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Reasons for Public Sector Jobs Preference in Nigeria

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Abstract

Occupational preference is an age long phenomenon. It is a product of many considerations on the part of an individual, and, varies across time and society. Despite various government programmes aimed at encouraging self-employment and or entrepreneurship, little success has been achieved in this direction in Nigeria. This study sought to investigate the reasons why Nigerians prefer public sector job to self-employment or private sector jobs with a view to understanding the dynamics of youth employment in a rapidly changing society. Concurrent triangulation mixed method research design was employed for this study to collect quantitative and qualitative data in the study location. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analysed using thematic content analysis. The results showed that majority of the respondents preferred public sector careers. Job security; economic benefits; negative perception of other forms of employment; societal values; and altruistic service motive were the major reasons for preference. The study concludes that an understanding of the plethora of factors that engender high preference for public sector careers could inform youth employment policy directed at enhancing informal sector career outlook.

Key Words: Unemployment, informal sector, career preference, public sector careers.

Introduction

Youth unemployment is a global social phenomenon. In Nigeria, available report indicates that the phenomenon has been on the increase in recent times (National Bureau of Statistics – NBS, 2016). However, the data generated from official reports can be confounding because not all the youths in the unemployed category are indeed not employed. Many people who are considered to be in this ‘unemployed’ category may be self-employed, but because of a preference for wage employment either in the public or private sector, they still considered themselves ‘unemployed’. In spite of huge employment opportunities in the informal sector (NBS, 2015; Farayibi, 2015), many unemployed youths scramble for few available slots, especially in the public sector. This is evident in the number of people who applied for jobs in government ministries, departments and/or agencies. For example, in 2014, the Leadership newspaper reported that over 6.5 million applied for less than 4,000 job slots in the Nigeria Immigration Service.

In the pre-colonial era, agriculture was the major source of employment. Virtually all able youths engaged their energy on farmlands and/or other areas in the primary sector of the economy such as weaving, fishing, iron-smelting, smiting, tanning and leather working, hunting, carving on wood and on calabashes. Youths were employed as long as land was available. And of course, it was. However, colonialism and its consequent establishment of factories (and educational institutions) in selected cities made many youths to leave farmlands in search of paid employment especially in the public sector. This development made agricultural sector, which had previously accounted for more than 60 percent jobs in pre-colonial Nigeria (Olugbile, 1997), to lose its acceptance. Although wage employment brought about a higher living standard than had ever previously been enjoyed, it also brought with it the risk of unemployment (Hanson, 1977). Actually, the higher standard of living of those in paid employment served as the major source of attraction to those in the informal sector employment, farming inclusive.

Nigerian government at different times have initiated various youth employment programmes to address youth unemployment. The employment generating programmes were intended to provide alternative employment opportunities either as ‘self-employed’ in the informal economy or participants in government’s voluntary services that pay the participants stipends, usually lower than what is paid in full time jobs. Many youths who have benefited from these programmes are still waiting for when they will receive full appointment from the government, as indicated by their untiring applications to government advertised vacancies. The alternative employment opportunities however, are seen as a stopgap rather than career paths.

Several studies have reported increase in ‘wait’ unemployment due to continued preference for public sector careers (Hyder, 2007); and Behar and Mok (2015) established inverse relationship between public and private sector employments. As a result, preference for public sector careers may have affected, among other factors, the official statistics on youth unemployment. In spite of a number of employments generating programmes of governments, non-governmental organizations and development agencies, the official statistics on youth unemployment remain high. Despite bleak employment outlook, many young Nigerians do not appear deterred from pursuing careers in public service. In the process of choosing their career, many Nigerian youths still see public sector careers as the only means to fulfil their career goal, irrespective of the

number of years this might require. Existing studies on unemployment have focused on the causes, effects and solutions (Asaju et al, 2014; Salami, 2013; Ajufu, 2013; Obumneke, 2012; Ajayi, Adeniji & Adu, 2008; Augustus, 2005). This study examines the cultural factors influencing youth preference for public sector careers. This is with a view to providing a better understanding of unemployment issues in a rapidly changing society.

