

Assessment of the Nature of Labour Casualization in Nigeria

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Abstract

Casualization of labour has become a global challenge that has been of major concern to labour unions and government authorities in different parts of the world including Nigeria. Its widespread has not only crept from the private sector into the public sector of the Nigerian economy but it has also permeated core government establishments. Given the above, the study assesses the nature of labour casualization in Nigeria. The paper is a theoretical discourse hence it adopts a qualitative research approach and relies on secondary data sources obtained from journal articles, government publications, books, as well as web-based studies on labour casualization. The study is guided by Karl Marx's Conflict Theory which best highlights the precariousness and unevenness of Labour Casualization. The findings reveal a national workforce that is characterized by an undesirable level of casualization in both private and public establishments occasioned by the generally high level of unemployment in the country which presents a depressing job situation for casual workers due to the rarity of opportunities for confirmation of appointments from casual to permanent employment. The paper, therefore, recommends that the country should prioritize efforts towards the creation of decent employment opportunities for its employable populace.

Keywords: Casualization, Labour, Governments, Establishment, Precariousness.

Introduction

The casualization of labour has become a universal phenomenon that has generated concerns amongst various stakeholders globally. It has become a huge social issue that confronts the industrial sector in different parts of the world including highly industrialized countries such as the USA, China, and Germany, amongst others, as well as in less developed nations such as Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa, just to mention a few. Thus, an understanding of this issue remains critical to labour welfare and general employee protection as its prevalence has become consistently high in Nigeria (Otuturu, 2021).

The term 'casualization' is used by Okafor (2010) to refer to a non-standard work arrangement occasioned by the impact of globalization and trade liberalization which is facilitated by technological improvement in communication and information technology. Casualization is referred to in Europe and the United States as Non-Standard Work Arrangements (NSWAs), and these refer to fixed contract work, on-call work, part-time, and temporary work engagement (Oyadiran, Dare, Faskari, & Success, 2018). Other categories include day work, outsourcing, sub-contracting, homework, self-employment,

and zero-hour employment. The common characteristic of non-standard jobs is that they differ in terms of hours worked, job security, and payment system from the traditional full-time or permanent employment which has been a dominant feature of industrial relations in many developed economies and developing industries for much of the twentieth century. Rasak (2017) reveals that there are different reasons for employing casual labour or workers, and the different sections of the labour force targeted by different organizations lead to more general observations about the nature of labour casualization in Nigeria. Engagement of large attendants of the workforce based on casualization has become a burden in the industries in the country. Workers are recruited at the gate and fired at will daily. Even though these workers continue to generate enormous profits and revenues for the various establishments they work for, they remain classified as casuals and subjected to deplorable and inhumane working conditions.

Furthermore, most unemployed people struggling to get decent jobs choose to fight poverty and inequality by becoming casual workers in either the private or public sector of the economy. Casualization as a method of employment where people are engaged without a permanent appointment contract is currently highly prevalent in Nigeria. The lack of decent job opportunities for uneducated and educated people in Nigeria makes it one of the unequal societies producing high levels of poverty. Globalization and trade liberalization made way for competing imports into the economy which consequently resulted in lots of instability in the product market. To cope with this challenge, employers resulted in adopting cost-cutting measures, including downsizing, cutting back on employment, and use of permanent employees; the offshoot being the current predominance of casual workers (Bayo, 2019). Also, many women want to work part-time to combine family care and work; this is the flexibility that NSW gives them, Therefore, the changing economic conditions such as greater instability and uncertainty necessitated the use of non-standard workers as a response to the market by entrepreneurs.

A recent study by Musti and Mallum (2020) concludes that the human resource of any country is the most critical asset for the achievement of organizational growth and National development. Furthermore, Fapohunda (2012) stated that the real treasure of any country is its workforce. The quantity of labour force available for any country consists of all those able and willing to work, including the self-employed and employed workers, as well as the unemployed. This is linked to the reason most highly developed nations of the world pay thoughtful and active attention to this factor when compared with other factors of production: Land, Capital, and Entrepreneur (Rasak & Babatunde, 2017).

