

Demographic Characteristics, Discrimination at Work and Performance among Civil Servants in Nigeria

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Abstract

From antiquity, the history of man has been characterized by discrimination, which includes gender and ethnic discrimination. In Nigeria, several attempts have been made to eliminate these discriminations, howbeit, its prevalence is still widely seen. This study investigated demographic characteristics, discrimination at work and performance among civil servants in Nigeria.

The study used the correlational survey research design and a simple random sampling technique. Oyo State was selected at randomly from the 36 states in Nigeria and a Local Government Area was selected randomly. The local government selected was Akinyele Local Government Area. Also, a sample size of 100 respondents was selected for the study and the questionnaire was used to obtain information from them. The Binary Logistic regression and regression analysis was used to analyse data obtained from the field.

Result showed that civil servants who have secondary and tertiary education were significant ($p < 0.05$), individuals who work in the educational department of the civil service are often discrimination ($p < 0.05$), the level of experience was significant for not discrimination ($p < 0.05$), and individuals who are Hausa and lived among the Yoruba also receive discrimination at work ($p < 0.05$) as compared to those from other parts of the nation. Other variables were not significant ($p > 0.05$). Individuals who are married are not performing well at work ($p < 0.05$). In addition, there was a negative significant relationship between respondents discrimination at work and their performance at work ($p = 0.05$).

In conclusion, gender discrimination in Nigeria does not exist again nevertheless, ethnic discrimination is still prevalent in the nation. The governments at all levels should endeavour to provide and put in place necessary policy to intervene in this national menace of discrimination. It is then sustainable national development can be achieved as every individual irrespective of where you are from and where you live will receive equal treatment.

Keywords: Gender Discrimination; Ethnic Discrimination; Work Performance; Civil Servants in Nigeria

Background to the Study

From antiquity, the history of man has been characterized by discrimination, which includes gender and ethnic discrimination (Charles and Ikenna, 2009). Discrimination is the prejudicial or distinguishing treatment of an individual or group of individuals based on membership or perceived membership status, however, in a certain group or category.

The discrimination against minority and indigenous ethnic groups exists in Nigeria (Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, 2005). There are attempts to assimilate other ethnic groups into the mainstream majority ethnic group in each of the regions. There are also evidence of gender and ethnic discrimination at work place. The European Commission through the GendeRace project (2012), clearly stated that, women are more often subject to harassment within the work place and in their neighbourhood, whereas men most commonly experience discrimination in places of recreation and leisure. Majority of those who experience multiple discriminations seem more aware of ethnic than gender discrimination.

Gender and ethnic discrimination refer to beliefs and attitudes in relation to the gender and ethnic of a person/people or group of people, such beliefs and attitudes are of a social nature and do not, normally, carry any legal consequences. Gender/ethnic discrimination can arise in different contexts. For instance an employee may be discriminated against by being asked discriminatory questions during a job interview, or by an employer not

hiring or promoting, unequally paying, or wrongfully terminating, an employee based on her (or his) gender and/or ethnic. In an educational setting there could be claims that a student was excluded from an educational institution, program, opportunity, loan, student group, or scholarship because of her (or his) gender and/or ethnic. In some setting there could be claims that a person was refused negotiations on seeking a house, job, contracting/leasing a house or getting a loan based on his or her gender/ethnic. Another setting where there is usually gender and ethnic discrimination is when one is refused to extend his or her credit, refused approval of credit/loan process, and if there is a burden of unequal loan terms based on one's gender/ethnic.

Unfair discrimination usually follows the gender and ethnic stereotyping held by a society (Raymond, 2003). The United Nations had concluded that women often experience a "glass ceiling" and that there are no societies in which women enjoy the same opportunities as men (Cynthia, 1995). The term "glass ceiling" is used to describe a perceived barrier to advancement in employment (perhaps also in workplace) based on discrimination, especially gender and ethnic discrimination (Kenneth and Joe, 2004).

