

Decentralized Collective Bargaining and Salary Differentials in the Civil Services in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the effects of decentralized collective bargaining on salary differentials and industrial harmony in the Civil Services in Nigeria. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaire and oral interview in six selected Civil services in Nigeria. Interviews were also conducted with Directors of Establishment in each of the selected Civil Services and secretaries of the Association of Senior Civil Servants in Oyo, Kwara, Kaduna, Adamawa, Cross Rivers and Enugu states representing a state in each of the six geo-political zone. Secondary data were collected through official documents of the Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics. The study revealed that decentralised collective bargaining has led to deregulation of salary grade structures in the Civil Services in the country, presently there exists 13 salary grade structures for various professionals respectively in the Civil Services. Further decentralized collective bargaining was the major cause of salary differentials in the Civil Services in Nigeria as recorded by 76.4% of the respondents. Similarly, decentralized collective bargaining was the major cause of industrial conflicts in the Civil Services in the country as recorded by 85% of the respondents. The study concluded that decentralized collective bargaining to be modified in line with ecology of administration in Nigeria in order to make salaries competitive in the public sector.

1.0 Introduction

Salary is a major factor in the economic and social lives of any community (ILO 1992). For workers salary is primarily a source of income, but can also be a source of social prestige and may be judged according to its fairness. While government interest lies in the fact that it is a major employer of labour both in the developed and developing countries and salary contributes to a great extent to the economic well being of the citizenry (ILO, 1992).

In Nigeria wage labour was developed during the colonial era in order to meet the commercial needs of both local and European companies (Allen, 1971). Subsequently, government workers institution later developed as a result of the institution of urban administration and the creation of public utilities. This generated a standing corpus of officials who earned different kind of pay (Cohen, 1981). The service comprised both the European and native staffs with different kind of pay for both of them respectively. While the European staff conditions of service were for better off than the natives condition of service (Otobo, 1987). Thus, built the foundation for salary differential in the Civil Services in Nigeria.

In order to get fair and equitable salary administration and reduce salary differentials in the colonial civil services different salaries and wages commissions/committees were established. Like the Batt Committee (1919), Rice Committee (1919), Hunt Committee (1934), Bridges Committee (1941), Harraging Committee (1945), Tudor Davies Committee (1946) and Miller Committee (1948). Notwithstanding, the recommendations of these committees deepened salary differentials in the country's civil service (Kester, 2006).

For instance, the Hunt Committee recommended financial wages, with differentials in pay of each province respectively. While the Bridges Committee categorised towns into categories A, B, and C. The basic pay and cost of living allowances in these categories differed. Similarly, the Miller Committee (1947) established the principle of payment on geographical basis thus he divided the country into six geographical zones with differentials in pay for each region (Fashoyin, 1987).

This was the situation at the introduction of federalism in the country by Lytellton constitution in 1954. Infact, federalism brought salary differentials in the four civil services into limelight as each region tried to undo one another in the payment of highest minimum wage. However, in 1963 the Morgan Commission divided the country into six wage zones with different wages for each zone respectively (Otobo, 1988). The agitations that followed the wage zones and certain economic developments made the Udoji commission of 1974 on review of the public services to recommend the unification of salary grade structure in the public service in Nigeria. Subsequently, the "principle of equal pay for equal work irrespective of the public sector where an employee is employed was established" (Iwuji, 1989). As a result, the wage zones were abolished and a unified salary structure of ₦720 per annum minimum wage for the least paid worker was recommended. In a related development, the Shagari administration in 1981 enacted the minimum wage Act of ₦125 per month. Otobo (1987) submits that "due to successive internal reviews, the minimum wage crept up until the economic recession properly set in, in 1983 and many state governments and parastatal found themselves owing areas of

salaries for upward of six months in several instances”.

The Buhari regime that took over from the Shagari regime took certain actions to ameliorate the problem associated with the implementation of national minimum wage. However, the actions were not adequate to address the problems associated with collective bargaining in the country’s public service. As a result, decentralized collective bargaining was designed by president Babangida administration to achieve a realistic remuneration policy and a crises free industrial relation practice in the civil services of the federation (Babangida, 1991). As previous approaches failed to bring out a crises free salary determination process in the civil services in Nigeria. Despite this policy, the crises associated with salary determination process and industrial relation practices in the civil services in Nigeria have not abated.

