



## Examining the Influence of Job Security and Reward Systems on Employee Preferences for Public Sector Employment in Nigeria

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### Abstract

This study investigates the variables influencing Nigerian workers' widespread preference for jobs in the public sector. To understand the underlying reasons for the persistent preference for public sector employment, the study explores the complex dynamics of reward systems, job security, and job satisfaction. The research delves into the intricate interactions among these variables (reward practices, job security, and job satisfaction) and how they influence people's preference for public sector jobs. The study made use of questionnaire and interviews to obtain primary data necessary for the study. Secondary data was derived from relevant documents to complement the primary data. Quantitative data collected through questionnaire was analysed both descriptively and inferentially. The inferential statistical tool for the study is multiple regression analysis with the help of (SPSS) version 25.0. On the other hand, the responses of face-to-face interview were thematically analyzed. The study found out among others that Job security; economic benefits and job satisfaction with positive un-standardized coefficient has significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria. The study recommends among others the need for labour laws to be reviewed, especially as it applies to job placement in the private sector of the economy to prevent arbitrary displacement of workers and to reduce too much burden on the public sector jobs.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Job Security; Public Sector Employment and Reward Practices.

## Introduction

Preference for public sector employment is a global social phenomenon. In Nigeria, the available report shows that the issue has been on the increase in recent times (National Bureau of Statistics – NBS, 2016). However, the data from official reports can be confusing because not all the youths in the unemployed group are indeed not employed. Many people who are considered to be in this "unemployed" group may be self-employed, but because of the preference for wage employment (for more

rewards, job security that will engender job satisfaction) either in the public or private sector, they still see themselves "unemployed". Despite huge employment opportunities in the informal sector (NBS, 2015; Farayibi, 2015), many unemployed youths scramble for few available slots, especially in the public sector. For example, in 2014, the Leadership newspaper described that over 6.5 million Nigerians applied for less than 4,000 job slots in the Immigration Service.

Preference for public sector careers has been globally reported both

in developed and developing countries (Barsoum, 2015). Many extant studies agreed that reward practices (i.e. pay gap), job security, and job satisfaction (i.e. working conditions) in favour of the public sector compared to its private counterpart mainly accounted for this high preference. For example, Rahman and Al-Hasan (2018) reported sizeable wage differentials in favour of the public sector at the detriment of the private sector and examined the changes as regards earnings inequalities between public and private. In Morocco, Boudarbat (2005) noted a preference for public sector careers and a willingness among the educated to engage in 'wait' unemployment to secure more well-paid and stable public sector careers. In the same vein, in Ethiopia, Mengistae (1999) argued that public sector workers were more remunerated than private sector workers; this resulted in a continuous preference for public sector careers in the urban labour market. Needless to say, that preference for public sector employment has the effects of causing low labour productivity, increasing the population of job seekers, and interrupting government efforts towards unemployment lessening, among others. Apart from these, preference for public sector employment, as already been confirmed by extant studies, contributes to the increasing number of unemployed youths. Governments across nations of the world have recognised this. Hence, they continued to clamor for alternative employment creation.

A report by the African Development Bank (2017) found that the public sector was the most popular employment sector for Nigerians,

followed by the informal sector and agriculture. Reasons cited for preferring the public sector included job security, benefits, and job satisfaction resulting from better working conditions. This led to a scenario where those seeking employment were struggling with high intensity and the number of private-sector job seekers was shrinking. The incidence of over 6.5 million youths applying for just 4000 vacant positions in the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) as stated above affirmed this preference for careers in the public service. It is against this background that the study assessed the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria: A tale of reward practices, job security, and job satisfaction. Though similar studies have been reviewed but none of them have described the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria from the perspective of reward system; job security and job satisfaction in public sector in Nigeria which made the study a novel within the broader field of public administration.

### Research Questions

Arising from the problems highlighted above, the study posed the following questions to guide this research. The questions are as follows.

- I. To what extent do reward practices in the public sector influence the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria?
- II. How significantly does job security in the public sector impact the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria?
- III. What is the role of job satisfaction in driving the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria?

## Research Objectives

The overall aim of the study is to assess the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria: A tale of reward practices, job security, and job satisfaction. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. To examine the extent to which reward practices in public sector significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria.
- ii. To examine the extent to which job security in public sector significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria.
- iii. To examine the extent to which job satisfaction in public sector significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria.

