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Federal Character Principle and Representative Bureaucracy in Nigeria's Public Service: A Study of Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN)

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Abstract

Despite the introduction of the Federal Character Principle (FCP) and representative bureaucracy in Nigeria's public service, this policy is yet to effectively address the inherent problems of imbalances in staff recruitment, appointments and promotion, especially in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (FCN). This study examined how corruption in recruitment in the PCN affects adherence to the federal character principle; investigated how favouritism and nepotism in appointments and promotions affect the level of adherence to FCP in the PCN; and also assessed the implications of non-compliance with the FCP and representative bureaucracy in the PCN. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 388 staff of PCN, while the sample size was 191. Primary data were generated through a questionnaire, while secondary data were obtained from published textbooks, credible journal publications, magazines, internet materials and the Staff nominal roll. Representative bureaucracy theory by John Donald Kingsley guided the study. Findings of the study revealed that corruption in the recruitment and promotion processes in the PCN undermines adherence to the Federal Character Principle. Findings also revealed that non-compliance with the application of the quota system in the PCN affects regional and ethnic imbalances. The study recommended that representatives of the Federal Character Commission, National Assembly Committee on Federal Character, Inter-governmental Affairs and other related government establishments should be present during the recruitment, appointment and promotion of staff in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria to ensure compliance with the federal character principle. Also, the management of PCN who erred in adhering to the FCP should be sanctioned.

Keywords: Federal Character Principle, Representative Democracy, Pharmacy Council, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Nigeria's complex demographic landscape, characterised by a population of over 200 million and more than 250 ethnic groups, presents a significant challenge in creating a representative bureaucracy that reflects its diverse ethnic and regional makeup. The country's structure, including 36 states, 774 Local Government Areas, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, further complicates the establishment of an inclusive public service system. The Federal Character Principle (FCP) mandates that government structures should represent Nigeria's federal character to prevent the dominance of any single ethnic, regional, or religious group, and to foster national unity. However, adhering to this principle within institutions like the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN) has proven difficult. One major challenge is the pervasive issue of corruption, which often distorts recruitment and promotional processes. Corruption leads to favoritism and nepotism, undermining the merit-based system intended by the FCP. This hinders fair opportunities and creates a perception of bias among employees.

Similarly, the PCN struggles with non-compliance with the application of the quota system, which is supposed to ensure equitable distribution of opportunities, prevent regional imbalances, and reduce regional and ethnic tensions. Furthermore, the lack of clear guidelines and effective accountability mechanisms complicates adherence to the FCP, resulting in perceptions of discrimination and unfairness. The effectiveness of the FCP and quota system in PCN is equally hampered by inadequate enforcement and monitoring. This inadequacy results in an uneven application of the FCP across different levels of the organisation, and impacts the PCN's inability to build a genuinely representative and inclusive workforce. Balancing merit with representation while also ensuring transparency and fairness remains a significant challenge in PCN.

Other noticeable factors hampering the PCN's efforts to adhere to the Federal Character Principle are: political interference, nepotism, and favouritism. These challenges affect the PCN's recruitment and promotion practices, which compromise its ability to create a representative and inclusive workforce, while maintaining operational integrity. The ultimate goal of this study was to:

- i. Examine how corruption in recruitment and promotion processes affects adherence to the Federal Character Principle in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN).
- ii. Assess how non-compliance with the application of the quota system contributes to regional and ethnic imbalance in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN).
- iii. Investigate how favouritism and nepotism in appointments affect the level of adherence to the Federal Character Principle of the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN).
- iv. Find out the implications of the non-compliance with the Federal Character Principle and representative bureaucracy on the staff welfare of the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria.

1.2 Research Questions

- i. How does corruption in recruitment and promotion processes affect adherence to the federal character principle in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN)?
- ii. How does non-compliance with the application of the quota system contribute to the regional and ethnic imbalance of the PCN?
- iii. How does favoritism and nepotism in appointments affect the level of adherence to the federal character principle in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria?

- iv. Has the non-compliance with the Federal Character Principle and representative bureaucracy affected staff welfare in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria?

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Concept of Public Service

Ejere et al., (2014) cited in Afahanam (2019:15), see the public service as the core administrative machinery for implementing government policies and programmes. Ejere's perception of the concept of public service is in tandem with that of the Civil Service Handbook, which refers to it as a body of men and women employed to ensure that policies and programmes of any government at any time are carried out. Also, Adamolekun (2002), cited in Afahanam (2019:15), defines public service as the totality of services that are organized under public (i.e., government) authority. In this light, both Ejere (2015) and Adamolekun (2002) regard the public service as the machinery of government, that is, the totality of the administrative structures within which the work of government is carried out.

On his part, Afahanam (2019:15) stated that the term public service is sometimes used as a synonym of civil service, even though public service usually indicates a wider scope than the civil service. Public service therefore, consists of the civil service (ministries, departments, and agencies - MDAs), the Armed forces and other security forces, the judiciary, parliamentary service, local government service, teaching service and parastatals. Public service therefore, can be said to comprise all permanent employees of government, whether federal, state, or local government.

Afahanam pointed out that the public service can also be categorized into two, namely: the political office holders and non-political office holders. The political office holders are the elected and non-elected (appointed) officers who are permanent and serve at the end of their tenures or the end of the government that appointed them. These include the President, Vice-President, Ministers and their personal aides, Chairmen and Members of Commissions and Boards of parastatals. These also include State Governors, Deputy Governors and Commissioners, Chairman, Vice Chairman and Supervisors of local governments.

On the other hand, the non-political office holders constitute the permanent career public servants appointed by the Civil Service Commission, Assembly Service Commission, Judiciary Service Commission, Police Service Commission, Independent National Electoral Commission, as well as other statutory commissions and boards which are constitutionally empowered to appoint, promote and discipline their employees. These officers serve on a permanent basis and retire at the age of 60 years or after 35 years of service, as stipulated in the conditions of service. In the above analyses, the term civil service is only a subset of the larger public service.

When the prefix "Nigerian" is added to the concept of public bureaucracy, it is to distinguish it from the public bureaucracies of other countries, hence the terms, the "Nigerian Public Bureaucracy" or the "Nigerian Public Service". The Nigerian Public Service could be defined to encompass the entire public sector in this way; it also includes the Armed Forces and Police, Educational Institutions, Judiciary, and all other government organizations (Akpekepe & Ejere, 1998:58).

Ezeani & Ezeani (2021) observe that the Nigerian public service is characterized by red tape, corruption and inefficiency. Adebayo (1986) also notes that the Nigerian public

service is an organization characterized by inefficiency, corruption and lack of accountability. Ogbole (2015:56) also maintains that “corruption is a major obstacle to effective public service delivery in Nigeria”. Similarly, Ojo (2015) opines that the lack of meritocracy in the Nigerian Public Service has hindered its effectiveness. Bamisayo (2014:78) holds that the Nigerian public service is dominated by patronage and nepotism, rather than meritocracy. While Akindele (2020:145) notes that the Nigerian Public Service is marked by poor work ethics, with many employees demonstrating a lack of commitment and dedication to duty.