Currently, many African countries are taking steps towards economic self-sufficiency. Governments all over the continent have taken steps to ensure attractive and investor-friendly policies, which are sometimes to the detriment of the indigenous workers. In 2012 alone, there was a spike in news reports in the continent about workplace violations such as workers' exploitation, physical abuse, and indiscriminate disengagements, amongst others, which were committed by foreign employers in the manufacturing industries in several

African countries. Although many of these narrations tend to focus on the transgressions committed by Chinese firms due in large part to increased Chinese economic activities in Africa which according to some estimates is expected to be worth at least \$50 billion by 2015. Allegations against other foreign investors from countries like Lebanon, India, and Germany mistreating their African employees have also been documented around the continent (Tamunomiebi & Bagshaw, 2018).

It is very unfortunate that in the face of widespread unemployment and growing economic hardship in the continent, employers of labour have brought a new twist to employment in the name of labour casualization. The traditional industrial relations system based on the concept of full-time employees working within an enterprise is increasingly being challenged by the use of Non-Standard Work Arrangements (NSWAs) by employers (Eyongndi, 2016). This changing nature of work has taken a new dimension with the adoption of flexible work arrangements by many firms globally.

The theme running through many of the new approaches in today's globalized economy is the development of a more flexible workforce which has become employers' new frontier in the management of human resources. However, these changing patterns of work (casual, contract, temporary, part-time employment, subcontracting or outsourcing) occasioned by Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP), have created concerns for workers and trade unions alike, especially in Nigeria. Job security, social security, terminal benefits, and minimum conditions of work are some of the issues of concern (Fapohunda, 2012).

Therefore, it is obvious that the practice or concept of full-time, permanent, or standard job placement is being threatened by the use of Non-standard work arrangements (NSWA) by employers including government or public establishments. Also, the shift from full-time or permanent work to Non-standard arrangement came by when employers began to avoid the mandates and costs associated with labour laws which are designed to protect permanent or full-time workers in standard employment. Employers have persisted in filling positions in their establishments that are permanent with casual workers.

Statement of the Problem

Several studies in Nigeria by Okafor (2010); Animashaun (2012); Fapohunda (2012); Kalejaiye (2014); Solaja (2015); Ibekwe (2016); Rasak and Babatunde (2017); Ogbe, Olugbumi and Okorode (2019); Musti and Mallum (2020) were undertaken on casualization of labour but they were skewed towards labour casualization in the private sector without sufficient examination of the problem within the public sector. The expansive views of some of these scholars show that while Okafor (2010); Kalejaiye (2014); Solaja (2015); Ibekwe (2016); Rasak and Babatunde (2017) situate their studies around multi-national firms, mostly within the South-South region of the country (Niger-Delta) and focus their analyses mainly on the rise or causes of casual work in Nigeria, Animashaun (2012) gives an overview of the contract nature of casual engagement to highlight its implications within the context of the Nigerian Labour Laws.

Moreover, most of these studies focused on labour casualization in the industrial cities with emphasis on private establishments in the southern parts of Nigeria, without substantial studies on the general assessment of labour casualization. Therefore, the paper offers a general assessment of labour casualization in Nigeria, intending to examine the nature, causes, and implications of labour casualization and its emerging trends in the country.

Conceptual Clarification

Labour

The early pre-industrial interests in modes of production in Western Europe and America, combined with Africanists' consciousness of the best mode of exchange for farm proceeds shaped the advancement of the development of the concept of labour (Narotzky, 2018). Labour provides the expertise, manpower, and service necessary to turn raw materials into finished products and services (Mollo & Emuze, 2017). The skill-level category of labour is the most common category of labour, where labour is measured by workers' expertise in their jobs. The most basic type under this category is unskilled labour which does not require any form of formal training. This is mostly associated with manual jobs and craftsmanship like farm work or service work such as custodial staff. The other category is the semi-skilled which may require some level of education. An example of this sort of labour is in the manufacturing industry. Skilled labour refers to various jobs across several industries in an economy in which special knowledge, training, and learning of efficiency are required (Chinwendu & Edeke, 2016).

