

**THE CIVIL SERVICE, VALUE RE-ORIENTATION AND
SUSTENANCE OF DEMOCRACY: THE PROBLEM AND PROSPECTS
OF THE POST-INDEPENDENCE NIGERIA CIVIL SERVICE**

Martin Onwudinjo Ugada

Department of Public Administration, Caritas University, Amorji-Nike, Enugu, Nigeria

martinugada200@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: With the Civil Service values visibly eroded and, as a result, declining productivity, institutional corruption and other vices became evident in the Nigerian Civil Service. This paper sought to inquire into the problems and prospects of the Nigerian Civil Service. To carry out this investigation, the researcher depended on secondary sources and civil service experience to assess the various reforms in the Civil Service, review the recruitment processes in the Nigerian Civil Service, the implications of the Federal character principle on productivity, and the retention strategies, with particular interest on the minimum/living wage. It was found out that although the Federal character principle was meant to be “an effective nation-building strategy for managing the combustible diversity in Nigeria”, this principle has badly eroded the professional and competency capacity of the public service. Similarly, the new minimum wage of N70,000 per month was perceived as substantial income, low value, laughable, and meaningless. It was therefore recommended that there be independent, nonpolitical control over recruitment and conditions of employment, recruitment by merit, and payment of a living wage.

Keywords: Civil Service, recruitment, merit, federal character, non-political control

INTRODUCTION

The study begins with a reflection on the Nigerian Civil Service, prompted by a powerful quote from Martin Luther King Jr.:

“I am convinced that men hate each other because they fear each other. They fear each other because they don’t know each other, and they don’t know each other because they don’t communicate with each other, and they don’t communicate with each other because they are separated from each other”

This notion of separation, historically rooted in colonial legacies, remains relevant in the context of contemporary Nigeria. In many ways, the deep-seated divisions among the Nigerian populace have hindered meaningful collaboration and the realisation of national goals. Following the colonial exploitation of Africa, Nigeria's leaders inherited the civil service from the colonial masters. Unfortunately, instead of fostering unity, these leaders perpetuated a system that alienated ordinary citizens, treating the civil service as a realm reserved for the political elite and echoing the colonial imbalances. This lack of communication and trust continues to influence Nigeria’s political and administrative structures today.

The Civil Service is a crucial pillar of any government, tasked with ensuring that government policies and programmes are effectively implemented. According to the Civil Service Manual (1972), the civil service comprises a body of men and women employed to carry out the day-to-day operations of government. As an integral part of the state apparatus, the civil service transcends the political leadership of any given period, adapting to serve governments irrespective of their political leanings. Its permanence and stability mean that civil service institutions must be designed to function across changing political landscapes, ensuring continuity in governance.

Consequent upon this, an ideal civil service must:

- i. Be non-partisan and non-involvement to enable it serve any government of the day.
- ii. Be made up of experienced men and women with the technical and professional know-how to enable them implement government policies;
- iii. Be orderly and also ensure that orderly administration is continuous;
- iv. Operate under rules which guide its conduct.

Despite the evolving political climate, the civil service remains indispensable to upholding the state's administrative integrity.

Career Service:

The principles and goals guiding civil service can be summarised in the ILO Joint Report (1972) on career problems as follows:

- i. Independent non-political control of recruitment and conditions of employment;
- ii. Recruitment by merit;
- iii. A system of appeals designed to preserve justice in promotions, dismissal and punishment;
- iv. Advancement on grounds of efficiency;
- v. A regular system of classification of position with incremental advance;
- vi. A permanent organisational structure beyond which the fluctuating margin of work is met with temporary employment;
- vii. Protection against arbitrary and indiscriminate dismissal;
- viii. Administrative retirement and pensions system;
- ix. Opportunity for employment within and between departments.

Such principles are essential to maintaining a high level of professionalism and fairness within the civil service. As the engine behind the execution of government policies, the civil service is a critical player in shaping the administrative future of any country. It is considered the "thinking arm" of the state, providing intellectual resources drawn from the country's knowledge centres, including universities and research institutions (Nwakanma, 2014).

The civil service plays a critical role not only in policy implementation but also in the intellectual and cultural development of the nation. It generates ideas that contribute to the renewal and advancement of national goals.

Adebayo (2013) notes that while the civil service is not a modern creation, it evolved alongside the development of modern states and parliamentary systems. In Nigeria, the roots of the civil service can be traced to the colonial period. However, 1954 marked a pivotal moment in Nigerian administrative history when the country began to establish a civil service framework that was distinctively Nigerian. Prior to this, Nigeria's civil service was a direct extension of colonial rule, with little involvement from indigenous leadership.