## Research Hypotheses

Ho<sub>1</sub> Reward practices in public sector have not significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria

Ho<sub>2</sub> Job security in public sector have not significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria

Ho<sub>3</sub> Job satisfaction in public sector have not significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria

## Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This literature review explores the existing research on the interplay between reward practices, job security, and job satisfaction in shaping the

preference for public sector employment in Nigeria. It will also examine the broader implications of these factors for workforce management and public sector efficiency. Moreover, institutional theory of public sector employment considered to be relevant to the main thrust of this study was adopted to interrogate the study.

## Conceptual Discourse

### Reward Practices in the Public Sector

Torrington (2011) describes the importance of workplace rewards as follows; reward is central to the employment relationship. In simpler terms, Downes and Choi, (2014) define Reward as a broad construct that has been said to represent anything that an employee may value that an employer is willing to offer in exchange for his or her contributions. While there are plenty of people who enjoy working and who claim they would not stop working even if they were to win a big cash prize in a lottery, most of us work in large part because it is our only means of earning the money we need to sustain us and our families. He added that how much we are paid and in what form is therefore an issue that matters hugely to us. In line with the previous assertion, Wilson (2013) describes rewards and their purpose as including systems, programme, and practices that influence the actions of people. The purpose of the reward system is to provide a systematic way to deliver positive consequences. There are, however, various typologies of reward and nearly all these typologies of reward can be broadly partitioned into four categories (Muchinsky and Nelson-

Gray., 2018, p. 226). The four broad typologies are:

- a) **Wages and Salary:** Wages are what is paid to employees who are not permanently employed and typically pertain to hourly rates of pay (the more hours worked, the greater the pay), while salary is what is paid to people who are permanently employed and this is at a fixed weekly, monthly, or annual rate of pay.
- b) **Incentive Plans:** This is an additional reward that is above and beyond the employees' wage or salary provided. It may be long-term or short-term in nature.
- c) **Employee Benefit Programmes:** Time off with pay, pension scheme, tuition reimbursement, recreation activities, and cafeteria services are all examples of employee benefit programmes.
- d) **Additional Privileges:** Employees in organisations may have other privileges such as the usage of company vehicles/cars, club membership, or traveling allowance. These privileges may be a substantial part of the reward, especially for the executives.

### Job Security

Job security has an important role in helping individuals or employees work and not worrying too much about future careers, promotions, etc. Rabenu, Yaniv, and Elizur, (2016) defined job security as the expectations of employees for the continuity and continuity of their work, which includes important matters such as promotion opportunities, general working conditions, and long-term career

opportunities. Maintaining employee job security is also an important matter for agencies.

In addition to the understanding of job security previously disclosed, it is also described by Senol, (2011), that job security is a guarantee that an employee will remain in his job without the risk of experiencing unemployment and guarantees that employees and their families will not lose income and maintain their lives to remain decent.

### Job Satisfaction

Robbins and Judge, (2017) stated that job satisfaction is a feeling of someone positive about his job which is the result of an evaluation of the characteristics of the job. In another view, Gibson, Ivancevic, and Konopaske, (2012) explained that job satisfaction does not automatically increase productivity, although employee dissatisfaction tends to reduce productivity, cause more frequent avoidance of work, or cause work results to be of lower quality than satisfied employees. In other words, job satisfaction is a reaction to an employee's feelings about work or work experience, an employee feels whether or not there is a match between what is expected and what he gets for various things related to the work environment, work relationship, job security, reward, the job itself and so on (Zainal, Hadad, and Ramly, 2019). Relating it to reward, Aziri (2011) defined job satisfaction as "doing the work one likes, doing it well, and being rewarded for own efforts". This is the reason why Raziq and Maulabakhsh, (2015) assert that job satisfaction is an essential element in

motivating employees and encouraging them to achieve better results.

One of the most often cited definitions of job satisfaction is the one given by Spector (2017) according to whom job satisfaction has to do with the way people feel about their job and its various aspects. It has to do with the extent to which people like or dislike their job. That's why job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction can appear in any given work situation. Thus, from the description above it can be summarized that job satisfaction is a picture of positive feelings or a positive emotional condition psychologically from a person for his job, thus forming certain attitudes and behaviours of an employee towards work or organization according to what he feels.

