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SALARY DISPARITIES WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE AND ITS IMPACT ON WORKER PERFORMANCE: AN EXAMINATION OF KWARA AND OYO STATES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the issue of salary disparities within the civil service and its impact on worker performance in two states in Nigeria. It examined the key factors contributing to salary disparities and the impact of the salary disparities within the civil service of Kwara and Oyo states, Nigeria. The study has drawn upon the theoretical underpinings of equity theory. Due to the nature of the study, a descriptive survey approach was employed. It used the questionnaire as the primary source of data, and secondary data sources included the Internet, textbooks, and journals. The study analysed the views of civil servants in the Nigerian states of Kwara and Oyo. Findings indicate a prevalence of bureaucratic, and economic factors exacerbating compensation inequalities. Moreover, inadequate wage review procedures further demotivated and caused dissatisfaction among civil servants. The research underscores the detrimental impact of these disparities on organizational dynamics, employee commitment, and turnover rates, ultimately affecting service quality. Recommendations included the need for transparent decision-making processes, regular reviews of compensation systems, and policy modifications to ensure equity and meritocracy within civil service sectors. The conclusion is that addressing salary discrepancies is crucial for enhancing employee motivation and optimizing organizational performance in the Nigerian civil service.

Keywords: Civil service, salary disparities, performance, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The government is seen as the major or sole employer of specific types of workers in different labour markets, for instance, civil/public servants, military personnel, and firefighters. The need for these workers comes from society's need for the products and services that these workers provide for the public. The government uses up or absorbs financial resources when it hires labourers (Campbell et al., 1991). This implies that the ultimate decision on how much to pay a society's labour force rests with its government. The government uses the money it gets in taxes, borrowings, grants, and other forms of aid to pay salaries. Enhancing welfare is the main driver behind this, not necessarily increasing worker productivity. Government employees receive varying salaries depending on funding availability. Equity theory suggests that employees assess the fairness of rewards by comparing their inputs and outcomes with those of relevant others (Adams, 1965). In public employment, this makes perceived pay fairness an important consideration alongside broader public service motives.

Salary differentials in the Civil Services have their roots in wage labour, which emerged during Nigeria's colonial era to meet the demands of both European and local companies. This led to the creation of government worker organizations with separate pay scales for white and native employees. Inadvertently, commissions, such as the Batt Committee of 1919, Rice Committee of 1919, Hunt Committee of 1934, Bridges Committee of 1941, Harraging Committee of 1945, Tudor Davies Committee of 1946 and Miller Committee of 1948, made recommendations which included financial remuneration based on province, town classifications, and geographic zones. These recommendations contributed to the widening of gaps in economic outcomes for the civil servants (Adegroye, 2015). However, in 1963 the Morgan Commission divided the country into six wage zones with different wages for each zone resulting from the introduction of federalism in 1954, which further emphasized these disparities. The Shagari administration's Minimum Wage Act of 1981 was the first legislative action to implement the 1974 Udoji Commission's recommendation for unified wage systems. Salary determination difficulties continue despite successive attempts at reform, such as decentralized collective bargaining during President Babangida's government. The attempts at reform resulted in the public service wage system having thirteen salary charts (Adegroye, 2015). They are as follows: Consolidated Public Service Salary Structure (CONPSS); Consolidated Research and Allied Institution Salary Structure (CONRAISS); Consolidated Armed Forces Salary Structure (CONAFSS); Consolidation Intelligent Community Salary Structure (CONICSS); Consolidated University Academic Staff Salary Structure II (CONUAS II); Consolidated Tertiary Institutions Salary Structure II (CONTIS II); Consolidated Tertiary Education Institution Salary Structure (CONTEDIS); Consolidated Poly and Colleges of Education Academic Staff (CONPCASS); Consolidated Health Salary Structure (CONHESS); Consolidated Medical Salary Structures (CONMESS); Consolidated Legislative Salary Structure (CONLESS); Consolidated Police Salary Structure (CONPOSS); and Consolidated Para Military Salary Structure (CONPASS) (Adegroye, 2015).

