ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR, HUMAN CAPITAL FORMATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Okeke, Remi Chukwudi  
Department of Public Administration and Local Government, University of Nigeria,  
Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria  
corresponding Email: remiokeke@gmail.com

Jim-Ogbolo, Bestman  
Department of Public Administration and Local Government,  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria

Obiakwramuo, Obumneme Nestor  
Department of Public Administration, Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo, Imo State, Nigeria

Imaga, Harkins Chidi  
Department of Public Administration, Enugu State University of Science and Technology,  
Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria

Abstract

The general objective of this study is to examine the nature of the linkages between organizational citizenship behaviour, human capital formation and national development in a typical developing nation. The focus of the study is the Nigerian national public-private sector setting. Self-evident national development has seemingly become an optical illusion in this national structure, otherwise clearly rich in natural and human resources trajectories. The theoretical framework of the study is the systems theory. The study is principally framed on the hypothesis that the nexus between organizational citizenship behaviour and human capital formation in Nigeria has led to developmental retardation in the case study country. Deploying the qualitative research methodology, relying on secondary sources of data and the research motif of logical argumentation, findings of the study led us to the conclusion of plausibility in the hypothesis of the work. We found a critical need to reverse the trend of monumental sleaze, which militates against resolute human capital formation in the Nigerian public sector and the negative trend in organizational citizenship behaviour in the nationwide system. The study recommends further unrelenting substantial privatization of the traditionally deficient entities, where nothing material against the strategic interests of the state would dictate against such massive privatization.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, Human Capital Formation, National Development

Introduction

Why has self-evident national development seemingly become an optical illusion in Nigeria? The fundamental problem of this study indeed revolves around this critical question. Alternatively conceptualized, the study’s research problem is about whether national developmental status of a state may remain a debatable issue when claimed to be occurring or even when some excited nouveau-political elites claim it has already occurred. Onuoha (2008, p.5) therefore, had argued that Nigeria has experimented with all types of ideologies and economic management philosophies to move the national economy forward to no avail. And so in recent times, the Nigerian economy was claimed to be the largest of its types in Africa. Then as Nigerians were celebrating under the bliss of their new-found status, the same formidable economy was officially announced to have entered into an economic recession (BBC News, 2014, 2016). It then begins to seem immensely puzzling and consequently continues to attract research attention that a nation so humongous in human and material resources-endowment has continued to play at the bottom rung of the regional and global developmental leagues.
The Nigerian nation we highlight is evidently rich in natural resources-trajectories. The oil resources endowments of the country in specificities have also largely contributed in the past to its currently arguable wealthy status. The discovery of oil in Oloibiri in 1956 in the present Bayelsa state of the country thus precipitated further explorations and exploitations that brought stupendous quantum of petro-dollar into Nigeria’s national treasury (Odularu, 2008; Wilcox, Ekpo & Akadi, 2014). The country is also immensely populous in comparative terms. The National Population Commission (NPC) in Nigeria and the country’s National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) currently put the figure of Nigeria’s population at 193.39 million (Adejokun, 2016). How does this gigantic population-endowment relate with the nation’s developmental status? A nation and her economy are invariably driven to greatness (or retardation) by her individual citizens and the composite organizations. In the various Nigerian organizations that populate her economy therefore, what constitutes the pattern of organizational citizenship behaviour and how does this dovetail into generic national development?

Oladeji & Folorunso (2007, p.41) have in these dimensions argued that the development process requires, among other things, capital accumulation of all sorts, namely; physical, material and human capital. How do the state in generic terms and the multifarious businesses and organizations in the national system arrive at their human capital mixes? These are the additional germane questions that intrinsically relate with the problem of this study. Hence, the general objective of our study is to examine the nature of the linkages between organizational citizenship behaviour, human capital formation and national development in Nigeria. The theoretical context of the study is the systems theory. The study is further framed on the hypothesis that the nexus between organizational citizenship behaviour and human capital formation in Nigeria has contributed to developmental retardation in the country. The study is principally qualitative in nature. We have accordingly relied on secondary sources of data for our analyses. Furthermore, we have deployed the methodology of logical argumentation to arrive at the study’s findings and conclusions.