### **Public Sector Employment in Nigeria: The Legal and Institutional Formwork**

Several legal and institutional frameworks shape public sector employment in Nigeria. These include among others the following:

- a) **The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria:** The Constitution defines the powers and duties of the government, as well as the structure of the public service.
- b) **The Public Service Rules (PSR):** The Public Service Rules lays out the rules and regulations governing public service, including recruitment, promotion, and retirement. Federal Civil Service Commission is the main body responsible for the implementation of PSR and for managing the public service (see 4 below).

### **c) The Federal Character**

**Commission:** The Federal Character Commission ensures that public sector appointments are made by the principles of federal character and equality of States.

### **d) The Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC):** The Federal Civil Service Commission is responsible for the management and discipline of public servants.

### **e) The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC):** The Nigerian Labour Congress represents the interest of public sector workers and negotiates their benefits (1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; [www.fedcivilservice.gov.ng](http://www.fedcivilservice.gov.ng), and [www.bpsr.gov.ng](http://www.bpsr.gov.ng)).

### **Preference for Public Sector: The Push Factors**

There are several reasons why many Nigerians prefer the public sector over the private sector. Among them include the following:

- a) **Job Security:** The public sector offers a greater sense of job security. even during times of economic downturn, government employees are less likely to be laid off than those in the private sector.
- b) **Economic Benefits:** The public sector offers better benefits (such as pensions, healthcare, and gratuity).
- c) **Greater Opportunities for Advancement:** The public sector offers greater opportunities for advancement, as promotions are often based on seniority rather than performance.



- d) **More Vacation Time:** The public sector offers more vacation time and paid holidays than the private sector.
- e) **Higher Job Satisfaction:** The public sector is seen as offering a higher level of job satisfaction due to the sense of purpose and fulfilment that comes from serving the community and the nation at large.
- f) **Stability and Predictability:** The public sector is seen as more stable and predictable than the private sector (assumed to be volatile) (Afro-Barometer report, 2017-2018).

### Review of Empirical Studies

Rahman and Al-Hasan (2018) examines the underlying factors contributing to the changing scenario concerning the relative attractiveness of public sector jobs in Bangladesh vis-à-vis private sector jobs. The study focussed on wage differentials between the public and the private sector and examines the changes as regards earnings inequalities between groups (public versus private). The study relied on secondary data to arrive at a logical conclusion. The study revealed that following the salary scale revision of 2015, public sector jobs in the country have become more attractive for job seekers looking for salaried employment than the private sector jobs even though the private sectors have been able to adjust their salaries in response to government pay scale revision. The current study described the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria from the perspective of reward practices, job security and job

satisfaction in public sector in Nigeria which made the study a novel within the broader field of public administration.

Ajida Zareen Zilakat Khan Amjad Amin (2019) investigates empirical analysis of the determinants of the preferences for public sector jobs in District Peshawar. The study attempts to study the determinants of preferences for public sector jobs of the educated youth in district Peshawar. Primary data was collected from 210 respondents in the district of Peshawar. Data is analysed using multiple regression analysis to estimate the relationship between job preferences and the factors affecting them. Age negatively affects preferences for public sector jobs while wage differences, gender and education positively effects job preferences for public sector jobs. The study concludes that more fringe benefits are given in public sector jobs and less in private sector jobs. To control unemployment, the study recommended that the government must bring a balance between the public and private sector jobs. The current study described the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria not only from the perspective of reward system but also from the perspective of job security and job satisfaction in public sector in Nigeria which made the study a novel within the broader field of public administration.

Ajani, Oludele, and Albert (2019) identified reasons for public sector jobs preference in comparison to self-employment or private-sector jobs in Nigeria. A 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 the majority of the respondents preferred public-sector careers. Job security; economic benefits were the major reasons for preference. The current study added job satisfaction to the other two variables to make it a novel in the field of public sector preference. Moreover, our current study adopted sequential mixed research design (i.e. presenting quantitative and qualitative data separately as against concurrently).