This has made salary determination process intensively problematic and controversial within the nation’s political economy. It is against this backdrop that this study sets out to examine decentralized collective bargaining and salary differentials in the civil services in Nigeria.

2.0 Objectives of the study

The objectives are to:

- (i) assess the effects of decentralized collective bargaining on salary differentials in the civil services in Nigeria; and
- (ii) determine the effects of decentralized collective bargaining on industrial harmony in the civil services in Nigeria.

3.0 Research Methodology

Primary and secondary data were collected for the study. Primary data were collected through the administration of questionnaire and in-depth interview. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used for the study. A state each was purposively selected in the six geopolitical zones in the country. The selected states were Oyo (Southwest); Kwara (North Central); Kaduna (northwest); Adamawa (northeast); Enugu (Southeast) and Cross River (South south). The reason for choosing these states is that opinion sampled from these states was representation of the opinions from each of the geo political zone. Two each of Ministries and Extra Ministerial Departments were also purposively selected for the study. They are the Ministries of Establishment and that of Finance and the Head of Service and Accountant General Offices. Whereas the Ministry of Establishment is responsible for issues relating to industrial relations and staff matters in the Civil Service, that of Finance is responsible for government expenditures including salaries. Finally, Civil Servants on Grade level 07-14 were be purposively selected for the study because they belonged to the Unified Civil Service Class. From each of the purposively selected samples, random technique was used to further select the respondents in the selected Ministries and Extra-Ministerial departments. A total number of 650 respondents representing 2% of 31,546 which is the study population was randomly selected. This technique in particular gave equal chance to every member of the senior civil service cadre for the purpose of the study. In-depth interview was conducted with the Heads of Service in each of the selected civil services, the Permanent Secretaries in the Ministries of Establishment and Finance and the Chairman of the staff team of the Joint Negotiating Councils in each of the selected Civil Services respectively. Relevant documents of the Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria constituted key source for secondary data. Data collected were analyzed with appropriate descriptive statistics.

4.0 Discussion of Findings

4.1 The Effects of Decentralised Collective Bargaining on Salary Differentials in the Civil Services in Nigeria

This section presents, analyses and discusses data on the effects of decentralised collective bargaining on salary differentials in the civil services of Nigeria. Presented hereafter, is the Table on Questions on the effect of the policy on salary differentials in the civil services in Nigeria.

Table 1: Questions on Decentralised Collective Bargaining and Salary Differentials in the Civil Services in Nigeria
(Figures expressed in percentage)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
1	A national minimum wage of any kind is desirable in Nigeria	47.9	19.2	2.7	12.3	17.9	100
2	National Minimum wage should be fixed to check state government inclination for low salaries payment in their civil service respectively	54.4	23.1	4.0	7.0	11.5	100
3	Minimum wage in the civil service should vary from state to state in Nigeria	16.3	11.9	1.6	21.1	49.1	100
4	In the civil services the minimum wage should vary between the federal, state and local governments respectively	15.9	12.6	3.7	19.2	48.6	100
5	The present salary differential between the federal and state civil services in Nigeria is desirable	16.1	14.1	9.0	25.6	35.2	100
6	Decentralised collective bargaining in the salary determination process in the civil service is a major cause of salary differentials in the civil service of Nigeria	48.0	28.4	9.5	5.3	8.8	100
7	Union leaders at the state level lack bargaining power	28.0	32.2	7.0	17.0	15.8	100
8	Resuscitating JNPSNC will increase the bargaining power of the union at state levels	45.9	31.7	8.1	9.7	4.6	100

Source: *Field work*, June, 2011

Findings from Table 1 reveal that 47.9% and 19.2% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that a national minimum wage of any kind was desirable in Nigeria, another 17.9% and 12.3% of the respondents were of the view that minimum wage of any kind was not desirable in Nigeria and 2.7% of the respondents were undecided on the desirability of the enactment of national minimum wage in Nigeria. The implication of this is that majority of the respondents wanted national minimum wage in Nigeria, this is due to the fact that national minimum wage plays political, social and economic roles in the nation.