The term "pay discrepancy" refers to the relative compensation variations between employees of similar organizations with jobs that are seen as comparable. Employees may feel content with their pay when they compare their earnings with those who work for other companies. He or she may also believe that the company pays its workers fairly from the money the company makes. However, in contrast there will also be many other workers in the same organization who may be quite unhappy with their own pay. Only those who think their pay is directly tied to their output will find contentment. When a job's salary becomes less appealing, an employee's likelihood of becoming dissatisfied with their position increases. The Nigerian legislative process determines the terms and conditions of employment for its civil personnel.

The nation's wealth, which is derived from tax and crude oil revenue, determines salaries and pay in the public sector and civil service. Political issues also influence the collective-bargaining and wage-determination processes in the public and civil sectors. Salary-related disputes can contribute to industrial conflict and weaken morale, commitment, and service delivery. Pay satisfaction depends partly on whether employees regard the rewards they receive as fair in relation to their contributions and to comparable employees. Research on the Nigerian public service has documented substantial pay disparities across categories of public employees and has linked such disparities to perceptions of inequity, industrial disharmony, labour mobility, and workplace behaviour (Ikeanyibe & Ibietan, 2018; Aliyu, 2019).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Salary inequality is a serious problem that has an impact on staff performance, as well as the dynamics of the whole organisation. The Nigerian civil service is where this problem is most common, particularly in the states of Kwara and Oyo. Adegoroye (2015) and Aliyu (2019) opined that historical, bureaucratic, and economic factors are the main reasons for pay disparities in the civil services. Adegoroye (2015) state that these disparities often worsen because of ambiguous pay schemes and inadequate processes for regular wage reviews, which will demoralize the dissatisfied civil servants. The current study highlights that these differences lead to unfavourable attitudes and behaviours on the part of employees, creating a complex issue that calls for thoughtful analysis and a well-thought-out response. Several noticeable workplace behaviours seem to be the result of these consequences. Workers who experience salary disparities exhibit a marked lack of teamwork and heightened resentment, which suggests a disengagement from their place of employment. This disconnection undermines collaboration and destroys the synergy necessary for optimal organizational performance (Aliyu, 2019).

One common effect of the current wage gaps is that employees become less committed and are more likely to think about quitting. Demoralised by unfavourable working conditions, employees may consider looking for work elsewhere, which would increase turnover and result in the loss of experienced employees. This complicates the recruiting and training procedures and breaks the continuity of the organization. One cannot stress the wider ramifications of these findings on the efficacy and efficiency of organizations (Adegoroye, 2015). The prevalence of unfavourable attitudes, disengagement, and quitting intent directly jeopardizes employee cohesiveness and productivity. The quality of services provided by the civil service suffers as a result, and it becomes less equipped to meet the needs of the people it serves. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate factors that contribute to salary disparities within the civil service of Kwara and Oyo states in Nigeria, and how these disparities impact employee motivation and job satisfaction.

OBJECTIVES

The broad objective of this study is to determine the extent of salary disparities within the civil service and the performance of civil servants in Kwara and Oyo states. The specific objectives are to:

- i. identify and analyse the key factors contributing to salary disparities within the civil service of Kwara and Oyo states, Nigeria.
- ii. assess the impact of salary disparities on employee motivation within the civil service of Kwara and Oyo states.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Salary

A salary is a fixed sum of money that an employer provides to a worker on a regular basis, typically once a month or once a year, in recognition of the worker's labour or service. A worker's wage is a set amount that is determined by their work history, qualifications, responsibilities, and the overall status of the economy. It is often outlined in their employment contract. Salary is defined by Federal Republic of Nigeria (2009) as the money given to an employee in exchange for services provided over a predetermined time frame. The compensation might be paid out on a weekly, monthly, or annual basis. On the other hand, a wage is the amount that an employee gets paid for their labour; it is typically stated as a set amount per hour, day, or other units of measurement. Salary payments might be made on a weekly, monthly, or annual basis. On the other hand, a wage is the monetary payment an employee receives in exchange for their labour, usually calculated and paid on an hourly, daily, weekly or other specified time basis. For the most part, the phrases "wages" and "salaries" refer to the monetary compensation for labour. As a result, the meanings of the two notions can eventually diverge. Wage or salary is typically determined by an agreement between management and workers, the former agrees to pay and the latter agrees to be paid in exchange for services or labour. The quality and quantity of labour that the employee produces determine the monetary value of their services. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2009) define salary as the personal emolument that an employee of an organization receives in exchange for services rendered at a fixed rate of pay. This payment is typically made on a monthly basis. An organization pays its employees their personal emolument, also referred to as a salary, on a monthly basis in exchange for services rendered at a predetermined rate of pay. The payment of benefits is open to all workers in the public and private sectors.

