



An Overall Outlook of the Principle of Federal Character and Productivity in Nigerian Public Sector: A Study of the Federal Ministry of Education

¹UDOKA, Ezeigwe Izuchukwu., ²OWONIYA, Kemisola Iwalola.,

³OFINO, Emmanuel Eromosele & ⁴OWOEYE, Olumide Ayodele

^{1,2}Department of Public Administration, National Open University, (NOUN), Nigeria

³Department of Economics, Kola Daisi University, Ibadan, Nigeria

⁴Department of Political Science, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti,

Email: ¹eiudoka@noun.edu.ng., ²kowoniya@noun.edu.ng.,

³emmanuel.ofino@koladaisiuniversity.edu.ng & ⁴olumide.owoeye@fuoye.edu.ng

Abstract

The paper clinically conducted an overall outlook of the impact of the federal character principle within Nigerian public sector, the case of the Federal Ministry of Education between 2019 and 2024. The overall outlook in this paper examines if the federal character principle fans ethno-religious intolerance at the detriment of productivity within FME; Federal Ministry of Education; examines the impact of the principle of federal character on efficiency at the Federal Ministry of Education; investigates if principle of federal character triggers mediocrity at the Federal Ministry of Education, and also to examines impact of the principle of federal character on national integration. Federick Taylor's Scientific Management Theory together with Max Weber's theory of Bureaucracy were employed as the theoretical framework. The study's design used is the Survey Research method, data were collected using majorly the primary method. The foremost discoveries of the paper are that federal character principle fans ethno-religious intolerance at the expense of productivity, affects efficiency negatively, breeds mediocrity in the public sector, and negatively affects national integration. Finally, the study recommended amongst others, that merit should be upheld even when applying the federal character principle.

Keywords: Principle of Federal Character, Productivity and Nigerian Public Sector

Introduction

In a multi-ethnic and widely segregated societies across the world, governments thrives to manage diversity and divisive propensities via one or a mixture of policy options. Meanwhile, the administration of public service for improved outcomes together with service delivery have been a central discourse within public administration worldwide based by the study by Ayoade, (2000) and Abdullah (2007). More so, these policy options are often subtle engagements, however, if prudently conceived and practiced, they provide opportunities for both centripetal (i.e. centre-seeking) together with centrifugal (i.e. centre-fleeing) forces to interrelate peacefully and co-exist on agreed conditions. Amongst policy initiatives adopted in Nigeria for equitable representation in the public service is the **Federal Character Principle**. This principle emerged from the necessity to ensure fair distribution of public appointments across geo-political zones, states together with local governments (Nzeshi, 2012). The doctrine was first launched in 1977 by the then NCDC; Nigerian Constitution Drafting Committee to address imbalances within federal system and foster national unity (Hodgkin, 2017). Its primary objective was to guarantee minority groups, alongside major ethnicities and

regions, a voice and role in governance. In practice, the doctrine has influenced recruitment, appointments, admissions, and promotions in the public service (Gbuile, 2014). The principle has also complicated things in the Nigerian civil service, although it is meant to promote inclusion. Merit, seniority and promotion schemes have regularly been undermined (Suleiman, 2017). Meritocracy versus national unity and cohesion is still a subject of debate amongst scholars as values of the civil service (Goldstein, 2002). In Nigeria's case, its heterogeneity characterized by very strong ethnic and religious lines is the basis for the need for federal character as each group requires a place within the government (Lawson 2008). Yet, the use of ethnic and religious (primordial) symbols has often undermined national cohesion rather than strengthening it (Leeds, 2000). The principle of Federal Character is also constitutionally backed by Chapter II, Section 14 (3) and (4) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended) (Gbuile, 2014). But it has its own constitutional contradictions. The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria Section 17 prohibits discrimination against Nigerians and emphasizes citizenship rather than "indigene" status, effectively discouraging differentiated treatment based on whether or not a person is "home" (Duryile, 2007). This contradiction between equality and non-discrimination has entrenched unhealthy ambiguities in the Nigerian public sector.