Preference for public sector careers has been globally reported both in the developed and developing countries (Barsoum, 2015; Rose, 2015; Hyder & Reilly, 2005; Norris, 2004; Light, 2003; Blaug, 1979). Many of these studies agreed that pay gap and working conditions in favour of the public sector compared to its private counterpart mainly accounted for this high preference. For examples, Hyder and Reilly (2005) reported a sizeable average wage differential in favour of public sector workers in Pakistan resulting in high preference for public sector careers. Also, research conducted in Egypt showed wage differentials in favour of the private sector for males. However, this was reversed when wages were replaced by a broader compensation measure in the public sector resulting in preferential change towards the public sector careers (Said, 2004). In Morocco, Boudarbat (2005) noted a preference for public sector careers and a willingness among the educated to engage in 'wait' unemployment to secure the more well paid and stable public sector careers.

In Ethiopia, Mengistae (1999) argued that public sector workers were more remunerated than the private sector workers in the urban labour markets of Ethiopia; this resulted in continuous preference for public sector careers in the urban labour market. In Haiti, Terrell (1993) reported that public servants preferred public sector careers majorly because of public-private wage differentials with selection bias apparently relevant in only one sector.

In Nigeria, studies of this nature are emerging. This calls for empirical investigation in order to proffer way out, as its effects on the nation's socio-economic development could be costly. Nevertheless, such attention must aim at addressing methodological defects of past studies. Existing studies focused on certain categories of youths such as undergraduates, government workers, and unemployed youths while ignoring others. None seemed to combine all categories of youths in a study. This study therefore fills the methodological gap by employing all categories of youths (final year undergraduates, fresh graduates, self-employed youths, and workers in both private and public sector).

Preference for Public Sector Careers and Youth Unemployment

Preference for public sector careers is not without notable effects. This section sets to examine the consequences that preference for public sector careers have on youth unemployment, especially as it affects the nation's sustainable development. Having established preference for public sector careers in many nations of the world, Nigeria's case deserves empirical investigation. This will provide additional understanding on youth unemployment, which has been a major hindrance to Nigerian development.

Private sector remains a major employer of labour. Gone were the days when government was found to be at the forefront of employment creation. This was evident in the report of National Bureau of Statistics (2015) which found the creation of just 4,818 jobs in the public sector out of the total 475,480 new jobs created in the third quarter of the year 2015 (see Table 1). This implies that almost 99 percent new jobs were created in the private sector, which include both formal (representing 8.8 percent) and informal (representing 90.2 percent) jobs. Despite this

large job creation in the private sector, Nigerian youths seem to still prefer careers in the public sector as indicated by their continuous application for government advertised vacancies. This hinders the productive capacity of Nigerian youths in the informal sector jobs, which has been established to be capable of employing majority of unemployed youths in the nation (Ogbuabor & Malaolu, 2013).

Behar and Mok (2015) discussed the implications of the extent to which public-sector employment crowds out private-sector employment for countries in the Middle East, North Africa, Caucasus and Central Asia. The coefficient estimates indicated full crowding out; which means, every public job comes at the cost of a private-sector job, and does not reduce overall unemployment. In addition, Hyder (2007) reported that preference for stable and well-paid public sector careers 'give rise to job queues and wait unemployment'. The time spent in seeking a career in the public service comes with social opportunity cost, although it may be possible to take it as job search strategy.

Preference for public sector careers have the effects of engendering low labour productivity, killing initiatives, increasing number of job seekers, sustaining corruption, and sabotaging government efforts towards unemployment alleviation, among other negative consequences. Apart from these, preference for public sector careers, as already been confirmed by existing literature, contributes to increasing unemployment rate. Governments across nations of the world have recognised this. Hence, they continued to clamour for alternative employment creation. A study conducted in the United Kingdom suggested a rethink for every job seeker preferring to work in the public sector not to consider job security and undemanding desk job while seeking employment (University of Kent, 2016). The study reported that public sector no longer guarantees a 'job for life' or a cushy career. According to the report, between 2009 and 2015, the public sector workforce fell by 969,000. Instead of expecting hardly working public sector workers, a survey of 2,200 local government workers found that the workload of 75 per cent of them had increased in the past year, and 46 per cent said they had too much work to do (University of Kent, 2016).