Furthermore, majority 54.4% strongly agreed and 23.1% agreed that the national minimum wage should be fixed by the Federal Government to check State Governments inclination for payment of low salaries in their civil services. However, 11.5% strongly disagreed while another 7.0% disagreed that the Federal Government should fix the national minimum wage. Meanwhile, 4.0% of the respondents were undecided. This implies that majority of the respondents would want the national minimum wage to be fixed by the Federal Government as this would discourage the State Governments from paying low salaries in the civil services. This finding was confirmed by the interview method most especially the labour side. They were of the opinion that if States were allowed to determine their salaries independently, they would end up paying low salaries.

In a related development, findings from Table 1 reveal that majority of the respondents (49.1% and 21.1%), were of the view that minimum wage should not vary from State to State civil services in Nigeria, respectively. Another 16.3% and 11.9% respondents were of the view that minimum wage should vary from State to State civil services in Nigeria. 1.6% of the respondents were indifferent. The implication of this is that civil servants in the civil services of Nigeria want minimum wage to be uniform throughout the civil services in Nigeria. This explains why unions in the state used to compare notes during any negotiation process and would not want the salary structure of the nearby State to be significantly different from theirs. Sometimes, they used to adopt the salary structure of the other States in the same geo-political zone.

Similarly, 48.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 19.2% respondents disagreed that minimum wage should vary between the Federal, State and Local Government Services in Nigeria. Another 15.9% strongly agreed and 12.6% agreed that minimum wage should vary between the Federal, State and Local Government Services in Nigeria. On the other hand 3.7% of the respondents were undecided. This implies that civil servants in the civil services did not want variations in inter-civil service salary structures in the civil services in Nigeria. Findings from the interview revealed that civil servants did not want regional minimum wage in Nigeria, which was the situation before the unification of Salary Grade Structure in 1974.

Furthermore, 35.2% of the respondents strongly disagreed and another 25.6% disagreed that the present inter and intra civil services salary differentials in Nigeria was desirable. Meanwhile, 16.1% of the respondents strongly agreed and 14.1% agreed that the present inter and intra civil service salary differentials in the civil services of Nigeria were desirable. On the other hand, 9.0% of the respondents were undecided. The implication of this is that civil servants across the geo-political zone wanted to be on the same salary structure with their Federal counterparts. They did not want the present salary differentials in the civil service. This explains why Unions at the States level usually agitate to be on the same salary structure with the Federal civil service; hence, the protracted strike actions usually embarked upon to press home their demands.

Likewise, 48.0% of the respondents strongly agreed and another 28.4% agreed that decentralised collective bargaining in the salary determination process is a major cause of salary differentials in the civil services in Nigeria. On the contrary, 8.8% strongly disagreed and 5.3% of the respondents disagreed respectively that decentralised collective bargaining is a major cause of salary differentials in the civil services in Nigeria, while another 9.5% were undecided. The implication of this is that civil servants were of the opinion that decentralised collective bargaining was a major cause of intra and inter-civil service salary differentials in the civil services in Nigeria.

Besides, the results reveal that union leaders at the state level lack bargaining strength to get what they wanted from the State Governments as 28.0% and 32.2% respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively. On the other hand, 15.8% and 17.0% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, while another 7.0% of the respondents were indifferent. This means that the civil servants were of the view that the local branch of their unions could not adequately cater for their needs at the local level. This explains why the national union leaders often encouraged restiveness during the struggle for the implementation of a new national minimum wage. Furthermore, from the interview conducted with the Secretaries of Association of Senior civil servants in the six geo-political zones respectively, they all confirmed that the Union leaders at times succumbed to the threats of State Governments during the struggle for the implementation of any new minimum wage in Nigeria.

