Committee of the local government. In line with the above, Kogi State Local Government Service Commission (2000, pp. 26-27) admits its functions thus:

- (a) To appoint, promote, discipline Local Government employees on GL 07 and above;
- (b) To set up uniform guidelines for appointment, promotion and discipline;

(c) To monitor the activities of each Local Government on appointment, discipline and promotion of Local Government employees on GL 01-06;

(d) To ensure that the guidelines for appointment, discipline and promotion are strictly and uniformly adhered to and

(e) To serve as an appellant body for all petitions from Local Government staff in respect of appointment, promotion and discipline. The power of the Commission also includes power for training and manpower development. Again, the Nigerian Public Service Rules (2008) No. 020102 (1) provides that:

The Civil Service Commission (Federal, State and Local) shall make appointments to post grade such appointment shall be made as the need arises into the available vacancies after advertisement. Officers intending to transfer their services shall take part in the annual public service examinations for post GL 07- 10.

Furthermore, No. 020103 (a) of the Public Service Rules provides that:

Each ministry/extra ministerial office shall appoint junior staff on GL 06 and below [...]

Each ministry/extra ministerial office shall work out actual establishment or requirements for each state office. The junior staff management committee (local) shall conduct the interview to appoint the officers, subject to approval of the permanent secretary/Head of extra ministerial offices.

Thus, since inception, Idah Local Government like other local governments has offered appointments to several persons. But, the question of whether or not there is compliance with recruitment guidelines is the central focus of the paper. It is against this backdrop that this paper intends to answer the following questions:

- To what extent have Idah Local Government and the Local Government Service Commission comply with recruitment guidelines?
- What are the consequences of non compliance with recruitment guidelines?
- In what specific ways can the consequences of non compliance with employment guidelines on Idah Local Government be curtailed?

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Local Government Administration in Nigeria has witnessed several reforms since independence with a view to achieving the much desired efficiency, effectiveness and responsive government at the grass root levels. Hague (1997) asserted that, these reforms were due to the problem of poor accountability facing the perceived role of local government in regional development. Igbuzor (2007) notes that among such reforms were the 1976 reforms which conceptualized Local Government as the third tier of government operating within a common institutional framework with defined functions and responsibilities. Between 1984 to 1992 there were reforms aimed at ensuring local government autonomy. These included the abolition of the Ministry of Local Government; establishment of Executive and Legislative Arms in Local Councils; and direct allocation to Local Government without passing through State government. This in the words of Dalhatu (2007) is perhaps the most sticking national reforms in the Local Government system in Nigeria (p. 203). The regime also increased Local Government statutory allocation from 15 percent to 20 percent with effect from 1992 (Igbuzor, 2007). Thus, Local Government reforms aimed at solving the inherent structural problems in the Local Government. Despite the introduction of the above mentioned reforms, the much desired efficiency, effectiveness and service delivery at the Local Government level remain intangible. This, according to Onah (2003) ranges from the fact that the Local Government is overstaffed due to arbitrary employment and incompetent employees.

Over the years, the Kogi State Local Government Service Commission, Lokoja and Idah Local Government have been carrying out appointments of staff. There is high level of redundancy, truancy, and misconducts in the Local Government. This adversely affects the service delivery capacity of the Local Government, coupled with issues of corruption, mismanagement and misappropriation of funds. From the foregoing, this paper is targeted at considering:

- The extent of compliance with recruitment guidelines.
- The consequences of non compliance with recruitment guidelines.
- Workable suggestions that would lead to compliance with recruitment guidelines to enable the Local Government achieve the much desired efficiency and service delivery.

1.3 Significance of the Paper.

This paper has contributed to the Principles and Practice of Local Government Administration through the fact that:

- It is a very useful source of research material for students of public administration and Local Government Studies in particular and other interested researchers.
- It contributes immensely to the existing body of knowledge in the field of public administration and local government bureaucracy in particular.
- It is of immense importance to those occupying bureaucratic positions as well as those aspiring for such positions in the local government as it acquaints them with the powers political leaders have over the bureaucrats pertaining to employment of staff.
- It educates Nigerians on how political actions in the Local Government administration affect administrative efficiency and service delivery.
- It informs the States Local Government Service Commission the manner in which employment into the Local Government Council is conducted.
- The workable suggestions proffered at the end of the work equally make this study significant.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on examination of compliance with recruitment guidelines in Idah Local Government Council. The scope of this study covers the appointment of Senior Staff (Grade Level 07 and above) done and posted to Idah Local Government Council from year 2007-2011 by the Kogi State Local Government Service Commission, Lokoja and the appointments of Junior Staff (Grade Level 01 – 06) done by Idah Local Government Council itself within the period under review.

This paper mainly relied on information provided by the Kogi State Local Government Service Commission and Idah Local Government Council, Kogi State.

