

**IMPACT OF PUBLIC SERVICE REFORMS ON WORKERS' PRODUCTIVITY IN THE FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE, ABUJA, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** Public service performance challenges in Nigeria date back to the colonial period, leading to the introduction of many reforms as a remedy to those maladies. Those reforms, however, have not achieved any significant results. This study, therefore, sought to assess the implications of reforms in achieving organizational stability, particularly in the Nigerian civil service. It also delved into factors that led to public service reforms and ascertained their benefits to the general performance of civil servants. The study adopted a descriptive survey design using questionnaires and an interview guide to generate its primary data. The target population was made up of all the 94,511 workers in the federal civil service in Abuja. A sample of 622 participants was selected using Taro Yamane (1967) through multistage and simple random sampling techniques. Major findings of the study show that reforms were considered a potential measure of organisational ineffective and inefficient service delivery. It was discovered that the reasons why reforms have not achieved their primary objective were corruption and the parochial interests of the officials. The study recommends that the government should desist from all subtleness by intensifying efforts at all costs through a genuine willingness to tackle favouritism, nepotism and others that jeopardise government reforms in the civil service. Also, corrupt officials must be dealt with decisively to serve as a deterrent for future occurrences.

**Keywords:** Public Service Reforms, Workers' Productivity, Federal Civil Service, Corruption, Organizational Stability

## **INTRODUCTION**

The journey into public service reforms can be traced to their advent under British colonial rule in Nigeria. Although reforms have been numerous, their impact remains infinitesimal. It is convenient to say that reforms have not improved service delivery in the public sector. Alabi and Okeke (2024) observed that government fiat, reckless abandonment of procedure, and government use of force to intimidate opponents are factors militating against public service reforms in Nigeria. These factors appear also to affect institutional reforms and their implementation. Furthermore, Okorie and Owne (2016) noted that marginal success in reforms can be attributed to a lack of consultations, lack of corresponding reforms in the constitution, non-implementation of reform principles and infiltration of mediocrity in the public service. These issues originated during colonial public service, but the ecology factor in Nigeria made it feasible for them to thrive until the present time, as they continued to pose challenges despite the government's barrage of reforms (Ogunrotifa, 2019).

It is indisputable that ineffective public service performance has taken a global dimension. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2019) reported that in the

past two decades, most governments of the world have been under pressure to promote their economies through sustainable public sector performance. Obansa (2018) gives credence to the report of (the OECD) by asserting that Europe and America, which represent high-income countries of the world in line with the recommendations of the OECD, opted for the modern use of techniques in public sector management to sustain improved performances of their public institutions. Therefore, governments of different countries are mounting overdue emphasis on performance as a prerequisite to core requirements for competitiveness as fundamental/essential to the globalisation of the world. The developed countries are far on a journey into public sector reforms for effective performance as their journey began years ago, around the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (OECD, 2019).

The developing countries of the world at the dawn of the century upheld public sector performance with intensely practical concern. Research has shown that public ineptitude performance is the major issue entangling the development of most African nations. However, social reformers attributed the backward state of developing countries to a lack of weak institutional framework, inappropriate technologies, gross incompetence, defective capital structures, bureaucratic inflexibility and complexity (Kwaghga, 2010). Charles and Batholomew (2019) remarked that Nigeria's public sector is polluted by the global dynamics with its compartment of global economic demand, advances in technology and increase in citizens' demands in all sectors. Therefore, improved performance in the way of management becomes imperative as workforce capacity building is a fundamental requirement for the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. It is pertinent to recall that a standardised performance management system allied with organisational goals might equip individuals and agencies for effective performance, which is largely missing out as a necessity to change the community's perception of the sector in general (Charles & Bartholomew, 2019).