Consequently, 45.9% strongly agreed and 31.7% agreed and they were of the view that reconstituting the Joint National Public Service Negotiating Councils (JNPSNC) would give leverage to Union leaders to bargain effectively at the State level. But 4.6% and 9.7% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. However, 8.1% of the respondents were indifferent. The implication of this is that the civil servants wanted centralised bargaining structure in the civil services of Nigeria because the Joint National Public Service Negotiating Councils stood for centralised bargaining structure.

The interview revealed that all the respondents wanted collective bargaining to be used as the tool for salary determination in the civil services in Nigeria. In addition some wanted the labour issue to be put under the concurrent legislative list as this would give state governments opportunity and legal backing to bargain with their labour unions as the fiat approach by federal government is not desirable. Even though some of the respondents (from Kwara, Kaduna, Adamawa) wanted the federal government to determine the salaries of the civil servants centrally. They argued that by this the revenue allocated to states might be increased in order to pay salary and reduce inter-civil service salaries differentials in Nigeria.

The respondents were unanimous in their responses that Public Service Negotiating Councils were not effective at the state levels across the state of the federation in comparison with their effectiveness at the federal level. This is due to lack of political will on the part of the executive arm of government in the state and lack of bargaining strength on the part of the state unions.

The result of the interview schedule revealed that the major cause of salary differentials in the civil services in Nigeria is decentralized collective bargaining policy occasioned by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which brought about the idea of privatization and commercialization programme culminating in discrimination in wage rates in the country. Decentralized collective bargaining has created a platform for salary deregulation. That is salaries and allowances became professionalized leading to different salary structures within the public services of Nigeria (Federal, State, Tertiary Institutions, Medical, Military and Paramilitary) as applicable. The differential is always attached to ability to pay by every employer and the nature of the profession. This has led to various salary structures within the civil service. It encouraged salary differentials as the policy enabled various professions in the civil service to bargain for salary structure peculiar to their various professions respectively. For instance, there exists thirteen (13) salary charts in the public service. They are;

- (i) Consolidated Public Service Salary Structure (CONPSS).
- (ii) Consolidated Research and Allied Institution Salary Structure (CONRAISS)
- (iii) Consolidated Armed Forces Salary Structure (CONAFSS)
- (iv) Consolidation Intelligent Community Salary Structure (CONICSS)
- (v) Consolidated University Academic Staff Salary Structure II (CONUAS II)
- (vi) Consolidated Tertiary Institutions Salary Structure II (CONTIS II)
- (vii) Consolidated Tertiary Education Institution Salary Structure (CONTEDIS)
- (viii) Consolidated Poly and Colleges of Education Academic Staff (CONPCASS)
- (ix) Consolidated Health Salary Structure (CONHESS)
- (x) Consolidated Medical Salary Structures (CONMESS)
- (xi) Consolidated Legislative Salary Structure (CONLESS)
- (xii) Consolidated Police Salary Structure (CONPOSS)
- (xiii) Consolidated Para Military Salary Structure (CONPASS)

Consequently, the various professionals salary structures as occasioned by decentralization of collective bargaining policy in the civil services has led to salary differentials between the generalist administrators and the specialists professionals thus bringing back the conflicts between the two groups which the Udoji Commission

(1974) had tried to resolve.

The staff side also submitted that they usually shifted ground for the state government during any negotiation meeting when they were confronted with options of retrenchment in order to meet up the salary demand. Besides, they also succumb to government blackmail when they were accused of being sponsored by opposition parties or that paying the demanded salary would deny the government of having money to prosecute its development programs. This usually aroused the sentiments of other citizens in the state against the civil servants.

In Table 2, below, the calculated mean and standard deviation of salary determinants are presented.