2. Literature Review/Conceptual Clarifications

2.1 Local Government

Studies have revealed that no country can effectively and efficiently administer its entire land mass/people from the centre alone. Consequently, there is decentralization of governmental powers from the centre to a sub-level of government referred to as Local Government. In light of the above, Barber (1978), in Bagaji (2002, pp. 92-93) has pointed out that: some degree of Local Government characterizes every state in the world, and the significant point is not the mere existence of Local Government but the degree of power. He therefore discussed Local Government to connote a sub-level of government smaller than that of the state or central government which has and enjoys some degree of autonomy to determine and to execute matters within a restricted area. The same way, Olisa et al (1990, p. 93), in Ezeani (2004, p. 25) defined Local Government as a unit of government established by law to exercise political authority, through a representative council within defined area. Similarly, the United Nations' Office for Public Administration (1976), in Ezeani (2004) defined Local Government as:

[...] a political sub-division of a nation or (in a federal system) state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the power to impose taxes or to exert labour for prescribed purpose. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected. (p. 25)

Despite the wide appeal of the above definition, it has some flaws. The assertion that the governing body of a Local Government can be "locally selected" is faulty. It implies that in the case of Nigeria for instance, all the caretaker committees of management and sole administrator system instituted by the various military administrators and civilian administrators including Idah Local Government can still be seen as Local Government whereas, in actual fact, such appointed bodies are mere brands of local administration rather than Local Government (Ozor, 2003; Ezeani, 2004 & Onah, 2003). Furthermore, the definition of Local Government as contained in the Guidelines for a Reform of Local Government in Nigeria (1976, p. 1) quoted in Bagaji, (2002) aptly captured the essential characteristics of local government when it states that local government is:

Government at the local level exercised through representative council, established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. These powers should give the councils substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal government in their area and to ensure, through active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized. (p. 93)

From the foregoing, Ezeani (2004, p. 29) has outlined the following as the key characteristics of Local Government in Nigeria.

- I. **Localness:** Local government is the lowest tier of government. It is government at the grass root level. Hence, it is subordinate but not subservient to the higher levels of government – federal, state or regional governments.
- II. **It has a legal existence enshrined in the constitution.** This protects it from arbitrary actions of higher authority. As a legal entity, it can sue and be sued.
- III. **It enjoys substantial autonomy:** This implies that although local governments are creations of the state or federal government, and therefore, are subjected to state or federal government control in certain areas, nevertheless, they enjoy a reasonable degree of independence in administrative and financial affairs. For example, the local governments enjoy considerable autonomy in the preparation of annual estimate (budget), hiring, control and discipline of their own staff subject to a certain upper limit and the execution of certain projects (Ozor, 2003, p. 19).
- IV. **It exists within a defined territory:** Local government is a political sub-division of a nation or state and it exists within a geographical and political territory which has well defined boundaries (Ozor, 2003, p. 18).
- V. Local government exercises its authority over a given population.
- VI. It exercises specific powers and performs certain functions as enshrined in the constitution (in the case of Nigeria, see 4th schedule, section 7 of 1999 constitution).
- VII. The council is composed of elected representatives of the local people.
Local Government is usually divided into departments, divisions and units including wards which facilitate the accomplishment of its goals, objectives and functions.

2.2 Recruitment/Selection in the Local Government System

As it were, the recruitment of Junior Staff of the Local Government is done by the Junior Staff Management Committee (JSMC) (Public Service Rule No 020103 (a)). The JSMC is made up of the Director of Local Government and Head of Service and all the Heads of Departments of the local Government. The junior staffs comprise officers on GL 01 – 06, and qualifications required of them for employment range from first school leaving certificate to diploma certificate (Local Government Scheme of Service, 2006). All letters of appointment of the junior officers must be endorsed by the Local Government Chairman. Subject to the need of the Local Government Council, the Chairman has authority to employ workers – the junior staff only, subject to the approval of the Permanent Secretary/Head of extra ministerial office (Public Service Rule No 020103 (a)). Regarding the employment of the senior officers of the local government, Kogi State Local Government Service Commission (2000, p. 57) stated as follows: The comprehensive functions of the Local Government Service Commission are outlined thus:

- a) To appoint, promote, discipline local government employees on GL 07-and above.
- b) To set up uniform guidelines for appointment, promotion and discipline.
- c) To monitor the activities of each Local Government on appointment, discipline and promotion of Local Government employees on GL 01 - 06 in order to ensure that the guideline for such are strictly and uniformly adhered to.
- d) To serve as an appellate body for all petitions from Local Government staff in respect of appointment, promotion and discipline...
- e) To exercise powers for training and manpower development of the local government staff including the posting of employees from one local government to another.

It is important to point out that the candidates that are employed by the LGSC are holders of NCE and above (Local Government Scheme of Service, 2006). In line with the Local Government appointments, the Local Government Bye-law in Nigeria, Chapter Eleven Article 5, 9 and 4 states as follows:

All direct appointments to grade level 07 and above shall be open advertisement to the general public, and copies of such advertisement shall be sent to all the local governments within the state.

Undoubtedly, this is very rare, as Onah (2003, pp. 209 -210) has rightly pointed out that:

... observation in recent survey is that at appointments be it grade level 07 and above or grade level 01 – 06, members of the commission (politicians) present their own list, the local government Chairman and his group present their own list, then the Governor's sacrosanct list. The process of recruitment, selection and placement are consummated by marrying the list and publishing same.