Report from the National Bureau of Statistics (2015), coupled with the prevailing circumstances in the country, also suggest that public sector careers no longer guarantee jobs for the Nigerian unemployed youths. What was obtained in the past no longer hold in this time of economic recession when government is yet to pay workers' full salaries and when workers' job security is no longer guaranteed. Continuous search for public sector careers now seems to result in chasing after shadow, although this may eventually benefit just infinitesimal number of the unemployed youths. The reason being that Nigerian population growth rate is 2.44 per cent (Central Intelligence Agency - CIA, 2016), 1.8 million youths are added to the Nigerian labour force yearly (Falusi, 2014) and public sector job creation falls from 22,644 in 3rd quarter of 2012 to 4,818 in 3rd quarter of 2015 (NBS, 2015; Table 1). Despite bleak employment outlook, youths in Nigeria seem to still prefer public sector careers as indicated in their continuous search for careers in the public service. Self-employed youths still apply for vacant positions in the public sector, private paid workers continue to send applications to government parastatals/ministries/agencies and public paid workers desire to change job from one government job to another more preferred one. The incidence of over 6.5 million youths applying for just 4000 vacant positions in the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) affirmed this preference for careers in the public service. This preference contributes to increasing youth unemployment rate. Similarly, this does not allow accurate estimation of youth unemployment

rate because those who are not to be counted as unemployed are numbered because of their continuous desire in still seeking alternative employment. This calls for empirical investigation in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts two theories, which are Rational Choice Theory, and Social Cognitive Career Theory. Rational choice theory, also known as choice theory, has its origin in neo-classical economics as well as Unitarianism and Game Theory (Simpson, 2007; Lindenberg, 2001; Levi et al., 1990). A pioneering figure in establishing rational choice theory in sociology was George Homans (1961), who set out a basic framework of exchange theory, which he grounded in assumptions drawn from behaviourist psychology. On the other hand, the social cognition career theory (Lent, 2005; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2002) is rooted in Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, especially self-efficacy theory. It provides an overarching framework to understand the development of career interest, career choices and career performances. Social cognitive career theory focuses on the interaction between social (environment) and cognition (person) in explaining how individual interests, choices and performances are influenced. This is achieved through the interactions among three basic tenets: self-efficacy, outcome expectation and personal goals (Lent et al., 1994).

Rational choice theory focuses on the ability of individuals to make 'rational' or calculable career choice. This is achieved through logical assessment of the costs and benefits within two social constraints: scarce resources and social control. Hence, individuals tend to pursue careers which give maximum benefits (such as allowances and prompt promotion) and minimum costs (such as job flexibility and favourable hours/days of work); while at the same time is attainable given the social constraints (such as cultural beliefs and government policies). Individual actions are therefore undertaken to achieve objectives that are consistent with an actor's career preference as determined by cost-benefit analysis. However, rational choice theory fails to accommodate chance events and the role of environmental (or contextual) factors in making career choices.

Social cognitive career theory addressed the weaknesses of rational choice theory by taking into account the role of environmental factors, although it may fail to consider others (which the latter in turn addressed). Social cognitive career theory emphasizes the influence of individual person (such as age, sex and education) and social-cultural factors (such as career counsellors, social expectations, and government policies) on the development of career interest and the eventual career decision-making. It posits that cognitive-person variables (self-efficacy, outcome expectation and personal goal) are shaped by four primary sources (mastery, modelling, social persuasion and physiological state), which are in turn the results of cultural factors. Therefore, career choice is a dynamic process in which the person and his/her environment jointly influence each other; and in which individual interests may be compromised due to contextual factors to the person such as cultural beliefs and norms as well as government policies. Hence, both rational choice theory and social cognitive career theory suggest that the factors influencing youth preference for public careers are culturally determined.

Method

The study was carried out in Ibadan South west Nigeria. Ibadan is the largest metropolitan geographical area in Nigeria and the third largest metropolitan area (by population) after Lagos and Kano (Demographia, 2016). The study adopted concurrent triangulation mixed method research design. The research is descriptive in nature and sought to find out the reasons for public sector jobs preference. To achieve this, the study employed both quantitative and qualitative primary data sources in order to generate a complete data that will aid comprehensive and unbiased inferences. For quantitative data, the study population consisted of youths between ages 18 and 40 years who were final year students and fresh graduates of tertiary institutions, self-employed workers, and workers in both private and public paid employments. Experienced public servants were targeted for the qualitative data. A sample size of 505 respondents was selected for this study. The sample for the quantitative data was selected via quota non-probabilistic sampling technique because first, it involved selection to meet certain criteria and second, the sample frame for the segment of the population targeted was not available. Also, purposive non-probabilistic sampling method was employed to select six interviewees based on their knowledge of the public service, from whom qualitative data were generated. This was to complement the survey data.