**Conceptual Elucidation**

**Organizational Citizenship Behaviour**

In Takeuchi, Bolino & Lin (2015, p.1239) organizational citizenship behaviour is defined as employee behaviour that is relatively discretionary and contributes to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance. Citing Organ (1997, p.91) Takeuchi, Bolino & Lin further highlights that organizational citizenship behaviour is considered vital to an organization’s performance and long-term viability. Then according to Jahangir, Akbar & Haq (2004, p.75) organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) refers to the set of discretionary workplace behaviours that exceed one’s basic job requirements. And they are often described as behaviours that go beyond the call of duty. Walz and Niehoff (1996) in Jahangir, Akbar & Haq (2004, p.76) further highlight that OCB denotes a set of desirable organizational behaviours, which demonstrate multi-dimensional relationships with positive organizational outcomes.

Rioux & Penner (2001, p. 1306) then add that the current interest in OCB (relative currency) can be traced back at least to Katz (1964) as Katz’s thesis, subsequently made more explicit by Smith, Organ, and Near (1983), was that for organizations to operate successfully, their employees must be willing to do more than the minimal formal and specified technical aspects of their jobs. Smith, Organ & Near (1983, p.654) therefore remind us that much of what we call citizenship behaviour (organizational citizenship behaviour) has an altruistic character. Rioux & Penner (2001, p. 1306) subsequently highlight that most conceptualizations of OCB suggest that it has two major dimensions: altruism - pro-social behaviors that are directed at specific individuals or groups within the organization - and conscientiousness (or generalized compliance) - pro-social behaviours directed at the organization.

Citing Hossam (2008) also Pourgaz, Naruei & Jenaabadi (2015, p. 801) posit that although the term, organizational citizenship behaviour was first proposed by Chester Barnard and Katz and Kahn, it was first used by Bittman and Organ (1983) investigating the relationship between job satisfaction and performance. In the Organ’s first definition of OCB, Pourgaz, Naruei & Jenaabadi further add, despite no compulsory burden from the organization to perform a certain behaviour, if the behaviour is performed, interests occur to the organization. Hence, Bolino & Turnley (2003) in Pourgaz, Naruei & Jenaabadi (2015, p. 801) underscore the fact that according to Organ, OCB is a behaviour that is voluntarily performed based on desire and determination and is not directly and clearly appreciated through formal organizational reward system; however, overall, it enhances effectiveness performance of the organization.

**National Development**

We cannot plausibly conceptualize national development in isolation of a proper viewpoint of the development concept in specificity. We therefore ask: what is development? And development is indeed a terminology that has
Historically received some multidisciplinary research attention. The concept has also been surrounded by multifaceted disputation. It has accordingly been posited in Mandere (2014, p.2) that the meaning, objectives and outcomes of development are controversial and that this state of affairs is likely to be so for the foreseeable future. We do not however, necessarily agree with this position. Mandere (2014, p.3) insists additionally that there is no agreement as to the meaning, objective and desired outcomes of development, furthermore, that the vision or objectives of development which underpinned the rise of the practice in the 1950s and 1960s has progressively changed from that of liberating peoples from poverty to liberalizing economies, and from structural (economic and social) transformation to spatial integration.

Mandere further contends that since development is not immanent (neutral) and is value-laden or imminent, it was important to constantly provide for alternative conceptions premised on constructed realities to evolve suitable change (Mandere, 2014, p.3). There was actually an evident great attempt in his contribution to buttress these arguments from other sources, particularly the work of Sumner & Tribe (2008). We opine however that the meaning, objectives and outcomes of development should not remain so tersely disputable. Social science and social intervention concepts (including development) may be contentious to conceptualize but the empirical imports of such concepts must be occluded from such disputation. Consequently, development in our estimation is principally about lack of misery and the absence of sundry deprivations in the affairs of men. It is a process with variegated trajectories but the essential issue remains that it is ideally human-centered. Ultimately therefore, development is about human persons, whose positive state of being catalyzes actions in the other desirable regards.

Citing Rodney (1972), Nnoli (1981), Ake (2001) therefore, Nwanegbo & Odigbo (2013, p.287) argue that development may be multifaceted but it indeed centers on man. According to Nwanegbo & Odigbo (2013, p.287) development could be seen as the process of empowering people to maximize their potentials and the ability to exploit nature to meet daily human needs. It can also be seen as a process by which quality of human lives and capacity to surmount daily needs are considerably improved. Omenka (2013, p.40) thus sees development as a multi dimensional process that normally connotes change from less to more desirable state.