Also, the labour force as the aggregate of the current active population refers to all persons above a specified age who were employed or unemployed during a short reference period. Usually, the current active population comprises all persons above a specified age whose main activity status, as determined in terms of several weeks or days during a long-specified reference period (such as the preceding 12 months or the preceding calendar year), was employed or unemployed. The current active population may be subdivided into employed and unemployed under the main activity (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2011).

The study adopts the definition given by Mollo and Emuze (2017) which refers to labour as the aggregate of physical and mental exertion required for the production of goods and services in an economy.

Casualization

Casualization is referred to in Europe and the United States as Non-Standard Work Arrangements (NSWAs), and this refers to fixed contract work, on-call work, part-time, and temporary work engagement. Other categories include day work, outsourcing, sub-contracting, homework, self-employment, and zero-hour employment. Here in Nigeria and most other parts of West Africa, the common characteristic of casual jobs is that they differ in terms of hours worked, job security, and payment system from the traditional full-time or permanent employment which has been a dominant feature of industrial relations in

many developed economies and developing industries for much of the twentieth century (Oyadiran et al., 2018).

Also, casualization is adopted in industries where demands for employment are highly variable and where entrepreneurs are avoiding employing people in permanent positions in construction work, port work, migratory farm labour, and other jobs which require manual labour or unskilled workers. Most contractors have adopted the method of employing general workers through casualization in South Africa to maximize profit while keeping up with the competition through cheap labour. People in developing countries are the victim of labour exploitation evident in a bad salary, wages, and salary arrears system, poor motivation, and every other vice that negates the intentions of decent jobs (Amidala, 2011). The study agrees with the definition provided by Okafor (2010) which describes casualization as a non-standard work arrangement occasioned by the impact of globalization and trade liberalization which is facilitated by technological improvement in communication and information technology.

Labour Casualization

Several studies, including Okoye, Okolie and Aderibigbe (2014); Yen, Platt, Yeoh and Lam (2015) consider labour casualization as a recruitment approach adopted by most employers in different parts of the world including Nigeria to create less secure and attractive jobs. Under this practice, workers are contracted on an occasional or short-time basis instead of being offered a permanent contract. Amidala (2011) adds that labour casualization is a method of employing people without issuing a permanent contract in public, private, and shady informal sectors. Basso (2003) observes that casualization may be linked to under-employment. It is often used loosely in the international literature to refer to the spread of bad conditions of work such as employment insecurity, irregular work hours, intermittent employment, low wages, and absence of standard employment benefits.

Bodibe (2007) affirms that traditionally, casual labour refers to work conducted for defined periods and during peak business periods when individuals are called to supplement full-time workers in times of high business activity, particularly in retail. Sadly, the trend now is that casual workers work for many years without promotion and necessary entitlements, and sometimes they do what normal full-time employees do but are not compensated for their services. To ILO (2016), casual labour or workers are those who have an explicit or implicit contract of employment that is not expected to continue for more than a short period and whose duration is to be determined by national circumstances. This ambiguous definition has led to varying definitions of casual or contract workers and their rights in different jurisdictions.

Houeland (2015) conceptualized a casual employee as a worker who is paid lower salaries, given lesser benefits, lacks job security, and is faced with stiff challenges of basic labour rights. She further reveals that junior workers are usually the main target for casualization which in her opinion can be described as the neo-colonization of the workforce in Nigeria

because it breeds a structure that is anti-employee union and very insensitive to workers' welfare. Houeland also submitted that a large number of casual employees or casual workers in Nigeria are subjected to a lengthy period of temporary engagement for up to 15 years and above, whereas labour laws stipulate that an employee's appointment should be regularized within six (6) months of engagement.

Also, Mollo and Emuze (2017) see causal labour as the product of a system by which people gain employment without a proper or clear written contract. This form of engagement, according to them, is usually designed for a specified short period, or in some cases, no time frame may be stated by the employer. Where the latter condition is the case, such workers may work temporarily for a long period hoping for regularization or confirmation of appointments that may never come.

The study adopts the definition provided by Alonge (2019) which refers to labour casualization as a recruitment approach adopted by most employers in different parts of the world including Nigeria which offers non-permanent and less attractive jobs.