The research employed mixed instruments of data collection. Structured questionnaire (consisting of both closed-ended and open-ended questions) was administered on each category of youths to generate quantitative data while structured interview guide was utilized to elicit qualitative data. The questionnaire was divided into sections starting with socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and then followed by other sections capturing the objective of the study. In addition, the interview guide was structured in line with the objective of the study. For the quantitative data, a total of 505 copies of questionnaire were collected and analysed for this study. In addition, two in-depth interview sessions were conducted for male and female public servants selected from each of the federal, state and local government secretariats in the study location.

The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive analyses of key variables such as socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, prevalence of youth preference for public sector jobs, reasons for youth preference for public sector jobs were carried out. Also, thematic content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data.

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Sample for the quantitative data were obtained from five categories of youths (final year undergraduates, fresh graduates, public paid workers, private paid workers and self-employed youths) whose mean age and median ages were approximately 30 years and 28 years respectively. Also, the age range of the respondents was between 18 and 40 years. The sample consisted of both male and female gender in almost equal proportion while majority (58.6 per cent) of the respondents were single and 41.4 per cent were married. Approximately two-third (66.5 per cent) of the respondents earned between ₦10, 000 and ₦49, 999 monthly. In addition, Table 3 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewees. A total of six adults were purposively selected and interviewed to generate qualitative responses. Two interviewees were selected from each of federal, state and local government secretariats purposively based on their experience in the public service. Their mean age was 48 years and it ranges from 37 years and 57 years. Three of them were females and all of them were married. While 4 of them

had second degrees, the remaining 2 had Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) or Higher National Diploma (HND). Also, while 3 of them had spent more than twenty years in public service, two of them had spent between 10 and 20 years in service while the remaining one had just spent less than ten years in service. Further information is presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Results

Preference for Public Sector Careers

Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents based on preference for public sector careers. The results presented therein are instructive. The findings showed that 71.7 per cent of the respondents preferred public service jobs, 19.2 per cent of the respondents did not prefer career in the public service, and 9.1 per cent of the respondents were indifferent to pursuing career in the public service. The qualitative responses confirmed preference for public sector careers among Nigerian youths. For example, a 37-year-old male with 9 years of experience in the local public service said: “Youths prefer public sector jobs because that has always been the preconception. The moment they finish or graduate from school, they will want to work with the public organisation”. Also, a 50-year-old female interviewee in the state public service, while putting parental role into consideration, stated thus: “Nigerian youths prefer public sector careers because that has always been the agitation of the parents so that their children will be at the helm of affairs in the government and be relevant”. However, while stating the dwindling preference for public sector careers among Nigerian youths, a 37-year man with ten years of experience in the state public service argued that “Nigerian youths before now, preferred public sector works to private sectors. But recently, people are trying to change their mind again for reason best known to them.”

When asked the extent of their preference for public sector careers, 43.4 per cent of the respondents who preferred public sector careers said they preferred it to a ‘very large extent’. While one-third (33.4 per cent) of the respondents who indicated their preference for public sector careers ‘largely’ preferred it, 21 per cent of the sample who preferred public sector careers only preferred it to ‘an extent’. Meanwhile, the proportion of those who preferred a career in the public service to a ‘small extent’ (1.4 per cent) was infinitesimal while that of those who preferred public sector careers to a ‘very small extent’ (0.8 per cent) was very minor. More information on this is provided in Table 4.

Reasons for Preference

Table 5 presents the distribution of respondents based on a number of factors influencing youth preference for public sector careers. Job security and economic benefits (such as pension and gratuity) were rated very high among other factors. While 35.1 per cent preferred public service jobs because of job security, 29.8 per cent were encouraged because of economic benefits such as pension and gratuity. Aside these two major factors, 13.5 per cent of the respondents’ perception of public service jobs was a factor for preference. Furthermore, while 7.5 per cent of the respondents who preferred careers in the public service were motivated because of the negative perception of their current working condition, 5 per cent of them preferred public sector job because of its social recognition and prestige. Lastly, 4.7 per cent of the respondents cited altruistic service motive.