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Institutional Theory of Public Sector Employment by Paul Light (1983)**

The institutional theory of public sector employment is propounded by Paul Light (1983). This theory stresses that people prefer public sector jobs because they offer greater job security, benefits, and pension plans than private sector jobs. Additionally, people may prefer public sector jobs because they are associated with higher social status and prestige (Røvik, 2020). According to James and Richard (1992), the institutional theory of public-sector employment is based on three key assumptions: "People prefer security and stability over risk and change; People are motivated by more than just economic incentives; and Social and cultural factors play a major role in shaping people's preferences". Looking at the aforementioned assumptions, it is logical to adopt the institutional theory of public sector employment to underpin our study, as the key variables

are job security, job satisfaction, and benefits as the major reasons for the preference for public sector jobs in Nigeria.

### **Gouldner's Reciprocity Theory**

Gouldner's theory was proposed by Alvin Gouldner in (1960), a well-known American sociologist. His work on reciprocity and trust in human interactions has been widely referenced in the social sciences and organizational behavior literature. This theory suggests that public sector employees are attracted to jobs that offer a high level of job security, a strong sense of fairness in rewards and compensation, and a supportive work environment. This leads to a sense of reciprocity, where employees feel obligated to contribute their best efforts to the organization in return for its support (Gouldner, 1960).

The application of Gouldner's Reciprocity Theory in the context of Nigeria's public sector is particularly relevant given the country's high unemployment rates and widespread concerns about job security and government stability. Some key issues that link the Gouldner's Reciprocity Theory to public sector job preference in Nigeria include:

- a. **Job Security:** The public sector in Nigeria is often viewed as offering more stable and secure employment opportunities compared to the private sector. This stability, in turn, can lead to a sense of reciprocity among public sector employees, who may feel a sense of loyalty to the organization in exchange for its support.

b. **Better Compensation:** The Nigerian public sector is often perceived as providing more attractive compensation packages than the private sector. This includes higher salaries, benefits such as pensions, and other perks. This can lead to a sense of reciprocity among employees, as they may feel obligated to perform at a high level in return for these rewards.

Therefore, Gouldner's Reciprocity Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the preferences of Nigerian workers towards public sector jobs. Key factors such as job security, compensation, and a supportive work environment can lead to a strong sense of reciprocity among employees, resulting in greater motivation, loyalty, and performance in public sector jobs.

## Methodology

This study adopted sequential mixed method also known as integrating or multimethod (Bryman, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The rationale behind the choice of

‘explanatory sequential mixed method procedures’ is to elaborate on the findings of one method (questionnaire) with another method (interview). In other words, the study lies on its ability to broaden understanding by incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research.

## Population and Sampling of the Study

The target population for the study includes public and private sector employees including the civil servants, administrators, and support staff within reach during the period of the study. They also include academic staff of public administration in Kwara State University. On the part of the private sector, small business owners in Ilorin metropolis and corporate sector workers like those working in the banks and manufacturing industries were consulted. The population of the study is summarized in table 1.

**Table 1: Population of the Study**

S/No.	Respondent's Category	Population of Respondents
1	Civil Servants in Ministry of Education, Ilorin	40
2	Administrators in Ministry of Finance, Ilorin	30
3	Support Staff, Ministry of Communication, Ilorin	40
4	Staff of Tuyil Manufacturing company, Ilorin	25
5	Staff of selected Banks	35
	Total	170

**Source:** Research Survey, 2024

On the overall, the cumulative total of the target population is one-hundred and seventy (170) respondents. Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table was used to determine the overall sample size for the

study. According to Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table, (1970), in a population of one-hundred and seventy (170), the appropriate sample size is one-hundred and eighteen (118) respondents. The Krejcie and Morgan



sample size determination table (See Appendix).

### Instruments of Data Collection/ Data Analysis

The instruments of data collection are both primary and secondary data. While questionnaire and interview were the primary methods of data; reliable documents like Premium Times and Nigerian Tribune Newspaper, 2022 constituted the secondary sources of data for the study. However, the primary (quantitative) data was analysed using multiple regression and the interview responses were thematically presented and analysed.

**Table 2: Regression Output 1**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1802.639	3	600.880	3476.407	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	67.237	389	.173		
Total	1869.876	392			

a. Dependent Variable: PREFERENCE\_FOR\_PUBLIC\_SECTOR\_EMPLOYMENT

b. Predictors: (Constant), REWARD\_PRACTICES; JOB\_SECURITY AND JOB\_SATISFACTION

*Source:* SPSS Output, 2024.

