EFFECT OF FEDERAL CHARACTER ON APPOINTMENT INTO THE CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM: A STUDY OF FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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Abstract
Federal character was adopted in Nigeria to ensure that no group or section suffers imbalance or marginalization of any kind. However, its implementation has been fraught with criticism by scholars and public servants who see it as an instrument of favoring some sections against others. It has been linked to the high level of administrative inefficiency experienced by the civil service system in spite of myriad of reforms over the years. The study examined the effect of federal character principle on appointment in the civil service system, using Federal Ministry of Education. Descriptive survey design was adopted, while simple random sampling was used in selecting the 300 respondents from the ten departments of the ministry. Questionnaire was the research instrument and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while inferential statistics was carried out using T-test and ANOVA. As federal character increases by 1%, it will result to a multiplier effect of 63% in appointment into civil service system in Nigeria. There is a strong positive correlation between federal character and appointment into the civil service system, r = 0.756. Federal character negatively affects appointment into civil service in Nigeria, as merit is sacrificed on the altar of quota or representativeness.

Introduction
Plural and sharply divided societies all over the world attempt to manage their diversities and divisive tendencies through one or combination of policy alternatives in the organization and management of their public services for performance; and Nigeria is not an exception (Abdullah, 2007). Often times, these policy alternatives turn out to be delicate arrangements; but when carefully conceived, crafted and practiced, it provides opportunity for centre-seeking and centre-fleeing forces to interact peacefully and co-habit on agreed terms. One of such policy alternatives adopted for the management of public service in Nigeria for even representation is the federal character principle, which “was borne out of the need to ensure...even spread of government appointments...in all the regions, states and local government councils in the country” (Nzesi, 2012: 97).

The federal character principle essentially refers to the recognition of the plural nature of the country in recruitment, distribution of administrative and political offices and power as well

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as the resources of the country. The essence federal character principle is to allow the composition and conduct of public institutions and affairs reflect the country’s diversity. It is premised on the ground that when national institutions and affairs are reflective, in composition and conduct, of the pluralism of the country then, a sense of belonging is likely to be evoked from the citizenry. It is also designed to mitigate, if not obviate, the bellicose political struggle that characterized previous Nigeria’s democratic systems (Obiyan and Akindele, 2001).

The phrase “Federal Character” was first used by the late General Murtala Ramat Muhammed in his address to the opening session of the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDCs) on Saturday the 18th of October 1975. Federal Character according to the CDCs report of 1977 refers to the distinctive desire of the peoples of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging to the nation notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, language or religion which may exist and which it is their desire to nourish, harness to the enrichment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Babura, 2013).

The civil service is the body of public officials employed in the civil capacity to undertake the formulation and implementation of government policies and programmes. This can be viewed in terms of structure like ministries, departments, etc or human occupants of the public offices like permanent secretaries, ministers and higher administrative staff. Section 2 of the Pension Act of 1951 defines civil service as the service in a civil capacity under the government of the federal or in a college, university or a pensionable employment under local authority.

Civil servants are mainly of two categories: lower clerical staff and higher administrative and technical staff. The higher administrative staffs that are directly responsible to the elected public officers, who are charged with the responsibility of steering the ship of state. The Nigerian civil service is patterned to the Westminster model, and composed of well trained, highly skilled body of professional officials who have taken government service as a career (Ekhator, 2002).

The Federal Ministry of Education is the body of government that is charged with the responsibility of managing education in the country. It occupies a strategic position in the development of the country given the nature of the services it provides. It is indeed a key ministry and if the ministry of education does not deliver on its mandate, then future of the country would be in jeopardy. In line with the professionalization of the civil service accomplished as part of the Obasanjo civil service renewal programme of 2000 – 2007, the ministry has 10 departments. The ministry’s functions include: formulation of a national policy on education; collecting and collating data for the purposes of educational planning and financing, maintaining uniform standards of education throughout the country, controlling the quality of education in the country through the supervisory role of its inspectorate service department, harmonising educational policies and procedures of all the states of the federation through the national council on education, effecting cooperation in educational matters on an international scale, developing curriculum and syllabuses at the national level in conjunction with other bodies (Mogism, 2013).