Theoretical Framework

Equity Theory

The Equity Theory was first developed by John Stacey Adams (1963) at the General Electric Company in Crotonville, New York City. Adams used equity theory to explain the importance of evenhandedness and impartiality in employee motivation and commitment. The Adams Equity Theory, as equity theory is also referred to, is a model for measuring employees' satisfaction and commitment in the workplace. According to John S. Adams, the fundamental tenets of equity theory are equality and justice. He argues that employees' actions and motivation are directed by workplace fairness and that where or when they feel being impartially treated, they will exhibit a low level of enthusiasm and commitment (Abdullahi, Layi, & Mazuma, 2022).

For Robbins, Judge and Vohra (2012), employee commitment accounts for an individual's direction and persistence in efforts towards the organizational goal. Equity theory identifies that through an individual's perception of fair treatment in social exchange, employee commitment can be affected. Individuals would want to be treated and rewarded fairly for their contributions when equated with other people. Again, someone's beliefs concerning what is fair and what is impartial can affect his or her motivation and commitment. For example, it is not out of place for a casual worker to exhibit negative work behaviour when he or she notices she is unevenly or unfairly remunerated compared to other permanent staff whose inputs are equal to hers.

The central argument of the advocates of social comparison theory is that most workers specifically casuals who feel disproportionately treated compared to other permanent workers of their level or status within the same organization, will resort to achieving equity by adjusting their inputs to commensurate with the negative comparison order (Robbins et al., 2012).

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory was propounded by Karl Marx, one of the most influential social thinkers of the 19th century. Marx's Conflict Theory is a good alternative to the Western "Functional Theory". Conflict theory eliminates all the deficiencies inherent in Neo-Liberalism and Functionalism which may undermine the precariousness of the casualization of labour. Conflict Theory as propounded by Karl Marx holds that social order is sustained by domination and power, rather than consensus and conformity. Hence, society is in unending conflict due to competition for limited resources. The wealthy and influential individuals in society, at all times, will always strive to hold onto power and authority by any means possible, largely by suppressing the poor and powerless (Tamunomiebi & Bagshaw, 2018).

Marx's conflict theory focused on the conflict between two classes. The bourgeoisie represents the individuals in the society who hold the majority of wealth and all the means of production, while the proletariat accounts for those considered a working class. With the rise of capitalism, Karl Marx theorized that the bourgeoisie, a minority within the society, would use their influence to suppress the proletariat, the majority class. The proletariat constitutes members of society who do not have any means of production; hence they are at the mercy of the bourgeoisie for they have no means to produce for their own needs. They must use their wages to provide for whatever their needs may be. By the status of their class, the proletariat depends on those (bourgeoisie) in whose hands lie the means of production (Okafor, 2010).

For Marx, the driving force of the capitalist economy is the exploitation of the worker. Hence, casualization is the logical outcome of a system based on the accumulation of profits at the detriment of those who provide the labour. Therefore, 'precarious' work (casual labour) is a product of capitalism. Sadly enough, exploitation is an indispensable part of the capitalist system where workers are free labourers who enter into free contracts with capitalists and accept their filthy offers. The capitalist system naturally pays the workers much less than the value they produce with the surplus value accruing to the capitalists. The consequence of this theory remains that 'those who owe the wealth and resources in the society will protect and hoard them, while the working class majority continue to struggle to survive their onslaughts'. These narratives of this theory present a constant struggle between the haves and the have-nots.

Furthermore, the study draws on 'Equity Theory', the work of John Stacy Adams (1963) to argue that individuals would want to be treated and rewarded fairly for their contributions when equated with other people. Without a shade of a doubt, John Stacy Adams' Theory of Equity does afford excellent narratives for fairness and equity in the workplace, but it is still far off from radical condemnation and denunciation of labour casualization. Hence, the study does adopt conflict theory as its theoretical basis. The following reasons justify this decision:

Firstly, the radicalness in 'Conflict Theory', the work of Karl Marx adequately highlights the precariousness and unevenness of labour casualization. The theory laid to bear all the dehumanizing elements of all forms of casual engagements and their exploitative tendencies. Secondly, conflict theory examines any social phenomenon within the context of a natural human instinct towards conflict. Hence, if conflict theory can be used to analyze wars, violence, revolutions, forms of injustice, and discrimination, among others, it is justifiable to adopt it to guide a study in labour casualization.