The post-independence civil service inherited a structure that was not designed to accommodate the complexities of Nigeria's diverse society. As a result, the civil service has been the subject of numerous reforms, all aimed at improving efficiency, reducing corruption, and ensuring that it serves the entire nation equitably.

Core Values of the Civil Service

Deaconess Joan Ayo (2018), Emeritus Chairman, Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC), informs that the traditional core values of the Civil Service include: meritocracy, political neutrality, integrity, discipline, professionalism, impartiality, loyalty/patriotism, anonymity, and accountability and transparency. She made this known at a high-level retreat on Public Service Reforms in Abuja. She said that at the recruitment level, FCSC will ensure quality control, standards, professionalism, efficiency, transparency, and strict adherence to rules and regulations, mindful that any compromise of these core values will jeopardise the Civil Service's overall strategic importance to do good. She asserted that recruitment, transfer/secondment will be strictly based on qualifications, experience, merit and availability of vacancies without prejudice to the principle of Federal Character (FC) as enshrined in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This is with a view to checking stagnation at the Directorate level and restoring the bastion of continuity.

The Authority of the Civil Service Commission

Section 197(1) of the 1999 Constitution provides that "There shall be established for each state of the Federation the following bodies, namely:

- (a) State Civil Service Commission;
- (b) State Independent Electoral Commission; and
- (c) State Judicial Service Commission.

Section 197(2) states that "The composition and powers of each body established by subsection (1) of this section are as set out in Part II of the Third Schedule to this constitution." Part II of the Third Schedule to the 1999 Constitution states as follows:

1. A State Civil Commission shall comprise the following members:

- (a) A Chairman; and
- (b) Not less than two and not more than four other persons, who shall, in the opinion of the Governor, be persons of unquestionable integrity and sound political judgment.

2. (i) The Commission shall have power, without prejudice to the powers vested in the Governor and the State Judicial Service Commission to-
 - (a) Appoint persons to offices in the State Civil Service; and
 - (b) Dismiss and exercise disciplinary control over persons holding such office”.

For the Federal Civil Service Commission, Section 169 of the 1999 Constitution provides that “There shall be civil service of the Federation”. Also, Section 10 of Part 1 of the Third Schedule of the Constitution provides that “The Federal Civil Service Commission shall comprise the following members:

- (a) A Chairman; and
- (b) Not more than fifteen other members,

Who shall, in the opinion of the President, be persons of unquestionable integrity and sound political judgment.

Furthermore, Section 11(I) states that “The Commission shall, without prejudice to the powers vested in the President, National Judicial Council, the Federal Judicial Service Commission, the National Population Commission and the Police Service Commission, have power-

- (a) To appoint persons to offices in the Federal Civil Service; and
- (b) To dismiss and exercise disciplinary control over persons holding such offices”.

Both the Federal and State Civil Services Commissions were established to oversee the career service as enunciated by the ILO. Further to this, the Civil Service Manual (1972:36) provides that “The Civil Service Commission is a department of the Civil Service not under Ministerial Control. Similarly, the 1999 constitution provides at Section 202 that “In exercising its power to make appointment or to exercise disciplinary control over persons, the State Civil Service Commission, the State Independent Electoral Commission and State Judicial Service Commission shall not be subject to the direction and control of any authority or person. The same is applicable to the Federal Civil Service Commission.

Reforms in the Nigerian Civil Service

Nigeria has undertaken numerous civil service reforms dating back to the pre-independence era. These reforms are divided into three phases: pre-Udoji, Udoji, and post-Udoji.

Pre-Udoji Reforms

Prior to the Udoji Reform of 1972, the following Commissions were set up to review the civil service (Civil Service Handbook, 1997:21-22).

- i. **Tudor Davis (1945):** This was primarily concerned with the review of wages and general conditions of service (Civil Service Handbook, 1997).
- ii. **Harragin Commission (1946):** According to Garba and Jirgi (2014), the Harragin Commission was the first Commission set up to look into the manpower problem in the service

and the discontent among the European members of what was described as poor financial reward. The Commission made some structural changes by introducing "senior service" and "junior service", thus dividing the service into two rigid compartments (Civil Service Handbook, 1997).