Section 14 (3) of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria states that The composition of the government of the Federation or any 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 the at government or in any of its agencies.
Nigeria is a federal society with 36 component states, with a population of over 160 million segmented into over 250 ethnic groups which makes an arrangement that could accommodate the different segments of the country in the public bureaucracy without any segment feeling marginalized such as federal character a necessity (Gberevbie, 2012). Tonwe and Oghator, 2009) write that before the adoption of federal character, Nigeria had introduced quota system into the public service in 1958 with the aim of ensuring equitable representation of various groups in the country.

It is generally acknowledged that the federal character principle was adopted to deal with the problem of imbalance, marginalization and discrimination. However, the question is whether the principle can be rightly used to address the problem of discrimination in the composition and conduct of public institutions and affairs given the fact that Nigerians have very high inclination to their ethnic identities. Does the implementation of the principle not encourage divisive ethnic sentiments? A major concern is the nature of application of the federal character principle which tends to pose challenges to the administrative effectiveness of the Civil service especially when merit is sacrificed on the altar of federal character, or federal character is used as the indices to accelerate the promotion of mediocre and incompetent civil servants into top government positions.

The study therefore examined the impact of federal character on appointments into the civil service system, using the Federal Ministry of Education, while the null hypothesis that was tested was: Federal character has no significant effect on appointment into the civil service system. The study is subdivided into seven sections; introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, presentation and discussion of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

Literature Review
Federal character Principle and its Implementation
Federal character principle is a highly contested issue in Nigerian polity. As a result it has attracted the attention of many reputable scholars in Nigeria. There is abundant literature on the federal character principle and its implementation in the Nigerian public service covering various perspectives. Many scholars regard it as a tool for nation building and development through elimination of dominance of any particular group and marginalization of other groups, while others see its implementation as defeating the purpose for which it was adopted. The concept of federal character was first popularized under the Murtala/Obasanjo regime (1975 – 1979). It became a constitutional matter in the Constitution Drafting Committee as well as the Constituent Assembly, which were the progenitors of the 1979 constitution. It finally inculcated into the 1979 constitution as a directive principle of state policy (Osaghae, 1988).

Gboyega (1989) writes that the:
Fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy in the 1979 constitution explains federal character to mean that the composition of the federal government or any of its agencies and the conduct of their affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to recognize the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and to command national loyalty. Accordingly, the predominance in that government or its agencies of persons from a few ethnic or other sectional groups shall be avoided. The above constitutional mandate was made with a view to enhance participation of people from different segments of the Nigerian society in the process of governance (Gboyega, 1989: 177)
Afigbo (1989) provides a historical perspective to the understanding of federal character principle. While stating that federal character is directly linked to the character of the Nigerian federation, he highlights the factors that must be noted in order to have a clear understanding of the character of the Nigerian federation:

The innate or primordial characteristics of Nigeria’s federal society going back to the days of yore; the quality and performance of the statesmanship which has sought to harness the inborn characteristics of Nigeria’s federal society to a federal constitution; the degree of harmony existing between the primordial features and usages of Nigerian society; the structure and usages of the constitution; and the fact that the character of the Nigerian federation has been rather dynamic in response to the changing perceptions of statesmanship and other relevant forces (Afigbo, 1989: 6).