Thirdly, conflict theory explains the oppressive nature of the capitalist system occasioned by the exploitation of workers, where the capitalists employ workers whose labour time they own for they also own the means of production. Lastly, conflict theory also offers to explain class consciousness and conflict that exist in an organization where you have two categories of workers (casual and permanent workers). Casual workers are often treated as the inferior and oppressed class while their permanent counterparts possess more superior status.

Empirical Review

Nature of Labour Casualization in Nigeria

The current nature of the labour system can be traced back to the colonial era when the colonial governor of Nigeria, Lord Lugard, to ensure effective utilization of the impoverished labour force, introduced forced labour, which then was meant to induce the interest of the natives in wage labour which became necessary to facilitate the laying of rail tracks across various parts of Nigeria, following the opening of Jos and Enugu tin and Coal mines in 1912 and 1915 respectively which require a large penurious workforce (Bayo, 2019). Again, the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and its end in 1918 necessitated the need to rebuild the shattered infrastructural landscape. This made the colonial government introduce a new labour regime based on the piece-meal payment system, which entails placing the majority of the workers on part-time contracts to perform sundry work and for paid stipends calculated either hourly or daily (Ubeku, 1984; Bayo, 2019).

In current times, the casualization of labour as a form of predominant employment practice in Nigeria was occasioned by the collapse of the oil boom and the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986, a development that eventually led to a fall in the economy where several factories got shut down, some operating below minimum capacity and many organizations found it difficult to compete in the globalized economy. It also led to the downsizing and mass retrenchment of skilled people, particularly in the urban centres and resulted in numerous cases of unemployment (Aladekomo, 2004).

Further, in recent decades, there has been a dramatic increase in nonstandard jobs due to such factors as massive unemployment, globalization, the shift from the manufacturing sector to the service sector, and the spread of information technology (Okafor, 2012). These changes have created a new economy that demands flexibility in the workplace and as a result, causes a decline in standard employment relations and a dramatic increase in

precarious work (Kalleberg, 2000; Adewumi, 2008). The nature of the job; whether it is short-term or long-term, offered on a full-time or part-time basis, or its status is recognized under industrial best practice, differs between types of casual jobs. The characteristics of the ideal recruit, and his or her willingness to participate in the casualization process, will differ between casual job types (Bamidele, 2017).

In Nigeria, the problem of nonstandard employment is very common in many establishments whether in indigenous, transnational, or multi-national firms, either in public or private industry, including telecommunications, oil and gas, banking (both old and new generations) educational sectors, amongst others (Okafor & Rasak, 2015; Idowu, 2010). In some companies in Nigeria, one can get as many as over one thousand, five hundred workers who are on temporary appointments in an industry of about two thousand workers. In some local industries in the formal sector, it is possible to get a situation whereby virtually all the employees are either casual or contract staff. This category of staff may have either professional or administrative skills (Adenugba, 2003).

Similarly, as reported by the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in 2018, 45 per cent of the entire Nigerian workforce are casual staff. Since 2018, casualization has also become a prominent employment practice in government establishments with reports indicating a disturbingly high prevalence trend at both state and federal levels (Agbakwura, 2021). Several States House of Assemblies such as Nasarawa, Kogi, and Benue states, amongst others consist of a high level of casual workforce. The Nasarawa State House of Assembly (NSHA), Lafia, has a workforce of 71.5% casual staff and 28.5% permanent staff (NSHA Records Unit, 2020). Other states such as Kwara, Bauchi, Ondo, Cross River and Bayelsa, just to mention a few, have also been reported to possess an unacceptable level of a casual workforce. A petition from the casual workers of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) was sent to the National Assembly in May 2022, where the protesting workers numbering about 336 staff members of the Warri Refinery demand urgent regularization (Abdullahi et al., 2022).