National development is accordingly, development in the context of a nation-state. It is about the processes of positive transformation in structures and functions. National development is about values that are held sacrosanct in the nation-state. It alludes to the state of security of lives and property and how issues of inequality and man’s inhumanity to man are perceived and the reactions of the generality of the people to the occurrence of such deviant tendencies in the society. Essentially, national development is exhibited in the capacity of nationals to catalyze the conditions that lead to further productivities in the area of goods and services needed by the citizenry. The engendering of abundances in the capacities of the citizens to put in place, the critical infrastructure for this further productivity, is within the gamut of what national development entails.

**Human Capital Formation**

To properly arrive at the concept of human capital formation, let us see what the root-concept of human capital means. Consequently, Idike & Eme (2017, p. 24) explain that the concept of human capital actually owes its beginnings to the subject area of economics. Hence, in the list of its earliest theorists would be found Becker (1964), Mincer (1958), Lewis (1954) and Pigou (1928). Human Capital in these works became similar to the physical means of production such as factory equipment or machines. One could thus invest in human capital through training, education or medical attention. When this happens, one’s output was dependent on the rate of return (ROT) on the capital deployed. Human capital was consequently seen as a means of production into which further investments yielded additional output (Idike & Eme, 2017, p. 24). However, continues Idike & Eme, Crook et al (2011) have also opined that human capital is the stock of competences, knowledge and personality traits locatable in the ability to perform of labour so as to engender economic value. To these scholars (Idike & Eme), this theoretical dimension invariably extends the concept of human capital beyond the limitations of factory-production processes and in this dimension, human capital to them refers to skilled labour and the productive capacities embedded in a given population.

The World Economic Forum’s Human Capital Report (2015) in Idike & Eme (2017, p. 24) further highlights that a nation’s human capital endowment - the skills and capacities that reside in people and that are put to productive use - can be a more important determinant of its long term economic success than virtually any other resource. Hence, this resource must be invested in and leveraged upon efficiently in order for it to generate returns for the individuals involved as well as an economic system as a whole. Peterson et al (2011) in the same study (of Idike & Eme) posit that human capital refers to the skills and knowledge that employees possess, which are relevant to the organization and which could be improved upon through professional training or development. Then Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008) still in Idike & Eme (2017, p. 24) opine that in general terms, human capital refers to the investment people make in themselves that enhance their economic productivity. And by this definition, contends Idike & Eme, a curious dimension is added to the
definition of human capital, whereby in absolute terms, people are to make the investment in themselves which would translate to human capital.

Finally in their study, Idike & Eme (2017, p. 24) submit that human capital refers to the skills and knowledge which citizens possess. Moreover, they argue, it refers to the skilled and knowledgeable human resources of a nation and differently denoted, they opine, a nation’s human capital would be made up of her enlightened citizens. According to these scholars, human capital development would thus connote the processes of investment in human capital, which lead to the generation of returns for the individuals involved and for the national economic system as a whole. Human capital development to them therefore broadly refers to what governments do as different from what is done by Chief Executive Officers of business organizations and other entities. They argue that the primary motive of the process is the development of the individual as citizen, which is different from the conceiving of the individual as an employee of any entity (Idike & Eme, 2017, p. 24).

We highlight at this point that there are conceptual similarities between the human capital development theorization (human capital development thesis) of Idike & Eme (2017, p. 24) and the concept of human capital formation in our own contribution. In our own work therefore human capital formation is the process of creating a national stock of human capital which consists of citizens with qualitative productivity-values. These nationals are accordingly co-creators with others in the critical task of national development. They are neither mere public sector workers nor the business-as-usual private sector personnel. Moreover, they are not as in the Nigerian case, public sector leaders more enamored by the tendencies towards monumental sleaze than national productivity and development.