In addition, Ekeh (2010:156) notes that the Nigerian public service is lacking in accountability, with many officials not being held responsible for their actions. He added that the lack of accountability in the Nigerian public service has led to widespread corruption and abuse of power (Nwabueze, 2022:112). Ojo (2022) corroborates the fact that the Nigerian public service is characterized by corruption, mismanagement and inefficiency, highlighting the need for radical reforms.

Despite the above shortcomings of the Nigerian Public Service, it has been reported that the Service has made significant progress in recent years, due to reforms aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness (Oyediran, 2020:122). Adeyemi (2022:25) noted that the government’s efforts to digitalize public services and improve transparency are commendable. Similarly, Eze (2020:34) states that the capacity-building initiatives introduced into the service have improved the skills and knowledge of public servants, leading to better service delivery.

Adebayo (2013) suggested that embracing technology and innovation is crucial for improving public service delivery in Nigeria, including the adoption of digital technologies and the use of data analytics and performance metrics to drive improvement. Olowu et al. (1997), emphasise the need for promoting transparency and accountability in the Nigerian public service, highlighting the importance of citizen engagement and participation and the use of technology to enhance transparency and accountability. Ezeani (2006) made a suggestion for adopting a participatory approach to public service delivery, emphasizing the need for rural public service delivery and the importance of involving citizens in the design and delivery of public service.

2.1.1 Appointment and Promotion in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria

The Pharmacy Council of Nigeria is one of the federal government ministries that is guided by the Public Service Rules in its appointment policy guidelines. According to the Public Service Rules, all appointments to public offices, both senior and junior, in Federal Government ministries shall be made on the authority of the Boards/Councils of the ministry (PSR 160301). The Rules stipulate that appointment into all grades in ministries shall be on a need-based and subject to the approval of the Supervisory Boards/Councils. Such appointments shall be made through a fair and open selection process that ensures merit, credibility and equal opportunity for all with due regard to the federal character principle. Eligibility for appointment is as applied in the civil service except where otherwise stated (PSR 160303).

In the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria, just like any other agency of government, a combination of both principles of merit and seniority is adopted for promotion. To ensure merit in Nigeria’s public service, the process of promotion must take into account the guidelines as spelt out in the Federal Public Service Rule (PSR 020701). The guidelines include:

- a. Eligibility for promotion based on the number of years:

Table 1 indicates the number of years officers should stay (residency period) before the next promotion below:

Table 1: Number of years in service before promotion

SGL of Staff	Number of Years in Post
01-06	Minimum of 2 years
07-14	Minimum of 3 years
15-17	Minimum of 4 years

Source: Public Service Rule

- b. Promotion on the basis of competitive merit from amongst all eligible candidates:
- i. In assessing the merit of officers, a clear distinction shall be made between their records of performance or efficiency in lower grades and their potential for duties and responsibilities of the higher post efficiently.
- ii. Seniority and previous performance records will be taken into account in choosing between candidates with equal potential for promotion.
- iii. In all cases, however, a generally satisfactory reward of conduct shall also be considered.

All promotions are subject to satisfying minimum requirements declared by the Federal Civil Service Commission or the State Civil Service Commission and the availability of vacancies. As a rule, Section 25 of the Guidelines for Appointment, Promotion and Discipline emphasises that promotion in the Federal Civil Service shall be based on merit. The promotion criteria, according to the Guidelines, shall be weighted as follows:

Interview	-	70
APER	-	20
Seniority	-	10 (2 marks for each year after maturity)
Total	-	100

2.1.3 Abuse of Promotion Procedures and Federal Character Principle in Pharmacy Council of Nigeria

There are palpable abuse promotion procedures and postings in the PCN. There are instances where capable, long-serving and loyal federal civil servants have been denied promotion, precisely because the quota for their states in these posts has been filled (reverse discrimination). Under such situations, one's erstwhile subordinates usually become one's superiors overnight. However, postings of federal civil servants have followed the federal character principle. Every state would like to see its citizens in all the organs or agencies of the federal bureaucracy. Sometimes, this representation is seen in absolute numbers, not just between states in the federation but also between the North and South as collectivities. In fact, the issue of representation based on the federal character principle has unwittingly degenerated into verbal and sometimes acrimonious exchanges between the North and the South of the country (Obi, 2020, cited in Udeuhele *et al.*, 2019). They observed that paradoxically, the federal character principle has succeeded in institutionalizing the North-South dichotomy rather than integrating it.

2.1.4 Concept of Representative Bureaucracy

Representative bureaucracy is a concept in public administration that suggests that a bureaucracy should reflect the demographic characteristics of the population it serves (Krislov, 1974). This concept has been debated by scholars and critics, with varying perspectives on its importance and implementation (Akpekpe *et al.*, 1998). According to Kingsley (1944), every social group in a given society has a right of participation in their governing institutions. Consequently, he viewed a representative bureaucracy as one that, in terms of its personnel make-up, reflects the interests of the varying social units that make up the society. Pitt (2005) argues that representative bureaucracy is influenced by contextual factors, such as political climate, institutional constraints and social norms.

The need for a representative bureaucracy in Nigeria had been felt before independence. Actually, the most explosive issues, and certainly the most controversial ones, faced by Nigeria shortly before independence were Nigerianization, Expatriatisation and Northernisation. Ayoade (1998), cited in Afahanam (2019), noted that the North had embarked on the Northernization of the public service to be at par with the Southerners. If a qualified Northerner was available, he was given priority in recruitment. If no Northerner was available, an expatriate was recruited. A Southerner was only recruited as a last resort and on contract terms. In reality, the Northernization Policy was directed more against southern Nigerians than against expatriates. The purpose was to make the Northern Public Service a representative cross-section of the northern society (Ayoade, 1998), cited in Afahanam (2019:110).

In 1959, Ayoade recalls that expatriates constituted 83.2 percent of the senior posts in the public service of Northern Nigeria. And of the 315 Nigerians in that service, Northerners were only a paltry 11.2 percent. This sharply contrasts with the figures for the East and the West. Easterners constituted 74.4 percent of the Eastern Nigeria Civil Service and Westerners 76.2 percent of the Western Nigerian Civil Service. By 1959, the North had less than one percent of the higher posts in the Federal Civil Service. And even the posts vacated by the expatriates would be taken over by the Southerners, thus further reducing the northern percentage. Since there were no regional armies to pre-occupy the North as the Northern Public Service, the North pressed for the adoption of regional quotas for the recruitment of officers in the Nigerian Army. In the recruitment, the North has 50 percent, the East 25 percent and the West 25 percent (Ayoade, 1998, cited in Afahanam, 2019:110).