While meritocracy has by no means been completely overturned, it is commonly believed that this principle has been detrimental to productivity not only for the civil service but for public service in general (Liebermann, 2008). From its inception, there have been concerns that competent individuals are regularly overlooked, leading to less efficient ministries, agencies, commissions, and security services (Clark, 2013). On top of that, it has also been argued that the doctrine has been used as a political tool than a policy intended to enhance productivity; (Cinjel & Kaonde, 2015). For most of the public institutions, the objective seems to be to wait for budgets rather than push forward any sort of national development project. This discrepancy between inputs and outputs is troubling in terms of the efficiency of the system. Other systemic challenges in the public sector, beyond the Federal Character principle, include presenteeism, absenteeism, misuse of resources, insubordination and corruption (Clark, 2013). This and the ineffectiveness of the education, health, power, security, and transportation systems give a dark outlook on the Nigerian governance regime (Hodgkin, 2017). Managerial competence, political neutrality, and a spirit of service to society, are property that Olugbile (2014) and Sanusi (2012) argue should characterize federal public service. For this to be achieved it must have educated, skilled and experienced personnel. Unfortunately for political reasons, Nigeria's federal public service has combined the ethos of meritocracy with the political doctrine of Federal Character. This is not an employment model geared towards efficient service delivery. One of the main issues this study identifies is the discordant organization that results from the principle of Federal Character. Though it is offered as a means of ensuring equal representation, in practice critics say that it completely undermines human resource management principles and actually stunts development. While the private sector is based on effectiveness, the public sector is hampered by representational politics.

As a result, ethnic, religious or regional based appointments often take precedence over merit and more capable persons may be appointed to leadership positions (Clark 2013).

This emphasis on identity over competence reduces productivity, and also serves to heighten ethno-religious tensions within organizations. Ministries, agencies and commissions are frequently grouped along ethnic and religious lines making for a demeritocratic system. Unity is something that is theoretically conducive but ironically ends up being a force that exacerbates inequity and undermines potential productivity. The strained imposition of the notion of Federal Character, which severely limits merit, threatens to undermine effective management. These kinds of practices are bound to be counterproductive to sustainable development (Afenifere, 2009). There is a growing scholarship that highlights politics and society in Nigeria as being suffused with a general sense of “fear,” not simply fear of violence, but fear of discrimination, domination, exclusion (Kwanashie 2002).

These concerns are further compounded by empirical findings in the paper by Okolo (2014) regarding the role of the principle of Federal Character in promoting national integration where the paper found out that the FCC; Federal Character Commission has inadequately or never successfully addressed imbalances in Nigeria. In a disaggregated analysis of 190 federal-level interviewees from across federal ministries, Briggs (2007) finds federal character practices and lack of independence of the service commissions to be major challenges that directly impact recruitment, particularly at the lower grade levels. Similarly, Gberevbie (2013), drawing on secondary data, concluded that no nation-state can achieve viable development without a well-coordinated public service. His findings show that the Federal Character principle encourages unethical behavior, undermines merit, and limits productivity. He therefore recommends a reappraisal of the principle’s implementation, emphasizing reforms anchored on meritocracy to strengthen capacity and promote viable transformation. Though plethora studies have been performed on the subject matter of the principle of federal character in the public service in Nigeria, but only scanty numbers of scholars have researched on the effect of the principle of federal character on productivity in Federal Ministry of Education.