Alabi (2019) observed that bureaucratic organisations in Nigeria are full of contradictions, leading to performance abysmal in many circumstances. It is characterised by excessive bureaucratisation, which is the major reason for unbridled intrusion by the political class coupled with attendant consequences emanating from globalisation and anti-democratization, which feature public service nowadays as key limitations to success. In addition, Alabi (2019) argued that public service has become something unimaginable, associated with corrupt practices, mediocre and fraudulent with impunity. It is apparent that the state of the public sector in Nigeria is continuously depleting or near to completely irredeemable. Weak morale, poor remuneration, workforce incompetence and merit abandonment are factors stumbled upon by public institutions. These prevailing organisational circumstances are not in tandem with the global best practices. Part of the reasons for the continual marginal success in the public sector ineptitude performance is the prolonged military rule in Nigeria coupled with the attendant inconsistency of the policies (Okolie, 2010; Fajana, 2010; Ibietan, 2013; Adebisi, 2014) but beyond these internal obstacles are external factors unique to the ecology of Nigeria that are inconsequential and undermines every attempt to success. Therefore, Nigeria's public service continually manifests symptoms of bureaucratic inappropriateness and challenges that have hampered the foundation and purpose of its establishment. It is against this background that governments have introduced reforms in an attempt to reposition the public sector; incidentally, those reforms were not effective. Therefore, this study is an attempt to analyse public service reforms and the output of workers in Nigeria.

Presently, there are growing calls for new reforms to be instituted to revamp bureaucratic procedures that are not in tandem with positive change that will foster innovation and progress. It follows that bureaucratic processes, structures and techniques, and managerial procedures

need to be reassessed with the aim of providing solutions to clients' dissatisfaction (Charles & Bartholomew, 2019). This will bring about a restoration quest for developmental needs as desired by the people to be entertained. As (Osawe, 2015) put forward, public service reforms in Nigeria should be focused on building public service that is result-oriented, a professionally and technologically advanced workforce that is driven by the spirit of high performance as requisite to the changing global world. Consequently, more emphasis should be placed on policy formulation to modify existing rules that are restrictive in ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) of the public service as key aspects of social institutions (Eze, 2013).

To oversimplify, the public sector in Nigeria is a colonial heritage, and the formation was under the hidden motives of the colonialists. The untold story is embedded in dependency and protection interests made possible by the ecological factor permeated deeper by forces of globalisation and corruption in the system. It accounts for fruitless efforts in policies with performance maladies remaining unchecked by the public servants in Nigeria. It becomes clear that the routine political interest method of formulating policies/reforms cannot change the narratives. Sincerely speaking, public service needs overhauling as redress if genuine competition and viable public institutions are desired (Salisu, 2019). There is no doubt that a high-performing workforce will bring about organisational efficiency and effectiveness. As a matter of fact, employees are the most critical element of all organisational resources and their capacity to function will be essential in meeting the expected standards depending on both their inward potentials (personal) and the outward (environment) in which they operate. This nature-nurture perspective of explaining the indicators of employees' performance underscores the indispensability of performance management as an integral part of organisational environments.

Despite these established vital connections between public service performance and reforms, many desirable results have been achieved in this regard. Professionalism, improper placement of workforce, weak moral standards, weak institutional framework, poor awareness of work ethics and meagre salaries, which constituted untold hardship to employees, deserve urgent attention in any reform initiatives of the government (Alabi & Okeke 2024). It will amount to futile efforts in other areas if not addressed, thereby continuing to pose danger to employees, which might culminate in unwarranted absenteeism, conflicts, tardiness and other behaviours that are antithetical to public institutions. The general working environment should be revised with the aim of expunging crude practices that are less effective. Lastly, mention must be made of the lack of leadership skills, which can lead to faulty management. Leadership should be democratic and inclusive in approach. Sentiment, sectionalism, political affiliations, religion and region should be set aside. Subversion of institutional interest to achieve personal goals should be jettisoned to pursue a common goal. Therefore, arose the interminable quest for twenty-first-century governments to reposition the public service to suit the general purpose by ensuring efficiency in service delivery. It is under these pursuits that the study tends to analyse public service reforms and workers' output in the federal civil service in Abuja. The study also seeks to evaluate factors that led to public service reforms in Nigeria, determine factors affecting the job performance of workers in the federal civil service Abuja, and ascertain the perceived benefits of public service reforms to the general performance of civil servants in the federal civil service Abuja.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Generally speaking, reform is an essential instrument fundamental to the renovations that foster progress. It can be viewed as a method applied to get rid of an unproductive system of