Causes of Labour Casualization

Globalization and trade liberalization made way for competing imports into the economy; this consequently resulted in lots of instability in the product market. To cope with this challenge, employers resulted in adopting cost-cutting measures, including downsizing, cutting back on employment, and the use of permanent employees; the result is the current prevalence of casual workers (Bayo, 2019).

Similarly, Rasak (2017) in his study, 'casual employment and the globalized market: A case of selected countries', examined the unavoidable correlation between labour casualization and the utilization of labour in the country. The study was anchored on Neo-liberal (an economic and political philosophy of non-interventionism) and Social Action (Weberian social action) Theories. The study concludes that the current state of the Nigerian economy does perpetuate a high level of unemployment. So long as this unchecked high level of

unemployment exists society will find it difficult to control casualization. At all times, the unavailability of decent jobs for teeming school leavers gives them no choice but to accept these dehumanizing job offers just to make ends meet. The study recommends that the political and economic leadership of the country both at the federal and state levels should be more responsive and proactive in terms of providing decent employment for qualified unemployable individuals. Furthermore, most unemployed people struggling to get decent jobs choose to fight poverty and inequality by becoming casual construction workers.

For management strategists and operators, the casualization of labour has become a means of minimizing costs and sustaining jobs in the face of the concept of globalization. The Casualization of labour may have created a breathing space for many organizations to survive in the face of an adverse economic downturn that has led to the closure of many companies and businesses. Nonetheless, casualization is a bad wind that blows nobody any good. Apart from the fact that this category of workers works under a spate of uncertainties; it is no gainsaying that casualization reveals a brutal work growth process similar to slave labour. Other causes of casualization include technological changes, the abundance of labour supply, deregulation of both product and labour markets, and unprecedented promotion of outsourcing. Arising from globalization, outsourcing provided an easier way to cut costs and run-off competition. When an employer outsources labour or production components, it is assumed that fewer numbers of permanent employees are needed (Bamidele, 2017).

Implications of Labour Casualization on Employee Commitment

Engagement of large attendants of the workforce based on casualization has become a burden in the industries in Nigeria. Workers are recruited at the gate and fired at will daily. Although these workers continue to generate enormous profits for various establishments, they remain classified as casuals and are subjected to deplorable and inhumane working conditions (Bamidele, 2017).

The implications of labour casualization are multi-faceted and heterogeneous. The workers may be the direct victims of casualization, but the effects they suffer transcend through a flow-on process to other actors in the economy. Collective bargaining is under threat as there is increased job insecurity and one can be easily laid off without any notification. The effects of casualization on an employer will also include; the high cost of recruitment, interviewing and hiring. Shelley (2008) estimates that it costs about 33 per cent of any new employee's salary to replace a worker who left. On the economy, Hall (2000) submits that casualization may have negative effects on important aspects of national economic performance such as skill formation and development.

The division between casual and permanent employment has led to an increased level of labour market segmentation. The increased labour market segmentation has created inferior and stereotyped jobs. This has created dissections between workers where some now consider their jobs more important than others. This has affected the morale of the

workers (casual) and subjected them to ill-treatment and isolation. Peer support and cooperation have also suffered due to possible resentment by casual staff against the superior industrial conditions enjoyed by others. There is some evidence that the increasing precariousness of work (of which casualization forms a part) leaves workers more vulnerable to workplace bullying, and certainly to more managerial control (Bayo, 2019).

Emerging Trends in Labour Casualization in Nigeria

Labour casualization has continued to permeate both the public and private sectors in Nigeria. The negative effects of this trend are even far more worrisome as it concerns public establishments. The gradual acceptance of the practice of casualization of labour has become an issue of great concern to labour and industry stakeholders in Nigeria and every other part of the globe. It is even more worrying as the practice is currently found amongst such government establishments as the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), National Assembly (NASS), Nasarawa State House of Assembly (NSHA), Lafia, Kogi State House of Assembly (KSHA), Lokoja, Benue State House of Assembly (BSHA), Makurdi, just to mention a few (Premium Times, 2021).