He maintains that, this is also true of appointment of staff on grade levels 01 – 06. Pointing out that although it is the responsibility of the Junior Staff Management Committee of each Local Government to employ staff on GL 01 - 06 according to the manpower needs of the Local Government, it has been observed that the Local Government Service Commission has increasingly been usurping the function and insisting, in most states, that

members of the commission are represented at interview. The representatives are mostly those carrying list of people recommended by politicians for appointment. This explains why appointments occur in the Local Governments without the due process.

Furthermore, Local Government Chief Executives (Executive Chairman, Transitional Chairman, Sole Administrators etc) also appoint many uncountable personal and Special Assistants on nearly every function of the local government. These are people who are undoubtedly thugs, are gradually integrated into the system as staff. In other cases, the traditional rulers also nominate people for appointment to the Local Government council, a request that is usually a command in many parts of the country (Onah, 2003). Whereas, going by the principle of the Weberian bureaucracy and the Nigeria public service rule, appointments into the Local Government system and the public bureaucracy generally ought to be based on merit and competence through examination (oral and or written interview) rather than political and other considerations.

2.3 The Concept of Politicization of Recruitment/Selection

The concept of politicization has been given different meanings within different schools of thought. We shall in the tradition of most academic discussions present a number of definitions/levels of politicization offered by a number of authorities. According to Onah (2003:206), politicization is a process by which politicians control bureaucracy by means of manipulating recruitment, education, training and promotions to imbue bureaucracies with overt explicit commitments to the political goals of government of the day. Stahlberg (1987, p. 365), in Onah (2003, p. 206) distinguished five orientations of politicization, starting from a general level to conceptualization and ending at a concrete and operational level of thinking about politicization.

- That is said to occur when the public sector grows and its regulation of private matters increases. This orientation is found within a critical theory orientation and it tied to notions about the state and the economy. Another equally general notion is to tie politicization to functionalistic orientation, whereby the control capacity of the political leadership necessary to adapt the public service to changing conditions of service delivery. In this sense, a politicized administration is seen as one that reacts favourably to political signals.
- In a slightly more delimited version, politicization is tied directly to the relationship between political and administrative power. Here, the bureaucracy is politicized in the sense that it increases its autonomy vis-à-vis political power. Administrative powers are delegated by politicians in many cases through – laws – but for practical purposes, civil servants' discretionary power is increased along with their capacity to further augment their degree of freedom. This connotes the fact that politicization is undue political interference within the bureaucracy. Thus, the less autonomous the administration is with regard to the political power, the more politicized it is (Onah, 2003; Okoli, 2003; Okafor, 2005).
- A third line of thought is that of a representative bureaucracy. Here, politicization is seen in relation to the general public. Bureaucracy is politicized and it is likely to be responsive to popular demands to the extent that the administrators reflect the composition of the society. Politicization is seen here in terms of the relationship between bureaucracy and its environment outside government (Kingsley, in Onah, 2003).
- More concretely, politicization is viewed in terms of attitude and behaviour of bureaucrats. It is analysed or measured, the extent to which bureaucrats participate in political parties or supply the parties with information and partisan advice. This view seems to be based on idea of traditional bureaucracy being neutral and hostile to pluralistic politics and to political participation. From this perspective, politicization is generally held to an indication of modernism.
- The bureaucracy is seen as politicized to the extent that the party political criteria are accorded greater weight in recruitment than the more conventional merit principle. On the whole, it is obvious that in most countries in which the politicization of administration has been a part of the public debate, it has been tied to the recruitment and promotion of civil servants, especially in the local government system.

2.3.1. Manifestation of Politicization in the Local Government Bureaucracy

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Section 7 empowers the State to exert sufficient control over the Local Governments under their jurisdiction. This arrangement neither promotes the autonomy of the local governments nor protects staff from the whims of the State government (Onah, 2003, p. 208). State Governments therefore by that power exert tremendous control over staff in the Local Governments; ranging from recruitment, through promotion, to postings. Consequently, all States have a Local Government Service Commission (LGSC) headed by a Chairman, with other members all of whom are politicians (Onah, 2003; Kogi State LGSC, 2005, p. 57). Thus, the LGSCs have overwhelming powers over local government employees, in terms of recruitment/appointment, promotion, transfer, training and discipline. This particular phenomenon accounts for the

inability of the Local Government system to discharge efficiently its critical functions of mobilizing of the grass root peoples for socio-economic and political development (Onyishi & Obi, 2004).

Furthermore, Local Government Chief Executives (Executive Chairman, Transitional Chairman, Sole Administrators etc) also appoint many uncountable personal and special assistants on nearly every function of the Local Governments. In other cases, the traditional rulers also nominate people for appointment to the Local Government council, a request that is usually a command in many parts of the country.

2.3.2 Implication of Politicization of Local Government Bureaucracy

As earlier indicated, politicization is generally seen as a means by which the political system may strengthen its position vis-à-vis the administrative system in order to make the bureaucracy more compliant (Onah, 2003). Thus, under politicized environment, staff are unduly subdued and robbed of their rights. Politicization is therefore, advantageous to the politicians as a means of control but it tends to lead to loss of identity for the workers. Most local government bureaucrats are overly concerned about the security of their positions and as such are not inclined to take the initiatives or decisions themselves without giving a second thought to their political god-fathers because of fear of victimization (Mohr, 1987, Okoli, 1998, Okafor, 2005).