- iii. **Gorsuch Commission (1954):** This Commission was the first to attempt to give the regional administrative bureaucracies an indigenous structure (Garba and Jirgi, 2014). It reviewed the senior and junior service categories and recommended that the service be structured into five main grades, from the lowest established posts upwards, with parallel classes for both the administrative and professional cadres. It recommended that the Public Service, which had been unitary, be split into four separate services, comprising the Federal and three regional services (Civil Service Handbook, 1997).
- iv. **Mbanefo Commission (1959):** This was set up to review the basic rates of salary and wages payable to holders of posts in the Federal Public Service as well as the Public Service of the Northern and Eastern Regions and Southern Cameroon (Civil Service Handbook, 1997).
- v. **The Morgan Commission (1963):** The Commission was set up in 1963 for improvement in working conditions. The Commission emphasised the principle that in fixing wages, family responsibilities should be taken into account. According to the Commission, "even if a man is not 'his brother's keeper', in so far as his extended family is concerned, he is very much the provider for his family, i.e. his wife or wives and children. And it must be borne in mind that the fact that a man has no education or special training to enable him to undertake employment other than at the bottom of the ladder, does not and should not debar him from getting married and raising a family (Morgan Report, 1964).
- vi. **The Adebo Wages and Salaries Review Commission (1970-71):** This Commission was set up in response to the agitations of the workers over the harsh effects of the war inflation on their earnings. The Commission relied on the principle of a living wage as a guide for arriving at the minimum wage. It is believed that the minimum wage should be "high enough to enable a wage earner who does a full day's work" to support himself and his family out of his wages.
- vii. **The Udoji Commission (1972):** The Udoji Commission was set up to carry out a comprehensive review of the nation's public service. More than any other Commission before it, the Udoji Commission had the widest-ranging terms of reference. The Commission submitted its Report on 25th September, 1974. Through innovations, the Udoji Commission introduced several features in the Civil Service, notably the opening of the post of Chief Executive of the Ministry, referred to as Permanent Secretary, to both administrative and professional specialist staff, and the introduction of a new code of conduct for all public officers.

In a nutshell, the Udoji Commission recommended the adoption of modern techniques like the Planning Programming, Budgeting System (PPBS), Management by Objectives (MBO) and Project Management in the Nigerian Civil Service.

Post-UdoJi Commissions

viii. The 1988 Reforms

In 1984, the Federal Military Government established a panel to study the structure, staffing, and remuneration of the Civil Service and to make appropriate recommendations to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity in the service. The panel submitted its Report in 1985. It was, however, in January 1988 that then Military President, General Ibrahim Babangida, announced the reform package. As at the time the reforms were introduced in 1988, the Civil Service was already in a terrible state characterized by "over-centralization; incessant conflicts between the cadres; scant emphasis on result and concrete performance; excessive focus on compliance with regulations, forms and procedures; irresponsibility at the top of the Civil Service hierarchy; dangerously low staff morale and productivity; inappropriate staff profession or specialization of staff, thereby putting square pegs in round holes in critical areas outside of the traditional registrable professional fields; and increasingly potent inability to cope effectively with the challenges of a modern, complex and development hungry society (Philips)."

The above inevitable state of the nation's civil service resulted from years of neglect by successive governments, which failed to invest in the Civil service in terms of Space, equipment, staff training, modern operational techniques, adequate staff remuneration, and so on.

The 1975 Civil Service purge by Murtala Mohammed equally adversely affected the Civil Service.

The 1988 Reforms emphasised four main elements, namely:

- a) Enhanced professionalism of the civil service;
- b) Rationalisation of authority and responsibility at the top level of a ministry by making the minister (instead of the Permanent Secretary as hitherto) the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of his Ministry, and redesignating the Permanent Secretary who would serve as the Minister's Deputy;
- c) Installation of a strong scheme of checks and balances to prevent misuse or abuse of power, especially on the part of the Minister;
- d) Enhancement and strengthening of the economic and financial management apparatus of the Presidency by putting the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Planning and Budget Office directly under the President.

The reform package, despite its ambitious appearance, failed almost completely to achieve its aim. The first factor is corruption. Another factor is the politicisation of the appointment of Directors -General. Thirdly, the reforms, according to Okoli and Onah (2002), were, like their predecessors, based on faulty assumptions. The liberal approach to the reforms focused on the perceived problems of the Civil Service and failed to ask the important questions:

- (a) Why did many professionalised and well-trained public officers fail to perform in the past?
- (b) Why were existing machineries for public accountability weak?
- (c) Why does corruption still persist?

- (d) Why were existing punitive measures ineffective?
- (e) Why did existing management practices and techniques not work satisfactorily? and
- (f) Why do some civil servants misuse their enormous administrative powers?