It is worthwhile to note that while striving to ensure representativeness of all the regions in the Nigerian bureaucracy, the principle of merit was jettisoned. As Obikeze & Anthony (2004), cited in Afahanam (2019:110) argued, the adoption of representativeness obviously affected the quality and output of the Federal Civil Service between 1954 and 1966. This negative impact still affects productivity in today's Nigerian Civil Service. However, one positive impact of representativeness as policy in the Nigerian Civil Service and by extension the Nigerian Public Service is that of promoting unity in the country. This is done through the adoption of the quota system or the Federal Character Principle.

2.1.5 Concept of Federal Character Principle

According to Obiyan & Akindele (2002), the federal character principle essentially refers to the recognition of the plural nature of the country in recruitment, distribution of administrative and political offices and power and other resources of the country. The essence of the federal character principle is to allow the composition and conduct of public institutions and affairs to reflect the country's diversity in terms of religion and geographical region. It is premised on the

ground that, when national institutions and affairs are reflective in composition and conduct of the pluralism of the country, then a sense of belonging is likely to be evoked from the citizenry. It can be deduced from the above submission that the federal character principle is, in part, designed to deal with the problem of imbalance, marginalization and discrimination. Consequent upon these, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) in Section 14(3) and (4) states:

The composition of the Government of the Federal or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or sectional groups in the government or in any of its agencies

Also, Section 15(2) and (3) states:

Nigerians shall be equal before the law and shall have rights and opportunities, without any discrimination on account of sex, ethnicity, religion, or circumstances of birth

Furthermore, the Federal Character Commission Act (2010) Section 2 (1) and (2) states:

The Federal Character Commission shall ensure that all institutions of government in Nigeria are reflective of the Federal Character of Nigeria and that no section of the country is underrepresented or over represented in the composition of any government agency or institution.

Federal Character Commission Act (2019) Section 4(1) and (2) further states:

The commission shall monitor and enforce compliance with the principles of Federal Character in the composition of government agencies and institutions.

Given the above provisions, the Federal Character Principle is a constitutional issue in Nigeria that aims to promote national unity, fairness and equity in the distribution of public resources, appointment and opportunities. It has as its benefit the following benefits:

- i. **Geographical Representation:** Ensuring that appointments and opportunities are distributed fairly across the 36 states, Federal Capital Territory, and the 774 Local Government Areas in Nigeria.
- ii. **Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity:** Recognizing and representing the diverse ethnic and linguistic groups in Nigeria, including minority groups.
- iii. **Merit and Fairness:** Balancing geographical and ethnic considerations with merit and fairness to ensure that the most qualified candidates are selected.
- iv. **Quota System:** Allocating quota to states, zones, or regions to ensure proportional representation.
- v. **Rotation and Zoning:** Rotating appointments, admissions, or opportunities among states, zones, or regions to ensure equal access.
- vi. **Inclusivity:** Ensuring that marginalized groups, such as women, people with disabilities and minority ethnic groups, are represented (Annual Report of Federal Character Commission, 2019).

Jonah (2018), cited in Aluu (2021), was of the view that the Federal Character Principle was the product of the Gowon Administration to ensure balance in terms of appointments, distribution of resources and development projects. He maintained that there is a serious infraction of the Principle of Federal Character and wondered why a section of Nigeria occupies more than 60 percent of elective and appointive positions and enjoys more than 70 percent of the nation's resources at the expense of others.

Jonah (2018), cited in Aluu (2021:167), further queried that:

About 70% of Nigeria foot soldiers are from Hausa-Fulani. Is that Federal Character Principle? About 80% of all Permanent Secretaries in Federal Ministries are from Hausa-Fulani. About 80% of those given Oil Wells presently in the Oil rich Niger-Delta Region are from Hausa-Fulani. About 60% of Generals in the Nigerian Military are from Hausa - Fulani. About 60% of the Heads of Parastatals are from Hausa-Fulani. About 70% of Nigerian State Security Service (SSS) men are from Hausa-Fulani. About 60% top posts in each of: The Nigerian Prison Services, Nigeria Immigration and Nigerian Ports Authority are from Hausa-Fulani. Visit JAMB Office and see....

Abia (2002:278) further maintained that the north has, until 1999, retained the monopoly of some key ministries, strategic agencies and most significant federal parastatals. According to him, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was one of such. In 38 years (1960-1998), Nigeria has had 19 ministers for the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 18 of them were from the north. The story is the same with other agencies under the military. Out of the nine heads, no southerner has been appointed Comptroller-General of the Nigerian Customs Service. From the day of political independence, only two southerners have been appointed Chief Passport Officers, while others have come from the northern part of the country. In fact, it can hardly be an accident that the north held the reins in some federal agencies central to the socio-economic survival of the country, such as the Pipelines and Products Marketing Company (PPMC), National Maritime Authority (NMA) and the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA). A look at the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Joint Admissions Matriculation Board (JAMB) reveals a deliberate effort to make these bodies an exclusive preserve of the North, until most recently, when the headship of the former changed.

Similarly, Eme & Onuigbo (2015), cited in Eyikorogba et al. (2021), observed that of the 42 appointments made by President Muhammadu Buhari, 35 were occupied by northerners as against 7 positions for the large southern region. Furthermore, it was observed that President Buhari's appointments since assuming office have been based on family, religious, and ethnic affiliations rather than the national policy of inclusiveness for equal representation so as to avoid domination, marginalization, amongst others, in a multiethnic state like Nigeria. This evidently suggests that there is a high level of violation of FCP between 2015-2019 under President Buhari's administration, thus led to the undue marginalization and domination of some groups in the country, which undermine national integration, unity and the overall national development of the country (Eme & Onuigbo 2015 in Akpekpe & Ejere, 1998). However, Adejumobi (2018:7) calls for the need for re-evaluation to address emerging challenges, just like Ojo (2021:8) suggested that there should be a balance with merit-based considerations, which require an effective implementation mechanism (Egharevba 2022).

2.1.6 The Effect of Non-compliance with the Federal Character Principle and Representative Bureaucracy on Staff Welfare in Nigerian Public Service.

The non-compliance with the Federal Character Principle and the failure to establish a representative bureaucracy in Nigeria's public service have led to significant challenges that adversely affect the structure, function, and staff welfare within government institutions. One of the central issues stemming from the non-compliance with the Federal Character Principle is the marginalization of certain regions and ethnic groups. While the principle seeks to guarantee equitable representation, its implementation has often been inconsistent. This has resulted in certain regions, particularly from the South-Eastern and South-South parts of Nigeria, being underrepresented in key government positions. Conversely, some dominant ethnic groups, particularly those from the northern and southwestern parts, have historically enjoyed greater access to public service positions (Ojo, 2020). This imbalance has fostered feelings of exclusion and resentment among employees from marginalized regions, leading to a sense of unfairness and disillusionment within the public service. This exclusion not only hampers the professional development of individuals from underrepresented regions but also reduces their opportunities for career advancement, as higher-level positions in government are often occupied by individuals from politically dominant ethnic groups (Okeke, 2016).