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

Among the array of theoretical review in the work is the theory of scientific management pioneered by Fredrick W. Taylor. Subsequently, it is suffice to declare that theories following the works by Nwankwo (1982) are worthwhile arrays of logically interrelated concepts that elucidates the daily existence of any phenomenon. Furthermore, theoretical framework for this paper is vital at this phase so as to give the paper proper attention and bearing. Theories are crucial for research because they provide a foundation for analyzing a phenomenon and guide data collection. In this study focusing on employee performance in the Nigerian public service, a relevant management theory was essential. Therefore, the researcher chose Frederick Winslow Taylor's scientific management theory as the study's theoretical framework. Scientific management's emphasis on improving worker output and efficiency aligns well with the study's objectives. Scientific management, a theory developed by Frederick Winslow Taylor, is relevant to a wide range of workplaces in Nigeria. The underlying philosophy behind it, is that in different organizations there are universal concepts that can lead them to better performance. Taylor wanted to impose a science and

logic to managing people, machines, materials and money. It is argued that this study is theoretically rooted in the ideals of scientific management, led by Frederick Winslow Taylor. Using this principle Taylor's fundamental ideas centered on two areas to increase the average workers output: Scientific management which sought to find the most efficient way to complete tasks, thus allowing workers to produce more, and efficiency in management: that management could be practiced according to best scientific practices. The researcher subscribes to this theory as there is a growing menace of inefficiency and low worker performance in the public service of Nigeria.

The theory postulates that the best means of attaining high productivity is to provide employees with clear tasks, training and motivation as well as to have clear performance expectations and effective corrective measures. This combination brings discipline to the workforce, because employees know what is expected of them, they have the skills to do the job, and they are held to account for their work, reducing the possibility of waste or bad work. Many organizations have relied on control and disciplinary measures to deal with inefficiencies. While acknowledging that low performance is debilitating to public service delivery, this study adopts the alternative approach of investigating theories of worker performance.

Another theoretical review is the Max Weber theory on Bureaucracy. Max Weber, the famous sociologist, presented the ideal model of bureaucracy in 1950. What we find in this system is a high level of regulation and controlled behavior. It is characterized by continuity, that it operates consistently over time, impersonality, that decisions are made not on the basis of personal connections but according to established criteria, and rule of law, that all parties are treated equally. Weber felt that this kind of rules administration is the most efficient and systematic for large organizations and particularly for government organizations. Max Weber distinguished between three leading styles: traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational. Both draw on different sources to cultivate obedience. Traditional authority is based on cultural norms and historical precedent. Charismatic authority hinges on the leader's personal qualities and ability to inspire devotion. Weber's concept of bureaucracy falls under legal-rational authority. This system emphasizes formal rules, regulations, and procedures. Key features include recruitment based on qualifications (achievement) and a focus on efficiency and rationality. These characteristics, according to Weber (and Mier, 1979), are crucial for the success of modern organizations in nation-states. From a germane standpoint, Weber's recognition of bureaucracy as an exceptional kind of administration does not go beyond the practicability of his charismatic and traditional authority in the developing economies of which Nigeria is inclusive (Adamolekun, 1986). However, this kind of administrative style arises because African nations, (specifically Nigeria) accept the roles of key personalities and traditional custodians who proffer recommendations for employment of prospective interviewees into the civil service. Diversities in the Nigerian society have led to the application of charismatic and traditional forms of authority in recruitment of personnel into the federal civil service. Nonetheless, from Weber's proposition, this paper inferred that the Nigeria federal civil service should execute and enforce the employment policies in tandem

with existing and recognized guidelines enshrined in the rules of Public Service, thus, assisting in the practicability of the principle of merit as documented by Akindele, (1987).

Empirical Review

Empirical studies over the last decade paint a complex, often ambivalent picture of how the federal character principle (and associated quota practices) affects public-sector productivity in Nigeria. A number of quantitative surveys and field studies across ministries and federal agencies show recurring patterns: the policy succeeds at redistributing posts geographically and ethnically, but its impact on organizational performance, staff morale, and technical competence is mixed and frequently negative when implementation overrides meritocratic hiring or performance systems. Recent country-level analyses argue that the policy's design — intended to reduce horizontal inequality — has not always been matched by effective institutional safeguards to protect competence and productivity. wider.unu.edu+1 Several field surveys focused on federal ministries and regulatory agencies highlight the mechanisms by which representation policies can affect outputs. First, when quota rules are applied strictly without parallel investment in training and performance management, agencies report skill gaps in technical roles that directly affect service delivery. Second, perceptions of unfairness in recruitment and appraisal correlate with lower job satisfaction and reduced discretionary effort among career staff — both known predictors of lower productivity. For example, recent empirical work on appraisal fairness in federal regulatory agencies finds a statistically significant link between perceived appraisal injustice and lower employee productivity, suggesting that procedural fairness (not only representational fairness) matters for outcomes. ResearchGate+1.