Another factor that was reinforced by the corruption of that era was executive job insecurity. Because of fear of job insecurity, those in executive positions were more preoccupied with their compensation before removal than with implementing government policies. Government officials believed that their positions were intended to improve their lot through corrupt practices, given the limited time they had before being removed. This attitude made it impossible to achieve the objectives of the reforms.

ix. **The 1994 Review Panel on Civil Service Reform (Ayida Panel)**

The panel submitted its Report in June 1995, and the government began implementing its recommendations gradually in 1997. Among other things, the panel recommended that, to eradicate widespread corruption in the Civil Service, strict sanctions be imposed on those engaged in corrupt practices, and that civil servants' remuneration be sufficient to deter such practices (Obikeze, 2004).

Each of these reforms, among other things, addressed the issue of adequate salaries and wages to enable civil servants to support their families and thereby reduce corrupt practices, as well as to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity in the civil service. But to what extent have these recommendations been heeded by successive administrations in Nigeria?

- x. **Public Policy Reforms of 2003:** A policy analysis unit was established in the legislative arm with a view to building capacity for policy formulation, implementation, and review.
- xi. **Monetisation as Public Policy Reform (2003): The Presidential Committee on Monetisation** in the Public Service was set up on 11th November, 2002, under the chairmanship of Chief U. J. Ekaette, Secretary to the Federal Government. The monetisation policy aimed to reduce government recurrent expenditure, waste, and abuse of public facilities. This is intended to enhance efficiency in resource allocation and advance the economy.

Ekaette (2003) listed some benefits currently being monetized, like residential accommodation - monetized at 100 percent of annual basic salary; furniture allowance - paid as 300 per cent of annual basic salary in line with the provisions of employment of certain political, public and judicial office holders; utility allowance and domestic servants' allowance; motor vehicle loan and transport - monetized with provision of vehicle loan of 35 per cent annual basic salary and recoverable over 6 years with 4 per cent interest rate; fuelling/maintenance and transport allowance - 10 per cent of annual basic salary will be paid to public servants while political office holders will be paid 30 per cent annual basic salary; leave grant - monetized at the rate of 10 per cent of annual basic salary; meal subsidy - monetized; entertainment allowance - already monetized for public servants, while 10 per cent of annual basic salary was stipulated for political office holders; and personal assistant allowance - monetized.

- xii. **The Pension Reform Act. 2004:** The Federal Government set up the Adeola Committee to look into pension administration in Nigeria. The Committee came up with a recommendation

for the reform of pension administration and management in Nigeria. This recommendation was subsequently introduced as a bill to the National Assembly and passed into law on Friday, 25th June, 2004. The passage of the bill into law appeals the Pension Act of 1979 and establishes a uniform contributory pension scheme for z 3fh the public and private sectors of the economy.

- xiii. **SERVICOM Policy (Initiative):** It was established within the Presidency to manage and effect government commitment to the people in the area of service delivery. It is a social contract between the Federal Government of Nigeria and its people. According to Eneanya (2009), SERVICOM was empowered to coordinate the formulation and operation of the SERVICOM charter; monitor and report to the President on the progress made by Ministries and Agencies in performing their obligations under SERVICOM; carry out independent surveys of the services provided to citizens by the Ministries and Government Departments, their adequacy, timelines and customer satisfaction; conduct SERVICOM compliance evaluation services provided by Government Departments; award the SERVICOM index; and view SERVICOM books and relevant documents.

Reforms Under President Obasanjo

Civil Service Reforms during Obasanjo administration (1999-2007):

According to Obasanjo (2005), civil service reform is a central theme of the government's agenda. "For without a transparent and effective civil service, government business and service delivery to the public will be crippled and mired in dishonesty and graft. I am convinced that an efficient, transparent, and accountable civil service should be the hallmark of our democratic transformation and development. The Nigerian people deserve nothing less." (Obasanjo, 2005).

In its effort to reorient Nigerians' value system and improve the standard of living, the Obasanjo regime provided well-remunerated packages to enhance democratic governance. Since 1999, the government has increased the salaries of workers twice, while several officials hitherto deprived of promotion have been promoted (The Guardian, May 30 2004). Many more salary reviews have been implemented in Nigeria

Among others include professionalizing the service with skilled and knowledgeable technocrats with appropriate motivation to assist in up-grading the operations of government; reducing waste and inefficiency by monetizing fringe benefits within an incentive structure that supports private sector development by out-sourcing services which are considered to be unnecessary and only tangential to effective government and operation of the service; improving morale by instituting a more transparently managed contributory pension system that guarantees pension payment as and when due and under direct control of the retiree; rightsizing the workforce of the service by weeding outsourced cadres and those that do not have the qualifications, which required discipline or the proper state of physical and mental health to serve effectively; instituting fiscal and budgetary reforms within the context of a Medium-Term Public Expenditure framework in order to sanitize budgeting and funding of government programmes (Yayale, 2007).