Salary Disparity

Salary disparity refers to unequal pay across employees, job categories, organisations, or sectors, including situations in which comparable work is rewarded differently. Pay differences may reflect education, experience, responsibilities, bargaining arrangements, institutional rules, or labour-market conditions (Lawler, 1971; Aliyu, 2019). In the Nigerian public service, unequal compensation structures have been associated with perceptions of inequity, industrial disharmony, labour mobility, and weaker motivation (Adegoroye, 2015; Aliyu, 2019). These effects are consistent with equity theory, which predicts negative attitudes and behavioural responses when employees perceive an imbalance between their contributions and rewards relative to others (Adams, 1965).

Civil Service

The organization in charge of carrying out government initiatives and programs is the civil service. It primarily carries out executive and administrative tasks related to developing and carrying out government policies and initiatives (Agbodike et al., 2015). The Nigerian government periodically develops policies pertaining to roads, water, education, and health that the civil service is expected to carry out. This is to guarantee that living conditions for the populace improve and to further the nation's socio-political and economic growth.

The civil service is a central administrative instrument through which governments implement policies, deliver public programmes, and support development. In Nigeria, civil servants operate within public institutions and are expected to translate government decisions into administrative action and service delivery (Agbodike et al., 2015).

Workers' Performance

The performance of workers is a critical factor in determining the success or failure of any organisation. It encompasses the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of tasks completed by employees within a given timeframe. According to Armstrong (2006), performance is not only about achieving organizational goals, but also about how employees contribute to these goals through their individual and collective efforts. Dessler (2013) describes workers' performance as the effectiveness with which job tasks are carried out in a timely and accurate manner. He emphasizes the importance of efficiency and timeliness in achieving high performance. Aguinis (2009) defines performance as the behaviours and results that employees exhibit in relation to their job responsibilities, and how these behaviours contribute to the organizational objectives. This definition brings together both actions and outcomes in assessing performance.

Several factors influence the performance of workers, ranging from individual attributes to organisational systems. One of the key determinants is motivation, which can drive employees to perform better. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg et al., 1959) suggests that both hygiene factors (such as salary and work conditions) and motivational factors (such as recognition and achievement) play essential roles in influencing workers' performance. Employees who are motivated tend to exhibit higher levels of engagement and productivity (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Moreover, the skills and competencies of workers are crucial in determining their performance levels. According to Boyatzis (1982), competency is the underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to effective or superior performance. Employees who possess the requisite skills and training for their tasks are more likely to perform well. Aguinis (2009) notes that continuous training and development programs are essential for improving the skills of employees and ensuring they remain effective in their roles.

The work environment and organisational culture also significantly impact workers' performance. Organisational culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, and practices that influence how employees interact with each other and the organisation (Schein, 2010). A positive culture that fosters teamwork, trust, and open communication tends to boost employee morale and performance. Conversely, a toxic or unsupportive work environment can reduce motivation and lead to poor performance (Denison, 1990). Leadership style is another key factor in shaping the organisational culture and by extension, workers' performance. Transformational leaders, who inspire and motivate their employees by creating a vision and encouraging innovation, often see higher levels of worker engagement and performance (Bass, 1985). In contrast, transactional leadership, which focuses on routine tasks and maintaining the status quo, may not inspire workers to perform at their highest potential.

Gap in Knowledge

In reviewing the literature on salary disparities within the civil service, several studies have been conducted, but significant gaps remain that warrant further investigation. One of the primary gaps in the literature is the absence of a detailed comparative analysis between Kwara and Oyo States regarding

salary disparities and their effects on worker performance. While studies have individually examined each state's civil service, there has been little effort to conduct a comparative analysis that identifies specific factors that contribute to disparities in one state versus the other. Such a comparison would offer insights into how regional, political, and administrative differences influence salary structures and worker satisfaction in these states.