Data from the qualitative tradition affirm these most important factors for youth preference for public sector jobs. Job security was cited as a very important factor. For example, a 57-year-old married woman in the federal public service, indicated:

“The first reason is the security of that job. When you work with the public sector, there tends to be a high level of security concerning the job contrary to what operates in the private sector where the owner of the job can just wake up one morning and say I don’t need your service again.”

Confirming this view, another 37-year-old public servant said there is high preference for public sector career “because of the job security and because it is a pensionable job”. According to him, after years of service, one is entitled to gratuity and pension. While investigating further on the factors encouraging youth preference for public sector careers, a 50-year-old female public service affirmed thus: “the only two most important factors are just those I have mentioned that it is pensionable and there is security of job”. In the light of these, high preference for public sector careers was recorded among Nigerian youths mostly because of social security and economic benefits such as pension and gratuity, although remuneration in the public service might not be attractive.

Discussion

The findings revealed high preference for public sector careers and majority of the respondents preferred careers in the public service to a very large extent. This finding confirms the fact that careers in the public service are preferred by Nigerian youths and that the eagerness of those who preferred careers in the public service was very high.

The result on high preference for public sector careers in Nigeria confirms Norris’ (2004) findings that reported more than 70 per cent preference for public sector careers in countries such as Russia, Slovenia, Cyprus and Bangladesh (see Chart 1). Also, the result confirms other studies such as Boudarbat (2005), Hyder and Reilly (2005), Said (2004), Mengistae (1999) and Blaug (1979) which all reported preference for public sector careers.

What therefore account for this high preference for public sector careers among Nigerian youths? The major reasons adduced for preference for public sector careers were job security; economic benefits such as pension and gratuity; nature of public service jobs; negative perception of the current working condition; societal values attached to public service; and altruistic service motive. This was also supported by the qualitative tradition where emphasis was laid on social security and pension (although not influenced by high remuneration). These findings support earlier studies. For examples, Perera et al. (2010) had reported ‘opportunity to develop skills and competency’, ‘salary’, ‘other facilities’ and job security’ to be the major factors influencing preference for public sector careers. Also, Barsoum (2015), Rose (2015), and Hyder (2007), had reported job security, money, and altruistic service motive to be the most important factors influencing youth preference for public sector careers. Moreover, this study supports the findings of Famous, Adebimpe and Abiola, (2002) who reported that money was not important factor influencing youth preference for public sector careers. Rather, they reported that money was important in seeking careers in the private sector. Also, Light (2003) reported that money was the least factor influencing preference for public sector careers.

These findings further confirm the synthesis of rational choice theory and social cognitive career theory. The theories posit that individuals make rational choices in term of cost-benefits

ratio and these choices are influenced by factors beyond the individuals. Since public sector career is seen as the most secured job and the one that guarantees future benefits, Nigerian youths will continue to prefer it because rational individuals will seek employment which maximizes benefits (such as social security and economic rewards) and minimizes cost (for example, unsecured job and irregular remuneration) and at the same time, is attainable given social constraints.

Job security was considered the most pressing reason probably because of the social cost of losing a job. Considering the high dependency ratio in Africa at large and in Nigeria in particular (87.7 per cent; Central Intelligence Agency, 2016), losing a job might be very costly, not only to the individual concerned but also to the extended family of such individual.

Moreover, provision for contributory pension scheme and gratuity characterising the public service influenced preference for public sector careers among Nigerian youths. Although the former pension-for-life is no longer obtainable in the public service, the contributory pension scheme still adds to the economic benefits influencing youth preference for public sector careers. Despite the fact that money seems to be a key factor determining career choices (especially in the private sector), the findings revealed that remuneration in the Nigerian public service was not encouraging. This suggests that Nigerian youths were not motivated by the present monthly salary provided by the government; instead, they were much influenced to seek careers in the public service because of their future expectation of collecting pension and gratuity. In other words, Nigerian youths were more futuristic. This tradition is rooted in the Nigerian traditional belief systems, which emphasize more consideration for the future than the present.