The Civil Service as a Systemic Organisation

The Public Service, according to a one-time Governor of Enugu State, Dr Chimaroke Nnamani, is a big government business organisation. An organisation is a systematic arrangement of people and technology to accomplish some purpose. The public service is an organisation with a high level of interdependence. Every organisation comprises three basic components: people, tasks, and management.

When people combine to achieve objectives, they have created an organisation. Whether the organisation succeeds or fails depends on how effectively it acquires and utilises its resources. The work of combining and directing resources to achieve specific objectives is called management. It includes working with technology, with people, and with money to achieve task performance and human satisfaction.

In an organisation, people, tasks and management are interdependent, just as the nerves, digestion, and circulation are interdependent in the human body. A change in one part affects the others inescapably. Like an organism, an organisation is a system. Managers will find it helpful to look at the organisation as a dynamic whole with parts whose interdependence must be recognised and respected.

Of the three resources required by an organisation to succeed, the human resource is the most important. Without human resources, all other organisational resources remain latent and potential. The human resource is therefore the activator, energiser, or catalyst that transforms all other organisational resources into the objectives for which the entity was ab initio set up. All the activities of any enterprise are initiated and determined by the persons who make up the institution.

In order that the recommendations of the fourteen Panels mentioned in Section 2 above are realised in the Civil Service, the Human Resource Management aspect of the service must be put in proper perspective. Human Resource management is the organisational process concerned with the effective utilisation of human resources to realise both the organisation's objectives and the development and welfare needs of employees. It also encompasses those activities designed to provide for and coordinate the human resources of an organisation. Recruitment remains one of the central issues in human resource management. The overriding importance of this human resource function becomes manifest when it is realised that every organisation is only as good as its workers. In other words, any organisation aspiring to higher levels of efficiency and productivity must first come to terms with the problems of attracting and retaining a collection of competent, highly trained and motivated employees. Recruitment involves the whole gamut of activities with which the organisation reaches the wider pool of qualified individuals, both from within and outside the organisation, with a view to alerting them of the actual or potential job openings and convincing them to apply. In effect, the recruitment process is only adjudged successful if a good number of applications are received from several qualified prospective employees seeking to fill the vacant positions in the organisation. (Armstrong, 2009).

Over the years, the civil service has undergone progressive reforms aimed at transforming the system (Oloapa, 2013). Nevertheless, research has found that the civil service productivity and performance continue to dwindle. The reason was partly due to the lack of commitment on the part of the civil servants to government work and the low morale of the civil service. This situation has hampered

service delivery in the public sector. Therefore, there is a need to restore confidence and morale among the workforce in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The post-independence Nigerian Civil Service has faced myriad problems that have hindered its effective functioning as an agent of development. Some of them, namely, the Federal character principle and the minimum wage, are discussed hereunder:-

Federal Character, Employee Recruitment and Organisational Performance

During the post-independence era, the Nigerian state found itself in a dilemma whereby the political setting was dominated by Northern executives, leaving its administrative functions to a Southern-dominated bureaucracy (Ayoade, 2000). For the political executive to successfully carry out its policies, it required a facilitator in the bureaucracy, which the North was then unable to provide in terms of people with the required skills, educational qualifications and experience.

It was the fear of domination of one section of the country by the other in the political and administrative affairs that led to the principle of Federal Character in Nigeria. The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria recognised the imperative of the federal character of Nigeria's administrative system, hence section 14(3) states that:

“The composition of the government of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the Federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or in any of its agencies.”

It was in a bid to resolve the dilemma of the problem of northern political domination and southern-dominated bureaucracy in the country that led to the introduction of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria (Federal Character principle) (Ayoade, 2000).

According to Bodunrin (1989) Federal character principle is a political settlement that enables every section of the Nigerian society to be represented in government. He argued, "The new phrase, 'Federal character' in its application and implementation is a mere euphemism for ethnic balancing, which has the potential of solving the problem and fear of domination and bringing about stability that is needed for development to take place in the country.