**Theoretical Context of the Study: Systems Theory**

The Austrian-born biologist, Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1901-1972) whose multidisciplinary scholarship later took to some other global capitals was an indisputably prominent theorist in the evolution of what is currently known as General Systems Theory (GST). As a matter of fact the origination by some accounts is easily associated with (if not totally ascribed to) this foremost philosopher (Weckowicz, 1988; Das Hara & Chouldbury, 1997; Mbah, 2014; Izueke, 2014). However, Von Bertalanffy himself opines that a more detailed study would rather point towards a long array of theorists who had made immense contributions to the notions of what is presently denoted as systems theory. He posits that in hierarchic order, we are truly using a terminology introduced by Dionysius Aeropagite (the Christian mystic) who in any case was contemplating on the choirs of angels and the organism of the church (Von Bertalanffy, 1972, p. 407).

Von Bertalanffy also mentions Nicholas of Cusa, a certain profound thinker of the fifteenth century, who in linking Medieval mysticism with the first beginnings of modern science, introduced the notion of the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the opposition or indeed, fight among the parts within a whole, which nevertheless forms a unity of higher order. He talks about Leibniz’s hierarchy of monads which looks quite like that of modern systems; and also highlights that Hegel and Marx emphasized the dialectic structure of thought and of the universe it produces: the deep insight that no proposition can exhaust reality but only approaches its coincidence of opposites by the dialectic process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Von Bertalanffy here also remembers Gustav Fechner, who as the author of the psychophysical law, elaborated on the way and the nature philosophers of the nineteenth century portrayed organizations of higher order than the usual objects of observation; for example, life communities and the entire earth, thus romantically anticipating the ecosystems of modern parlance (Von Bertalanffy, 1972, p. 408).

The position of this paper however is that the term and program of a general systems theory was introduced by Von Bertalanffy a number of years ago (Von Bertalanffy, 1968, p.38). Furthermore by way of emphases, the man’s doctoral thesis in 1925 was on this same topic (Von Bertalanffy, 1972, p. 408). According to Von Bertalanffy (1968, p.38) therefore, the following issues indicate the major aims of general system theory:

- There is a general tendency towards integration in the various sciences, natural and social.
- Such integration seems to be centered in a general theory of systems.
- Such theory may be an important means for aiming at exact theory in the nonphysical fields of science.
- Developing unifying principles running vertically trough the universe of the individual sciences, this theory brings us nearer to the goal of the unity of science.
- A much-needed integration in scientific education.

Essentially however, Mele, Pels & Polese (2010, 126) have appositely opined that Systems theory is interdisciplinary its trajectories, extending to every system in nature, in society and in very many scientific areas. It thus serves as a framework with which we can investigate phenomena from a holistic approach. Systems theory, Mele, Pels & Polese (2010, p. 126) further depose, accordingly encompasses a wide field of research with different conceptualizations and
areas of focus. The subject matter of general systems theory is accordingly the formulation and derivation of those principles which are valid for "systems" in general (Von Bertalanffy, 1968, p.32). Our study investigates the relationship between organizational citizenship behaviour, human capital content (human capital formation) and national development in Nigeria. Within the theoretical context of systems therefore, we position the Nigerian nation as a supra-organization. We theorize sundry organizations in the Nigerian supra-national organizational order as subsystems. The work thus continues to interrogate the influence of organizational citizenship behaviours and the human capital factor in these sub-organizations on national development in the general regards. Principally, the germane organizations are further reclassified under the public and private sector bifurcations.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour in Nigeria Critical Issues of Human Capital Formation

Pourgaz, Naruei & Jenaabadi (2015, p. 801) have also cited Appelbaum et al (2004) to emphasize that OCB is a behaviour which is based on the personal discretion apart from the employee’s job requirements, yet increasing organizational effectiveness in order to satisfy the interests of the beneficiaries. And that in fact, OCB, with a set of voluntary and informal behaviour, leads to effective improvements of organizational responsibilities and roles. We also underpin the point that the purpose of human capital formation in the national system of a developing society should be the engendering of effective improvements of organizational responsibilities and roles in the national system. Let us now see what the Nigerian general scenario portrays under a bifurcated framework of both public and private sectors.