For example, Aliyu (2019) examined compensation practices and wage differentials in the Nigerian public service using salary-structure data from the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission. The study documented substantial inter-sectoral pay gaps and linked discriminatory compensation patterns to industrial disharmony, labour mobility, and weaker public-service performance. Adegoroye (2015), using evidence from civil services across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, likewise found that decentralized collective bargaining contributed to salary differentials and industrial conflict, with implications for recruitment, motivation, retention, and service delivery. However, these studies do not provide a focused comparative analysis of Kwara and Oyo States, leaving room for the present study to examine how state-level administrative and fiscal conditions shape salary disparities and worker outcomes.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SALARY DISPARITIES WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE OF KWARA AND OYO STATES, NIGERIA

There are different potential factors which contributes to the salary disparities. Salary disparities within the Civil Service of Kwara and Oyo states were influenced significantly by the respective states' revenue and allocation dynamics. The amount of money that was available for employee pay was largely dependent on how financially sound each state was. Political, corrupt, and financial mismanagement all contributed to the disparities in compensation plans (Ikeanyibe & Ibieta, 2018). In Kwara and Oyo states, salary differences within the civil service were closely tied to the composition and structure of the workforce in each state. Different pay scales were produced by the Civil Service's allocation of different job functions, responsibilities, and skill levels. Uneven pay was a result of the higher salary paid for positions requiring specialized skills or higher qualifications. Salaries were also distributed based on the overall structure of the workforce, which included the number of roles at various levels. Further exacerbating these disparities were the inefficiencies in the workforce planning and job appraisal processes (Aliyu, 2019).

In Kwara and Oyo states the remuneration differences within the civil service were mostly determined by the states' willingness to pay their civil servants. The states' willingness and capacity to prioritize competitive remuneration has had an impact on the budget allotted for salaries, in addition to the total revenue and allocation. Salary discrepancies were more likely to be addressed if the leadership was dedicated to luring and keeping outstanding people. However, if a sizable amount of the budget was not willingly set aside to guarantee equitable and competitive compensation for all civil service personnel, then inequities will continue to exist. To eliminate compensation disparities across the civil services, the imperative was to strike a balance between economic restraint and the appreciation of talented and committed public officials (Bamidele et al., 2023). The government's financial capacity was another important element causing salary differences in the Nigerian civil services of Kwara and Oyo States. This aspect pertains to the state government's financial ability to pay civil servants a fair and competitive wage. The ability of the state to generate revenue, optimise different federal allocations received and other factors all would play a part in how much money the state government could afford to pay its civil servants. The government's financial resources may be impacted by economic downturns, volatile

commodity prices, and external debt obligations, which may restrict the government's capacity to raise the pay of civil servants. Therefore, salary levels in Kwara and Oyo States' civil service are largely determined by the government's capacity to pay (Adegoroye, 2015).

The bargaining strength of the labour force has had an impact on salary discrepancies within the Kwara and Oyo state civil services. The power of labour unions and the capacity of public employees to bargain for just compensation were major factors in determining pay scales. Competitive pay and benefits may be easier to get in jurisdictions where the labour force has significant bargaining power. On the other hand, federal servants can have trouble getting fair salaries if there is little labour negotiating power. Salary structures and disparities within the Civil Service are directly impacted by the dynamics of labour negotiations, which include the existence of strong unions and the readiness of state authorities to participate in open and honest discussions. Addressing and reducing compensation gaps in both Kwara and Oyo states requires empowering the labour force and encouraging positive communication between unions and state officials (Adegoroye, 2015). Salary discrepancies in Kwara and Oyo states were mostly caused by the kind of jobs in the Civil Service. Different work roles frequently have different responsibilities, skill requirements, and certification requirements. Greater levels of responsibility or the need for specialized knowledge are usually associated with greater compensation. The inherent variations in the nature of work across different departments and functions within the Civil Service are the cause of disparities (Adegoroye, 2015).