In the opinion of Gboyega (1999, p. 5), politicization makes the local government bureaucrats more of representatives of the powerful elites. This is because at appointments, councillors, politicians and other interest groups present names of their people for appointment thereby throwing the merit principle over board (Onah, 2003; Okoli, 2004).

Politicization promotes inefficiency. This is because loyalty to party exceeds that of service as watch dog positions have been created by the state to monitor Local Government affairs. These appointments not only are they unnecessary but the distrust among partisan groups also leads to unproductive and indiscipline. Apart from appointments, postings are also highly politicized in the local government system, especially at the top management level. Posting of Directors of Local Government (DLG) is done on the basis of loyalty to government. In Kogi State for example, the posting of DLGs to viable Local Government is contingent upon proven loyalty to the ruling party. Those whose loyalty is questionable are posted to newly created Local Government to man the four walls of the ill-equipped Secretariat (Onah, 2003). In a similar vein, powerful Local Government Chairmen influence the posting out of strong bureaucrats for weaker ones they can easily manipulate to their advantage.

In the area of training, it is obvious that most staff sent for training are hand-picked by members of the LGSC without any training need assessment (Okoli, 2003; Onah, 2003). They stress that politicians select their chums and make them benefit from a training that Local Governments do not need. This also applies to workshops and seminars. Participants at workshops take it as an opportunity to make some fictitious claims rather than a chance to improve their work skills.

Promotions and discipline are also the exclusive preserve of the LGSC, and decisions pertaining to them always reflect the interest of political party in control. Undoubtedly, the ripple effect of this is certainly obvious. Furthermore, observation suggests that politicization of appointments have led to a situation whereby workers in the Local Government are over employed, resulting to increase in wage bill, irregularities in the payment of staff salaries/allowances, redundancy, truancy and acts of in-subordination. Similarly, most Local Governments are unable to embark on developmental projects due to over employment of staff and financial misappropriation by the bureaucrats and politicians alike.

Politicization leads to corruption and lack of accountability. Because, the treasury unit is politicized, the Local Government auditor is under the chairman, the cashier is appointed by the chairman, the staff union, National Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE), leader is forced to be a “friend” to the chairman and management, staff are weakened, the Local Government Chief Executives unduly enrich themselves and create other unspeakably wealthy staff at the expense of other staff who are either on the same grade level or even above those so enriched by the politicians (Onah, 2003).

2.4 Operationalization of Key Concepts

In the field of social sciences, a study of this nature requires a definition of key concepts, which are used, depicting the context in which they are used so often in the entire study. It assigns meaning to variable by specifying the activities or operations necessary to measure that variable. The essence of operationalizing concepts is to enhance reader understanding. Against this background, the following concepts are therefore operationalized in the context of this study.

- (a) **Politicization:** is a process by which politicians control the bureaucracy by means of manipulating recruitment, education, training and promotions to imbue bureaucracies with overt explicit commitments in the political goals of the government of the day (Onah, 2003). It simply means that a politicized administration or bureaucracy is

one that reacts favourably to the dictates of the politicians in terms of recruitment, selection, promotion, training and posting of bureaucrats without following due process. A politicized bureaucracy is one that does not do things on the basis of merit. (Okoli, 2004, p. 107) noted: Local Government bureaucracy in Nigeria has been democratized through the principle of representation. This democratization, which involves the subordination of the concept of technical qualification (merit system) to the concept of representation (politics) violates the Weberian Ideal type of bureaucracy in all its essentials and thus throws public bureaucracy in Nigeria in “crisis of legitimacy”. Politicization therefore manifests itself in diverse ways. For example, the appointment and posting of senior Local Government bureaucrats which is done by the LGSC is done on the basis of clear loyalty to the government (politicians) (Onah, 2003). Similarly, that of junior officers (GL 01-06) which is done by the Chairman of the Local Government and Junior Staff Management Committee (JSMC) is also done mostly on the basis of political, family, religious and other non-bureaucratic considerations (Onah, 2003; Okoli, 2004; Okafor, 2005).

Consequently, most Local Governments are overstaffed with thugs and incompetent individuals who only come to the office during the payment of staff salaries. Whenever they come to the office, they sit under the trees in groups and engage themselves in all manner of conversation and gossiping and disappear one by one from the office before the official closing hour. In a similar vein, those who stay during working hour, their performance tends to be sluggish, their breaks prolonged and there is need for constant supervision (Onyeonoru, 2005; Okafor, 2005; Onah, 2006). There are cases of employees been fired by the incumbent government simply because, such employees were loyal to or members of the opposition party. Furthermore, politicization also occurs in the area of contract award. The bureaucrats and the politicians alike award development contracts on the basis of “whom you know” or party affiliation. Buttressing this assertion, Okoli (2003, pp. 16-17) posits that:

The corollary of this situation is that no applicant gets out seeking for a job without first making the necessary contacts. Even before he or she submits an application for the job, the necessary spade work must have been completed, and assurance given for the success of the application. This necessary spade work invariably involves getting in touch with the “right” person or the person who “knows” the right person, or the person who “knows” who “knows” the right person.