A Focus on the Public Sector

Citing Oluwasanmi (2007) and Ebegbulem (2012), Osakede et al., (2015, p.80) accordingly submit that the Nigerian society has never been well governed (because of impunity and corruption) since it gained its political independence in 1960. Omenka (2013, p.39) thus views corruption as a social hazard that has eaten deep into the fundamental structures of the Nigerian society, particularly with regards to the public sector. Generally, continues Omenka, the universal perceptions about corruption in the Nigerian nation are that of pervasive negative development. It has consequently been acknowledged that corruption and its tendencies are egregiously systemic in both the public and private sectors of the Nigerian socio-economic setting but more so in the public sector. The devastating effects of corruption on the nation are consequently enormous as it distorts the usual processes of governance and administration, and it generally defiles the business environment. Furthermore, it also weakens the integrity of governance-processes and public administration. The critical issues have to do with the organizational citizenship behaviour in the public sector entities and the human capital content.

The Nigerian public sector is accordingly undeniably the epicenter of fraud and corruption in the country. Operations of sundry organizations in the sector are consequently usually marred by immense absence of financial discipline. Indeed the terminology of corruption seems to have lost its meaning in the Nigerian public sector environment. Workers remain more interested in what they would unduly or fraudulently get from the organizations than what they may contribute to the efficiency and the effectiveness of the organizations. Organizational citizenship behaviour in these places thus runs in the negative regards. The net position of organizational citizenship behaviour in the public sector organizations in the country is accordingly in the undesirable dimension. Ogbeidi (2012, p.1) thus bemoans the fact that Nigeria, a country richly endowed with natural resources and high quality human capital is yet to find its rightful place among the global community of nations as a major reason that has been responsible for her socioeconomic stagnation is the phenomenon of corruption. The truth however is that the depreciatory scenario of malfeasance in the public sector of the country alludes more to human capital deficiencies than high quality of human capital.

The Private Sector Nexus

The private sector in the country is also not immune to corruption which leads to some unbecoming organizational citizenship behaviours that were usually precipitated by disordered human capital formation. There is this prevalence of lack of employee commitment in the Nigerian private sector as if the enterprise in which the worker operates is a national concern. This indeed arises out of a national tendency, in preference for public sector jobs. Those who seek employment in the private sector now seem inferior to the public sector workers and invariably bring their latent animosities to the work place. There is consequently a tendency on the part of the private sector employees to think that the responsibility to engender growth and progress of the organization primarily resides with the promoters of the business. The employee merely anticipates the coming of his or her wages (after delivering substandard services). In any case, our thesis is that the epicenter of corruption in the Nigerian nation is in the public sector.

And so regrettably, argues Ogbeidi (2012), in Osakede et al., (2015, p.79), since independence (in 1960) a notable surviving legacy of the successive elected leaders who have managed the affairs of the Nigerian state at different times
has been the institutionalization of corruption in all agencies of the public service, which, like a deadly virus, has subsequently spread to the private sector of the country. According to Osakede et al., (2015, p.810 private sector corruption has manifested in Nigeria as everyday bribery to obtain a desired objective, breaking of traffic laws, piracy, plagiarism, alteration of school grades, illegal inflation of petroleum pump prices by dealers, robbery, sexual gratification for higher grades or promotion, et cetera. But in the cluttered web of corruption that has largely enveloped the country; we highlight for instance that the private sector player who evades payment of customs duties (regarding his imports) has certainly done so in collusion with the public sector official. There are immense deficiencies therefore in the human capital needs of the sector which accentuates the imperatives of human capital formation.

Relating the Study’s Variables in the Framework of a Prognosis

According to Wilcox, Ekpo & Akadi (2014, p. 93) national development could principally be precipitated by natural resources-endowments and the human capital formation in a country. And we opine in this regard that human capital formation and organizational citizenship behaviour are functionally related. National development is consequently also a function of the composite organizational citizenship behaviours within a nation. It has however been contended in Okeke (2014, p.229) that national development in Nigeria has altogether only truly manifested in the inscrutable imaginations of Nigeria’s national development planners. The human capital component and the organizational citizenship behaviour imperatives of such planning are consequently in deficiencies. Let us recall at this intersection of the study the contention of Smith, Organ & Near (1983, p.654) that much of what we call citizenship behaviour (organizational citizenship behaviour) should possess an altruistic character. The human capital component of national developmental strides must also be imbued with altruism. Then citing Belcourt, Bohlander & Snell (2008), Pourgaz, Naruei & Jenaabadi (2015, p. 801) posit:

"Human resource is considered as one of the most valuable organizational capitals and rarest source in the knowledge-based economy. This worthwhile capital has outdistanced other organizational capitals in terms of importance due to its great effect on organizational effectiveness. Accordingly, nowadays, organizations and managers apply various methods and strategies to recruit most skillful human forces. One of the worthwhile properties of human forces highly regarded is organizational citizenship behavior."