The people's perception of the nature of the Nigerian public service also influenced many Nigerian youths to consider seeking careers therein. Nigerian youths believe that careers in the public service are more flexible. They see careers in the public service as an avenue to engage in other personal endeavours such as personal/family businesses that would provide them with extra income, thereby encouraging moonlighting. In addition, it provides them the opportunity to attend social events such as religious meetings during *Jumat* on Fridays and Christian worship services on Saturday or Sundays; birthday parties; naming and wedding ceremonies; as well as holidays declared by the government. Attending these kinds of events reflect the spirit of communalism that characterised Nigerian pre-colonial society. Also, these kinds of gatherings encourage the spirits of collectivism and brotherliness, which is part and parcel of the Nigerian culture in the pre-colonial era. Moreover, Nigerian youths believe that careers in the public service are less stressful than in any other sector. Nigerian youths considered public sector careers as an opportunity to engage very little effort and earn 'easy money' as against what was obtained in the private sector where workers were strictly monitored and engaged. This confirms the Yoruba common saying, '*a kii s'ise oba lagun*' (one does not sweat while working for 'government'). This orientation to public sector jobs is embedded in the Nigerian belief system and had been transferred from the pre-colonial era to date.

Lastly, the values attached to careers in the public service influenced Nigerian youths to prefer careers therein. During the colonial era, the public service was reserved for the educated ones; it was seen as befitting jobs and encouraged corporate dress; it provided the opportunity to reach the peak of one's career; among others. These made public service to be highly valued and prestigious. Historically, workers in the public service were highly rated and referenced;

they were considered the few privileged that shared in the national cake. This arguably made parents to desire their children to replace them, thereby turning public service into household job. This orientation had therefore influenced Nigerian youths to prefer careers in the public service.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that high preference for public sector careers existed among Nigerian youths to a very large extent and that the major reasons for preference for public sector careers among Nigerian youths are: social security; economic benefits such as pension and gratuity; the nature of the public service; negative perception of the current working condition, societal values attached to public service, and altruistic service motive. Policies that will regulate pay scheme and ensure job security are therefore recommended in the private sector, especially the informal sector as well as small and medium enterprises. Also, good infrastructural facilities should be provided so as to make Nigerian environment more conducive for businesses, to reduce high dependence on the public sector for employment generation. Future empirical investigation should extend the sample size in other metropolitan areas to generate findings that will be more acceptably generalisable for comparative analysis and for examining historical changes needful for effective developmental plan.