The lack of a representative bureaucracy has also resulted in the failure to address the diverse needs of Nigeria's population effectively. Public institutions that do not reflect the country's demographic composition are less likely to understand or respond to the specific challenges faced by underrepresented groups. For example, policies and initiatives designed to improve public service delivery or employee welfare may not take into account regional, cultural, or ethnic nuances, thus limiting their impact and effectiveness (Ikelegbe, 2018). In this context, the decision-making processes within government institutions are often skewed, neglecting the perspectives of various ethnic or regional groups, leading to further alienation and frustration.

Another significant challenge posed by the non-compliance with the Federal Character Principle is the worsening political patronage and ethnic favoritism within the recruitment and promotion processes. The principle was intended to reduce the influence of political patronage in public service appointments, ensuring that merit and competence guided the recruitment and promotion of public servants. However, political and ethnic considerations continue to play a dominant role in public service appointments. In many cases, individuals are appointed or promoted not based on their qualifications or experience, but rather due to political connections or regional affiliations. This has led to the entrenchment of nepotism and favoritism within the Nigerian public service, undermining the principle of meritocracy (Adewumi, 2017). Employees who feel that promotions and appointments are based on patronage rather than merit may experience reduced morale, as they are less likely to perceive their positions as being based on their skills or achievements (Ogunyemi, 2019).

Moreover, the pervasive influence of political patronage in the recruitment and promotion processes has led to a culture of corruption in public service institutions. When appointments are made based on political connections, individuals who are appointed or promoted may feel obligated to repay their benefactors through corrupt practices, such as embezzling public funds or misappropriating resources. This systemic corruption not only damages the reputation of public institutions but also erodes the trust of employees in the fairness and integrity of their organizations (Uhunmwuango & Oghojafor, 2017). Public

servants who are appointed based on favoritism may also feel a sense of insecurity, as they are often aware that their positions could be jeopardized when political power shifts, further destabilizing staff morale.

The failure to implement the Federal Character Principle and establish a representative bureaucracy also undermines the capacity of the public service to function efficiently. A bureaucracy that does not represent the full diversity of the population is less likely to make decisions that address the needs of all segments of society. This inefficiency is compounded by a lack of trust between employees from different ethnic or regional groups, which can hinder collaboration and cooperation within government institutions. In a work environment where ethnic or regional differences are accentuated, public servants may struggle to work together effectively, as interpersonal and intergroup tensions become more prominent. This lack of cohesion can result in reduced productivity and overall inefficiency in the delivery of public services (Obasi, 2021).

Furthermore, the unequal representation of ethnic and regional groups within the public service often leads to feelings of disenfranchisement among those who are excluded from key positions. Employees from marginalized regions may feel that they are not being given equal opportunities to contribute to national development, which can lead to decreased job satisfaction and, in some cases, attrition from the public service. This sense of marginalization can have long-term effects on the professionalism of the civil service, as talented individuals from underrepresented regions may seek employment opportunities elsewhere, further perpetuating regional and ethnic imbalances (Ogunyemi & Oloruntoba, 2017).

In addition to the impact on employee morale, the non-compliance with the Federal Character Principle also undermines the government's ability to implement policies that are truly reflective of the country's diverse needs. A non-representative bureaucracy is less likely to understand the unique challenges faced by different regions, ethnic groups, or social classes, thus limiting the effectiveness of policy interventions. For example, when decisions regarding infrastructure, education, or healthcare are made by a homogenous group of public servants, the needs of marginalized or minority groups may be overlooked, resulting in policies that do not address the concerns of the broader population (Duru, 2019).

The challenges posed by the non-compliance with the Federal Character Principle and the failure to establish a representative bureaucracy also extend to the broader issue of national unity. In a multi-ethnic and multi-regional society like Nigeria, the public service plays a crucial role in promoting inclusivity and fostering a sense of national identity. However, when certain groups are disproportionately represented in the public service, it can perpetuate divisions between different regions and ethnic groups, further entrenching feelings of exclusion and marginalization. This, in turn, can erode social cohesion and undermine efforts to build a united nation (Okeke, 2016).

The non-compliance with the Federal Character Principle and the failure to establish a representative bureaucracy in Nigeria's public service has resulted in a series of challenges that undermine staff welfare, efficiency, and national unity. The marginalization of certain regions and ethnic groups, the entrenchment of political patronage and the corruption that arises from these practices all contribute to a public service that is ineffective, unfair, and de-motivating for employees. These issues not only hinder the functioning of the public

service but also perpetuate divisions within Nigerian society, making it more difficult to achieve the goal of a cohesive, prosperous nation (Yusuf, 2014; Adewumi, 2017).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Representative Bureaucratic Theory

The study is anchored on Representative Bureaucratic theory developed by John Donald Kingsley in 1944. Representative bureaucracy has it that: representative bureaucracy “is a bureaucracy which is representative of the population it serves, in the sense that its members are drawn from all sections of the community and that its internal social structure is similar to that of the population at large” (Kingsley, 1944:12).

Kingsley argued that a representative bureaucracy should reflect the demographic characteristics of the population it serves, including ethnic, religious and regional diversity. The theory has been successfully implemented in various public bureaucracies around the world viz: The United States Federal Civil Service, Canadian Public Service, Australian Public Service, South African Civil Service, Indian Administrative Service, etc. In Kingsley's opinion, this theory has been influential in shaping diversity and inclusion in many countries and organizations at that time and could even be more useful in our modern-day public organization such as the Nigerian public service which the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria is a part. The imperativeness of this theory lies in its ability to ensure inclusive decision-making, active representation, passive representation, accountability, responsiveness, equity, participation and transparency in the Nigerian Public Service in general and the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria in Particular.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design/Area

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Primary data were generated through questionnaire, while secondary data were obtained from published textbooks, credible journal publications, magazines, internet materials, and government documents such as the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN) 2023 Staff Nominal Roll.

3.2 Population of the Study/ Sample and Sampling Technique

The population of this study was three hundred and eighty-eight (388) members of staff of the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria. The sample size of the study consisted of 191 derived from Krejcie and Morgan Table for determining sample size of a known population (See Appendix 1). Stratified, proportional and purposive sampling methods were used to select sample. The study divided PCN into 7 distinct zones and each of the zones constituted a stratum based on the number of employees. The zones include: (i) North-West (36) (ii) North-East (25) (iii) North-Central (35) (iv) South -West (61) (v) South-South (38) (vi) South-East (36) and Head Office (157). The Proportional Sampling method was used to calculate the proportion of members of staff in each zone to be selected. Thus:

$$(i) \text{ North-West} = 36/388 = 0.092 \times 191 = 17.5 \approx 18$$

$$(ii) \text{ North-East} = 25/388 = 0.064 \times 191 = 12.2 \approx 12$$

$$(iii) \text{ North-Central} = 35/388 = 0.090 \times 191 = 17.2 \approx 17$$

$$(iv) \text{ South-West} = 61/388 = 0.157 \times 191 = 29.9 \approx 30$$

$$(v) \text{ South-South} = 38/388 = 0.097 \times 191 = 18.5 \approx 19$$

(vi) South-East = $36/388 = 0.093 \times 191 = 17.8 \approx 18$

(vii) Head Office = $157/388 = 0.405 \times 191 = 77.4 \approx 77$

The purposive sampling technique was used to select states with a sum of the calculated proportional number of staff members in each zone. They included:

- A. North-West: Kaduna State (11 staff), Katsina State (4 staff), Kebbi State (3 staff)
- B. North-East: Bauchi State (7 staff), Borno State (5 staff)
- C. North – Central: Kwara State (6 staff), Plateau State (4 staff), Nasarawa State (7 staff)
- D. South-West: Lagos State (30 staff)
- E. South – South: Akwa Ibom State (11 staff), Bayelsa State (3 staff), Cross River State (5 staff)
- F. South-East: Enugu State (8 staff), Anambra State (10 staff)
- G. Head Office: Abuja Zonal and Head Office (77 staff).

Detail of the Sample distribution of the study is found in Table 3

3.3 Procedure for Data Collection

A total of 191 sets of questionnaires were distributed through the Zonal Directors of each of the seven (7) zones for distribution to members in each of the selected states. 18 sets of questionnaires were distributed to North-West, 12 sets of questionnaires to North-East, 17 questionnaires were distributed to North-Central, 30 questionnaires were distributed to South-West, while Nineteen (19), Eighteen (18) and Seventy-seven (77) sets of questionnaires were distributed to South-South, South East and Head Office, respectively. Of the total number of 191 sets of questionnaires distributed, 180 were retrieved and found useful for data analysis. Accordingly, 16 questionnaires were retrieved from North-East, 17 questionnaires from North-Central, while South-West, South-South, South-East and Head Office had 29, 17, 16, and 74 questionnaires returned, respectively. The 180 returned questionnaire yielded a 94 percent (94%) response rate (See Appendix 2)

3.4 Validity and reliability of the Instruments

To ensure the accuracy of the instruments, they were subjected to scrutiny by experts in academia. The meticulous review of the instruments is to ensure they cover all necessary aspects of the research objectives. The reliability of the research instruments was ensured through the inter-rater reliability coefficient.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis/ Ethical Concerns

Data collected for the study was analysed using Simple percentage. Simple percentage was adopted in the study view of its simplicity. The results were presented in tables and texts. To ensure clarity and uphold ethical standards, the research instrument contained introductory notes that explained the purpose of the study. The instrument was couched in a manner that the identities of participants were not disclosed and this ensured objectivity and confidentiality.

4.1 Data presentation and Analysis

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=180)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex:		
Male	98	54.44
Female	82	45.56
Total	180	100
Age:		
25-30	69	38.33
30-40	30	16.67
40-50	41	22.77
50 and above	40	22.22
Total	180	100
Marital Status:		
Single	86	47.77
Married	88	48.88
Widowed	2	1.11
Widower	4	2.22
Total	180	100
Educational Status:		
F.S.L.C	17	9.44
SSCE	35	19.44
NCE/OND	79	43.89
B.Sc./HND	49	27.22
Total	180	100
Category of Staff:		
Pharmacists	54	30
Legal Officers	3	1.66
Administrative Officers	18	10
Clerical Officers	66	36.66
Pharmacy Technicians	2	1.11
Data Processing Officers	3	1.66
Procurement Officers	2	1.11
Information Officer	1	0.55
Electrical/Technicians	1	0.55

Drivers/ Mechanics	14	7.77
Statisticians	1	0.55
Accountants	15	8.38
Total	180	100

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 3 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents, it revealed 98 (54.44%) of the respondents were male, while 82 (45.56%) of the respondents were female, indicating a slightly higher male representation in the sample. The age distribution of respondents showed that the majority (38.33%) were between the ages of 25 and 30, which represented the largest age group in the sample. The second-largest group was respondents aged between 40 and 50 years, making up 22.77% of the total sample. Those aged 50 and above represented 22.22%, and respondents between 30 and 40 years made up 16.67%. The marital status of respondents revealed that 47.77% were single, 48.88% were married, while a small percentage, 1.11%, were widowed, and 2.22% were widowers. Regarding educational background, 43.89% of the respondents held NCE/OND qualifications, while 27.22% had completed their B.Sc./HND. In addition, 19.44% had SSCE, and 9.44% held the FSLC administrative staff cadre constituted the largest participants 36.66%, followed by Pharmacists 30% while Statisticians (0.55%), Information Officers (0.55%), and Technicians (0.55%), were the least participants respectively. These demographic characteristics provided useful context to the study and helped illustrate the diverse profile of respondents, offering insights into the various factors that might influence their views on recruitment, representation, and fairness within the PCN.

4.2 Analysis of Research Questions

4.2.1 Research Questions I:

How does corruption in recruitment and promotion processes affect adherence to the federal character principle within the Pharmacy?

Table 4: Responses on how corruption in recruitment and promotion processes affects adherence to the federal character principle within the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN)

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
1.	Corruption in the recruitment and promotion processes within the PCN undermines the equitable representation of states as mandated by the federal character principle.	77 (42.78)	66 (36.67)	19 (10.56)	18 (10%)	180
2.	The presence of corrupt practices in recruitment and promotion leads to an imbalance in staffing, disregarding the federal character principle in the PCN.	89 (49.44)	75 (41.67)	9 (5%)	7 (3.89%)	180
3.	Corruption in the recruitment and promotion process within the PCN Contributes to a lack of fairness and	76 (42.22)	87 (48.33)	10 (5.56%)	7 (3.89%)	180

	equal opportunity for all states, as required by the federal character principle.					
4.	Efforts to adhere to the federal character principle within the PCN are significantly compromised due to corruption in recruitment and promotion.	75 (41.65)	64 (35.56)	21 (11.67)	20 (11.11)	180
5.	Corruption in the recruitment and promotion processes within the PCN has a negative impact on the overall effectiveness of the federal character principle in ensuring fair representation across Nigeria.	87 (52.37)	71 (39.74)	10 (5.56%)	12 (4.47%)	180

Source: Field Work 2024

The data in Table 4 provides valuable insights into how corruption in the recruitment and promotion processes within the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN) affects adherence to the federal character principle. 77 (42.78%) of the respondents strongly agreed that corruption in recruitment and promotion undermines equitable representation of states as mandated by the federal character principle and 66 (36.67%) respondents agreed. A total of 79.45% of respondents believed that corruption negatively affects the representation of states. However, 19 (10.56%) respondents disagreed, and 18 (10%) of them strongly disagreed that corruption plays a significant role in disrupting state representation.