Salary discrepancies are also largely caused by pay charts or systems within the Kwara and Oyo state civil services. Pay scales for different roles are outlined in salary charts, which are designed and implemented according to the experience, credentials, and job duties of employees at the same level. Pay disparities will result if these charts are not used consistently, or if there are differences in how they are understood by various government agencies or levels. Overall wage inequalities are a result of certain employees being paid more or less than their counterparts in identical tasks due to establishment inconsistencies and adherence to salary charts (Aliyu, 2019). Pay differences between Kwara and Oyo state civil servants were frequently impacted by the amount of training and other credentials each employee possessed. Higher pay is sometimes associated with positions requiring specialized training, advanced degrees, or additional certifications. Inequalities occur when workers spend money on continuing their education or earning new certifications, which causes a pay difference between workers with advanced skills and workers without them. Acknowledging and recognizing staff members for their dedication to professional growth also helps create a more balanced wage structure (Aliyu, 2019). The distribution of government funds has had a major impact on the differences in salaries between the Kwara and Oyo state civil services. The total remuneration that employees received was directly impacted by the amount of funding allotted to the Civil Service. Pay inequalities would undoubtedly result from the government budget's limited allocation of resources to employee pay since different departments and positions would obtain different amounts (Aliyu, 2019).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to explain how people view fairness in social exchanges, psychologist John Stacy Adams developed the equity theory in the 1960s. Fundamentally, equity theory argues that individuals are driven to keep a balance between their contributions, time, effort, and abilities, and their output rewards, benefits, and recognition in relation to other people. According to the theory, people aim to achieve equity, which is the perception that their input-to-output ratio is the same as that of their peers or

colleagues. People feel psychologically uncomfortable when there is perceived injustice, whether it takes the shape of under- or over-reward, and are driven to bring things back into balance.

From the perspective of equity theory, it is possible to see how employee motivation, work satisfaction, and performance may be affected by perceived disparities in salary distribution. Workers in the civil service of Kwara and Oyo States have the ability to evaluate their own contributions such as time, effort, and skills in comparison to their peers' contributions such as pay, perks, and recognition. Their motivation and job happiness may suffer if they believe that their contributions are not being fairly compensated in relation to their colleagues who have comparable skills and responsibilities.

For example, when civil service employees with similar roles get dramatically different compensation for the same amount of work and competence, those who feel they are being underpaid may become disengaged and demotivated. This sense of injustice has the potential to lower morale and reduce employees' willingness to put in extra effort at work. Employees who believe they have received excessive rewards, on the other hand, could feel guilty that they are enjoying unjustified privileges. This could have an effect on their motivation and output. Using the theoretical framework of equity theory, the present research examined the mechanisms by which salary differences impacted employee outcomes and offered guidance for creating just and equitable compensation schemes that encourage worker motivation, contentment, and productivity in the civil service industry.

METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

Data Sources

This study employs both qualitative and quantitative research approaches to explore salary disparities within the civil service and workers' performance in Nigeria, specifically in the civil service systems of Kwara and Oyo States. The combination of these methods has allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of salary disparities and their impact on workers' performance. The qualitative approach facilitated an in-depth analysis, interpretation, and understanding of complex social phenomena, such as wage disparities, within their natural contexts. In contrast, the quantitative approach provided measurable insights and statistical analysis to support generalisations, and identify trends in salary structures, performance levels, and the factors contributing to these disparities. Together, these methods offered a holistic framework for investigating the intricate relationships between salary discrepancies and workers' performance. Questionnaires were adopted to collect data for the quantitative analysis. These methods offered a holistic analytical framework for investigating the relationships between salary discrepancies and workers' performance.

Data Analysis

The study adopts a descriptive survey approach, utilising data from both a primary source (questionnaire) and secondary sources (internet, textbooks, Unpublished manuscripts and journals). The target population consists of staff members working in various ministries in Kwara and Oyo States. To ensure a representative sample, Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table was employed. This method provides a reliable approach in calculating the appropriate sample size based on the population size, ensuring statistical accuracy while minimizing sampling errors.

According to Krejcie and Morgan's table, for a population of 8,486 civil servants, the appropriate sample size is 367 respondents. By applying this technique, the study ensures that the selected sample adequately reflects the characteristics and opinions of the larger population within the civil service of both states. Table 1 below demonstrates the sample size determination based on the Krejcie and Morgan method.

Table 1

Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Table

Item A		Item B		Item C		Item D		Item E	
N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	123	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	100000	384

Notes. N = Population Size and S = Sample Size.

Source. Krejcie and Morgan, 1970.