Table 2: Mean value and Standard Deviation of Salary Determinants in the Civil Services in Nigeria

ITEMS	N	MEAN	SD
Ability to pay	551	1.32	.616
Willingness to pay	551	1.70	.791
Weak union at state level	551	2.11	.807

Source: *Field work*, June, 2011

Table 2 shows that out of the three factors listed as salary determinants, weak bargaining power State level has the highest mean of 2.11 followed by willingness to pay of 1.70 mean and lastly ability to pay with 1.32 mean. This shows that by extension weak bargaining power of Unions at the State level was one of the causes of salary differentials in the civil services in Nigeria. Thus, the salary structure of any State Civil Service will be a function of the bargaining power of their union officials. Since this took pre-eminence over willingness to pay and ability to pay. Willingness to pay which was the second mean indicated that the state government had the ability to pay. Given this, with strong negotiating skills and bargaining power at the state level, it means that salary differentials in the civil services of Nigeria can be bridged. The factor “Ability to pay” has the least standard deviation (0.616), followed by “willingness to pay” (0.791) and weak bargaining power at the state level by union leader (0.807). This suggest that ability to pay has the most significant of decentralised collective bargaining impact on salary differentials.

Meanwhile, salary structures differed from State to State and between the Federal Civil Service and other civil services in the country. The Minimum Wage

Meanwhile, salary structures differed from State to State and between the Federal Civil Service and other civil services in the country. The Minimum Wage Table in each of the State of the Federation is hereby presented.

Table 3 Minimum Wage Across the Civil Services in Nigeria as at December, 2010

S/N	Federal /State Govt	Minimum Wage
1	Abia	9,695
2	Adamawa	9,522
3	Akwa Ibom	10,600
4	Anambra	8,675
5	Bauchi	11,000
6	Bayelsa	7,500
7	Benue	6,700
8	Bornu	9,000
9	Cross Rivers	8,400
10	Delta	9,400
11	Ebonyi	8,687
12	Edo	9,400
13	Ekiti	7,300
14	Enugu	8,575
15	Federal Government	17,020
16	Gombe	6,348
17	Imo	7,500
18	Jigawa	7,500
19	Kaduna	8,799

20	Kano	7,500
21	Kastina	9,700
22	Kebbi	6,500
23	Kogi	7,500
24	Kwara	9050
25	Lagos	10,300
26	Nasarawa	7,590
27	Niger	5,500
28	Ogun	9,000
29	Ondo	10,050
30	Osun	9,500
31	Oyo	9,400
32	Plateau	7,500
33	Rivers	7,500
34	Sokoto	7,500
35	Taraba	9,400
36	Yobe	7,500
37	Zamfara	10,300

Source: *Field work*, June, 2011

Findings from Table 3 reveal that Bauchi state paid the highest minimum wage among the thirty six States of the Federation. It is followed by Zamfara and Lagos State that paid ₦10,300 minimum wage per month; respectively, while Ondo state was the fourth on the list with ₦10,050 per month. Niger State was the least on

the list with ₦5,500 per month. However, on the average majority (Bayelsa, Rivers, Plateu, Jigawa, Imo, Yobe, Kogi, Sokoto, Kano, Jigawa) ten of the States paid ₦ 7,500 per month, while those that paid between ₦ 9,000 and ₦ 9,700 were eleven States (Abia, Ogun, Bornu, Adamawa, Kwara, Oyo, Osun, Taraba, Edo, Delta and Kastina). However, those that paid between ₦ 10,000 and ₦ 10,500 were three States (Akwa Ibom, Zamfara and Lagos).

The implication of this is that ₦7500 was the average among the State. Those that paid less than ₦7500 were five States (Ekiti, Niger, Gombe, Benue and Kebbi States). However, none of the states paid up to ₦17,020 which the Federal Civil Service paid to its civil servants. This implied that the salary differentials between the Federal Civil Service and all the States of the federation was significant while the differentials among the states were not as significant as the Federal Civil Service.

The salary structure of the selected State civil services from grade levels 07 to 17 and grade level 01 step 01 are presented below.

Salary Structure in the Selected Civil Services in Nigeria

Presented below are the salaries for officers on salary Grade levels 01 step 01 and from 07 step 01 to 17 step 01 in selected States and Federal Government as of December 2010.