production and services in a given social system. Therefore, Ashava (2013) opines that reform is an instrument for social transformation and progress attained through restructuring the mode of production for improved performances of the forces of production. Reform tends to reconstruct administrative structures by renovating operational machinery and techniques, which improves organisational effectiveness and efficiency. The primary aim of reform is to modify human capacities to maximise administrative values by the government. The reform initiatives of governments in Nigeria are aimed at the trans-position of the public sector to improve performance (Alabi, 2019). Obansa (2018) opined that reform is the ultimate strategy initiated by the government at various levels with the sole aim of repositioning the public sector in order to realise its goals. Therefore, as an integral part of the system, the goals of the public service, if not realised, may prevent others from achieving their objectives in a given multi-sectorial dynamic society where good governance is a task that must be promoted. The latent objective of every reform is to ensure that democracy is sustained in public ventures, thereby bringing transformation in juxtaposition with the advent of globalisation. This implies the need for organisations to match the individuals with their jobs if high performance is desired. Therefore, public institutions in Nigeria should be equipped with the requisite skills to become one of the frontiers to reckon with this global quest for bureaucratic revitalisation.

All the developed countries in the world were once at the stage of development. They were faced with issues related to bureaucratic inadequacies (Nnonyelu, 2012). This is to say that social development is an attribute of reforms. Institutional reforms are a basic necessity for growth and development. Hence, there is no meaningful development that can take place without first making necessary provisions that will usher in social transformation. It denotes the repositioning of social institutions in the form of social transition. Ashava (2013) maintain that reform indicators for the successful execution of development policies and programmes in underdeveloped countries include flexibility, creativity, and innovativeness in the administrative systems of a country. These are distinguishing features that revolve around genuine policies/reforms. Certainly, it is important to understand that a system that is rigid in structure may not be good enough for elaborate developmental policies. Reform becomes a suitable element to revitalize such systems for genuine results as regards efforts towards social progress. Therefore, reforms have become a paramount option for effective and efficient development strategies around the global system (Farazmand, 2002). In developing countries like Nigeria, reforms usually involve a number of structural and process changes before improvements. The changes in sectorial structures and processes, such as personnel systems, by building the technical, professional, and administrative management capacity, are all-inclusive. More so, genuine support of political leadership is another requirement for reform because without the support change or reform might not achieve its target. Reforms in development are the distribution of vital structural measures to expedite organizational commitment to developing programmes (Osawe, 2015).

In the words of Igbokwe (2016), reform can be described as substantial process changes by which implementation, as well as policy development, contributes to efficient and effective national development. Political and administrative personnel or even industrial elites often adopt a top-down approach to issues. This method mostly does not guarantee the participation of ordinary people in building genuine efforts toward organizational success. Igbokwe (2016) further noted that active members of institutions or governance/administrative cadre often times have little or no say in the reform process initiatives. Consequently, it is possible to envisage controversies as a result of the reasons stated above. This is coupled with other associated factors such as inadequate resources, conflict of interests, lack of adequate requisite skills and training programmes, threat of the unknown, and fear of possible loss of jobs or

privileges. The reforms enunciated in the public sector seem to have benefited the power elite in the acquisition of more power. They have, in recent times, ventured into privatizing public enterprises and the utilization of the proceeds therefrom. Therefore, these obstacles, as well as incessant political uncertainties that characterise reforms like that of Obasanjo, Babangida, Jonathan and Buhari reforms, hinder reform implementation, hence their failure.

### **Relevance of Public Service Reforms to the Performance of Workers**

The performance of workers is usually a measure of the degree of workers' input in achieving desirable organisational goals or output. Workers are human resources disposable for competitive advantage in service-oriented organisations (Nebo & Nnamani, 2015). Those who are committed to a performance approach see workers as assets, and their roles are invaluable in any service organization. Workers' performance plays an outstanding role in organizational performance. Originally, a worker's performance was viewed as what an employee does or does not do. This popular way of viewing workers' Performance includes output, quality of work done, appropriateness of output, punctuality and congregations (Obansa 2018). More so, public choice scholars pinpointed that individual improved performance could, in turn, improve corporate performance. As earlier asserted, job performance is viewed as a measure of a record of achieved outcomes for any function within a stated period of time. Therefore, performance is represented as a distribution of outcomes achieved, which could be measured by using a variety of parameters to show workers' performance in the period under review.