Scholars have identified some advantages of Federal character principle or representative bureaucracy to include its ability to create support for government policies, including people who are local and indigenous to the environment in the implementation of government programmes in that particular area and its ability to act as mechanism for the government party to distribute patronage to its supporters (Bodunrin, 1989; Ayoade, 2000). However, there are contradictions in the application of the Federal character principle in the civil service, particularly in the area of employee recruitment and promotion.

Ayoade (2000) avers that subjecting recruitment/appointment, and/or promotion to Federal character discrimination against merit is unfair to certain sections of the country, to the advantage of others. The outcome is the acquisition of an incompetent workforce into the public service, and the result is poor performance.

Predicating employee recruitment on Federal character does not mean that such an employee cannot contribute meaningfully to the organisation's goals. This is particularly so where appropriate recruitment strategies involving the screening of potential employees based on relevant skills, experience and educational qualifications are adopted. What is important, therefore, is the ability of the individual employed and his/her willingness to work for the enhancement of the organisation. In addition, through effective staff training and development, organisations enhance productivity, even when incompetent employees are employed through inappropriate recruitment strategies (Okoli, 1998; Gherevbie, 2008).

Aside from being an administrative mechanism, the Federal Character Principle in Nigeria has come to represent a political necessity to further integrate the diverse elements that comprise the nation. Given the multi-ethnic, religious and cultural nature of the country, it is clear that merit as an exclusive principle for recruitment will negate the desire for equal representation of all sections of the country in the civil service. Consequently, the place of Federal character in the country's geo-administrative and political equation cannot be over-emphasised.

In order to drive the implementation of the Federal character principle, the Federal Character Commission (FCC) was established by Decree 34 of 1996, and the powers of the Commission was summarized by Mustapha (2007) to include: working out formula for sharing posts and services; compliance monitoring, enforcement of compliance through legal actions; demanding and reviewing data on staffing; and institutional investigations. The FCC is a Commission under the Presidency; its members are appointed by the President, but subject to the ratification of the Nigerian Senate. To ensure equity in representation, the law establishing the Commission states that the Executive Chairman and Secretary are to be appointed in such a way that if the Chairman comes from the North, the Secretary must be chosen from the South and Vice Versa.

In emphasising the shortcomings of the application of the Federal character principle in Nigeria. Gboyega (1989) points out that... "The issues of making public institutions reflect the Federal character were taken up haphazardly, giving rise to arbitrariness and victimisation of some unfortunate public servants." In the same vein, Ekeh (1989) contends that "its most radical and damaging application has been in the bureaucracies and public services of the federation. Permanent Secretaries have been kicked around, removed and sometimes dismissed". He further argues that the application of the Federal Character Principle "has invaded integrity and standards of public bureaucracy and other governmental bodies that normally require safeguards from the ravages of politics."

Furthermore, the negative effects of Federal character on public-sector performance in Nigeria are evident in Forrest (1993), who argues that the implementation of the principle of Federal character in the public service "not only led to poor appointments but also enhanced mediocrity rather than merit". To promote administrative effectiveness for performance in the Nigerian public service, Utomi (2002) argues that "we need to engage on the issues of competence, commitment, corruption

and conflict of interest and career certainty. From there come both threats to the effectiveness of the civil service and opportunities for the service to be the anchor of a Nigerian renaissance."

The contributions of a foremost scholar and practitioner in Nigerian public administration, Adamolekun (2008), to this discourse were more probing, thus: "Has the Federal character (FC) principle promoted or retarded national loyalty and stability? Or has the area or ethnic region of a person become the key factor in determining their quality as an individual? He argues further that "only a critical assessment of years of implementing the FC principle would help determine the desirable way forward." It is quite relieving that he answered the above questions in a related discussion, thus:

The Federal character principle that was introduced as Nigeria's path to achieving "representative bureaucracy" was morphed into the bad practice of politicisation. Capacity development programmes for public servants, which were a Major concern during the immediate pre- and post-Independence years, were progressively neglected, notwithstanding the strong case made for it in the Udoji Report (Adamolekun, 2007).

It is very clear from the above submission why administrative effectiveness in the Nigerian Public Service may continue to be a mirage. Contributing to the debate on public sector ineffectiveness, Suleiman (2009) contends that "poor capacity of the majority of civil servants, sometimes to the point of illiteracy", arising from the application of the FC, is one of the reasons for poor performance of the Nigerian public service. The views of Suleiman (2009) and Adamolekun (2007) support the argument that the neglect of capacity development programmes for public servants and the implementation of the FC offer a credible explanation for the ineffectiveness of the Nigerian public bureaucracy.