Table 4a: Salary Grade Structure in the Selected Civil Services in Nigeria

STATE	Salary Grade level 01/Step 01	Salary Grade level 07/Step 01	Salary Grade level 08/Step 01	Salary Grade level 09/Step 01	Salary Grade level 10/Step 01	Salary Grade level 12/Step 01
ADAMAWA	9,522.26	16,219.33	20,525.13	23,534.09	27,052.60	31,156.27
ENUGU	8,575.11	17,013.23	21,511.91	24,882.52	28,822	33,920
KWARA	9,050.00	17,426.00	21,888.48	25,183.00	29,140.00	34,300.56
OYO	9,400.00	18,010.00	23,432.00	25,183.00	28,983.00	32,745.00
CRS	8,400.00	16,362.88	20,773.30	23,802.29	27,449.57	32,824.63
KADUNA	8,799.00	17,257.16	22,464.91	26,556.80	30,929.49	36,250.95
FG	17,073.00	42,263.75	54,615.75	64,154.83	75,309.25	86,867.33

Sources: Ministries of Finance in the selected states, 2010

Table 4b: Salary Grade Structure in the selected Civil Services in Nigeria

STATE	Salary Grade level 13/Step 01	Salary Grade level 14/Step 01	Salary Grade level 15/Step 01	Salary Grade level 16/Step 01	Salary Grade level 17/Step 01
ADAMAWA	33,759.99	36,003.39	55,034.47	58,823	63,517
ENUGU	37,552	41,200.71	46,949.38	51,661	57,071
KWARA	37,902.48	41,521.20	58,769.64	74,825.00	80,191.44
OYO	36,284.63	40,073.00	49,067.00	54,078.00	59,847.00
CRS	35,824.63	39,273.72	40,225.00	50,597.00	55,967.00
KADUNA	40,544.79	44,768.25	63,985.00	83,129.00	89,392.00
FG	96,952.75	107,084.83	146,484.67	182,239.75	347,733.33

Sources: Ministries of Finance in the selected states, 2010.

In Nigeria, just like in many other countries, determination of salary structure is based on the qualification and experience of the individual concerned. This is often followed by the annual incremental process whereby a civil servant progresses by steps. Above are presented the table showing the salary grades of civil servants of grade level 01 step one (which represents the minimum wage) and salary grade levels 07 step one to grade level 17 step one. The decision to use these grade levels for this study is borne out of the fact that grade level 01 step one is the entry point of the minimum wage for civil servants with lower levels of education and grade levels 07 step one and above is the entry point for those with higher education in the Civil Service. Besides, the levels 07 and above are the ones always serving as the voice of the civil service and whose views in the agitation for collective bargaining are often respected.

Table 4 shows that Adamawa State, with a minimum wage of 9,527.26 naira a month, has the highest minimum wage. They are closely followed by Oyo State with 9,400.00 naira and Kaduna State with 8,799.00 naira. Interestingly, this differential is not reflected in the salary grades of level 07 officers. While Oyo State pays 18,010.00 for those in step one, Adamawa, paid less than this (16,219.33) for this category of officers. In fact, while Adamawa paid highest for those in grade level 01, she pays the least for those in grade levels 07-14. Kaduna State, which paid one of the lowest salaries for their grade levels 01 officers, paid the highest salaries for officers from levels 09 to 17. The effect of this is that, officers in grade level 15 in Kaduna State earned more (63,985.00) than officers in grade level 17 in Adamawa and Enugu States (63,517 and 57,071 respectively).

Beside all these, it is also noteworthy that a grade level 16 officer earned much less (51,661) than a grade level 08 officer in the Federal Civil Service with 54,615.75 naira. This wide salary differentials among the

States and the Federal civil services is a major cause of industrial dispute between the government and the organized labour unions bearing in mind the fact that the same entry qualifications were used as yardstick for the recruitment of these officers.

4.5 Decentralised Collective Bargaining and Industrial Harmony

This section presents and discusses data on the effects of decentralised collective bargaining and salary differentials on industrial harmony in the civil services of Nigeria.