The introduction of federal character principle in Nigeria, was aimed at fostering unity, peace, equal ability, as well as equal access to state resources and to promote the integration of disadvantaged states for better improvement of the living conditions of people living across the country (Ugoh & Ukpere, 2012). It was to take care of some problems in the political process including, ethnicity, the national question, minority problem, discrimination based on indigeneity, resources allocation, power sharing, employment and placement in public institutions, amongst others (Afigbo, 1989). The federal character principle while aiming at ensuring equality amongst the component units had as its very heart the eschewing of all forms of group imbalance in public institutions and affairs (Obiyan & Akindele, 2002). Ezeibe (2013) writes that federal character principle involves a deliberate plan to construct means of ensuring the proper distribution of amenities and government projects in a country. The implication is that it is a policy that was introduced following observed differences in culture, tradition and inequality in human resources as well as the capability to have access to resources. Heirmexy (2011) writes that federal character principle was introduced for equitable sharing of posts and even distribution of natural and economic resources.

The federal character principle as an integrative mechanism stands for fair and effective representation of the various components of the federation in the country’s position of power, status and influence. It is to ensure a broad public participation in the nation’s affairs while fostering even development. However, the application of the principle had remained problematic because of the disparity in the standard of western education attained among the states in the federation (Mohammed, 1998). The educationally disadvantaged states expect a lowering of standards in order for them to be accommodated, thereby ensuring equality, this sometimes may involve sacrificing merit in the selection process.

Olaopa (2012: 56) writes that the federal character principle has been one of the “effective nation-building strategies invented for managing the combustive diversity in Nigeria, however, it had badly eroded professional and competency capacity of the public service”. It has been argued that in striving to ensure equality for the unequal, federal character principle has become discriminatory. The interpretation of the federal character on the basis of state and ethnicity is regarded by some as inadequate as other social division in Nigeria include class, religion and ideological divisions. Operations of federal character tend to give more powers to the politically dominant groups, creating wider power disparity between the stronger and weaker groups (Ikime, 2002).

Suberu and Diamond (2004) write that federal character as defined and pursued by the 1979 and 1999 constitutions cannot succeed in integrating the people because it was a ideology of the minority ruling class aimed at protecting their interest. The operation of the federal character in Nigeria has given more powers to the politically superior groups thus creating a wider power disparity between the strong and the weak. A situation in which the politically
weak are subjected to a form of double jeopardy is antithetical to national integration which federal character was aimed to achieve (Bello, 2012).

Onyeoziri (2002) writes that though the federal character principle was introduced to foster national building, its implementation had been fraught with different problem as it had resulted in tension among the component units of the federation. The reasons for the tensions are as follows:

the fuzziness that pervades its application in certain areas; the arbitrariness that seems to accompany its application even in areas where the application seems straight, especially during military regimes; lack of political will from the leading elite to employ sanctions when the rules are breached; and lack of definite guideline in achieving balance between equity and efficiency in the application of the principle (Onyeoziri, 2002: 17).

These factors tend to highlight the liabilities to the judicious practice of the principle and poses serious encumbrances to the realization of sustainable development in Nigeria. Federal character principle instead ameliorating the negative effects of ethnocentrism, provokes ethno-regional division; it suffers from a fundamental contradiction as a policy for ensuring nation building or national integration. The principle does not encourage treating individuals as members of the nation-state, but views them from the lens of ethno-linguistic group within the nation state, thereby reinforcing the integrating of the units instead of the nation-state (Onyeoziri, 2002: 18).

In emphasizing the shortcomings of the application of the federal Character principle in Nigeria, Gboyega (1989: 178) writes that issues of making public institutions reflect the federal character was taken up haphazardly giving rise to arbitrariness and victimization of some unfortunate public servants. Ekeh (1989: 34) taking a similar position argues that “the most radical and damaging application of federal character has been in the bureaucracies and public services of the federation, where permanent secretaries have been kicked around, removed and sometimes dismissed”. The argument of Ekeh (1989: 34) is that federal character principle “has invaded the integrity and standards of public bureaucracy as well as other governmental bodies that normally require some protection against the vagaries of politics”.