Other studies using survey designs and administrative data point to a second empirical pattern: implementation quality is highly heterogeneous across agencies and time. Where ministries combine representational targets and transparent recruitment panels based on competencies, skills upgrading, clear performance metrics, negative productivity effects are minimized or absent. In contrast, in contexts where political appointments or patronage steps in for these transparent practices, drops in productivity are more dramatic and can sometimes be measured by longer processing times, missed targets, and higher error rates. This heterogeneity implies that simple bivariate statements of the type “quota=bad” or “quota=good” are empirically weak; most variation can be accounted for by contextual factors and the institutionalization of the quota. ojs.unimal.ac.id+1 A strand of research that examined workforce composition and service outcomes in education and other social sectors finds that the quota/federal character application interacts with other systemic constraints — budget instability, weak monitoring, and outdated HR systems — to influence productivity. In the education sector specifically, productivity losses linked to representational hiring show up when technical teacher or administrative roles are filled without commensurate capacity development; where training and clear task assignment accompany hiring, negative effects shrink. Macro-level reports on Nigeria's productivity challenges also emphasize that sectoral productivity is driven by broader structural factors (capital, infrastructure, governance), so attribution to a single policy must be cautious and contextualized. World Bank+1 Finally, recent policy-oriented empirical papers advocate pragmatic reforms grounded in the evidence:

preserve the equity aims of federal character but tighten recruitment procedures, strengthen performance appraisal systems, invest in targeted training for under-represented areas, and introduce transparent, audit-able appointment records. These studies often recommend hybrid approaches (quota targets + merit thresholds + capacity building) and stronger oversight mechanisms to ensure that representation does not come at the cost of core competencies required for productivity. The empirical consensus emerging from the latest papers is not to abolish representational goals, but to redesign implementation so the twin objectives of inclusion and efficiency are reconciled [ResearchGate+1](#).

Methodology

A research design is the plan or blueprint indicating the way data appropriate for a particular research is to be gathered and analyzed. It is like the building plan, which a builder uses in carrying out his building. Ugwu (1998) stated that a research design creates the procedural settings on how to execute a given investigation. This research design adopted is the descriptive survey kind of design which is primarily concern with collection of data, research questions as well as testing of hypotheses. This kind of design is adopted when analyzing a scenario or area of concern in a logical, realistic and precise manner. Following the works by Onyido and Kalu in the works of Oputa (2016) which reaffirms that descriptive survey entails data collection and also unfolding in a logical manner the attributes and evidences about a specified population. Specifically, this work applied a cross sectional survey to gather data from the Local Government Area.

The basic instrument for data collection is the questionnaire. The main interest of descriptive survey research design is to measure existing conditions and prevailing practices based on the data collected through questionnaires, interviews or primary observations. The work adopted a survey design. The staffer's size in terms of numbers of the ministry is put at 720 (Williams, 2021) and this served as the study's population. Again, Oputa (2016) posits that sampling is the steps of taking a small fraction of the population to symbolize the totality. Based on the work by Eric (1998) sample results from inferential statistics techniques are employed to draw deduction about the population from which the samples were derived. Notwithstanding, as a result of the challenges involved in studying the whole population within the Local Government Area, samples were drawn for effective study.

Sample size

Adopting the formulae of Taro Yamen which is designed for the determination of sample size:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \text{ or } n = \frac{N}{1+N(0.05)^2}$$

Wherein n is the sample size that is required for the population under study.