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APPENDICES

Figures and Tables

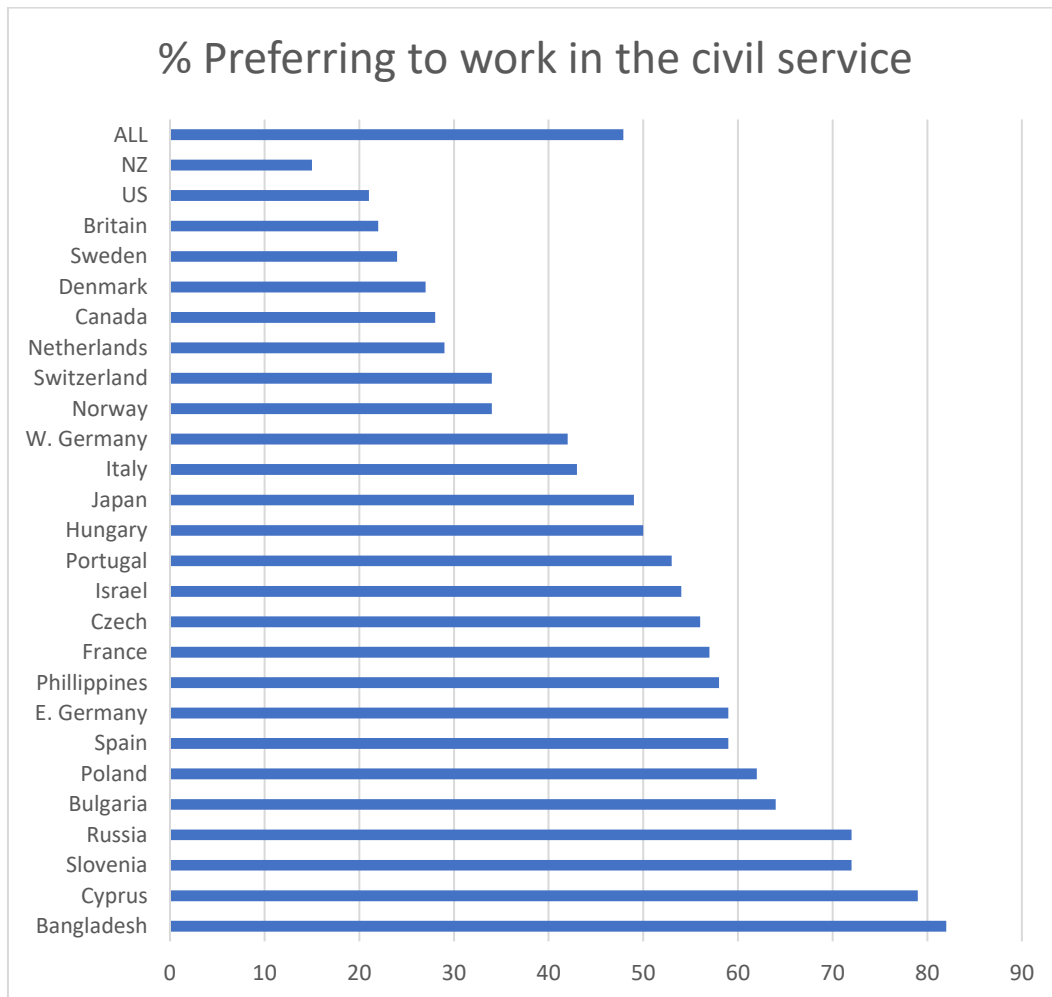


Chart 1: Preferences for working in the public sector

Source: Norris, P. (2004). *Still a Public Service Ethos? Work values, experience, and job satisfaction among government workers*. John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Table 1: Job Creation in Formal, Informal and Public Sector Jobs between 2012 and 2015

NEW JOBS ALL SECTORS QUARTER 3, 2012 – QUARTER 3, 2015													
Sectors	2012		2013				2014				2015		
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Formal jobs	164,293	152,018	174,326	80,412	76,385	101,597	76,018	78,755	145,464	138,026	130,941	51,070	41,672
Informal jobs	240,359	208,920	232,327	112,567	140,673	143,278	158,894	175,786	198,144	227,072	332,403	83,903	428,690
Public sector jobs	22,644	24,975	24,368	28,075	28,931	20,827	5,959	4,812	5,735	4,387	5,726	6,395	4,818
Total new jobs	427,296	385,913	431,021	221,054	245,989	265,702	240,871	259,353	349,343	369,485	469,070	141,368	475,480

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2015). *Employment (Job) Creation Survey, 3rd Quarter 2015*. Nigeria.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on socio-demographic characteristics

Independent variables	n	%
Age		
18-20 years	54	10.7
21-25 years	123	24.4
26-30 years	127	25.1
31-35 years	71	14.1
36-40 years	130	25.7
Sex		
Male	259	51.3
Female	246	48.7
Marital status		
Single	296	58.6
Married	209	41.4
Average monthly income		
Below ₦10, 000	61	12.1
₦10, 000 – ₦49, 999	336	66.5
₦50, 000 – ₦99, 999	69	13.7
₦100, 000 and above	39	7.7
Highest level of education attained		
Primary	2	0.4
Secondary	40	7.9
Tertiary	463	91.7
Total	505	100.0

Table 3: Distribution of interviewees according to socio-demographic characteristics

Variables	N
Age	
31-40 years	2
41-50 years	2
51-60 years	2
Sex	
Male	3
Female	3
Marital status	
Married	6
Highest level of education	
M.Sc./M.A.	4
B.Sc./HND	2
Years in service	
1-10 years	2

11-20 years	1
21-30 years	3
Total	6

Table 4: Distribution of respondents based on preference (and the extent of preference) for Public Sector Careers

Preference for public sector careers	N	%
Yes	362	71.7
No	97	19.2
Indifferent	46	9.1
Total	505	100.0
Extent of preference for public sector careers		
Very small extent	3	0.8
Small extent	5	1.4
An extent	76	21.0
Large extent	121	33.4
Very large extent	157	43.4
Total	362	100.0

Table 5: Distribution of respondents based on the factors influencing preference for public sector careers

Cultural factors influencing preference for public sector careers	N (%)	Rating
Social security	127 (35.1)	1st
Belief system on the nature of public service	49 (13.5)	3rd
Economic benefits	108 (29.8)	2nd
Negative perception of the current working condition	27 (7.5)	4th
Societal values attached to public service	18 (5.0)	5th
Personal reasons	7 (1.9)	7th
Prospect for career development	4 (1.1)	8th
Altruistic service motive	17 (4.7)	6th
Challenging work	3 (0.8)	9th
Enhances collectivity	2 (0.6)	10th
Total	362 (100.0)	