Table 5: Table on Questions on Decentralised Collective Bargaining and Industrial Harmony in the Civil Services in Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
1	Salary differentials have effects on the ability of State Civil Service to recruit, motivate and retain the best personnel	38.7	34.2	8.4	7.3	11.4	100
2	There is high labour turnover in the state civil service as a result of salary differentials	35.8	11.9	30.9	17.4	4.0	100
3	The low salary in your state civil service has made the civil service not to be a place of choice employment for the youth	44.8	25.1	3.3	7.3	19.5	100
4	Salary differentials are a major cause of industrial disharmony in the civil service in Nigeria.	59.0	26.7	2.9	4.6	6.8	100
5	Non availability of institutional framework for fixing and adjusting the national minimum wage is a major cause of industrial conflict.	46.9	30.0	8.8	9.0	5.3	100
6	Decision on minimum wage should not be Federal Government's exclusive right	43.1	22.9	8.2	10.6	15.2	100
7	Minimum wage in your civil service is a reflection of cost of living in your locality	27.7	11.4	4.0	17.6	39.3	100

Source: *Fieldwork*, June, 2011

Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents were of the view that salary differentials have effects on the ability of State Civil Service to recruit, motivate and retain best personnel 38.7% and 34.2% respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 11.4% and 7.3% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. Meanwhile, 8.4% of the respondents were undecided. In a related development, majority of the respondents were of the view that there was labour turnover in the State Civil Service as a result of inter-Civil Service salary differentials in the civil services in Nigeria 35.8% and 11.9% strongly agreed and disagreed respectively. Others, 4.0% and 17.4% respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. However, 30.9% of the respondents were undecided.

This implies that salary differentials have adverse effects on the recruitment of the young ones into the State civil services. The few ones that were employed only used the civil services as a stepping stone to other better paid employments elsewhere. Furthermore, majority of the respondents were of the view that salary differentials was a major cause of industrial disharmony in the civil services of the Federation 59.0% and 26.7% respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively. Others, 6.8%, 4.6% and 2.9% strongly disagreed, disagreed and undecided respectively.

This shows that the civil servants across the six geo-political zones viewed decentralised collective bargaining as a major cause of salary differentials in the civil services in Nigeria. The reason is that once the federal government increased the salary of the Federal Civil Service, State Governments usually find it difficult to pay at the Federal rate. As a result, it usually led to protracted strike actions because State Governments used to settle for less salary. In fact, most of the industrial actions in the civil services from 1991 to date were attributed to salary differentials in the civil services in Nigeria. Further, it was revealed that local issues were not significantly responsible for industrial actions in the selected States.

In a related development, majority of the respondents were of the view that non-availability of institutional framework for fixing and adjusting the national minimum wage was a major cause of industrial conflict in the civil service in Nigeria, as 46.9% and 30.0% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively. However, very few respondents 5.3%, 9.0% and 8.8% strongly disagreed, disagreed and were undecided, respectively. Although there existed institutions such as the PPIB and the National Council on Establishment to determine wages and salaries in Nigeria, these institutions only existed in name but were not functional; hence salary increments were done arbitrarily. The arbitrariness was a major cause of industrial actions in the civil services in Nigeria.

Similarly, Federal Government's unilateral decision on minimum wage is seen as one of the causes of industrial disharmony in the civil services in Nigeria. As a result, majority of respondents were of the view that decisions on national minimum wage should not be the Federal Government's exclusive right; hence 43.1% and 22.9% strongly agreed and agreed, while 15.2%; 10.6% and 8.2% of the respondents strongly disagreed, agreed and undecided, respectively. This implies that the Federal Government did not always carry other stakeholders along in fixing the national minimum wage, most especially the State Governments. This explains why State Governments, most times, complained about minimum wage implementation in the civil service. This is usually a source of conflict between Unions and State Governments during the implementation of any new national minimum wage.

Furthermore, majority of the respondents were of the view that minimum wage in their locality was not a reflection of the cost of living in their area 39.3% and 17.6% of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree that minimum wage in their locality is a reflection of the cost of living in their locality. Others, 27.7% and 11.4% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 4.0% were undecided. Since the salary in any of the six geo-political zones was not a reflection of the cost of living, it implies that civil servants would always feel that their salaries were inadequate and agitate for increment.