Commenting on the negative effects of federal character on public sector performance in Nigeria, Forrest (1993: 36) writes 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”. Ojo (2009) writes that federal character principle as practiced in Nigeria is elitist and class biased. Its implementation results to a blurring of the boundary between the pursuits of meritocracy and ethnic balancing, thereby creating inadvertently a multiple system of citizenship in the polity.

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 undertaken through discrimination in appointment and promotion, as 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. Tonwe and Oghator (2009: 237) takes the argument further, when they write that “federal character allows ethno-regional patrons and their clients to exploit and mismanage state resources without contributing to any meaningful development”.

To promote administrative effectiveness for performance in the Nigerian public service, Utomi (2002: 48) argues that the emphasis should not be on federal character, rather Nigeria needs to engage on the issues of competence, commitment, corruption and conflict of interest and career certainty. Adamolekun (2008) makes very robust contribution regarding implementation of federal character principle:
Has the federal character principle promoted or retarded national loyalty and stability? Or has the area or ethnic region of a person become the key factor in determining his quality as an individual? Federal character principle that was introduced as Nigeria’s path to achieving ‘representative bureaucracy’ was morphed into the bed of politicization. Capacity development programmes for public servants that were a major concern during the immediate pre and post independence years was progressively neglected notwithstanding the strong case made for it in the Udoji report of 1974 (Adamolekun, 2008: 17).

Suleiman (2009:33) contends that poor capacity of the majority of civil servants, sometimes to the point of illiteracy arising from the application of federal character is one of the reasons for poor performance of the Nigerian public service. The neglect of capacity development programmes for public servants and the implementation of federal character offer a credible explanation on the ineffectiveness of the Nigerian public bureaucracy for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Federal character is seen from different dimensions by Nigerians form different regions. As Suberu (2001) writes, those from the northern part of the country, see federal character as an equalizer that ensures proportional absorption into federal institutions. Those form the southern part of the country see it as an attempt by the ‘North’ to infiltrate into areas which they hitherto regarded as ‘their’ by right. Federal character is one of the most controversial issues in contemporary Nigeria, the divergences of views point to the fact there are definite solutions in sight given the political implications of its implementation and its linkage to access to power and state resources in the country.

**Theoretical framework**

The study adopts system theory as theoretical construct. David Easton (1965) introduced system theory into political science through his conceptualization of political systems as part of his proposition that politics is about authoritative allocation of values. According to Easton, a political system is that system of interaction in any society through which binding and authorization allocations are made. He analyzes political activity by employing the paradigm of the biological system “whose life processes interact with each other and with the environment to produce a changing but nonetheless stable bodily state.” (Ham and Hill, 1985:13). Viewed from this perspective therefore, therefore, a public policy such as federal character principle is the response of the political system to forces brought to bear on it from the environment. The attempt by the system to bring about equality and equity to a society that is at different stages of development.

Certain key concepts are central to the understanding of public policy from the systems theoretic framework. First is the concept of system which in the words of Dye (1997:35) “implies an identifiable set of institutions and activities in society that functions to transform demands into authoritative decisions requiring the support of the whole society” A crucial property of a system is the interestedness of its parts or elements. Furthermore, it is assumed that a system will respond to its environment and will seek to preserve it. Second, is the concept of inputs, which refers to the forces generated in the environment that affect the political system? In puts can take the form of demands and support. Demands involve actions by individuals and groups seeking authoritative allocations of values from the authorities. Support comprises of actions rendered in favour of government such as obedience to the law and payment of taxes. Inputs are generated from the environment.

The environment is any condition or circumstance defined as external to the boundaries of the political system. Inputs are fed into the black box of decision making, otherwise called the conversion box, to produce outputs. Outputs are the decisions and policies of the authorities.
Within the systems framework, allowance is made for feedback. This is the mechanism through which the outputs of the political system influence future inputs into the system. Anderson (1975:19) writes that “the concept of feedback indicates that public policies (or outputs) may subsequently alter the environment and the demands generated there in, as well as the character of the political system itself”.