Nigerian is a multi-ethnic nationalities consisting of multi-ethnic groups (Babangida, 2000). Although, there is no consensus over the actual number of ethnic groups in Nigeria. According to Babangida (2000), the actual numbers of ethnic group in Nigeria ranges from 250 ethnic groups to about 400 ethnic groups. This however poses a heterogeneous problem in the Nigeria ethnics. This also possesses major problem on gender discrimination. These are now very being very obvious in the Nigerian societies and communities including at various work places.

Many people might at some time have experienced a situation in which they have found themselves excluded, harassed or treated differently from other persons without justification in their work places or at other places within their community or nation, only because of their biological, physiological or personal characteristics, their origin or language, their abilities, manifestations of belief or preferences (Oudhof, 2007). The risks of such experiences are however not randomly distributed among the population (Olli & Olsen, 2006). In every society specific individual and groups can be distinguished who experience such discrimination very often. For victims of discrimination, the experience appears to have a large impact on their personal lives especially at work place (Van den Berg & Evers, 2006).

Yahaya (1992) noted that since Nigeria attained independence in 1960, successive governments have consistently pursued an employment policy which aims at full employment and reduce all forms of discrimination. It also provides maximum opportunity for workers to use their skills and endowments in a job for which they are suited, irrespective of gender, religion, ethnic group, political opinion or social origin (Fatile *et al.*, 2010). Robert (2004) observed that, after decades since Nigeria became an independent nation-state, there has not been doubt about the opportunities that have been made available to women and minority groups in the civil service, thereby reducing gender and ethnic discrimination. However, prejudice continued to exist that limits women and other minority groups from enjoying truly equal opportunities in the Nigeria public service. Furthermore, women in Nigeria have virtually no formal power in the national and civil service. Despite efforts put in place at different levels, be it constitutional and otherwise, to take care of the marginalization and discrimination against women and other minority groups, discrimination is still maintained to a large extent (Otite, 2005). To this end, this study investigated gender and ethnic discrimination at work place among Nigeria Civil Servant.

Research Questions

- i. What are the demographic Characteristics that are responsible for discrimination and non-discrimination at work among civil servants in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the demographic Characteristics that are responsible for performance and no-performance at work among civil servants in Nigeria?
- iii. Does Discrimination at work affect work performance?

Theoretical Review

The study of discrimination and equal opportunity in Nigeria is still in its infancy. Attention to the impact of gender and ethnicity on public institutions has focused largely on perceptions of discrimination, the notion of representative bureaucracy and equal opportunities policies for the minorities and the less privilege (Robert, 2004). As observed by Olojede (2007), global attention has focused on women's rights, International and National Women Civil Societies have drawn world attention to the continued subordination of discrimination in all spheres of life. For example, the international sensitization and the adoption of global instrument such as the 1979 convention of the elimination of all forms of discrimination has served the useful purpose of sensitization

national government to the plight of the less privilege gender and ethnics and the contribution which they can make to the development of their societies especially within their work place. This has served as a source of motivation to various governments to enact affirmative policies to enhancing the status of other gender and ethnic in public administration.

Equal employment opportunity and treatment according to Berkley & Rouse (2004) means that no person should be denied the opportunity for employment and favour at the work place because of discrimination based on ethnic, colour, religion, gender, national origin, or physical disability. According to World Bank (1997) report, when others are not offered equal opportunity in the civil service, there is the danger that some skills in a nation may be wasted and in most cases destroyed. The idea that recruitment and promotion are based on merit rather than on some particularistic criteria can contribute significantly to the levels of morale (motivation among staff) and also could affect their performance. In many societies, particularly in Nigeria, ethnicity and gender play a fundamental role in the development process and performances at the work place. Gender and ethnic politics is described as an important dimension in public affairs, pervading the environment in which public administration function in Nigeria (Adepoju, 1994).