Also, Tonwe and Oghator (2009) submit that "Federal character allows ethno-regional patrons and their clients to exploit and mismanage state resources without contributing to any meaningful development." As noted by Ojo (2009), there is no greater inequality than the equal treatment of unequals." The FC policy as practised in Nigeria is elitist and class-biased; additionally, it leads to a blurring of the boundary between the pursuits of meritocracy and ethnic balancing, thereby creating a multiple system of artisanship in the polity inadvertently. In addition, the principle and its application have brought about the unintended effect of creating situations of "elimination by substitution", which makes it counter-productive. This is done through discrimination in appointment and promotion. The principle attempts to achieve equality of all states, whereas states are not equal in population and size of the pool of candidates for appointment (Ojo, 2009; Tonwe Oghator, 2009).

Supporting the importance of merit as a strategy for manpower procurement in the nation's quest for administrative effectiveness and enhanced performance for sustainable development, Soludo (2012) argues that the emergence of a merit-driven culture is, therefore, a key outcome of Vision 20:20:20 and an area of immediate policy focus. To this end, a comprehensive review of ethnic balancing measures and diversity management-related laws, such as the implementation of the Federal character principle, should be undertaken with a view to ensuring greater promotion of merit for sustainable development in Nigeria.

According to the Transformation Agenda (2011-2015), Nigeria's failure to achieve sustainable development in the past has been attributed to its inability to address development challenges such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, and insecurity, which are rooted in poor governance and ineffective government institutions and agencies. The poor implementation of the principle of Federal character in the Nigerian public service is, therefore, capable of bringing into the service an incompetent workforce that lacks the capacity to implement government policies for sustainable development.

In the same vein, Olaopa (2012) commends the Federal character principle as one of the "effective nation-building strategies invented for managing the combustible diversity in Nigeria" He, however, argues that "this principle has badly eroded professional and competency capacity of the public service"

The application of the Federal Character Principle has failed to provide credible solutions to administrative inefficiencies in the Nigerian public service and has, in fact, become a hindrance to sustainable development. The implication of the foregoing is that unethical behaviour among public officials and low productivity in the Nigerian public service can be explained by the appointment of incompetent personnel through the application of the Federal character principle, which makes it possible for people from the different segments of the Nigerian society to be represented in government without due consideration for merit and quality training to enhance productivity.

Employee Retention Strategies and Organisational Performance

Employee retention strategies refer to the means, plans, or sets of decision-making behaviours implemented by organisations to retain their competent workforce for performance (Gberevbia, 2008). Researchers have found that employees are more likely to remain and contribute to the successful achievement of organisational goals when appropriate employee retention strategies are adopted and implemented by organisations (Amadasu, 2003; Taplin et al., 2003; Gberevbia, 2008).

Studies have shown that appropriate employee retention strategies such as job satisfaction arising from appropriate rewards (Gomez-Mejia and Balkin, 1992; Heneman and Judge, 2003), performance pay (Griffeth et al, 2000), employee training and career development (Okoh, 1998), creation of social community in the workplace that enhances social ties such as encouraging employee marriages and siblings employment (Ayagi,2001), job security (Character Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), 2006), high level of wage rate and organization's image (Taplin et al, 2003) and Participative decision making and information sharing (Jike, 2003; Riordan et al, 2005) serve as catalyst in retaining employees for organizational performance.

Theoretical Framework

Different theoretical perspectives on organisational productivity abound. This paper adopts the decision-making theory as its analytical framework. The significance of the theory lies in its identification of the importance of organisational decisions regarding whom to recruit, the recruitment strategies to be adopted, and how the workforce is to be retained to sustain performance. Decision-making theory is associated with scholars such as Simon (1945), Mintzberg (1973), Lyayi (2002), and Miller et al. (2003) in their studies of decision-making in organisations.

One of the major assumptions of decision-making in an organisation is that organisational decisions are rational and that these rational decisions are necessary to facilitate the smooth running of organisations in their quest to achieve performance (Miller et al, 2003). This means that decision-making is at the very heart of the business success of any organisation.