In the theoretical context of this study, the national developmental system of Nigeria and indeed all other national economies are populated by composite organizations or organizational sub-systems. The human capital content of these sub-systems and the manifold organizational citizenship behaviours of the sub-systems all aggregate to lead to development or underdevelopment. When the occasioning scenario is for instance, tainted by corruption, the resultant aggregates would hardly lead to national development. And so according to Casimir, Izueke & Nzekwe (2014, p.219), the image and social integrity of Nigeria have been battered by corruption and Nigerians are seen as criminals in other countries. Consequently and historically, human capital formation in the country, particularly in the public sector and invariably in the private sector has remained manifest only in deficient proportions. Hence, even human capital training programmes are beneficial to very many of the assumed trainees only to the extent that some funds in bloated amounts would accrue to participants (ostensibly to defray personal costs).

And to the workshop facilitators during such exercises, the assumed trainings are further avenues of public and private sector sleazy deals. The attempted human capital formation programmes do not therefore precipitate strong and adequate organizational citizenship behaviour in the national system. What the overall system receives is consequently describable as garbage and what it gives as output has also continued to translate to national developmental garbage, in the form of sundry insecurities. Hence, many institutions, argue Casimir, Izueke & Nzekwe (2014, p.223) have been established to checkmate unethical practices and corruption in Nigeria but the personal values of the members of these institutions were not altered by the corruption-fighting institutions. Rather the personal corrupt-values of members alter the values of the institutions. Ahiuma-Young (2016) thus reports that in the Nigerian national economy, 112million Nigerians, representing 67.1 per cent of the population as at that time (2016), lived below the poverty line, (while corruption thrives in the national system). With the current population estimates at 193.39 million (Adejokun, 2016) the poverty-spread must have also skyrocketed. And this trend is certainly not describable in developmental terms as good national omen. Then citing Tolu & Ogunro (2012), Enofe, Afiangbe & Agha (2017, p.2) further depose:

"Corruption has remained one of the major threats to political and economic development in any level. It is a phenomenon plaguing both public and private sectors of an economy and it is not restricted to a particular country or region. It is present in every economy and every nation. However, the level and degree of occurrence differs. In Nigeria for example, cases of corruption are prevalent and its occurrence is with impunity, this is because it has indeed become a society-induced activity in the sense that, it now enjoys popular support from the people, invariably, corruption has been democratized."
And national development in the final analysis translates to national economic development, which further translates to economic security, which is person-centered (Okeke, 2014, p.237). If the phenomenon of corruption is plaguing both public and private sectors of an economy how would development ever become catalyzed in such a system? And incontrovertibly, a national negative trend in human capital quality and organizational citizenship behaviors are indicative of popular support from the people for corruption. It is further argued in Okeke (2014, p.237) that devoid of economic security, economic development becomes an abstraction. National development we add in this study would also remain an optical illusion when devoid of economic security which negative trends in organizational citizenship behavior and human capital content entails.

Conclusion and Recommendation(S)

What happens in Nigerian organizations is critical to the direction of national development in the country. And in the interrogation of the inhibiting factors against national development in the country, the orthodox emphases had been on what politicians do. In this study however we have utilized the theoretical framework of the general systems theory to highlight that the nexus in the generic organizational citizenship behaviour in the Nigerian nation and the human capital formation-focus and culture is equally an important factor in the nation’s development or underdevelopment. It is the conclusion of this study that more than any other factor national development in Nigeria requires purposeful human capital formation. This would invariably translate to an input factor of strong organizational citizenship behaviour into the generic national system. Finally therefore, there is the need to dismantle the ancient monument of sleaze militating against resolute human capital formation in the Nigerian public sector and accordingly reversing the subsisting negative trend in organizational citizenship behaviour in the nationwide system. The study recommends further unrelenting privatization of the traditionally deficient entities where nothing material against the strategic interests of the state would dictate against such massive privatization.

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