He maintains further that, sometimes in the process of this cognitive melodrama, known organizational processes and ethics are bypassed or completely ignored due to political influence. Consequently, applications could be written and submitted after the job might have been offered to the applicant. Similarly, appointments could be given to ghost applicants, and appointments could be made in anticipation of application. In the above development, Odoh (2004, p. 83) pointed out that, indeed in the local governments, either the personnel are not capable of initiating change or the structure of administration does not permit such an enterprise. On the whole therefore, the failure to bureaucratize the Local Government system properly, owing to political influences has greatly hampered the degree of service delivery at the Local Government level in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

(b) Management of Human and Material Resources

Every organization is established for a purpose. Accordingly, section 7, fourth schedule of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, outlines the constitutional functions/purposes of Local Governments in Nigeria. The overall motive behind the creation of Local Governments in Nigeria is to up lift the living standard of the people at the local or grass root level by embarking on meaningful and developmental programmes and projects. For example, the fourth schedule, section 7, subsections (e-f) state as follow:

Establishment, maintenance and regulation of slaughter houses, slaughter slabs, markets, motor parks and public conveniences;

Construction and maintenance of roads, streets, street lighting, drains and other public highways, parks, gardens, open spaces, or such public facilities as may be prescribed from time to time by the house of assembly of the state.

Undoubtedly, what it takes to achieve the above mentioned goals of local government is effective and efficient management of both human and material resources at the disposal of the Local Government. Therefore, management is perhaps best understood from a resource based perspective (Griffin, 1997, in Onah, 2003, p.3). Thus efficient and effective management of resources is instrumental to rapid socio-economic development and efficient service delivery. All organizations use four basic kinds of inputs or resources from environment namely-human, financial, physical and information resources (Onah, 2003).

In the context of this paper, management (politicians and bureaucrats) are responsible for combining and coordinating these various resources to achieve the local governments’ goals. They do so by carrying out four

basic management functions or activities; planning and decision-making, organizing, leading and controlling (Onah, 2003). It is against this situation that Griffin (1997), in Onah (2003, p. 3) defines management as a set of activities (including planning and controlling) directed at an organization's resources (human, financial, physical and information) with the aim of achieving organizational goals in an effective manner.

It is important to point out that human resources of the Local Government are the most important of the resources required for the rendition of services. As Barney (1995, p. 50), in Onah (2003, p. 5) rightly pointed out that human resource include all the experiences, skills, judgement, abilities, knowledge, contacts, risk-taking and wisdom of individuals and associates with an organization. He maintains that, without an adequate, skilled and well-motivated workforce operating within a sound human resource management programme and development is not possible. This implies that the management of human and material resources in the context of this study is basically concerned with the extent to which the politicians and bureaucrats, who make up the management of the Local Government, are able to carry out their managerial functions of recruitment, selection, placement, compensation and appraisal of human, material and other resources (money, machine and information) to meet the needs, demands and aspiration of the local populace.

(c) Efficient and Effective Service Delivery

A task is said to be efficient when it has been accomplished thoroughly with no waste of time, money and energy while it is effective when the intended result is produced. Thus, efficiency is defined in terms of output produced in relation to input expended. That is minimum input for maximum output (Ikelegbe, 1996). Effectiveness is measured by how much of goals and objectives are achieved. Thus, effective programme is one that realized its objectives.

Service delivery in the perspective of Yayale (2004, p. 12) is the concept that presupposes that in public service, there is a contractual relationship between the public and the service provider (government agency) which obliges the latter to render service to the former in the most satisfactory way, be it in terms of utility, quality, convenience, timeliness, cost, courtesy, communication or otherwise. He posits further that, going by the foregoing, the concept of service delivery as it relates to Local Governments in terms of efficient and effective service delivery implies:

- I. An organization that is staffed with competent men and women and well managed;
- II. A public service that is:
 - Courteous, friendly, respectful and is helpful in its relationship with the public;
 - Eager and proactive in offering information to the public with feedback and follow up;
 - Transparent, honest and averse to corruption, fraud and extortion of the public in official dealings;
 - Exemplary in its standards of efficiency in both production and rendition of services, with minimal waste;
 - Punctual and time conscious in all official business;
 - Run on well planned programmes with activity schedule and calendar that are firm and respected;
 - Prompt in response to problems and complaints of the public, which are conclusively attended to;
- III. A public service whose:
 - Service and products that are almost of cutting edge standard and rendered with minimal need for members of the public to leave their home to visit the office concerned or to spend substantial amounts of money or provide copious documents and passport photographs;
 - Charges and billing systems are affordable and convenient to the public;
 - Public infrastructural facilities are built to unblemished standards, regularly maintained and properly prepared and;
- IV. A public service with:
 - Continuous improvement in service mix and methods based on communication and feedback from the public.