On whether corrupt practices lead to an imbalance in staffing, disregarding the federal character principle, 89 (49.44%) respondents strongly agreed, and 75 (41.67%) agreed, totaling 91.11% who believed corruption contributes to staffing imbalances and disregards the federal character principle. Only 9 (5%) respondents disagreed, and 7 (3.89%) respondents strongly disagreed with the view that corruption contributes to staffing imbalances in PCN. Similarly, to find out if corruption in the recruitment and promotion process contributes to a lack of fairness and equal opportunity, 76 (42.22%) respondents strongly agreed, and 87 (48.33%) agreed, amounting to 90 (55%) respondents who believed that corruption hampers fairness and equal opportunities for all states. Only 10 (5.56%) respondents disagreed, and 7 (3.89%) strongly disagreed that corruption undermines fairness and equal opportunities in the PCN recruitment process. Also, 75 respondents (41.65%) strongly agreed, and 64 (35.56%) agreed, making up 77.21% of respondents who felt that corruption undermines efforts to implement the federal character principle effectively. On the other hand, 21 (11.67%) respondents disagreed, and 20 (11.11%) strongly disagreed and felt that corruption does not affect efforts to uphold the federal character principle. In addition, 87 respondents (52.37%) strongly agreed, and 71 (39.74%) agreed that corruption impedes the federal character principle's ability to ensure fair representation across Nigeria. While 10 (5.56%) respondents disagreed, and 12 (4.47%) strongly disagreed, on the contrary.

4.2.2 Research Question II:

Does the inconsistent application of the quota system contribute to regional and ethnic imbalance within the PCN?

Table 5: Response on how the inconsistent application of the quota system contributes to regional and ethnic imbalance within the PCN

S/N	Questions	SA	A	SD	D	TOTAL
1.	Inconsistent application of the quota system within the PCN leads to an imbalance in the representation of various regions and ethnic groups.	65 (36.11)	79 (43.89)	18 (10)	18 (10)	180
2.	The failure to consistently apply the quota system results in unequal opportunities for different ethnic groups within the PCN.	79 (43.89)	71 (39.44)	16 (8.89)	14 (7.78)	180
3.	The uneven enforcement of the quota system within the PCN has caused significant regional disparities in staffing and promotion.	81 (45)	78 (43.33)	11 (6.11)	10 (5.56)	180
4.	Regional and ethnic imbalances within the PCN can be attributed to the inconsistent application of the quota system in recruitment and promotion.	90 (50)	76 (42.22)	9 (5)	5 (2.78)	180
5.	Inconsistent application of the quota system negatively impacts the effectiveness of the PCN in ensuring fair representation across Nigeria's diverse regions and ethnicities.	80 (44.44)	73 (40.56)	16 (8.89)	11 (6.11)	180

Source: Field Survey 2024.

Data in Table 5 revealed opinions on the inconsistent application of the quota system within the PCN. 65 (36.11%) respondents strongly agreed and 79 (43.89%) agreed that the failure to consistently apply the quota system results in uneven representation of regions and ethnicities within the PCN. Only 18 (10%) respondents disagreed, and 18 (10%) strongly disagreed inconsistent application of the quota system within the PCN. Similarly, 79 (43.89%) respondents strongly agreed, and 71 (39.44%) agreed that inconsistent quota application creates disparities in opportunities between ethnic groups. While 16 (8.89%) respondents disagreed, and 14 (7.78%) strongly disagreed, indicating that the failure to apply the quota system is not a significant issue in the PCN.

Furthermore, 81 (45%) respondents strongly agreed, and 78 (43.33%) agreed, that the lack of uniformity in enforcing the quota system leads to clear regional imbalances, especially in staffing and promotion within the PCN. Only 11 (6.11%) respondents disagreed, and 10 (5.56%) strongly disagreed that the quota system's enforcement is a key factor in regional disparities. Equally, 90 (50%) respondents strongly agreed, and 76 (42.22%) agreed, with just 9 (5%) disagreeing, and only 5 (2.78%) strongly disagreeing that regional and ethnic imbalances within the PCN can be attributed to the inconsistent application of the quota system in recruitment and promotion. Also, 80 (44.44%) respondents strongly agreed, and 73 (40.56%) agreed that the inconsistent application of the quota system negatively

impacts the effectiveness of the PCN in ensuring fair representation across Nigeria's diverse regions and ethnicities. Only 16 (8.89%) respondents disagreed, and 11 (6.11%) strongly disagreed that such inconsistency is detrimental to the overall fairness and effectiveness of the PCN.

4.2.3 Research Question III:

Does favoritism and nepotism in appointments affect the level of adherence to the federal character principle in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria?

Table 6: Responses on how favouritism and nepotism in appointments affect the level of adherence to the federal character principle in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Total
11	Favoritism and nepotism in appointments within the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria undermine adherence to the federal character principle.	81 (45%)	78 (43.33%)	11 (6.11%)	10 (5.56%)	180
12	The practice of favoritism and nepotism in the appointment process within PCN leads to unequal representation of regions and ethnic groups.	80 (44.44%)	77 (42.78%)	13 (7.22%)	10 (5.56%)	180
13	Favoritism and nepotism in appointments within the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria contribute to a lack of fairness and equal opportunity for all regions and ethnicities.	75 (41.67%)	78 (43.33%)	10 (5.56%)	17 (9.44%)	180
14.	The level of adherence to the federal character principle in PCN is significantly reduced due to favoritism and nepotism in appointments.	77 (42.78%)	75 (41.67%)	14 (7.78%)	14 (7.78%)	180
15.	Favoritism and nepotism in PCN appointments negatively affect the effectiveness of the federal character principle in ensuring fair and balanced representation across Nigeria's regions and ethnicities	80 (44.44%)	82 (45.56%)	10 (5.56%)	8 (4.44%)	180

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 6 revealed the responses of respondents on the impact of favoritism and nepotism on adherence to the federal character principle within the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN). 81 (45%) respondents strongly agreed and 78 (43.33%) agreed that favoritism and

nepotism in appointments undermine adherence to the federal character principle. Only 11 (6.11%) respondents disagreed, and 10 (5.56%) strongly disagreed that these practices negatively affect the equitable representation of various regions and ethnic groups as mandated by the federal character principle. Similarly, 80 (44.44%) respondents strongly agreed, and 77 (42.78%) agreed that favouritism and nepotism lead to unequal representation of regions and ethnic groups within the PCN. While 13 (7.22%) respondents disagreed and 10 (5.56%) strongly disagreed that favouritism and nepotism lead to unequal representation of regions and ethnic groups within the PCN. This indicates that most respondents perceived favouritism and nepotism as significant contributors to regional and ethnic imbalances in staffing within the PCN.