Most often, the disadvantaged which include gender and ethnic disadvantaged may act as major actors in the degradations in the efforts for transformation process, whether in terms of their direct involvement on the economy or their more tempered role as catalyst, facilitator and regulator of economic activity. At the same time a growing concern with the representatives of gendered and ethnic disadvantaged groups in the public sector has affected reform efforts that put stress and disorganised the human resources management issues such as capacity building, participatory management styles, constant innovation, entrepreneurial initiative, teamwork, strategic thinking and planning in the work places especially within the civil services (Robert, 2004).

While equal opportunity is essentially a passive concept, affirmative action is an active one. Affirmative action implements equal opportunity for minorities and women. Affirmative action is defined as actions undertaken to overcome barriers to equal employment opportunities and treatment and to remediate such effects of past discrimination (Berman et al., 2006). Nicholas (2006) sees affirmative action as a policy that argues for the hiring and promoting of members of disadvantaged groups on the grounds that jobs should be made opened to as many people as possible with equal treatment and measures. In addition, Rosenbloom and Goldman (1999), define affirmative action as entailing the establishment of goals and time tables for the hiring, promotion, and/or job training of members of certain minority groups and women. It could also be seen as the set of public policies and initiatives designed to help eliminate past and present discrimination based on ethnicity, colour, religion, gender, or national origin.

Previous Studies

According to Singer, (1999), social theories such as Egalitarianism claim that social equality should prevail. Propositions that divide individuals across lines of gender, ethnicity or religious affiliation risk are being translated into gaps in employment, earnings, etc (Arai and Nekby, 2007). Gender and ethnic imbalance permeates every facet of Nigerian society and comes in several forms (Anaeme, 2012).

Gender awareness among Nigerian in different ethnic group varies and this can be viewed from the aspect of the major constraints women face in public/private and traditional positions: their overall work load and the moral pressures and negative attitudes of both men and women towards women in leadership (Stanley, 2012). Onyeukwu (2004) outlined some of the gender discriminatory practices against women and female children. Some of the common harmful traditional practices against women in our communities include female genital mutilation, child marriage, ritualistic widowhood practices, nutritional taboos, cult prostitution, domestic violence, discrimination at work places and sexual freedom for husbands. Other discriminatory practices include traditional land tenure systems and patterns of inheritance, lack of access to credit, family preference for sons, lack of participation in public decision-making, discrimination in housing and employment, discriminatory legislation, and discriminatory religious practices, as well as rape, battery, trafficking in women, murder, kidnapping, and induced prostitution.

Robert (2004) observes that women in the civil service are characterized by limited and insecure employment opportunities and marked sub-standard wages, poor work conditions, unstable hours and disadvantageous employment contracts. Women and some minorities are predominantly employed in low wage jobs or extremely small scale venture which shunts them into segregated occupation and repetitious manual production. Despite the fact that the majority of women who work in the civil service in Nigeria occupy junior position of power within the civil service, few women are however, handicapped by the lack of affordable childcare, escalating rate of spousal abandonment, an increasingly high cost of living and gender stereotyping. These conditions deny women in the public services the requisite skills, training and capital to secure more lucrative and secured employment. Women did sixty percent of the world's work but receive one-tenth of its income (Isah, 2005). They own less

than one percent of the land, have limited access to education and financial resources and have less, than men in decision affecting their future (Isah, 2005).

Olojede (2009) did a quantitative analysis of women in top public administration in Nigeria. Her findings showed that men dominated key decision making levels in Federal Civil Service between 1988 and 1991. According to her, out of the total number of 4,243 top managers in the federal civil service between 1988 and 1991, 3,763 or 88.6% were men while women numbered 480 or 11.35%.

Olojede (2009) also argued that since men in Nigeria dominate public decision making bodies, the patriarchal ideology rests on the premises of separate spheres for men and women. While Amadi (1996) also found out that women are found in services, industries, which some researchers think are an extension of domestic work, such as nursing, teaching, secretarial work, fashion industry and such related job, which rural women engaged in mostly agricultural work and trading.