Nebo and Nnamani (2015) opined that a worker's performance is a rating system used in corporate organisations to decide the abilities and output of a worker. Improved worker performance is directly a perception of service quality. These are factors that gave birth to reforms in Nigeria. On the other hand, workers' performance is directly linked to increased customer complaints and resort to alternatives or even fraud, as the case may be. Therefore, workers' performance could be simply seen as related activities assigned to workers or by obligation routinely carried out by workers and how well the activities are accomplished (Nebo & Nnamani, 2015). Moreover, many business personnel/directors ideally assess the performance of each staff worker on a stated timely basis in order to enable workers to identify areas for improvement. In some companies, it comes in the form of a questionnaire where a worker is required to provide answers to a variety of questions regarding their work. Worker's performance is described as a yardstick for measuring both efficiency and effectiveness (Alabi & Okeke (2023).

### **Parsons Structural Functionalism**

Talcott Parsons originally developed Parsons functionalism theory in (1951). The theory seeks to understand the relationship between the various institutions of society and the functions they serve in sustaining social existence and order. Structural functionalism was later popularised by scholars like Radcliff-Brown and Gabriel Almond (Olaniyi, 1997). The basic analysis of the theory is the society and its structures. The society is viewed as a system with interdependent parts (structure). The parts of the system are interdependent and interconnected, and so on and so forth (Parsons 1967).

To simplify, Parsons has given an analogy of society. For instance, the system represents society, and structures denote social institutions. The social institutions are the public service, the political system, the economy, etc., which perform different functions for the general maintenance of society. As a matter of fact, the popular systems theory, which has become a



common framework for organizational analysis, is an offshoot of functionalism (Brown, 1992). The relationship between the system and subsystems is examined in terms of the function/contributions each makes to the overall well-being of the system. Kwaghga (2010) opine that proponents of structural functionalism described it as a means of explaining the basic functions of social institutions, and it is a tool for investigation. Therefore, it is interested in explaining the relationships between systems and subsystems. It is the contributions of each subsystem that justifies the essence. Therefore, any structure that is found wanting in its assigned role will result in a multiplier effect on the system. Parsons (1967) argued that society has a functional prerequisite that it must fulfil in order to survive. This basic survival of the society are served by her intuitions.

The public service is within the political system; there are also political parties, interest groups, business groups, religious groups, legislature, executive, and judiciary, among others (Kwaghga, 2010). The public service is vested with the power/function to formulate and implement policies, and render policy advice for the smooth function of society, like others with separate functions. Failure of the public service to execute those functions appropriately and effectively will result in the malfunction of the society as it will affect other social functions. Nigeria's public institutions are characterised by many anomalies posing challenges to the performances of workers over the years, which have hampered the purpose of the establishment of those institutions (Alabi & Okeke, 2023). It is under this background that reforms were introduced to address issues related to ineffective performances of the public service which have affected effective function of other institutions. Reform is considered an instrument of redress or system maintenance.

## **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

This study employed descriptive survey research design. The method was considered appropriate as it involves descriptive and interpretation of the actual phenomena under study. Also, the method makes use of a literature search and a structured questionnaire, which is most suited for this type of attitudinal study. The variables under investigation were extracted from the literature. A sample of 622 workers was selected out of 94,511 total population of workers in 29 ministries of the Abuja civil service. Taro Yamane's (1967) formula was applied to get the sample size. Cluster sampling and simple sampling techniques were employed in order to achieve the objectives of the study. This study used interview techniques and simple percentages to analyse the responses.