Furthermore, 75 (41.67%) respondents strongly agreed, and 78 (43.33%) agreed that favoritism and nepotism create a situation of inequality. Only 10 (5.56%) disagreed, and 17 (9.44%) strongly disagreed that it does not engender inequality. 77 (42.78%) respondents strongly agreed, and 75 (41.67%) agreed, that these practices diminish the commitment to equitable representation. Only 14 (7.78%) respondents disagreed and 14 (7.78%) strongly disagreed, suggesting that other factors may affect adherence to the principle. Equally, 80 (44.44%) respondents strongly agreed, and 82 (45.56%) agreed that favoritism and nepotism negatively affect the effectiveness of the federal character principle in ensuring fair and balanced representation across Nigeria's regions and ethnicities. Only 10 (5.56%) respondents disagreed, and 8 (4.44%) strongly disagreed that favoritism and nepotism undermine the effectiveness of the federal character principle.

4.2.4: Research Question IV:

Has the non-compliance with the federal character principle and Representative Bureaucracy affected staff welfare in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria?

Table 7: Responses on the effect of the non-compliance with the federal character principle and Representative Bureaucracy on staff welfare in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria

S/ N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total
16.	Non-compliance with the federal character principle has negatively impacted the overall welfare of staff in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria.	77 (42.78)	66 (36.67)	19 (10.56)	18 (10%)	180
17	The lack of adherence to the representative bureaucracy in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria has contributed to disparities in staff welfare and benefits.	89 (49.44)	75 (41.67)	9 (5%)	7 (3.89%)	180
18	The failure to comply with the federal character principle has led to unequal access to opportunities and welfare benefits for staff in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria.	76 (42.22)	87 (48.33)	10 (5.56%)	7 (3.89%)	180
19	Non-compliance with the federal character principle within the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria results in unequal	75	64	21	20	180

	treatment and reduced welfare for staff from underrepresented regions.	(41.65)	(35.56)	(11.67)	(11.11)	
20	The absence of representative bureaucracy in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria has worsened staff morale and affected their welfare.	87 (52.37)	71 (39.74)	10 (5.56%)	12 (4.47%)	180

Source: Field

Data in Table 4 revealed that 77(42.78%) respondents strongly agreed and 36.67% agreed that non-compliance with the federal character principle has negatively affected the overall welfare of staff in the PCN. This indicates that the failure to comply with this principle resulted in unfair treatment of staff, leading to a decline in their welfare. Similarly, 89 (49.44%) respondents strongly agreed and 75 (41.67%) agreed that the lack of adherence to representative bureaucracy has contributed to disparities in staff welfare and benefits, suggesting that without proper regional and ethnic representation in decision-making, some staff members are disadvantaged when it comes to access to resources and opportunities. Furthermore, 76 (42.22%) and 87 (48.33%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that the failure to comply with the federal character principle has led to unequal access to opportunities and welfare benefits, underscoring the perception that some employees are deprived of fair chances for career advancement and access to welfare benefits. Data also showed that 75 (41.65%) and 64 (35.56%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed that non-compliance with the federal character principle has caused unequal treatment, particularly for staff from underrepresented states. While 21 (11.56%) disagreed and 20 (11.11%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that this lack of compliance results in marginalization of certain groups within the PCN. Also, 87 (52.37%) respondents strongly agreed and 71 (39.74%) agreed that the absence of representative bureaucracy has worsened staff morale and affected their welfare. While 10 (5.56%) disagreed respondents and 12 (4.47%) strongly disagreed that the lack of representative bureaucracy in the PCN has had a detrimental effect on staff welfare.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Research question one revealed that corruption in the recruitment and promotion processes within the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN) significantly undermines adherence to the Federal Character Principle. Over 35% of staff reported that decisions in recruitment and promotions were often influenced by corrupt practices, such as bribery and nepotism, rather than merit-based criteria. Corruption disproportionately affects marginalized regions, leaving qualified individuals from these areas underrepresented in key positions. This finding is consistent with Adebayo's (2021) view, which argued that corruption in public sector recruitment exacerbates systemic inequities, hindering socio-economic development and creating deep divides between regions. As a result, the capacity of the PCN to serve the entire nation equitably is severely compromised, leading to uneven development across regions.

Similarly, former President Olusegun Obasanjo lamented that the public service he left in 1979 was better than the one he came to meet in 1999 (Afahanam, 2019:35). Obasanjo also averred that public officers are the shopping floors of government business. He went further to say that many of the problems currently bedeviling the public service can be traced to the fact that political patrons in the Fourth Republic have encroached on the activities of the public service institutions. The practice of political patronage has eaten deep in our polity as a federation and in the public service. The power elite adopt political

patronage “as an arrangement for repaying hardworking party members whose exceptional ability in hijacking ballot boxes during the election must not go unnoticed” (Democracy Monitor, 2005, cited in Afahanam, 2019:35).

Also, Okorochoa (2012) cited in Udeuhele et al., (2019) affirmed that the Federal Character Commission (FCC) have not lived up to its constitutional responsibilities by check-mating the application of the principle of federal character, which has led to the marginalization, and lopsidedness in recruitment/appointment into government institutions without recourse to the public policy of federal character principle. According to him, even if merit was the basis for recruitment, the states that have high literacy levels should be considered more than the less educationally advanced states. But the reverse is the case in Nigeria, where favouritism, nepotism, cronyism, ethnicity and religiosity are the order of the day. This is so because Naidu (1996) cited in Afahanam (2019:145), posits that bureaucracy and corruption are intertwined. According to him, bureaucrats are often tempted to bend rules and regulations to benefit their friends and benefactors. They also seek to use their power and status to achieve their own, as opposed to organization ends. These bureaucratic excesses are clear-cut examples of corruption.

Similarly, bureaucrats are presumed to be politically neutral and purely administrative. But, in reality, bureaucrats are not passive as far as policy-making is concerned. Although they are subordinate to the political office holders or the elected executives, they are active participants in the formulation of policies and laws. Elected political executives are entirely dependent on the data and the ideas provided by career civil servants in policy-making, which corroborates this effort. An employee opinion survey by a Pesome person of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPM, 2014), cited in Afahanam (2009), revealed that promotions are more likely to be based on politics rather than actual job achievements.

Answers to research question two revealed that the inconsistent application of the quota system within the PCN exacerbates regional and ethnic imbalances. Over 50% of respondents indicated that the application of the Federal Character Principle was not followed, which contributed to significant under-representation of certain regions in senior positions. This disproportionate representation is consistent with Ekeh's (1989) argument that inconsistent application of the quota system results in the exclusion of less politically influential regions, thus deepening regional and ethnic divisions within public institutions. This inconsistency undermines the principle of fairness that the Federal Character is supposed to promote and further entrenches inequalities across the country.

The above scenario averred is further buttressed by Tunji Olaepa (the current Chairman of the Federal Civil Service Commission), who maintained that, the criteria of merit and examination for the purposes of recruitment and promotion have been known to be substituted with those of nepotism and friendship. Hence, “Political, family, ethnic and religious factors are important considerations in achieving bureaucratic appointments throughout the Third World countries. Simply put, it is easier to get a good position if you know someone (Olaepa, 2010:80).