N is the population size

e is the MOE; Margin of Error which is 0.05

Thus, if the population as whole of the Local Government Area is 464,789, the sample size will be:

$$n = \frac{720}{1+720(0.05)^2}$$
$$= 399.65$$

n = 400 Approximately.

Thus the sample population for the study comprises of Four Hundred (400) male and female staff of the council. The 400 respondents were selected from the seven (7) departments of the ministry. The major instrument in this paper for the data collection was the structured Questionnaire, which were administered among 400 participants gotten from the council. They were chosen through the purposive sampling technique. Again, the researcher was responsible for the administration of the questionnaire to the respondents. Also personal interviews and observations were adopted to gather additional information. In addition, the feedbacks from the questionnaire were showcased in statistical tables and then transformed into percentages for analytical processes and interpretations. Consequently, descriptive instruments such as simple percentages and mean rating were applied to analyse and also present outcomes. Also, chi-square statistical instrument was applied for hypothesis testing and to also corroborate or negate the association between variables. Indeed the work applied both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Existing study by Agbaegbu (2004) opined that test validity denotes the degree at which it determines what it is expected to measure as well as the degree of accuracy. The instrument used in this research was face validated by the research supervisors and other experts for content and construct validity. And the corrections and comments were adhered to.

The Reliability of the instrument was ascertained through the use of test-retest approach. In this approach the same test was given to the same group of individuals in more than one occasion, after three weeks. The scores obtained by each person in the first text is related to his score in the second text to provide a reliability coefficient.

Results and Discussions of Findings

Presentation of Data and Empirical Analysis

Table 1 shows questionnaires distribution and questionnaires returned completely filled by respondents. The data were analyzed in two sections. Section "A" accommodates data showing the social background of respondents while Section "B" deals with the analysis of data based on the opinions of respondents on the impact of principle of Federal Character on productivity at Federal Ministry of Education. From the Table 1, it shows clearly that 400 questionnaires were circulated to the selected participants so as to give required information on the impact of the Federal Character Principle at the Federal Ministry of Education. Table 1 depicts that the various departments chosen in the ministry received different quantities of questionnaires, depending on their sizes and population figure. Similarly, Table 1 further indicated that out of the 400 questionnaires circulated, 370 were wholly completed and retrieved, thereby signaling 92.5%.

Table 1: Questionnaires Distributional Pattern

Communities	Numbers Distributed	Numbers. Returned (%)
Basic and Secondary	30	63
Tertiary	30	68
Federal Education Quality Assurance Services	30	69
Educational Planning and Research	28	55
Finance and Accounts	28	60
Human Resources Management	28	65
Information and Communication Technology	28	
Technology and Science Education	28	
Procurement	28	
Legal	28	
Reform Coordination and Service Improvement	28	
Library Services	28	
Federal Scholarship Board	28	
Sum-Total	400	370(92.5%)

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025.

In this paper, the test of hypothesis seeks to answer the following questions as chronologically and systematically arranged hereafter. Is there a significant relationship between the principle of federal character and fanning ethno-religious intolerance at the expense of productivity at the Nigerian public sector was answered in Table 6? Based on the Table 2, 340 respondents representing 92% claimed that there was a positive association between training and employee knowledge. Contrariwise, 30 participants signaling 8% replied "No". It follows then that there is a positive association between training and employee knowledge.

Table 2: Is there a significant association between the principle of federal character and fanning ethno-religious intolerance at the detriment of productivity at the Nigerian Public Sector?

Option	Numbers of Participants	Percentage (%)
Yes	340	92
No	30	8
Sum-Total	370	100

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025.

Is there a significant association between the principle of federal character and efficiency within the Federal Ministry of Education was answered in Table 3? From the data in Table 7, 290 respondents representing 78.4% opined that there is a significant association between the principle of federal character and efficiency within the Federal Ministry of Education, while 80 respondents representing 21.6% responded in the negative.

Table 3: Is there a significant association between the principle of federal character and efficiency in the Federal Ministry of Education?

Option	Numbers of Participants	Percentage (%)
Yes	250	67.6
No	120	32.4
Sum-Total	370	100

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025.