Amadi (1996) states that women tend to be engaged in the lower paying jobs and is generally more in the lower cadre. While about 55% of the workers in the Nigerian public service, GL-01-06 are women, only about 9% of the workers in the GL-01-06 are women. The main reason adduced for this position of women is that the number of women who benefited from formal education is generally less than those of men (Fatile et al., 2010).

In Nigerian public service, the marginalization of minority group according to Robert (2004) has two contrasting ideologies which ironically produce the same outcome. The first is related to the state-promoted identity. The state rhetoric and action imply that minority groups in Nigeria do not need to engage in income generating activities and that those who do engaged in such activities do so for other reasons other than economic necessity. The second ideology under girding the marginalization of minority groups micro-entrepreneurs according to him is related to bias embedded in development practice that perceive some minority groups as vulnerable and isolated groups and their activities as a collection of inconsequential endeavours. Specific ideologies such as these, which underpin the marginalization of minority groups within the public sector of Nigeria are often nuance by cultural, ethnic and religious undertone (Fatile et al., 2010).

Research Methods

The study used a correlational survey research design and a simple random sampling technique was deployed. This includes the selection of Oyo State and a Local Government Area was selected randomly. The local government selected was Akinyele Local Government Area. Also, a sample size of 100 respondents was selected for the study and the questionnaire was used to obtain information from them. The Binary Logistic regression and regression analysis was used to analyse data obtained from the field.

Results

Demographic Characteristics and Discrimination at Work

The binary logistic result of demographic characteristics and respondents' discrimination at work is presented in table 4.1. Table 4.1a present the classification table while the variables in the equation is presented in table 4.1b.

Table 4.1a: Classification Table of demographic characteristics and discrimination at work.

Classification Table ^a					
	Observed		Predicted		
			Discrimination		Percentage Correct
			1.00	2.00	
Step 1	Discrimination	1.00	18	8	69.2
		2.00	5	33	86.8
	Overall Percentage				79.7

a. The cut value is .500

The result from table 4.1a reveals that the prediction of discrimination and non-discrimination at work is 79.7% sure by the factors that account for them. Table 4.1b shows the variables that predicts discrimination and non-discrimination at work.

Table 4.1b: The Logistic Regression table for demographic Characteristics and Discrimination at Work

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
gender(Ref Cat= Male)	-1.258	1.090	1.332	1	.248	.284
Education (Ref Cat= Others)						
No Education	-3.210	2.229	2.074	1	.150	.040
Primary Education	-3.580	2.188	2.678	1	.102	.028
Secondary Education	-7.165	3.115	5.290	1	.021	.001
Tertiary Education	-6.544	2.952	4.915	1	.027	.001
Department (Ref Cat= None)						
Accounting	-1.636	1.818	.810	1	.368	.195
Commerce	2.654	2.196	1.461	1	.227	14.214
Education	-6.500	2.604	6.232	1	.013	.002
Security	-1.980	1.569	1.592	1	.207	.138
Administration	27.506	12816.135	.000	1	.998	8.821E11
Others	1.899	2.470	.591	1	.442	6.678
Level of Experience	.176	.082	4.562	1	.033	1.192
Age of Respondents (Ref Cat= Above 50 Years)						
Below 20 Years	4.059	4.477	.822	1	.365	57.913
21-30 Years	5.950	4.804	1.534	1	.216	383.729
31-40 Years	5.746	4.600	1.560	1	.212	312.980
41-50 Years	6.439	4.649	1.918	1	.166	625.806
Marital Status (Ref Cat= None)						
Married	-.573	1.535	.139	1	.709	.564
Single	-8.599	3.598	5.711	1	.017	.000
Divorced	-3.042	1.860	2.674	1	.102	.048
Widowed	2.209	1.915	1.331	1	.249	9.109
Ethnic Group (Ref Cat= Others)						
Igbo	-4.026	2.175	3.425	1	.064	.018
Yoruba	-.927	1.755	.279	1	.597	.396
Hausa	-5.339	2.588	4.258	1	.039	.005
Religion (Ref Cat= None)						
Christianity	3.503	1.931	3.289	1	.070	33.199
Islam	2.134	1.583	1.817	1	.178	8.451
Traditional	3.376	1.855	3.310	1	.069	29.246
Constant	.668	4.595	.021	1	.884	1.951