(d) Party Affiliation

This refers to inclination of bureaucrats to one political party to the extent that he or she becomes enmeshed as the politician himself or herself. This describes a situation where there is too much meddlesomeness of politics in administration.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The framework of analysis used in this study is the Bureaucratic Theory as propounded by Max Weber. This theory is believed to have adequate analytical strength to explain the study. This is justified by the fact that, Furlong (2003) gave the local government itself as a bureaucracy- a large and complex organization characterised by officials working under rules, regulations and procedure and a clear structure of command which are typical of the Weberian ideal type bureaucracy.

Max Weber (1947) in Idakwoji and Paul (2012, p. 42) outlined some basic characteristics of bureaucracy which an organization must meet for such an organization to become efficient and effective. These characteristics include:

- (a) A hierarchically defined authority structure, with limited areas of command and responsibility;
- (b) A specified sphere of competence;
- (c) Strict and systematic adherence to discipline and control in the conduct of official duties;
- (d) Recruitment based on merit and technical qualifications;
- (e) The existence of a career structure with a system of promotion based on seniority, merit or both;
- (f) A system of remuneration in the form of salary with a right to position;
- (g) Impersonality of official. In Weber's view therefore, the above characteristics, if followed would lead to precision, orderliness, efficiency and effectiveness of an organization.

The ideal model postulated by Weber, according to Oko & Uyionore (2003) cited by Paul (2012, p. 23) promotes the existence of a system of control based on rules which regulate the whole organizational structure and serve as apparatus for the achievement of maximum efficiency. Using the above premise, what comes to mind is the question of the extent of compliance or application of the Weberian ideal type bureaucracy in Idah Local Government. As Adamolekun (2006) rightly observed the idea of neutral competence or authority of expertise is that, appointed officials who are recruited/selected on the bases of competence and expert knowledge, skills and experience are valuable for conducting the partisan inclination. This role was put succinctly in the British context in the 1954 North Cote-Trelyon Report which states that permanent officers subordinates to ministers yet possessing sufficient independence, character, ability and experience to be able to advise, assist and to some extent to influence those who are from time to time set above them (Adamolekun, 2006).

Based on the above premises, Key (1942), in Hembe (1997) opines that, politicians dominate the issues which have a high content of political judgement and a low content of technical expertise, while administrators dominate the issues with a high content of technical judgement, (e.g. science and technology matters), and that in regard to issues both a high content of political judgement and technical expertise, politicians and administrators take decisions by cooperative effort as partners in a joint enterprise (e.g. the budget process).

The existence of the above situation as given by Adamolekun (2006) would enable the career officials to serve an incumbent government with competence, loyalty and fairness. The interactions between the two groups with reference to cooperation, partnership, trust and loyalty, that is implied by their joint enterprise will provide over all leadership of governmental administration. In the Nigerian situation of our time as viewed by Akinola (2004), the expected partner, trust and loyalty have been ruined by the politicization of appointment in the civil service and Local Government in particular, thus, hampering governmental efficiency, effectiveness and service delivery

2.6 Historical Background of Idah Local Government Area

Abalaka (2007) submitted that, Idah Local Government Area is located at the East of Kogi State. It was created in 1976. It shares common boundaries with Igalamela-Odolu Local Government Area to the North, Ibaji Local Government Area to the South and Edo State to the West. Idah being the headquarters of the Local Government and seat of the Igala Kingdom with the Ata Igala being the paramount traditional ruler is largely populated by the indigenous Igala and other ethnic settlers such as Igbo, Ebira, Nupe, Hausa, Yoruba, Fulani and others.

Administratively, Idah Local Government is mainly divided into 5 departments namely, Administration or Personnel department, Finance, Education, Works and Health Departments. Each department has a Head answerable to the Head of Local Government Administration who is the most senior bureaucrat.

Politically, Idah Local Government Area is divided into ten (10) Wards namely: Igalogba, Owoli-Apa, Ega, Igecheba, Ukwaja, Ede, Ogegele, Sabongari, Ugwoda, Ichala-Edeke. Each ward is headed by a Development Officer (D.O.). In terms of development, Abalaka et al (2007) posited that:

During the colonial era and up to the 1960s, Idah was blessed with a number of infrastructural facilities befitting its traditional city-status that boosted a beehive of socio-economic activities. There was, then, the presence of Royal Niger Company, the John Holt, the United Africa Company, Aerodrome, a General Hospital, Pipe borne water, a fair-enough township road net work, school of Nursing and Midwifery, and a host of what made meaning to life and living. Over the years, the situation had continued to deteriorate in very unfortunate and pathetic manner that, Idah has nothing to show for in terms of infrastructure and representation.

3. Data Presentation, Analysis and Findings

3.1 Data Presentation/Analysis

This part of paper focuses on data presentation, analysis and findings. The secondary data collected are presented in tables and descriptively analyzed, and from the analysis, some findings were derived.

Table 3.1.1: Staff employed and posted to Idah local government by the LGSC from 2007 – 2011.

QUALIFICATIONS AND GRADE LEVELS									
Year	NCE	GL	HND	GL	BSc	GL	MASTERS DEGREE	GL	SUB-TOTAL
2007	3	07	2	08	3	08	1	09	7
2008	1	07	3	08	2	08			6
2009	2	07	2	08	3	08			7
2010	3	07	3	08	1	08			7
2011	2	07	4	08	4	08			10
Total	11		14		13		1		39

Source: Kogi state Local Government Service Commission (2011).