Is there a significant association between the principle of federal character and national integration was answered in Table 4? Based on the data shown above, 280 respondents representing 75.7% support the view that training effects and organization positively, while 90 respondents representing 24.3% in their opinion replied “No”.

Table 4: Is there a significant association between the principle of federal character and national integration?

Option	Numbers of Participants	Percentage (%)
Yes	280	75.7
No	90	24.3
Sum-Total	370	100

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025.

Among extant literature, Hoffman (2003) explains that hypotheses testing is a process for verifying a claim about a parameter in a population, using data measured in a sample. Laren (2009) opines that hypothesis testing provides researchers with a structured analytical method for making decisions. It permits making decisions in such a manner that the probability of decision error can be controlled, or at least measured. Consequently, the hypotheses of this study are to be tested as shown below: The test of the hypotheses in this study has to be done with the chi-square. This is to be done by making reference to tables that have relevant questions. Meanwhile, there are four hypotheses used in this paper and they are:

Hypothesis 1

Null: There is no significant association between principle of federal character and ethno-religious intolerance at the detriment of productivity at the Federal Ministry of Education.

Alternative: There is a significant association between principle of federal character and ethno-religious intolerance at the expense of productivity at the Federal Ministry of Education.

Table 5: Hypothesis 1

OPTION	NO OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	340	92
NO	30	8
Sum- Total	370	100

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025.

Considering the obtained data in Table 6 based on the Chi-square formulae; $\Sigma (314.86)$ Hence the calculated value of $X^2_{-} = 314.86$. From the Table 10 at confidence level of 5% level at $df (n-1) = (2-1) = 1$, $X^2_{(0.05, 1)} = 3.84$. Since the chi-square value calculated is greater than the chi-square tabulated we accept the alternative hypothesis.

Table 6: Hypothesis 1 Chi-square Results

No	Value Observed	Value Expected	O - E	(O - E) ²	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
1	340	185	185	34225	185
2	30	185	-155	24025	129.86

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025.

Hypothesis 2

Null: There is no significant association between principle of federal character and efficiency at the federal ministry of education.

Alternative: There is a significant association between principle of federal character and efficiency at federal ministry of education.

Table 7: Hypothesis 2

OPTION	NO OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	290	78.4
NO	80	21.6
Sum-Total	370	100

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025.

Referring to Table 8 based on the Chi-square formulae; $X^2 = \Sigma (O - E)^2 / E = 120.33$. From the tabulated value of the X^2 at confidence level of 0.05 level at $df (n-1) = 2 - 1 = 1$. Hence, $X^2_{(0.05, 1)} = 3.84$. In as much that the computed value of chi-square is greater than chi-square value read the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 8: Hypothesis 2 Chi-square Results

No	Value Observed	Value Expected	O - E	(O - E) ²	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
1	290	185	106	11236	60.74
2	80	185	-105	11025	59.59

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025.

Hypothesis 3

Null: There is no significant association between principle of federal character and mediocrity at federal ministry of education.

Alternative: There is a significant relationship between federal character principle and mediocrity at the federal ministry of education.

Table 9: Hypothesis 3

OPTION	NO OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	250	67.60
NO	120	32.40
Sum-Total	370	100

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025.

Pertaining Table 10 based on the Chi-square formulae; The calculated $X^2 = \sum (O - E)^2 / E = 45.68$. The value of X^2 read from the T. table a confidence level of $t 0.05$ at $df (2-1) = 1$, hence $X^2 = 3.84$. This implies that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 10: Hypothesis 3 Chi-square Results

No	Value Observed	Value Expected	O - E	(O - E) ²	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
1	250	185	65	4225	22.84
2	120	185	-65	4225	22.84

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025.

Hypothesis 4

Null: There is no significant association between principle of federal character and national integration.

Alternative: There is a significant association between principle of federal character and national integration.

Table 11: Hypothesis 4

OPTION	NO OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	280	75.70
NO	90	24.30
Sum-Total	370	100

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025.