Table 3 above shows the result from the multiple regression analysis which tests the effects of the independent variables (i.e. reward practices; job security and job satisfaction) on the preference for

### Data Presentation and Analysis

This section deals with the data presentation and analysis. A total of 118 copies of questionnaire were administered to staff of selected public and private sector organizations. Though, one-hundred and eighteen (118) questionnaires were printed and distributed, but one-hundred and 102 questionnaire representing 89.44% of the total questionnaire were duly filled and returned, while 16 questionnaire representing 10.6% of the total questionnaire were not returned. Therefore, 102 questionnaires formed the basis for analysis and interpretation.

public sector employment in Nigeria. The F-statistic which measures the adequacy and goodness of fit of the model used in the study stood at 3476.407 with a p-value of 0.000<sup>b</sup> which is significant at 5%; this shows that the model is absolutely fit for the data.

**Table 3 Regression Output 2**

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.982 <sup>a</sup>	.964	.964	.41575	1.65

a. Predictors: (Constant), REWARD\_PRACTICES; JOB\_SECURITY AND JOB\_SATISFACTION

b. Dependent Variable: PREFERENCE\_FOR\_PUBLIC\_SECTOR\_EMPLOYMENT

*Source:* SPSS Output, 2024.

Table 4 above shows the summary of the multiple regression analysis. The empirical findings show that R – the

multiple correlation coefficient, stood at 0.982<sup>a</sup> which indicates a correlation; R<sup>2</sup>, the multiple coefficient of determining

the variables stood at 0.964 indicating that about 96.4% of the total variation in the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria is explained by variations in the 'independent variables' (i.e. reward practices; job security and job satisfaction) captured in the study. Thus, the remaining 3.6% of the variation in the dependent variable can

be explained by other variables not captured in the study. The adjusted  $R^2$  being 0.964 also indicates that the independent variables will still explain 96.4% of the variations in the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria even if other variables were added to the study.

**Table 4: Regression Output 3**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients				
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.036	.104		.348	.728
REWARD_PRACTICES	.606	.022	.837	27.385	.000
JOB_SECURITY	.149	.018	.199	8.248	.000
JOB_SATISFACTION	.135	.024	.042	5.642	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ACADEMIC\_STAFFS'\_PERFORMANCE

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

Table 5 above shows the outcome of the respective variables on the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria. Upon the fulfilment of the assumptions of regression analysis, multiple regression analysis was considered suitable in testing the research hypotheses. The respective hypotheses as tested in table 4 are discussed as follows:

**Ho<sub>1</sub> Reward practices in public sector have not significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria.**

The unstandardized coefficient of "reward practices" stood at 0.606 which is positive. This implies that the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria has significantly led to reward practices. However, the significance of this can be judged from the P value represented as "sig". The t statistics of "reward practices" stood at

27.385 with a p-value of 0.000. The p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship depicted in the model is significant at 95% confidence level. This implies that the study does not have enough statistical evidence to accept the null hypothesis. Based on the above analysis, the study failed to accept the null hypothesis Ho<sub>1</sub>, which states that "Reward practices in public sector have not significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria".

**Ho<sub>2</sub> Job security in public sector has not significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria.**

The unstandardized coefficient of "job security" stood at 0.149 which is positive. This implies that the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria has significantly led to job security. However, the significance of this can be judged from

the P value represented as “sig”. The t statistics of “job security” stood at 8.248 with a p-value of 0.000. The p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship depicted in the model is significant at 95% confidence level. This implies that the study does not have enough statistical evidence to accept the null hypothesis. Based on the above analysis, the study failed to accept the null hypothesis  $H_{02}$ , which states that “Job security in public sector has not significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria”.

**$H_{03}$  Job satisfaction in public sector has not significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria.**

The unstandardized coefficient of “job satisfaction in public sector” stood

at 0.135 which is also positive. This implies that the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria has significantly led to job satisfaction in Nigerian public sector. However, the significance of this can be judged from the P value represented as “sig”. The t statistics of “job satisfaction in public sector” stood at 5.642 with a p-value of 0.000. The p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship depicted in the model is significant at 95% confidence level. This implies that the study does not have enough statistical evidence to accept the null hypothesis. Based on the above analysis, the study failed to accept the null hypothesis  $H_{03}$ , which states that “Job satisfaction in public sector have not significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria”.