Key:

- NCE:** Nigeria Certificate in Education
- GL:** Grade Level
- HND:** Higher National Diploma
- BSc:** Bachelor of Science

The table above shows the number of staff appointed by the Kogi State Local Government Service Commission in order of qualification and Grade Level within the period under review. Thus, in 2007, the total number of staff employed was seven; 3 NCE holders, 2 HND, 3BSc and 1 Master’s degree holders were appointed and posted to Idah local government area. The following year 2008, 1 NCE, 3HND, 2 BSc holders were also appointed and posted to Idah Local Government area respectively making 6 all together. In 2009, 7 were offered appointment; 2 NCE holders, 2 HND and 3 BSc holders were appointed and posted to Idah Local Government. Furthermore, in 2010, 7 persons were offered appointment, 3 NCE, 3 HND, and 1 BSc holders and were posted to Idah Local Government respectively. While in 2011, 10 staff were employed and posted to Idah, 2 were holders of NCE, 4 HND, 4 BSc in that order.

From the data above, it is clear that the Commission has actually employed in line with the guidelines for appointment into the Local Government on the basis of qualifications and Grade Levels (07 and above).

However, the researcher’s study of the employment file no LGSC/IDA/STA/2/V suggests that no vacancy(s) was advertised before these appointments were made which is contrary to Public Service Rule (2008), No. 020102 (1) that:

The Civil Service Commission (Federal, State and Local) shall make appointments to post grade such appointment shall be made as the need arises into the available vacancies after advertisement. Officers intending to transfer their services shall take part in the annual public service examinations for post GL 07- 10.

Thus, from the application letters of the 39 staff appointed by the Local Government Service Commission within the period under review, none at least, in the application letters made reference to any form of adverts whether on the notice board, newspapers, radio etc. Based on this premises, one can safely conclude that no vacancy was declared.

In like manner, Idah Local Government as a body has power to appoint Junior Officers on Grade Levels 01 - 06 respectively. Table 3.1.2 below shows the statistics of junior staff appointed from 2007 – 2011.

Table 3.1.2: Junior staff employed in Idah local government from 2007 - 2011 and posted to various departments.

YEAR	PMD	PHC	WORKS	AGRIC	BPR&S	EDU	FIN	SUB-TOTAL
2007	2	2		3	1			8
2008				1				1
2009	2	1				2		5
2010	5		3			1		9
2011	11	28	6	1	5	32	1	81
TOTAL	17	31	9	5	6	35	1	104

Source: Adapted from Idah Local Government staff list (2011)

Key:

- PMD** = Personnel Management Department
- PHC** = Primary Health Care Department
- BPRS** = Budget, Planning Research and Statistics Department
- EDU** = Education and Social Service Department
- FIN.** = Finance Department

The table above shows that from the year 2007-2011, 104 junior staff were employed; within this period, 17 were posted to personnel management department, 31 to primary health care, 9 to works, 5 to agric, 6 to budget, planning research and statistics, 35 to education and 1 to finance department respectively.

However, to ascertain the extent of compliance with qualifications for appointment in the Local Government, table 3.3 presents the statistics.

Table 3.1.3: Appointments based on qualifications from 2007 – 2011.

YEAR	CPE	WAEC/NECO	CERT.	ND/OND	NCE	ADV.D	HND/BSc	SUB-TOTAL
2007		4	1	2	1	1		9
2008		1						1
2009	1	3					1	5
2010		3		2			4	9
2011	4	68		4	2		2	80
TOTAL	5	79	1	8	3	1	7	104

Source: Adapted from Idah Local Government staff list (2011)

Keys:

- CPE** = Certificate of Primary Education
- WAEC** = West African Examination Council
- NECO** = National Examination Council
- CERT.** = Certificate Course
- ND** = National Diploma
- OND** = Ordinary National Diploma
- NCE** = Nigeria Certificate in Education
- ADV. D** = Advanced Diploma
- HND** = Higher National Diploma
- BSc.** = Bachelor of Science

From the table above, it can be seen that out of the 104 junior staff employed by the Idah local government from 2007 to 2011, 5 have certificate of primary education, 79 have WAEC/NECO, 1 has certificate course, 8 have OND/ND, 1 has advanced diploma and 7 have HND/BSc respectively.

It is important to note that even though the Local Government has power to recruit junior officers from grade level 01 – 06, studies have revealed that even NCE holders and above can be offered appointment by the local government and placed on any grade level arbitrarily.

Table 3.4 below buttresses this assertion.

Table 3.1.4: Showing qualifications and grade levels of junior employees.