The binary logistic regression analysis result shows that, civil servants who have secondary and tertiary education were significant ($p < 0.05$) which implied that, when an individual in the civil service of Nigeria has either a secondary or tertiary educational qualification, there is a higher tendency that such individual may experience discrimination at work. This might be because their bosses or superiors may not have that same higher educational qualification as they have. Also, individuals who work in the educational department of the civil service are often discrimination ($p < 0.05$). Nevertheless, the level of experience was significant for not discrimination ($p < 0.05$), i.e. the higher the individual's level of experience the lesser the tendency for his/her discrimination at work. In addition, individuals who are Hausa and lived among the Yoruba also receive discrimination at work ($p < 0.05$) as compared to those from other parts of the nation. Other variables were not significant ($p > 0.05$).

Demographic Characteristics and Work Performance

The binary logistic result of demographic characteristics and performance is presented in table 4.2. Table 4.2a present the classification table while the variables in the equation is presented in table 4.2b.

Table 4.2a: Classification Table of demographic characteristics and performance at work.

Classification Table ^a					
	Observed		Predicted		
			Performance		Percentage Correct
			1.00	2.00	
Step 1	Performance	1.00	25	5	83.3
		2.00	4	26	86.7
	Overall Percentage				85.0

a. The cut value is .500

The result from table 4.2a reveals that the prediction of performance and non-performance of civil servants at work is 85.0% sure by the factors that account for them. Table 4.2b shows the logistic result.

Table 4.2b: The Logistic Regression table for demographic Characteristics and Performance at Work

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
gender(Ref Cat= Male)	-2.164	1.824	1.407	1	.236	.115
Education (Ref Cat= Others)			6.826	4	.145	
No Education	4.279	2.278	3.529	1	.060	72.145
Primary Education	-.147	2.322	.004	1	.950	.864
Secondary Education	.600	2.096	.082	1	.775	1.822
Tertiary Education	-3.788	2.646	2.049	1	.152	.023
Department (Ref Cat= None)			6.573	6	.362	
Accounting	3.444	2.831	1.480	1	.224	31.323
Commerce	5.095	3.968	1.649	1	.199	163.284
Education	3.432	2.380	2.079	1	.149	30.940
Security	-.863	2.795	.095	1	.757	.422
Administration	4.676	4.575	1.044	1	.307	107.327
Others	10.876	6.061	3.220	1	.073	52902.402
Level of Experience	.055	.075	.541	1	.462	1.057
Age of Respondents (Ref Cat= Above 50 Years)			2.140	4	.710	
Below 20 Years	-17.414	21605.252	.000	1	.999	.000
21-30 Years	-17.171	21605.252	.000	1	.999	.000
31-40 Years	-16.544	21605.252	.000	1	.999	.000
41-50 Years	-19.919	21605.252	.000	1	.999	.000
Marital Status (Ref Cat= None)			7.099	4	.131	
Married	4.843	2.438	3.946	1	.047	126.832
Single	.781	2.083	.141	1	.708	2.184
Divorced	1.766	2.284	.598	1	.439	5.849
Widowed	-3.000	3.105	.934	1	.334	.050
Ethnic Group (Ref Cat= Others)			1.571	3	.666	
Igbo	-.768	1.449	.281	1	.596	.464
Yoruba	-2.400	2.550	.886	1	.347	.091
Hausa	-2.674	2.422	1.219	1	.270	.069
Religion (Ref Cat= None)			3.296	3	.348	
Christianity	-.001	1.512	.000	1	.999	.999
Islam	2.832	2.058	1.894	1	.169	16.977
Traditional	-1.503	2.148	.490	1	.484	.222
Constant	14.633	21605.252	.000	1	.999	2265381.964

The logistic regression in table 4.2 reveals that only individuals who are married are not performing well at work ($p < 0.05$). Other variables in the equation were not significant ($p > 0.05$).