Consequently, respondents were of the view that decentralized collective bargaining and salary differentials led to a tense industrial climate and incessant strike actions in the civil services in Nigeria. The reason for this is that salaries were easily compared and with the presence of federal workers in all states, coupled with the fact that both the state workers and that of the federal are subjected to the same market indices within such state, state industrial harmony were always put to test with demand from its work force.

Besides, being the major cause of industrial disharmony in the civil services in Nigeria, the interview revealed that the policy made the average civil servants to become demoralized and almost at the verge of being frustrated and thus lose morale, dedication and commitment that could invigorate the civil service for efficient service delivery. Similarly, it has caused brain drain in state civil services across the federation. This is evident in the responses most especially from the government side. Their submissions were that the best usually use the state civil services as a stepping stone to the federal or viable private sector. Thus young graduates are not motivated to join the service.

Table 6: Mean value and Standard Deviation of Some of the Causes of Industrial Conflicts

ITEMS	N	MEAN	SD
Non existence of institutional framework for salary determination.	551	1.70	.737
Unilateral increment by federal government.	551	1.88	.748
State government retroactive approach to minimum wage Act in the country	551	1.82	.819

Source: *Fieldwork*, June, 2011

From Table 6, unilateral increment by the Federal Government has the highest mean of 1.88 followed by state government retroactive approach to minimum wage legislation 1.82 and lastly by non existence of institutional framework for salary determination 1.70 respectively. This implies that unilateral increment of salary by the Federal Government was one of the major causes of industrial disharmony in the civil services in Nigeria.

On the problems of decentralised collective bargaining, the factor "Non existence of institutional framework for salary determination" has the least standard deviation (0.737), followed by the factor "unilateral increment by federal government" (0.748) and "state government retroactive approach to minimum wage Act in the country" (0.819). Thus the most significant factor is the "Non-existence of institutional framework for salary determination. Presented hereafter is the statistics on Industrial conflicts in the Country.

Table 4.7: Summary of Industrial Disputes in Nigeria from 2003-2007

Year	No of disputes	Number of disputes resulting in strike	Number of Dispute resolved	Duration of Dispute (days)	Number of workers involved	Total Man day lost
2003	77	28	57	645	249,697	5,690,952
2004	36	26	32	277	127,377	2,737,399
2005	149	57	110	675	280,606	4,308,013
2006	189	63	79	910	208,589	7,785,993
2007	250	79	212	1,264	414,534	13,227,957

Source: Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity, Abuja

From Table 7, 2007 had the highest recorded number of 250 disputes while 212 disputes were resolved, 79 led to strike actions for 1,264 days involving 414,534 workers and 13,227,957 total man-day was lost. This is followed by 2006 with 189 recorded disputes. Although 79 disputes were resolved, 63 disputes resulted into

strike action for 910 days involving 208,589 workers which made 7,785, 993 total man day to be lost. In 2005, 149 disputes were recorded, 110 disputes were resolved, 57 led to strike actions in 675 days involving 280,606 workers and 4,308,013 total man day lost. There was relatively industrial peace in 2004 with 36 number of disputes recorded while, 32 disputes were resolved 26 resulted in strike action for 277 days involving 127,377 workers and 2,737,399 total days lost. It was higher than this in 2003 with 77 disputes recorded. However, 57 disputes were resolved while 28 led to strike actions for 645 days involving 249,697 workers and 5,690,952 total man-days lost.

From the above analysis, 2007, being an election year, the number of disputes were expected to be high because of the political implication of industrial disputes. Workers were expected to use the period to make demands on government and because of electioneering campaign and the need to legitimize government, the party in power was expected to succumb to workers demand. It was also high in 2006 because it was a build up to an election year. It was low in 2004 because of the political environment then (the year that followed an election year).

Conclusion

Decentralized collective bargaining was designed to solve the problems associated with salary determination process in the Civil Services in Nigeria, however the policy has brought intra-Civil Service and Inter-Civil Services salary differentials into the public service. Thus by extension heat up the industrial relations sector by the member of strikes actions witnessed in the Civil Services across the country.

Therefore in order to reduce these industrial conflicts, decentralized collective bargaining should be modified to reflect the ecology of public administration in Nigeria.

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