Table 1 is an example of the Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table. It is a table designed for researchers to use for the easy determination of sample size. While 'N' in Table 1 is the assumed population; the 'S' in Table 1 is the appropriate sample size for proper representation.

According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, in a population of eight-thousand, four hundred and eighty-six (8,486) respondents, the appropriate sample size is three-hundred and sixty-seven (367) respondents. Therefore, the sample size for the study is 367, so a total number of 367 questionnaires were distributed to respondents.

Based on the above formulae, simple percentages were used to allot questionnaire to each selected ministry in both Kwara and Oyo states.

Table 2

Number of Questionnaires Allotted to the Study Sample

S/N	Target population	Population	Allotted questionnaire
1	Kwara State Ministry of Finance, Ilorin	381	16
2	Kwara State Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Ilorin	155	8
3	Kwara State Ministry of Health, Ilorin	2471	107
4	Oyo State Ministry of Finance, Ibadan	987	42
5	Oyo State Ministry of Justice, Ibadan	1,146	49
6	Oyo State Ministry of Health, Ibadan	3,346	145
Total		8,486	367

Notes. Source is the study's fieldwork, 2024.

Table 2 illustrates the distribution of the study questionnaires to the selected ministries. This distribution strategy facilitated the collection of data for the study and guaranteed a high response rate.

Table 3

Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Items	Number	%
1	Quantity sampling	367	100%
2	Quantity of completed and duly returned	296	80.7%
3	Quantity received but incompletely filled	23	6.3%
4	Quantity of unresponsive respondents	48	13%
Total		367	100%

Notes. Source is the study's fieldwork, 2024.

A total of 367 questionnaires were distributed to selected ministries both in Kwara and Oyo States. However, 48 participants could not be contacted. Out of the 367 questionnaires that were administered, 319 were successfully retrieved, but only 296 questionnaires were correctly and accurately completed.

Table 4

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	207	70%
Female	89	30%
Total	296	100%
Age	Frequency	Percentage
30-40	68	23%
41-50	149	50.3%
51-60 Above	79	26.7
Total	296	100%
Education	Frequency	Percentage
ND/NCE	110	37.2
HND/B.Sc	158	53.3
Master/PhD	28	9.5
Total	296	100%

Notes. Source is the study's fieldwork, 2024.

Table 4 indicates that there is an overwhelming preponderance of male respondents. It shows that 70% of respondents were males and 30% females. From Table 4, it can be seen that 23% of the respondents were between the ages of 30 - 40 years old. Respondents between the ages of 41 - 50 years constitutes the majority in this survey, making up 50.3%, while 26.7% were individuals between the ages of 51-60 years and above. Table 4 also displays the educational qualifications of the respondents; most of the respondents have qualifications up to the university and polytechnic levels. It can be seen that 37.2% held the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) and National Diploma (ND), while 53.3% of the respondents held the Higher National Diploma (HND), or the B.Sc. Only 9.5% of the respondents possessed a Master's/PhD. All educational levels were duly represented in this questionnaire and it was to be expected that the respondents provided information concerning salary disparities within the civil service in relation to the workers' education levels.

THE IMPACT OF SALARY DISPARITIES ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE OF KWARA AND OYO STATES

Regarding the salary disparities within civil service in relation to workers' performance in Nigeria, eight (8) statements were tailored to seek information regarding the respondents' opinions on the issue. The results are as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Survey Data Collected

S/N	Statement	SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	Aggregate Response
1	Salary differences in the civil service are partly caused by differences in educational backgrounds	70 (23.7%)	82 (27.7%)	31 (10.4%)	58 (19.6%)	55 (18.6%)	296 (100%)	Agreed
2	Pay differences among civil personnel are mostly determined by government policy and bureaucratic practices.	69 (23.3%)	85 (28.7%)	19 (6.4%)	66 (22.3%)	57 (19.3%)	296 (100%)	Agreed
3	Job roles or positions within the civil service contribute to differences in salaries	79 (26.7%)	78 (26.4%)	12 (4.1%)	65 (21.9%)	62 (20.9%)	296 (100%)	Strongly Agreed
4	Salary disparities within the civil service have an impact on the motivation and job satisfaction of the individual employee	88 (29.7%)	78 (26.4%)	7 (2.4%)	58 (19.6%)	65 (21.9%)	296 (100%)	Strongly Agreed