## **RESULTS**

**Table 1: Factors that led to reforms in the public service**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>U</b>
Delay in promotion	49.3	42.8	3	4.9	0
Marginalisation and favouritism	41.8	43.9	8.2	4	2
Poor consultation during reforms	36.7	52.9	7.6	1	1.9
Bureaucratic bottleneck	55.1	32.2	8.9	2.9	1
Use of quota system and federal character	44.9	29.3	11.1	11.6	3
Unreliable reforms	42.9	44.6	3.7	4.7	4

Source: Field survey (2024)

Table 1, shows that more than half (55.1%) of the respondents strongly agree that bureaucratic bottle neck is an obstacle to job performance leading to reforms. This is followed by delay in promotion as indicated by 49.3% of the respondents. About half (44.9%) of the respondents also strongly agree that the use of quota system and federal character affects job performance. This may be unconnected to the fact that many unqualified and incompetent workers are recruited in the name of quota system. Poor consultation during reform was the least mentioned within the response category of 'strongly agree' with the rate of 36.7%.

Similar to the issues about ineffectiveness and inefficiencies, the following statements supported the responses on factors affecting job performance in Nigeria's civil service.

Just to go further, you see the case of monetising staff quarters has increased the problem of housing for workers. Now they have sold the quarters to the people that have retired, and you are employed every day. They have worsened the problem of newly employed in a new location. Where do you want them to live now? This is what causes all these problems in the office—fraud, lateness, tardiness, poor performance because when all these things are coming, the salary will not meet up, government need to do something about it (female, 48years, supervisor, commerce and tourism).

Pertinent to the factors affecting job performance is the lack of transparency in the recruitment and promotion processes, which are basically being corrupted by some officials using bureaucratic means. Those at the helm of affairs were said to intentionally recruit or promote people of their choice, not minding those who were better qualified. This was clearly captured below:

These top civil servants are not following the civil service guide in the recruitment and promotion of workers. Then you begin to see people recruiting their relations, friends and cohort who do not possess useful skills. If it is the person above you who brought the worker there, you cannot even complain or sanction the worker because it will be at your risk doing so. The method of employment in the civil service is not it at all; let me buttress this with more facts; there are some departments of offices here that are filled with people from one place (language), but they still have to look for qualified hands elsewhere to do the actual job. At the end of the day, it is a few qualified persons who will be overworked. Other people will just be there earning salaries. If employment were done based on qualifications and merit, capable hands would emerge and give a satisfactory performance (Female, 54years, supervisor, Ministry of Women Affairs)

Qualitative data obtained through interviews corroborated the findings on factors affecting workers' performance in the civil service. Participants decried the issue of staff salary and welfare as the major challenges to performance. Below are the submissions of some the respondents in the interview:

The challenge of output in civil service starts with the inability of workers to meet their basic needs at the workplace. Our offices suffer from a lack of equipment although it has improved over time. Abuja is far better. If you go to federal secretariats in some states, you will not wish to be a civil servant. We are in the information age. There are no facilities like internet wifi in

the offices to enable workers to access the internet for information. There are no adequate facilities, water, toilets, or air conditioners to make the office conducive for effective service delivery. Then we talk about regular power supply for office use. Here, it is irritating and ineffective, so maximum productivity cannot be expected; everything is just against high performance. If your office is not comfortable, you cannot start loitering around, but if it is not, you know what will be the case. When you are out there, please let the government know what we are going through. Comfort in the office and the general welfare of workers will promote effective job performance. (58years female, senior civil servant, ministry of justice)

IPPIS has its own issue. For instance, the jobs of financial experts like accountants contracted by the government have become redundant. They are doing nothing the government has given the duty to a private firm (IPPIS). Now, when workers have problems of short payments or arrears, it will take a long time to rectify because you hardly see them always, but the accountants are here (58years female, senior civil servants, Ministry of Justice)

The most challenging factor is the poor take-home package. The thirty-thousand-naira new minimum wage is nothing to the present general rise of goods and services. There is inequity in the salary structure among ministries. The challenges are numerous; we were promised a staff bus that would take us to work, but we have not seen the bus, and there are many other similar fake promises from the federal government. Office equipment like seats, computers, fans, and air conditioners to make the environment very conducive and incentive packages like car loans (Male 47years, senior executive officer, Ministry of Youths and Sports)