Echikwonye, and Beetseh, (2011) writes that systems theory had been a dominant paradigm in orthodox theorizing about public policy, of which federal character principle is one. In general, systems theory provides a convenient framework for capturing the complexity of the policy making process and is to the extent a valuable tool for organizing scientific inquiry into the causes and consequences of government action. This in our present study is of utmost importance given that different segments of the Nigerian population hold divergent views of federal character principle and the methodologies of its implementation.

Several questions arise regarding the relationship between the environment and the political system and how the characteristics of the political system, in turn affect modalities and the technicalities of the implementation of the federal character principle. A major problem with the use of system theory in the implementation of federal character principle by government lies in the impression that is conveyed to the effect that policy making proceeds in a systematic way, beginning with input and on to output, can hardly be sustained in the real world of policy making. While not denying the relevance of the environment for the generation of inputs, the fact remains that demands and support for federal character principle was not from the masses but as literature shows originated from a former Murtala Mohammed who was then Head of State, before it was adopted by the then framers of the constitution, equally conveyed by the military government.

A fundamental assumption of systems theory is stability, an assumption that is implied in such notions as pattern maintenance, equilibrium, etc. Much value is inevitably placed on the imperative of order and predictability. It is for this reason that systems theory is, not without some justifications, labeled an ideological endorsement of the status quo. The implication of this characterization is that stability becomes a goal which is pursued at all cost even if it means suppressing legitimate demands, the utility of systems theory is even more worrisome in situations where stability is a problem and the policy making machinery is in dire need of change (Echikwonye, and Beetseh, 2011).

The challenge in this case is how the system reacts to the many divergent feedbacks, especially regarding the modalities of implementing the federal character principle. While system theory supports the maintenance of the status quo which seems to be what the federal government seems to be, it is vital to note that system maintenance without consideration of the demands that are to facilitate improvement of the system amounts to stopping the wheel of progress and development, which was not the original intent of the federal character principle.

**Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The location of the study was Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja, Nigeria being the case study. The field survey was carried during the months of January and February 2015. The sample size was set at 300, with 30 respondents selected through simple random sampling technique from each of the 10 departments in the ministry. The research instrument was a questionnaire which was used to obtain quantitative data from the 300 respondents. SPSS software was used in the analysis of data. Descriptive statistics involving count of frequency of occurrence was applied, while inferential statistics was carried out through regression analysis, t-test and correlation coefficient.
Results
Table 1: Test of Application of federal character principle in Federal Ministry of Education