A couple of efforts have been made to douse the steady rise in labour casualization in Nigeria. At the national level, a bill for the prohibition of labour casualization in all forms of employment in both the private and public sectors in the country got a boost on Thursday, February 18, 2021, as it scaled second reading in the Senate. The bill was thereafter referred to the Senate Committee on Employment, Labour, and Productivity to report back in four weeks. This was a sequel to the consideration of the general principles of a bill sponsored by Senator Ayo Akinyelure of PDP-Ondo Central, in a plenary session (Umoru, 2021).

The bill (Establishment Bill 2021{SB, 329}) is titled "A Bill for an Act to provide for the prohibition of labour casualization in all forms of employment in the private and public sector in Nigeria and related matters". As contained in the submission of the bill, Casualization is described as a working arrangement that is not permanent and does not fall within the traditional standard which promotes employers' and employees' relationships. In his lead debate, Senator Akinyelure who noted that the bill was read for the first time on the floor of the red chamber on March 4, 2020, said that the labour casualization of Nigerian citizens in the labour market had become a subject of great concern. He said, "This is as more workers continue to groan under the immoral strategy of cutting costs by employers, rendering them inferior to their counterparts in other countries of the world (Premium times, 2021).

Also, at the national level and most recently, on Tuesday, October 26, 2021, the Minister of Labour and Employment, Senator Chris Ngige chaired a federal government one-day public hearing on three (3) labour bills by the senate committee on Labour and Employment. The bills include the National Directorate of Employment Act 2004, Labour Act CAP I1, LFN 2004 (Amendment bill 2021 (SB, 469), and Prohibition of casualization in Nigeria (Establishment Bill 2021{SB, 329}). The Minister, who spoke on behalf of the federal

government maintained that the casualization of labour is a very volatile issue that goes against the international best labour practices. In his final submission, the minister remarked, 'the time has come to stop casualization of any form in every sector of the Nigerian economy'. According to him, private entrepreneurs and other employers of labour must make gains to keep their businesses afloat but they must not enslave their workers (Agbakwura, 2021).

Similarly, at the state level, at the end of the second plenary session of the fifth Assembly of the Nasarawa State House of Assembly (NSHA), Lafia, the then Speaker of the House, Ibrahim Balarabe Abdullahi who got re-elected as Speaker of the sixth Assembly at the inauguration on June 10, 2019, and currently remains the incumbent Speaker of the Nasarawa State House of Assembly (NSHA), Lafia, announced that the Nasarawa State House of Assembly would offer a permanent and pensionable appointment to all its casual staff to guarantee job security for the workers. Hon Abdullahi said, "we are aware that a large number of our workforce are casual staff, which means that apart from not having the security of tenure, they are in no position to enjoy pension or gratuity by the time they are too weak to discharge their duties". He said, "for this reason, efforts were being made to ensure that casual staff working within the assembly would be given a permanent and pensionable appointment in the shortest possible time". Abdullahi also appealed to the organized labour in the state to exercise patience and show more understanding with the government to resolve the lingering labour crisis in the state (NSHA Records Unit, 2020).

Methodology

The paper is a theoretical discourse hence it adopts a qualitative research approach. The qualitative research approach as adopted and recommended by Tracy (2013) is useful for understanding a range of social issues. Also, Yin (2014) described qualitative research as the process of collecting the research data while embracing a blend of orientations and methodological consideration through the possible multiplicity of interpretations of human events; the inherent uniqueness of these events; and the methodological variations available.

The study relies mainly on secondary data sources obtained from relevant articles, publications, and texts, as well as web-based studies on labour casualization in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

On the nature of labour casualization in government establishments in Nigeria, The study revealed a staff strength that is characterized by an overwhelming percentage of casual staff. The results present a depressing job situation for casual workers due to the rarity of opportunities for confirmation of appointments from casual to permanent employment. Again, the traits of favouritism in job placement and unequal opportunities for all are inherent in the nature of labour casualization in government establishments in Nigeria.