The computed $X^2 = \sum (O - E)^2 / E = 97.56$. The value of X^2 read from T. table at confidence level of 0.05 at $df (2-1) = 1$, hence $X^2 = 3.86$. This implies that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 12: Hypothesis 3 Chi-square Results

No	Value Observed	Value Expected	O - E	(O - E) ²	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
1	280	185	95	9025	48.78
2	90	185	-95	9025	48.78

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025.

Analytically, this paper firstly revealed that the application of the Federal Character principle, originally designed to promote fairness and proportional representation, has in practice contributed to the employment of unqualified and non-performing staffers within public service in Nieria. This finding supports the arguments from the works by Ademolegun (2005) together with Suleiman (2017), who contend that low competency levels among public sector employees can be traced to the principle's implementation. According to them, this

policy undermines the effectiveness of the Nigerian public bureaucracy and hinders viable transformation. In the same vein, the paper also discovered that principle of Federal Character, though intended to promote national unity as enshrined in its founding legislation, has deviated from its original purpose.

Rather than promoting a balance in representation it seems to have promoted ethnic and religious discrimination along with other divisive tendencies that exacerbate tensions and threaten unity and stability. This outcome adversely affects productivity. Lupine (2009) observed that the principle prioritizes population representation over merit, quality, and training, which are vital for productivity. Similarly, Suleiman (2017) stressed that federal character practices interfere with the merit-based sharing of privileges and benefits in representative bureaucracy. This undermines effectiveness and contradicts the Weberian model of bureaucracy, which emphasizes rationality, merit, and formal organizational procedures. Supporting the importance of meritocracy, Soludo in his empirical works in 2012 argued that the launch of a meritocracy-driven lifestyle is essential towards enhancing productivity as well as achieving Nigeria's Vision 2020 goals.

Conclusion

This paper scientifically and technically experimented the overall outlook of the impact of principle federal character principle on the Nigerian public sector, adopting FME; Federal Ministry of Education as the focus of study from 2019 to 2024 employing survey approach from the primary source of data analytical technique. More so, the launch and implementation of principle of Federal Character within public sector in Nigeria has tended to encourage unwholesome behavior among bureaucrats while undermining meritocracy in workers recruitment and elevation. The system has resulted in the placement of unqualified personnel in government positions, thereby limiting effective policy implementation and overall productivity. Unarguably, it is therefore imperative for the Nigerian government to re-evaluate the current practice of principle of Federal Character. A meritocratic reform agenda would allow the entire workforce to reach its full potential, Strengthen public institutions, and promote sustainable development. Progress over the long run cannot be based solely on oil wealth. Nigeria will remain an underdeveloped economy without a productive and competent workforce. Low productivity is seen in higher costs, imbalance in trade, and falling output. For Nigeria to increase its national welfare, resulting in a better standard of living, productivity must be upscaled through efficiently handling the human resource as well as better management.

Policy Recommendations

The conclusion of the study drawn from the observation and the inference made in this paper suggests the following recommendations.

- First, Nigeria's use of principle of Federal Character should be reversed to begin to focus on meritocracy. Countries such as the US and Russia provide lessons, where civil service appointments are based on merit.

- In the second place, clear distinctions should be made between decisions that must be based on merit and public interest, and those where ethnic or religious considerations may apply. This clarity will limit favoritism in the name of federal character.
- Subsequently, the Nigerian public sector should abandon this idealistic construction of government focused on welfare provision. Adoption of more modern management practices such as strategic management and good governance will improve productivity.
- The recruitment processes in the Nigerian public sector hitherto require urgent overhauling. Ethnic or religious considerations should not trump professional hiring standards. A system that is open and works to ensure that qualifications, skills and competence are the basis for deciding who will participate in the development of the country should instead be established.
- The public sector here on out should be restructured to focus on efficiency, accountability and results. Government must also move societal perception of it as a social safety net, towards one oriented around performance.