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<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>SA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal character principle determines the composition of the staff of</td>
<td>51 (17%)</td>
<td>87 (29%)</td>
<td>39 (13%)</td>
<td>93 (31%)</td>
<td>30 (10%)</td>
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<td>Federal character has a significant effect on the operations of the</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>60 (20%)</td>
<td>66 (22%)</td>
<td>72 (24%)</td>
<td>102 (34%)</td>
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<td>Appointment in the federal Ministry of Education is done in compliance</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>24 (8%)</td>
<td>51 (17%)</td>
<td>66 (22%)</td>
<td>159 (53%)</td>
<td>300 (100%)</td>
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<td>with federal character principle</td>
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<td>Federal character principle mitigates ethnic sentiment in the</td>
<td>39 (13%)</td>
<td>69 (23%)</td>
<td>30 (10%)</td>
<td>99 (33%)</td>
<td>63 (21%)</td>
<td>300 (100%)</td>
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<td>appointment of civil servants in the Federal Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>Federal character principle is a legal weapon to regulate appointments,</td>
<td>42 (14%)</td>
<td>90 (30%)</td>
<td>39 (13%)</td>
<td>78 (26%)</td>
<td>51 (17%)</td>
<td>300 (100%)</td>
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<td>security of tenure and severance in the Federal Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>Federal character principle provokes rather than ameliorate ethno-regional</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>21 (7%)</td>
<td>12 (4%)</td>
<td>111 (37%)</td>
<td>156 (52%)</td>
<td>300 (100%)</td>
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<td>division in the appointment in federal Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>Federal character principle ensures that competent personnel from</td>
<td>36 (12%)</td>
<td>30 (10%)</td>
<td>51 (17%)</td>
<td>39 (13%)</td>
<td>144 (48%)</td>
<td>300 (100%)</td>
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<td>different parts of the country are recruited into the Federal</td>
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<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>Federal character principle copes with ethnic diversities and</td>
<td>21 (7%)</td>
<td>33 (11%)</td>
<td>60 (20%)</td>
<td>84 (28%)</td>
<td>102 (34%)</td>
<td>300 (100%)</td>
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<td>divisive tendencies in the Federal Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>Federal character deals with problem of inequality,</td>
<td>39 (13%)</td>
<td>51 (17%)</td>
<td>45 (15%)</td>
<td>69 (23%)</td>
<td>96 (32%)</td>
<td>300 (100%)</td>
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<td>marginalization and discrimination</td>
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<td>Effective integration of various sections of the Nigerian society in</td>
<td>81 (27%)</td>
<td>36 (12%)</td>
<td>21 (7%)</td>
<td>72 (24%)</td>
<td>90 (30%)</td>
<td>300 (100%)</td>
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<td>the Federal Ministry of Education is ensured through Federal character</td>
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<td>principle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal character gives opportunities in education and</td>
<td>45 (15%)</td>
<td>33 (11%)</td>
<td>21 (7%)</td>
<td>81 (27%)</td>
<td>120 (40%)</td>
<td>300 (100%)</td>
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<td>employment to disadvantaged groups, areas and sectors of the nation</td>
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<td>Federal character principle defeats administrative efficiency in the</td>
<td>54 (18%)</td>
<td>30 (10%)</td>
<td>12 (4%)</td>
<td>69 (23%)</td>
<td>135 (45%)</td>
<td>300 (100%)</td>
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<td>Federal Ministry of Education</td>
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</table>

Source: Field Survey (2015)
Inferential statistical data

In analyzing the data, a model depicting the functional link between federal character and the appointment into civil service system in Nigeria is specified. The postulated model is embedded on the assumption that federal character individually exerts a relationship and significant effect on the appointment into civil service system. Thus, a functional relationship between federal character and the appointment into civil service system is hypothesized. Appointment into civil service system in Nigeria serves as the explained variable and the federal character principle serves as the explanatory variable. The functional relationship is

\[ Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \mu \]

Where:
- \( Y \) = Appointment into civil service system in Nigeria
- \( X \) = Federal Character Principle
- \( \beta_0 \) = Intercept
- \( \beta_1 \) = Partial regression Coefficients
- \( \mu \) = error term

With the aid of SPSS software, the functional relationship between the independent and dependent variable of the specified model was estimated, via the OLS techniques, the following result was produced:

** Regression Model **

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>t-Statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>0.632</td>
<td>0.191</td>
<td>3.217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: 0.756  
R-squared: 0.674 
Adjusted R-squared: 0.599

Source: SPSS regression Output

The estimated model of the hypothesized functional relationship between federal character and the appointment into civil service system in Nigeria is:

\[ Y = 0.028 + 0.632X + e \]

The intercept of our regression result portrays a positive sign from which it can be deduced that the appointment into civil service system in Nigeria will have a low positive rate of 2.8%, if there is no federal character principle. From the result, it is asserted that as federal character principle increases by 1%, it will result to a multiplier effect of 63.2% in the appointment into civil service system in Nigeria.

Using Individual statistical significance

Testing at 5% level of significance and 199 degree of freedom i.e \( t_{199,0.05} \)

** Decision rule **

With respect to the respective explanatory variables, if:
- \( T_{cal} > T_{tab} \), it is statistically significant, thus \( H_1 \) should be accepted, and \( H_0 \) should be rejected.
- \( T_{cal} < T_{tab} \), it is statistically not significant, thus \( H_1 \) should be rejected and \( H_0 \) should be accepted.