**Table 5 Socio-Demographic Data of Interview Respondents**

S/N	Position	Gender	Code	Date
1.	Head of Admin, Ministry of Education, Ilorin	M	(R <sub>1</sub> )	7/05/2024
2.	Principal staff of Ministry of Finance, Ilorin	M	(R <sub>2</sub> )	7/05/2024
3.	Security Staff of Ministry of Communication, Ilorin	M	(R <sub>3</sub> )	7/05/2024
4.	Principal Staff of Tuyil Manufacturing company, Ilorin	F	(R <sub>4</sub> )	8/05/2024
5.	Zenith Bank Manager	M	(R <sub>5</sub> )	8/05/2024

**Source:** Researcher’s survey 2024. **Note:** R = Respondent; M = Male and F = Female.

**Theme I: The nexus between reward practices in public sector and preference for public sector employment in Nigeria** The respondents unanimously stated thus:

The public sector offers range of benefits (such as pensions, healthcare, and gratuity). The public sector offers greater opportunities for advancement, as promotions are often based on seniority. To cap it all, the public sector in some cases offers more vacation

time and paid holidays than the private sector (R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub>, R<sub>4</sub>, and R<sub>5</sub>).

**Theme II: The relationship between job security in public sector and the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria**

On the part of job security, the respondents stated that: “The public sector offers a greater sense of job security. Even during times of economic downturn, government employees are less likely to be laid off

than those in the private sector” ( $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ ,  $R_4$ , and  $R_5$ ).

### **Theme III: The linkage between job satisfaction in public sector and the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria**

The respondents without delay noted that; the public sector is seen as offering a higher level of job satisfaction due to the sense of purpose and fulfilment that comes from serving the community and the nation at large ( $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ ,  $R_4$ , and  $R_5$ ).

## **Analysis of Secondary Data**

However, several empirical cases are cited to illustrate the preference for public-sector employment in Nigeria. Some of the empirical cases are as follows:

A good illustration of the public sector preference in Nigeria is the case of the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) recruitment exercise in 2022, a total of 1.4 million people applied for just 4500 positions, demonstrating the high demand for public sector jobs in Nigeria. This exercise therefore calls for the need to reform the public sector, as the NIS was criticized for its inability to effectively manage the application process. Despite these challenges, the

large number of applicants highlights the widespread preference for public sector employment in Nigeria (Premium Times, 2022, May, 21).

Another example is the case of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) recruitment exercise in 2022, for this exercise, a total of 3.2 million people applied for only 4000 positions, demonstrating a similar high demand for public sector jobs. Similar to the NIS case, the FRSC was also criticized for its inability to effectively manage the large number of applicants due to the gap in positions available and the large chunk of applicants (Nigerian Tribune, 2022, October 3).

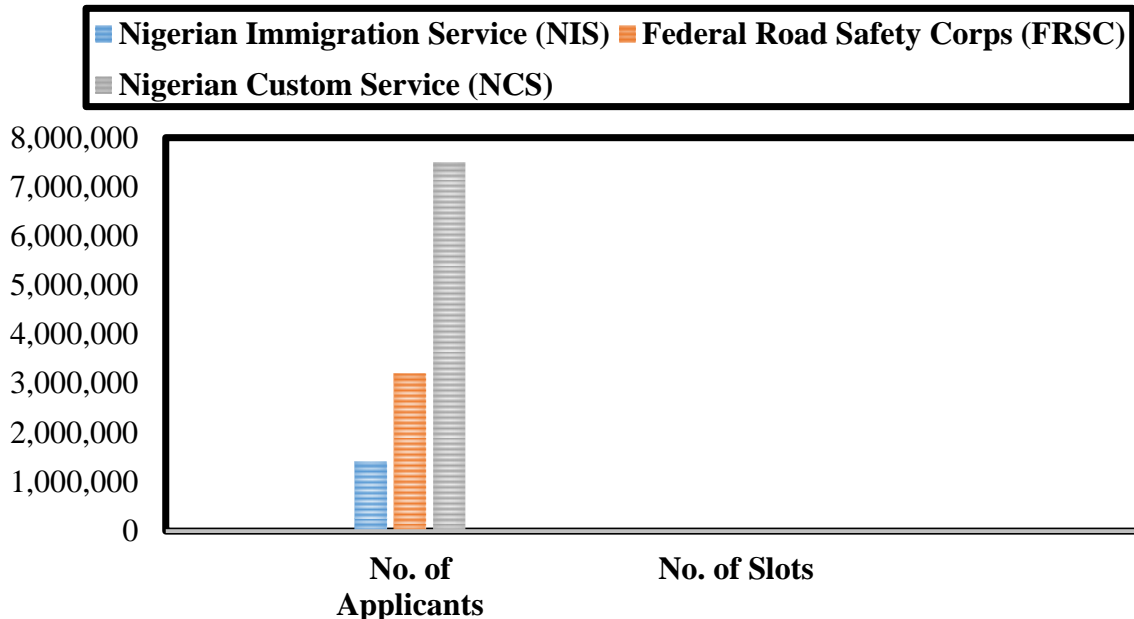
Another example is the case of the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) recruitment exercise in 2021, for this exercise, a total of 7.5 million people applied for only 7500 positions. Like the previous examples, the NCS faced challenges in managing the large number of applicants as well as the high level of nepotism that was allegedly involved in the recruitment process. Despite the aforementioned challenges, the applicants show a widespread desire for public sector jobs in Nigeria (Nigerian Tribune, 2021, March 8th).