Furthermore, it implies that the success and failure of any organisation at any point in time is considered to be a function of the decisions taken by the management team, as it affects a particular or whole aspect of that organisation. This assumption is particularly relevant to the success of an organisation in its desire for performance. Decisions on whom to recruit, when to carry out the recruitment, and the retention strategies to be adopted to enable competent employees to be retained for performance are crucial decisions an organisation would have to make if it must achieve its goals. Lyayi (2002) had applied the decision-making theory to study the decision-making process in underdeveloped organisations and came up with the conclusion that decisions in underdeveloped organisations are based on geocentrism rather than altruism. According to him, "egocentric decisions will be characterised by a lot of political activity, less rationality and tend to rely more upon judgment and negotiation, instead of altruistic decisions that emphasise computational and inspirational strategies." The implication of the above findings on employee retention and organisational performance is that rational or altruistic decisions bring about organisational development and survival, which makes it possible for organisations to achieve their goals. On the other hand, non-rational or egocentric decisions hinder development and organisational survival and make it impossible for organisations to achieve their set goals.

The National Minimum/Living Wage

Across all pre- and post-Udoji reforms, emphasis was placed on a living wage. Also, one of the strategies for employee retention is a high wage rate.

During the 2019 May Day celebration, President Muhammadu Buhari, represented by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, said the Federal Government was committed to the cause of improving the lot of every working Nigerian. He assured that the then N30,000 minimum wage for workers in the country would be fully implemented by the Federal Government. It is our hope that other levels of government in the country would follow suit. The era of "ability to pay" has gone.

President Buhari also said that industrial peace was central to economic stability, adding that every industrial disruption costs the national economy dearly in terms of money and man-hours. He, therefore, urged all actors in the industrial relations system to be more circumspect, patriotic and ethical in the use of industrial action as a tool for resolving workplace crises and addressing grievances. The President said that the government would continue to further strengthen labour institutions and update labour legislation and policies in line with international best practices. This, indeed, is as it should be.

Everything should be done to ensure employee motivation to avoid turnover and ensure retention. What calls to mind easily is Fredrick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Hygiene Factors and Motivators. The Hygiene factors are the preventers of dissatisfaction, but they do not actually lead to satisfaction. Standing alone, they do not motivate, but their presence prevents dissatisfaction and acts as a take-off point for motivation. The Motivators are also roughly equivalent to the higher order

needs in Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs signifying that people should be provided with jobs with challenging content to be truly motivated.

HERZBERG'S TWO-FACTOR THEORY		ABRAHAM MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS
Hygiene Factors	Motivators	
Company Policy and Admin	Achievement	
Supervision	Recognition	
Salary	Work Itself	
Interpersonal Relations	Reasonability	
Working conditions	Advancement	

Therefore, labour laws and policies must address the above factors to satisfactorily maintain a frictionless labour force. We will not have time to delve into all the factors mentioned above but let us single out the issue of salary/wage and examine its impact on the worker. Although Herzberg itemised salary as a hygiene factor, it may be necessary to consider it both a hygiene factor and a motivator in Nigeria. If motivation is the willingness to work, and almost all workers' strikes in Nigeria have been related to poor salaries, one can understand that it is crucial for workers to be properly remunerated to remain willing to work productively.

The question is whether the new N70,000 minimum wage can serve as a living wage for Nigerian workers. According to Archbishop Adeleke, the N70,000 minimum wage is laughable because it is simply big money, small value, meaningless and cannot buy anything. (The cableng.com online). Is it enough to retain the Nigerian worker in his workplace without scampering around in search of make-up funds? If there is a minimum wage, why is there no maximum wage? Government Policies on wages for low- and high-income earners in this country should address these issues.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As observed by the Civil Enlightenment Organisation of Nigeria, "Naira keeps falling, people's attitude to work is disappointing, corruption becomes institutionalised, productivity declines, and service delivery gets from poor to poorer as the worker aspires to do less job but earn more money! Our national values have been eroded. Obviously, there is a strong need for value re-orientation."

From the paper presented, one can conclude that the poor picture painted above stems from the misapplication of the federal character principle in our recruitment processes, which has undermined meritocracy, professionalism, and efficiency. As a result, integrity, impartiality and discipline are lost in the service. Similarly, strategies for staff retention are rather an exception than the rule. For instance, the minimum wage of N70,000 means about N2,000 per day for a family, and this has been described as meaningless, considering it is big money with small value in terms of its exchange rate against the dollar or pound, as well as its purchasing power.

It becomes necessary, therefore, that if there must be value re-orientation in the Nigerian Civil Service, the following recommendations would be made:-

- i. Independent non-political control of recruitment and conditions of employment;
- ii. Recruitment by merit
- iii. A system of appeals designed to preserve justice in promotions, dismissal and punishment;
- iv. Advancement on grounds of efficiency;
- v. Protection against arbitrary and indiscriminate dismissal;
- vi. Administrative retirement and pensions system;
- vii. Payment of living wage;
- viii. Introduction of Maximum wage both in the public and private sectors.

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