(continued)

S/N	Statement	SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	Aggregate Response
5	The earnings of civil servants are influenced by their proficiency in negotiation and the processes involved in negotiating salaries	67 (22.6%)	84 (28.4%)	13 (4.4%)	65 (21.9%)	67 (22.7%)	296 (100%)	Agreed
6	The influence of salary on social status within the workplace; it significantly impacts the overall motivation and sense of belonging among civil servants.	62 (20.9%)	78 (26.4%)	32 (10.8%)	63 (21.3%)	61 (20.6%)	296 (100%)	Agreed
7	To a significant degree, employees view the salary as a primary factor in their decision to stay or leave their positions within the civil service.	65 (21.9%)	86 (29.1%)	15 (5.1%)	66 (22.3%)	64 (21.6%)	296 (100%)	Agreed
8	Non-monetary factors, such as recognition and job responsibilities, interact with salary disparities in various ways, influencing overall employee motivation in the civil service.	87 (29.4%)	52 (17.6%)	8 (2.7%)	77 (26.0%)	72 (24.3%)	296 (100%)	Strongly Agreed

Notes. Source is the survey data collected from the study's fieldwork, 2024. Key: SA (Strongly Agreed), A (Agreed), U (Undecided), D (Disagreed), SD (Strongly Disagreed).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 5 demonstrates affirmation responses regarding the opinions of respondents on salary disparities within the civil service and workers' performance in Nigeria. However, Table 5 showed that $27.7\% + 23.7\% = 51.4\%$ agreed while $19.6\% + 18.6\% = 38.2\%$ disagreed on the first statement posed to respondents. It is with regard to the salary differences in the civil service as partly caused by differences in educational backgrounds. It shows that the salary civil servants receive is influenced by many criteria, including their level of education and the specialized certificates they have earned. The finding shows how crucial educational backgrounds are in determining the pay scales in the civil service. Employees who have higher qualifications are more successful and typically earn more money, which is a reflection of the importance placed on greater knowledge, specialized abilities, and improved qualifications. The result is in line with the view of Lawler (1971), who explained that salary disparities may result from a range of factors, including differences in education, experience, skills, or job responsibilities.

Pay differences among civil service personnel are mostly determined by government policy and bureaucratic practices: The second statement in Table 5 showed affirmative responses about respondents' opinions on salary differences among civil servants. The finding demonstrated that $23.3\% + 28.7\% = 52\%$ agreed while $22.3\% + 19.3\% = 41.6\%$ disagreed, which showed that salary disparities among civil servants were mostly determined by government policy and bureaucratic procedures. These factors were, in the context of this study seen as closely linked to the distribution and application of financial resources. Campbell et al. (1991) point out that when the government hires workers, it has to pay them, therefore it becomes the one who determines how much to pay them. From an equity perspective, employees compare the rewards they receive with their contributions and with the rewards received by relevant others (Adams, 1965). As a result, salary disparities between civil servants are closely linked to the financial resources available to the government, as demonstrated by the precarious balance between budgetary limitations and the necessity of drawing and retaining a highly skilled labour force.

Job role or position within the civil service contributes to differences in salaries: Table 5 showed that $26.7\% + 26.4\% = 53.1\%$ agreed, while $21.9\% + 20.9\% = 42.8\%$ disagreed with the statement which affirmed that Job role or position within the civil service contributed to salary disparities among civil servants in Kwara and Oyo states. Individual job responsibilities or positions within the civil service have an important influence on the salary disparity. Aliyu (2019) provides evidence that compensation structures in the Nigerian public service vary across occupational and institutional categories and identifies education, labour quality, bargaining power, and government policy among the factors associated with wage differentials. This supports the view that job classification and related role requirements contribute to differences in compensation. It is therefore clear that the particular jobs or positions held within the civil service are crucial in determining compensation disparities.

Salary disparities within the civil service have an impact on an employee's motivation and job satisfaction: The quantitative results revealed that $29.7\% + 26.4\% = 56.1\%$ agreed with the statement while $19.6\% + 21.9\% = 41.5\%$ disagreed, which means that salary disparities between civil servants have an impact on motivation and job satisfaction for the individual employee. Salary differences among civil servants can affect each worker's motivation and sense of fulfilment at work. This interpretation is consistent with Akpan and Inyang (2018), who found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were significantly related to employee engagement in the Nigerian civil service. It is also consistent with equity theory, which predicts dissatisfaction and behavioural adjustment when employees perceive their rewards as unfair relative to others (Adams, 1965).