**Table 6 Pictorial Presentation of Data for Public Sector Preference in Nigeria**

Agency	No. of Applicants	No. of Slots
Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS)	1,400000	4500
Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC)	3,200000	4000
Nigerian Customs Service (NCS)	7,500000	7500

**Source:** Premium Times, 2022, May, 21; Nigerian Tribune, 2022, October 3 and Nigerian Tribune, 2021, March 8.

**FIG. 1 PICTORIAL PRESENTATION OF DATA FOR PUBLIC SECTOR PREFERENCE IN NIGERIA**



**Source:** Excel Output, 2023

Table 7 and Figure 1 depict the data for public sector preference in Nigeria. The data shows the number of applicants and number of positions (slots) available for the large chunk of the applicants for three agencies. As shown in the figure, the number of applicants is visible (as against an invisible number of slots) which shows the popularity of public sector employment as well as its preference among citizens in Nigeria.

### Discussion of Major Findings

The study assessed the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria: A tale of reward practices, job security, and job satisfaction. From the presentation and analyses of data, a number of findings were arrived at which are discussed below. These findings were discovered from both questionnaire analysis and interview reports above under their respective themes.

- i. The study found that reward practices with unstandardized coefficient of 0.606 which is positive has significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria. However, the significance of this can be judged from the P value represented as “sig”. The p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship depicted in the model is significant at 95% confidence level.
- ii. The study also found that job security with unstandardized coefficient of 0.149 (positive) has significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria. However, the significance of this can be judged from the P value represented as “sig”. The p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship depicted in the model is significant at 95% confidence level.



- iii. On Objective III and Hypothesis III, the study discovered that job satisfaction with unstandardized coefficient of 0.135 has significantly led to the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria. However, the significance of this can be judged from the P value represented as “sig”. The p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship depicted in the model is significant at 95% confidence level.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the preference for public sector employment in Nigeria can be attributed to three main factors: job security; reward practices such as pension and gratuity, and job satisfaction. Public sector jobs offer a high level of job security, as they are less likely to be affected by economic downturns or changes in management. They also offer better reward practices such as pension plans, health insurance, and gratuity.

Finally, public sector jobs are associated with high levels of job satisfaction, as they offer a sense of pride and fulfilment that is not always found in private sector jobs. The study recommends among others the need for labour laws to be reviewed, especially as it applies to job placement in the private sector of the economy to prevent arbitrary displacement of workers and to reduce too much burden on the public sector jobs.

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**Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Determining Table**

N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	110	86	<b>320</b>	<b>175</b>
15	14	120	92	340	181
20	19	130	97	360	186
25	24	140	103	380	191
30	28	150	108	400	196
35	32	160	113	420	201
40	36	<b>170</b>	<b>118</b>	440	205
45	40	180	123	460	210
50	44	190	127	480	214
55	48	200	132	500	217
60	52	210	136	550	226
65	56	220	140	600	234
70	59	230	144	650	242
75	63	240	148	700	248
80	66	250	152	750	254
85	70	260	155	800	260
90	73	270	159	850	265
95	76	280	162	900	269
100	80	300	165	1000	274

**Source:** Krejcie and Morgan (1970). **Note:** N = Population Size and S = Sample Size.