GRADE LEVEL	CPE	WAEC/NECO	CERT. COURSE	ND/OND	NCE	ADV.D	HND/BSc	SUB-TOTAL
01								
02	5	11						16
03		60		4	2			66
04		8	1	4			4	17
05					1	1		2
06							3	3
TOTAL	5	79	1	8	3	1	7	104

Source:
 Adapted from
 Idah Local Government
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staff list (2011)

Keys:

- CPE** = Certificate of Primary Education
- WAEC** = West African Examination Council
- NECO** = National Examination Council
- CERT.** = Certificate Course
- ND** = National Diploma
- OND** = Ordinary National Diploma
- NCE** = Nigeria Certificate in Education
- ADV. D** = Advanced Diploma
- HND** = Higher National Diploma
- BSc.** = Bachelor of Science

From the table above, out of the 104 junior staff employed by Idah Local Government within the period under study, 16 are on grade level 02, while 5 of the staff hold certificate of primary education (CPE), 11 are holders of WAEC/NECO. Similarly, out of the 66 staff on grade level 03, 60 have WAEC/NECO, 4 have ND/OND while 2 are NCE holders. Furthermore, 17 junior employees are placed on GL 04, out of which 8 are WASC/NECO holders, 1 certificate course holder, 4 ND/OND and 4 HND/BSc holders respectively. On GL 05, there are two staffs, 1 NCE holder and 1 Advanced Diploma holder, and finally, on GL 06 there are 3 HND/BSc holders.

3.2 Discussion of Findings

The following are the findings derived from this study:

- It was discovered that the Local Government Service Commission actually appoints senior local government officers from GL 07 and above based on the required qualifications – NCE and above and equally has the power to post them to any Local Government within the State.
- The Commission did not advertise vacancies before all the employments were made. See file No. LGSC/IDA/STA/2/V with the subject: ‘Employment of Staff Idah LG’.
- Similarly, Idah Local Government has the power to employ junior officers from GL 01 – 06. However, the study reveals that NCE, BSc/HND holders are employed by the Junior Staff Management Committee (see table 3.4 above).
- The study further reveals that apart from Local Government employing people with NCE and qualifications above, such employees are placed on the junior grade levels arbitrarily, regardless of your qualification(s) (see table 3.4).
- Furthermore, the research discovered that less qualified officers are made superiors to officers with higher qualifications even at entry point.
- Finally, since neither the Commission nor Idah Local Government advertised vacancies before employment within the period under review, it means largely that those employments were not based on the needs of the Local Government. This accounts for overstaffing. As Ugwu (2009, p. 113) rightly highlighted, at the Local Government, people are classified into three types: the few that make things work; the many who watch things happen and the vast majority who have no idea of what happened.

4. Conclusion

Submission is herein made that the Local Government Service Commission is charged with the responsibility of recruiting/selecting and posting the Senior Officers of the Local Government (GL 07 and above) even though,

this study found out that the Commission did not advertise vacancies within the period under review, yet there were employments. This, to some extent, negates the Public Service Rule No. 020102 (1). Furthermore, the Junior Staff Management Committee of Idah Local Government has the power to employ Junior Officers from GL 01-06, it was discovered from this study however that, even NCE, HND/BSc holders are offered appointments by the Local Government. But, because they cannot give an officer above GL 06, they simply place such persons on whatever grade level they so wish. Hence, a BSc/HND holder can be offered appointment and placed on GL 04 with someone who holds WAEC/NECO Certificates (see table 3.4).

Apparently, this is contrary to the provisions of the Local Government Scheme of Service in terms of qualifications for appointments and the appropriate grade level one is entitled to.

There is no total compliance with recruitment guidelines. The LGSC complied in terms of qualification for recruitment but did not in terms of advertisement. Idah Local Government offers appointment to graduates and NCE holders who are supposed to be appointed by the Commission even though, with time, they are recommended to the Commission for normalization of appointment.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been proffered as remedies to the bureaucratic bottlenecks in the local government system, pertaining to employment/appointment and effective service delivery.

- For the purpose of efficient and effective service delivery, the employment and appointment of Local Government workers should be strictly based on qualification and professional competences. Before they are employed or appointed to any position or office, they should be subjected to both written and oral examination, which should be conducted under strict supervision to prove their worth/competencies. And for those in technical departments such as works and health, their examination should involve practical demonstration of knowledge and skills. By so doing, politicization of employment would be eradicated in the Local Government, which will enhance the efficient and effective performance of workers towards responsive service delivery.
- It is important for both the Local Government Service Commission and Idah Local Government to comply with the rule of advertisement. This will give room for not only qualified individuals to apply but competent and capable individuals will have equal opportunity to apply and prove themselves appointable rather than political and other considerations for appointment.
- To avoid over staffing and its consequences of non payment of salaries when due, and the problem of redundancy, workers should be recruited only when the need arises. Politicians should not turn the Local Government to “welfare agency” by randomly providing jobs to their unemployed party supporters.
- Individuals with higher qualifications such as NCE, HND or BSc should be recommended for Commission’s appointment rather than under employing them – placing them on the same grade levels with ND, WASC and even primary school certificate holders as this can be demoralising.
- Finally, appropriate laws should be enacted to check the excesses of political influence over matters that are purely bureaucratic in nature, especially employment/appointment, training, posting and discipline of staff. And the boundary of authority between the politician and bureaucrats should be clearly stated to enable bureaucrats control/manage their subordinates without fear of victimization. By so doing, the service delivery capacity of the local governments would be enhanced in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and greater productivity.

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