Discrimination and Performance

Table 4.3 shows the relationship between discrimination at work of respondents and their work performance.

Table 4.3: Regression Analysis of Discrimination and Performance at work

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	21.796	1.490		14.628	.000
	Discrimination	-.069	.035	-.196	-1.961	.05

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

The result in table 4.3 reveals that there is a negative significant relationship between respondents discrimination at work and their performance at work ($p = 0.05$). This implies that, individuals who tend to be discriminated at work may be performing lower than those who are not discriminated.

Discussion of Findings

The result of this study revealed that civil servants who have secondary and tertiary education were significant which implied that, when an individual in the civil service of Nigeria has either a secondary or tertiary educational qualification, there is a higher tendency that such individual may experience discrimination at work. This might be because their bosses or superiors may not have that same higher educational qualification as they have. Also, individuals who work in the educational department of the civil service are often discrimination. Nevertheless, the level of experience was significant for not discrimination, i.e. the higher the individual's level of experience the lesser the tendency for his/her discrimination at work.

In addition, individuals who are Hausa also receive discrimination at work as compared to those from other parts of the nation. This bolstered Charles and Ikenna (2009) who clearly noted that ethnic discrimination is a major feature among humans. This also shows that individuals who are Hausas who lived in the South West of Nigeria may be in one way or the other discriminated at work. This concurs with Raymond (2003) that unfair discrimination usually follows the ethnic stereotyping held by a society. This affirms Oudhof (2007) that many people may experience discrimination because of their language of origin which may be different from that of where they are working or staying.

There was no gender discrimination at work. This contrast the European Commission through the GendeRace project (2012), who stated that, women are more often subject to harassment within the work place and in their neighbourhood. The result of this study revealed that women are now enjoying the same treatment as male do. The result of the study shows a difference from the work of Cynthia (1995), Robert (2004) and Olojede (2009) that women often experience a "glass ceiling" and that there are no societies in which women enjoy the same opportunities as men.

This support Yahaya (1992) that since Nigeria attained independence in 1960, successive governments have consistently pursued an employment policy which aims at full employment and reduce all forms of discrimination as this study reveals that there was no gender discrimination among civil servants, nevertheless, there was ethnic discriminations at work among the South West Civil Servants.

On the one hand, the result of this study supported Robert (2004) and Anaeme (2012) that, after decades since Nigeria became an independent nation-state, there has not been doubt about the opportunities that have been made available to women in the civil service, thereby reducing gender. On the other hand, the result of this study showed a disparity from the work of Robert (2004) and Anaeme (2012) that opportunities have been made for other groups to reduce ethnic discrimination at work place. This buttressed Otite (2005) that in Nigerian discrimination is still maintained to a large extent. The result also showed that individuals who are married are not performing well at work.

The result of this study revealed that there is a negative significant relationship between respondents discrimination at work and their performance at work. This implies that, individuals who tend to be discriminated at work may be performing lower than those who are not discriminated. This augment the work of

Van den Berg & Evers (2006) who stated that for victims of discrimination, the experience appears to have a large impact on their personal lives especially at work place. This also buttressed World Bank (1997) that when others are not offered equal opportunity in the civil service, there is the danger that some skills in a nation may be wasted and in most cases destroyed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, gender discrimination in Nigeria does not exist again nevertheless, ethnic discrimination is still prevalent in the nation. Since discrimination at work influences civil servants work performance, it is evidence that such act would lead to national menace. This calls for attention as this might be the reason why there is still evidence of ethnic disparities and conflicts in the nation. The governments at all levels should endeavour to provide and put in place necessary policy to intervene in this national menace. It is then sustainable national development can be achieved as every individual irrespective of where you are from and where you live will receive equal treatment.

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