The evaluation of the t-stat is shown in the table below:

| Coefficient | \(|t_{cal}|\) | < or > | \( T_{199,0.05} \) |
|-------------|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| \( \beta_1 \) | 3.217       | >      | 1.645             |

Source: regression output and T distribution table

** Decision **
From the above, based on the data used, it is clearly shown that federal character principle individually exerts a statistical significant impact on appointment into civil service system in Nigeria. Based on this the $H_0$ is rejected while, we accept the $H_1$.

**The model explanatory power**
The coefficient of multiple determinants ($R^2 = 0.674$) implies that the model exhibited high explanatory power, but is of a good fit. That is, within the context of the model, about 67.4% of total variations in the appointment into civil service system in Nigeria are explained by the federal character principle and about 32% unexplained variations can be attributed to other factors outside our model.

Correlation Coefficient (R)
The correlation matrix shows that the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.756. This implies that on the average, a strong positive relationship exists between federal character and the appointment into civil service system in Nigeria.

**Summary of findings**
As federal character increases by 1%, it will result to a multiplier effect of 63.2% in the appointment into civil service system; 67.4% of total variations in the appointment into civil service system in Nigeria are explained by the federal character principle. There is a strong positive correlation between federal character and the appointment into civil service in Nigeria, based on the fact that the correlation coefficient result (r) is 0.756. Federal character principle exerts a statistical significant impact on appointment into civil service system in Nigeria.

**Conclusion**
Federal character principle negatively affects appointment into the civil service system in Nigeria, when mediocrity is promoted in the name of quota while meritocracy is put on the back burner. This would ultimately result in low level of administrative efficiency, with consequent truncating of national developmental efforts. The federal character principle which was introduced in Nigeria to redress historical imbalances among the component units of the federation has become the achilles heel of administrative efficiency in the country. It was designed to reduce those factors that would result in mutual distrust by ensuring equality among the states. Federal character is the guiding principle that regulates recruitment into the civil service with the implication that sometimes merit is sacrificed to ensure equality of representation among the states.

Though the principle is usually justified from the angle of representativeness of all the thirty six (36) states in Nigeria, adoption of meritocratic approach in recruitment would not adversely affect national integration as other mechanisms for attaining national integration exists in the country. Strategic ministries such as the federal ministry of Education which are at the fulcrum of national development need to be staffed by the most qualified, must skilled, most experienced personnel and not encumbered by non performing staff who have nothing to contribute, but are only recruited to their position to fulfil the principle of federal character. Emphasizing quota over merit will make Nigerian civil service to remain inefficient regardless of the number of reforms that would be carried out.

Federal character had become a divisive instrument instead of an integrative one. People who are favoured end up having greater affinity to their ethnic group given that it is the platform to their elevation, while those who are marginalized see it as an instrument to suppress them in spite of their sterling qualities, thereby bonding with those of their group who share the same fate. As such, federal character has become a divisive rather than integrative mechanism in the country.
**Recommendations**

The federal character principle should be applied the way the framers of the policy envisaged. It should give succour to the weak and marginalized, and limit the power of the strong, not to reverse development trend by deliberately putting on hold the progress of the nation through encouragement of mediocrity over merit.

There should be a combination of merit and federal character in the appointment of officers into the civil service system as the best personnel are required to achieve the development which Nigeria desires.

In order to ensure administrative efficiency in the civil service, only competent and qualified manpower should be engaged and where there are qualified people by merit, then federal character can apply to ensure that no section or state is marginalized.

The federal government should ensure that critical infrastructure are provided in all states of the federation to remove the appellation disadvantaged state. The idea of disadvantaged states 55 years after independence is a form of hidden politicization of development which is unhealthy for the nation.

The federal government should promote other integrative mechanism while de-emphasizing federal character which had become a divisive tool.

**References**