The earnings of civil servants are influenced by their proficiency in negotiation and the processes involved in negotiating salaries: The fifth statement in Table 5 showed that $22.6\% + 28.4\% = 51\%$ agreed, while $21.9\% + 22.7\% = 44.6\%$ disagreed on the issue pertaining to respondents' opinions on the earnings of civil servants. The processes involved in salary negotiations and the bargaining strength of labour representatives can affect public-sector pay. Adegoroye (2015) found that decentralized collective bargaining and differences in bargaining strength at the state level were important factors shaping salary differentials in Nigeria's civil services.

The influence of salary on social status within the workplace significantly impacts the overall motivation and sense of belonging among civil servants: Table 5 shows that $20.9\% + 26.4\% = 47.3\%$ agreed with the statement, while $21.3\% + 20.6\% = 41.9\%$ disagreed. Salary is an important extrinsic motivational factor in public employment. Akpan and Inyang (2018) identify good salary and fringe benefits as forms of extrinsic motivation and report a significant relationship between extrinsic motivation and employee engagement in the Nigerian civil service. This suggests that pay can influence how valued and connected employees feel at work.

To a significant degree, employees view their salary as a primary factor in their decision to stay or leave their positions within the civil service: Table 5 showed that $21.9\% + 29.1\% = 51\%$ agreed with the statement, while $22.3\% + 21.6\% = 43.9\%$ disagreed. This means that employees view salary as an important factor in their decision to stay in or leave their positions within the civil service. Salau (2025) found that compensation had a significant positive influence on talent retention in the Nigerian civil service, alongside career-development opportunities. Therefore, pay remains an important consideration in civil servants' retention decisions.

Non-monetary factors, such as recognition and job responsibilities, interact with salary disparities in various ways, influencing overall employee motivation in the civil service: Table 5 shows that $29.4\% + 17.6\% = 47\%$ agreed with the statement, while $26.0\% + 24.3\% = 50.3\%$ disagreed. Motivation in the civil service is not determined by salary alone. Akpan and Inyang (2018) show that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are related to employee engagement, while Salau (2025) reports that career-development opportunities also significantly influence retention. These findings support a broader view of motivation that combines financial and non-financial factors.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the paper illuminates the complex correlation between employee motivation and salary disparities in the Nigerian civil service. It is clear from the examination of the opinions of the respondents in this study that some variables, such as social standing, work positions, government regulations, educational background, and negotiating abilities, have a big impact on how much people get paid or how motivated they are at work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the examination of the civil service of Kwara and Oyo States, the current study has various recommendations. First to enhance justice and decrease inequities, decision-making procedures and compensation systems must remain transparent. For people to be paid according to their experience, education, and job responsibilities, clear rules must be established. At the national and subnational levels, these actions are intended to guarantee equity among civil employees. Second to make sure that pay determination practices are in line with the values of justice and meritocracy, there must be regular reviews of the official regulations and administrative procedures. Equality of opportunity for all government servants should be the goal of policy modifications, which should also address systemic concerns that lead to compensation discrepancies.

Thirdly, offer civil servants training and development programs that will make them aware of their rights and improve their ability to negotiate when it comes to wage negotiations. Giving workers the tools, they need to negotiate well will help them stand up for equitable pay and successfully resolve inequalities. Fourth the government should create recognition programs that go above and beyond financial incentives to recognise and honour civil servants for their accomplishments and efforts. Acknowledging workers' contributions and successes can improve workers' morale, drive, and general job satisfaction, which in turn promotes a positive workplace culture.

Fifth, the government ought to put in place performance-based pay plans that link incentives and salary increases to individual or group achievement. Paying employees based on performance measures can encourage excellence, increase output, and foster an accountable culture in the civil service. Lastly, invest in continuing research and assessment projects to track the success of initiatives meant to improve employee motivation and solve wage disparities. Regular evaluations can assist in pinpointing areas for improvement and offer insightful information on the effects of policy changes.

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