Speaking on salaries and poor wages, another participant explained that poor salaries of workers influence inefficiencies and ineffectiveness since workers are not motivated enough to work, coupled with poor infrastructures. The following statements are illustrative:

The salaries of workers are grossly poor, facilities are not provided, incentives are not given, and there is no training and retraining of workers. Nothing motivates our workers; ministerial workers are worst neglected among public servants. So, these are part of the challenges that workers encounter regularly that are counterproductive. You see workers walking up and down it's because they have nothing to do. You contracted a worker to work for you. Still, you didn't give him equipment, nor did they receive good pay as a monthly salary (Male, 60 years, administrator, ministry of Education and Youth Development).

There is no morale in workers to work harder because society does not recognize genuine efforts. Public service is not an accomplishment of destiny but suffering. The government should wake up to this reality and take corrective measures before the situation gets worse (Male, 38 years, Professional, Ministry of Works and Housing).



In addition, workers feel neglected through the non-provision of basic amenities at the workplace. The following statements capture it further:

It is this non-provision of basic amenities at the workplace. The office is supposed to be like home. If you look around, you will agree with me that we are working in a horrific environment. Go through the offices; they are empty. Things like office equipment, technologies, lack of training on the job, and relentless efforts from the workers are all the top factors that made it impossible to deliver effective service. Above all, corruption in the system (Male, 44 years, Professional/senior civil servant, works and housing).

**Table 2: Perceived benefit of public service reforms**

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Industrial harmony	37	6
High performance	71	12
Satisfaction	59	10
Effective delivery	208	35
All of the above	219	37
Total	594	100.0

Source: Field survey (2024)

The table above shows that 37% of respondents, which constitute the highest proportion of the population of the frequency distribution, agreed on all the mentioned benefits, followed by 35.0%, which focused on effective service delivery. Furthermore, respondents that made up (12.0%) proportion of the population agreed that civil service reforms lead to high performance, while 10.6% and 5.7% of respondents say satisfaction and industrial harmony, respectively.

Qualitative data further corroborates the findings that civil service reforms are beneficial to the system. For instance, it improved service delivery, as reported by one of the participants in the interview:

There was at one point in time when there used to be very disorganised. You hardly see workers and work undone. I'm speaking now for my organisation about what the policies have done and how they have improved the management of pensions, especially the old pension scheme which we are managing. The fraud has been reduced to the barest minimum courtesy of government reforms. Pensioners now receive their pensions as soon as they retire, and that has improved the performance of civil servants. The hope of going home with their entitlement when they retire motivates workers to put in their best at work (Female, 48 years, administrator, Pension Management).

Other comments also suggested that civil service reforms have the capability to improve job performance and overall satisfaction with the civil service. For example:

Reforms are beneficial to the workers and government. It gives workers a sense of belonging and increases their interest in the performance of duty. It appears to be beneficial to workers, for instance, by increasing wages. As a worker, there are certain things that will motivate you to deliver, and it strengthens the government to fulfil their obligation to deliver on certain things, especially payment of salaries. So, the policies now protect the workers as well as the government. The union serve as a watchdog against unfavourable policies (Female, 48 years, administrator, Pension Management).

When the rumour of the policy of downsizing was heard, workers started improving their academic qualifications and other personal skills on their own because something similar may come up again. The downsizing helped the government reduce the cost of salary payments. It has helped to improve the performance of workers because after reducing the number of workers the remaining ones had to sit up and put in more effort (Male, 58years, deputy director, Ministry of Information and Communication)

**Table 3: Contributions of reforms to the public service**

<b>Contribution of civil service reform to the national economy</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Increase productivity	223	37.5
General growth	169	28.5
Social wellbeing of workers	149	25.1
Achievement of parochial interest	53	8.9
Total	594	100.0

Source: Field survey (2024)

Table 3 indicates that achievement of parochial interest (8.9%) constitutes the least proportion of the population of the frequency distribution, followed by the social well-being of citizens (25.1%). More so, the general growth amounted to 28.5% of the respondents, while increased productivity (37.5%) emerged as the highest proportion of respondents in the population distribution.