These results build on the findings of Okoughbo (2004) and Idowu (2010) in the results of their studies when they revealed that nonstandard employment was very common in many

establishments in the public sector of the Nigerian economy and that confirmations of this sort of employment were usually hard to come by. In theory, the results do not fit with the Neo-liberal theory which guides the study of Okafor (2010). The Conflict theory of Karl Marx which guides this study offers the radicalness that adequately highlights the precarious nature of labour casualization, and it is in contrast with liberalism which may seem to tint toward the acceptance of casualization.

Regarding the causes of labour casualization, the findings of the study revealed that some of the major causes of labour casualization in Nigeria include globalization and trade liberalization, technological changes, the abundance of labour supply, deregulation of both product and labour markets, and unprecedented promotion of outsourcing. This finding is validated by the verdicts of a study by Bayo (2019) on the negative effects of labour casualization in Nigeria, which argued that the major cause of labour casualization in Nigeria was a high level of unemployment. The soundness of the outcome of this study is also corroborated by Amidala (2011) whose study revealed that the current prevalence of casual employment in Nigeria was informed by the inability of successive Nigerian governments to provide gainful employment for qualified employable members of the society.

On the implication of labour casualization on employee commitment in Nigeria, the study revealed multi-faceted consequences for casualization. All the players in the economy are affected negatively by the impacts of labour casualization, and these include the casual workers who are the direct victims of casualization, the employers of labour and the economy at large (Shelley, 2008). The results of the study agree with Tweedie (2011) whose study reveals that enough is known about the characteristics of casual employment to identify a low organizational commitment as one of its fundamental implications.

Also, regarding the emerging trends of labour casualization in Nigeria, the study revealed that its prevalence has crept from the private sector into the public sector of the economy. Reports indicate that casualization is currently highly prevalent in government establishments such as the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), and National Assembly (NASS), just to mention a few (Premium Times, 2021).

Conclusion

The casualization of labour has remained a daunting problem especially as it concerns employees' welfare and commitment to organizational goals and survival. Despite the concerted attention to labour welfare through an increase in the minimum wage, legislation on the prohibition of labour casualization, and research by international and national governments, donors, and scholars in the social sciences, humanities, and administration, it's still widespread in Nigeria. Also, with the increasing knowledge about the associated loss of productivity and labour exploitation, the casualization of labour has remained consistently prevalent and has continued to permeate both the public and private sectors

in the country. One of the foremost causes of Labour casualization in Nigeria as revealed by the study is the current high level of unemployment in the country. So long as this unchecked high level of unemployment exists society will find it difficult to control casualization. Hence, the country's leadership either at federal, state or local government levels should prioritize the provision of decent job opportunities for qualified and employable citizens.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are put forward to curtail the current rise in labour casualization in Nigeria.

Recommendations

- i. Given that one of the major findings of the study reveals that the generally high level of unemployment in Nigeria is a core cause of casual employment, it is recommended that the country should prioritize efforts towards the creation of decent employment opportunities for its employable populace. It is believed that when gainful employment is provided across all the economic sectors, much fewer people will accept casual employment.
- ii. All employers of labour in all sectors of the Nigerian economy should be urged to adopt the six (6) month probation period for confirmation of employment. Thus, regularization of casual workers should come into effect after six months of the first appointment except where certain casuals are found not worthy of full-time engagement. This will eliminate all forms of defects and ineffectiveness that casual workers are characterized by in organizations where they exist.
- iii. Employers in both private and public establishments should be made to fulfil their promises to their irregular workers. The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and its 29 affiliated unions should be part of the negotiating process for all forms of non-standard job placement so that in the end, any erring organization that reneges on its promises and responsibilities to casual employees can be held accountable. The commonest trick used by employers to perpetuate the unwholesome act of casualization is by reneging on their assurances.
- iv. A robust legal framework on labour laws and an urgent review of the Labour Act in Nigeria needs concerted efforts from all stakeholders. All forms of employment contracts need to be clearly defined in terms of the nature, rights, and obligations of all parties. As a matter of national interest, the National Assembly committee on labour and productivity and the ministry of labour and employment should be more sincere and pragmatic in their resolve for the eradication of all forms of labour casualization in Nigeria.

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