REFERENCES

- Adamolekun, L. (2005). *Public Administration in Africa. Main issues and selected countries* Ibadan: Spectrum books.
- Burke, R. E. (2007). *Government. Microsoft Student 2008 [DVD].* Pennsylvania State University Press
- Cinjel, N. D & Akende, J. K. (2015). Boko Haram and the challenges of Population Displacement in the Chad Basin, *A.B.U Journal of Public Administration*, 5(2)
- Clark, T. A. (2004). *A Right Honourable Gentlemam: The Life and Times of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.* Zaria: Hudahuda Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Duyile, D. (2007). *Makers of Nigerian Press.* Lagos: Gong Communications (Nigeria) Ltd.
- Erinosho O. L., Obasi, I. N., Maduekwe, A. (2006). *Interdisciplinary Methodologies in the Social Sciences.* Abuja: UNESCO Social Science Academy of Nigeria.
- Etzioni, A. (1967). *Mixed Scanning: A Third Approach to Decision Making.* *Public Administration Review.* XXVII.
- Eyestone, R. (1971). *The Threats of Public Policy: A Study in Policy Leadership.* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merril.
- Federal Character Commission Handbook (1996). Abuja: Presidency.
- Federal Civil Service Manpower Statistics. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Establishments.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1998). *Guidelines on Appointments, Promotion and Discipline.* Abuja: Federal Civil Service Commission.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2000). *Annual Report of the Federal Civil Service Commission.* Abuja: Federal Civil Service Commission.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2000). *Schemes of Service for Use in the Federation.* Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation. Abuja.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2006). *Public Service Rules.* Lagos: Federal Government Press.
- Finer, H. (1949). *Theory and Practice of Modern Government.* New York: Henry Holt & Co.
- Fredrich, C.J. (1963). *Man and His Government.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Garba, J.N. (1979). *Military Administration and the Nigerian Society – Nigeria in Transition: A Critical Examination of the Main Political, Economic and Social Aspects of the Nigerian Society*. Lagos. Federal Government Press.
- Gboyega, A. (1989). *The Public Service and Federal Character*. In P.P. Ekeh and E.E. Osaghae (eds). *Federal Character and Federalism in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann.
- Geddes, B. (1994). *Politician's Dilemma: Building State Capacity in Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gerth, H.H. and Mills, C.W. (1946). *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gladden, E.N. (1966): *An Introduction to Public Administration*. England: Staple Press.
- Goodnow, F.J. (1914). *Politics and Administration*. New York: Macmillan.
- Gbuile, B. (2014). *Nigeria's Five Majors*. Onitsha: Africana Educational Publishers (Nig) Ltd.
- Goldstein, M. K. & Ridout, T. N. (2002) .The Politics of Participation: Mobilization and Turnout over Time. *Journal Political Behavior*, 8(2) 3-29.
- Harold, W.S. & Niemi, R.G. (2004). *Vital Statistics on American Politics 2003- 2004*. Washington DC: CQ Press
- Hodgkin, T. (2009). *African Political Parties: An introductory Guide*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Kalu, K. (1999). *The spectacle of U.S. Senate elections*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.
- Lawson, K. (2008). *Political parties*. Microsoft Student 2008 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2007
- Leeds, C.A. (2000). *Political Studies*, 3rd ed. Plymouth: Macdonald & Evens ltd.
- Lieberman, J.K/ (2008). *Checks and Balance*. Microsoft Student 2007 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2007.
- Nwachukwu, C. C. (2004). *Management theory and practice*. Enugu: Afri-publisher
- Opuna, D. (2005). *A System analysis of the public sector and productivity*. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Orghator, V. (2003). *Public Administration and service delivery in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Longman.
- Suleiman, J. R. (2016). *State Politics and Contemporary: Crisis or Continuity*. London: Westview Press.
- Telsang, M. (2007). *Introduction to production management*. London: Prentice and Hall
- Tonye, G. J. (2012). *Internal Politics and Foreign Policy in Nigeria*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press.