Data from the qualitative research will provide further insight into the contributions of civil service reforms to the national economy. A respondent has it that:

Improved condition of service, increased income. It promotes output and will increase productivity. Building strong institutions increases the wealth of the nation and the welfare of its citizens. It has positive contributions like the contributory pension reform, which has helped the retirees access the money on time (Male, 47years, senior executive, Ministry of Youths and Sports)

## **DISCUSSION**

The job performance of civil servants was rated below average, and this was attributed to many factors that were not addressed in the reforms. These factors mostly include issues related to employees needs, such as poor welfare, low wages, and unavailable packages for the workers.

This was despite the recent increase in minimum wage. Reforms could not address these issues affecting workers' performance. Therefore, reforms were not properly directed and implemented. Most of the reforms were negotiated at the top, and they suffered partial implementation. Additionally, the work environment was reported to be poorly designed and unequipped with the necessary tools to motivate better performance. Specifically, respondents reported that there was no water, toilet, air conditioners, office space, or internet Wi-Fi, which resulted in the loitering of workers. A similar finding was made by Liza et al. (2019) in their study of employees of public organisations in the Philippines. They reported that workers are either tardy or absent from duty when their needs are not prioritised by their employers. Workers' housing is also not properly planned for because of a policy on monetising staff quarters, and this was said to result in lateness, tardiness, and poor performance of workers.

Corruption and favouritism were also commonly reported causes of inefficiency and ineffectiveness of workers. Similarly, Obioji (2019) found that corrupt practices in the organisational hierarchy have hindered the effectiveness and high performance of workers. Corruption was reported in the recruitment of workers; people recruit their relations, friends and cohorts without recourse to the civil service guide. Igbokwe (2016) also reported that a poor attitude toward work is rife when there is corruption or a lack of fairness in the recruitment process. This causes problems of indiscipline in the workplace and promotes poor work ethics. Also, it causes the few qualified workers to overwork themselves as they make efforts to cover for staff who cannot perform the task assigned to them.

Respondents widely held the view that civil service reforms are yet to address the issues affecting workers' performance. Poorly motivated staff are likely to be unproductive, which also has an indirect effect on society at large (Ogbomah et al., 2020). The performance of workers was adjudged to be grossly low. Despite this view, most held the view that reforms can be beneficial in the areas of service delivery, industrial harmony, high performance, and satisfaction. It can also contribute to the national economy in terms of increase in productivity and general growth. In fact, a case in point was cited of one of the ministries that underwent positive change as a result of reform. Positive instances of the positive impact of the civil service reforms are, however, overshadowed by voices of poor work outcomes.

The major causes of poor reforms and their inability to improve workers' performance rests on poor consultations on the part of the government and poor implementation of the reforms. Respondents held that there was a lot of politicking and controversies with these reforms, and corruption hindered their effective implementation. For example, poorly qualified personnel are empowered to implement reforms, leading to partial implementation and total abandonment. Moreover, the fact that workers are not properly consulted led to a lack of zeal and interest in implementing it.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The road to an effective and efficient civil service starts with reforms that are attuned to the needs of civil servants. It must take into account the context of workers' environment and available resources for its implementation. In short, reforms must be worker-centred and not designed by politicians for their aggrandisement. Considering the importance of the civil service institution, it is imperative to reorder it by addressing the needs of the civil servants who are the key to the execution of government policies. That way, the ineptitude associated with civil service might be addressed. Therefore, it is recommended that the federal government, through the Bureau of Public Service Reform, should adopt the inclusive approach

in its reform initiatives and in dealings with workers, civil servants should be involved in the development and implementation of reforms. This will promote trust and cooperation among workers, as well as the civil service. The government should desist from all subtleness by intensifying efforts at all costs through a genuine willingness to tackle favouritism, nepotism, and other issues that jeopardise government reforms in civil service. The government at all levels should be sincere and avoid obliterating policies that cannot be implemented. The federal government should, as a matter of necessity, desist from playing politics with the affairs of workers. Workers should not be coaxed/forced into imbibing government policies but given a free hand to come up with solutions to the problems for which they are confronted.

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