From the above findings therefore, it can be deduced that the processes of recruitments and appointments of staff in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria has failed to comply with the relevant sections of the Nigerian constitution, Federal Character Commission Act 1995, Public Service Rule 2008 and Federal Government Recruitment Policy (2019) respectively shares fifteen (15) states such as Bayelsa, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe and FCT failed to secure up

to 2.5% let alone 3% or posts out of 388 workforce as required by law in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria which is a federal agency of government. This is contrary to Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), which states that:

The composition of the government of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character or Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or any of its agencies.

Similarly, Pharmacy Council of Nigeria also negates Federal Character Commission Act (1995) Section 4(1) which States that:

Not less than 2.5% and not more than 3% of posts in the federal civil service, including the police, the armed forces and other security agencies, shall be allocated to indigenes of each state of the federation.

Whereas Section 5(1) States that:

The President, in appointment persons to offices in public service of the federation, shall ensure that the posts are distributed equitably among the states of the federation having regard to the provisions of section 4(1) of this Act.

Furthermore, Pharmacy Council of Nigeria through its recruitment process violated Public Service Rules (2008) Rule 02 01 01 states that:

The Federal Government shall ensure that the composition of the public service reflects the federal character of Nigeria, with a minimum representation of 2.5% and a maximum of 3% of posts allocated to indigene of each state.

Finally, it violated the Federal Government Recruitment Policy (2019) Section 3(1) which states that:

The recruitment process shall ensure that the federal character principle is upheld, with a minimum of 2.5% and a maximum of 3% representation of indigenes from each state of the federation

These provisions aim to promote national unity, equity and fairness in federal government employment.

Answers to research question three revealed that favouritism and nepotism in appointments within the PCN contributed significantly to non-compliance with the Federal Character Principle. The study found that 65% of the staff believed appointments were influenced by personal relationships and ethnic affiliations, rather than merit. This practice undermines the merit-based approach that the Federal Character Principle advocates, leading to a lack of diversity within leadership positions. Meier & Nigro (1976) support this finding, arguing that nepotism and patronage in public administration hinder organizational effectiveness by prioritizing loyalty over competence. As a result, decision-making is concentrated among a select few, and organizational culture becomes skewed, reducing both the efficiency and morale of the staff. Similarly, Matthew (2009 cited in Afahanam 2019:13-14) observes that favouritism, nepotism and corruption are negative

traits that affect ethical practices in Nigeria's public service and the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria in particular.

Research question four also revealed that non-compliance with the Federal Character Principle and representative bureaucracy had a detrimental effect on the socio-economic development of PCN staff. The study found that 40% of staff from underrepresented regions reported fewer opportunities for career advancement, access to training programs, and equitable salary structures. These inequities led to dissatisfaction and low morale, especially among those from marginalized areas, with 55% of these respondents attributing their grievances to ethnic and regional biases. This finding aligns with Ugwoke & Chukwuemeka's (2020) assertion that non-adherence to the Federal Character Principle perpetuates socio-economic disparities, limiting professional growth for staff in underrepresented regions and contributing to broader national inequalities. Corroborating this, Udoba (2015) also observes that non-compliance with the federal character principle in Nigeria's public service promotes inefficiency in addressing socio-economic disparity. As a result, the unequal treatment of staff reduces job satisfaction, which negatively impacts overall organizational productivity and effectiveness.

Overall, the findings from the testing of the four hypotheses revealed that corruption, inconsistent application of the quota system, and nepotism within the PCN severely hinder adherence to the Federal Character Principle. These practices contribute to regional and ethnic imbalances, undermining the socio-economic development of the staff and the organizational effectiveness of the PCN. These results support existing scholarly perspectives that highlight the need for greater transparency, merit-based recruitment, and consistent application of the Federal Character Principle. Without addressing these systemic issues, the PCN will continue to struggle in fostering inclusivity, fairness, and national integration, limiting its capacity to serve all regions equitably and hindering national development.

5.0 Conclusion

Findings of this study revealed that the Federal Character Principle has not been adhered to in the operations of the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria (PCN). Issues of corruption, nepotism, and inconsistent application of the quota system have been found to be common in PCN, not only hindering the equitable representation of all regions and ethnic groups but also undermining the overall effectiveness of the institution. These practices have caused systemic inequalities in marginalized regions and groups, resulting in a lack of access to opportunities for professional growth and career advancement. Moreover, the socio-economic disparities exacerbated by these practices have broader implications for the public service sector. Inequities in representation and opportunities contribute to regional and ethnic tensions, undermining national efforts toward inclusivity and cohesion. For the PCN to regain its role as a leading institution committed to national development, it must reflect the diversity and potential of the nation it serves. Ensuring fair representation and adherence to principles of equity and inclusion is not merely an ethical imperative but a practical necessity for fostering a robust, dynamic, and unified public service capable of driving Nigeria's socio-economic growth.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Representatives of the Federal Character Commission, National Assembly Committee on Federal Character, Inter-governmental Affairs and other related government

establishments should be present during the recruitment, appointment and promotion of staff in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria.

- ii. Sanctions should be meted out to the management team of Pharmacy Council of Nigeria who fail to adhere strictly to the provisions of the constitution, the public service rules and other extant laws relating to the recruitment, appointments and promotion of staff. There is equally a need for annual personnel auditing of PCN by oversight authorities.
- iii. States that are rated less than 2.5% according to the Federal Character Commission guidelines of employment in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria should be given the right of first refusal to fill in their vacancies on merit, to shore up with others in the next recruitment and appointment opportunities, to ensure equal representation.
- iv. The Public Service Commission, on its part, should always and promptly intervene in cases of non-compliance with the recruitment, appointments and promotion processes in the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria by involving relevant sections of the constitution, public service rules against erring management or the chief executive officer of PCN to serve as a deterrent to others.

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APPENDIX I:

KREJCIE AND MORGAN Table for Determining sample size a known population

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	120	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 0	384
Note: N is population Sur, S is Samples size					Source: Krejcie and Morgan 1970				

Appendix 2:

Sample distribution of the study

S/N	Zone	No. of States in the Zone	No. of Staff Members working in the State	No. of Selected State	No. of Selected Members
1.	North-West (NW)	Kaduna State (Zonal and State office)	11	Kaduna State	11
		Kano State	9	Katsina State	4
		Katsina State	4		
		Jigawe State	4	Kebbi State	3
		Sokoto State	3		
		Kebbi State	3		
		Zamfara State	3		
		Total	36	Total	18
2.	North East (NE)	Bauchi State (Zonal and State office)	7	Bauchi State	7
		Borno State	5	Borno State	5
		Yobe Sate	3		

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		Adamawa State	3		
		Gombe State	4		
		Taraba State	3		
		Total	25	Total	12
3.	North Central (NC)	Niger State		Kwara State	06
		(Zonal and State office)	12	Plateau State	04
		Kogi State	4	Nasarawa State	07
		Kwara State	6		
		Plateau State	4		
		Nasarawa State	7		
		Benue State	2		
		Total	35	Total	17
4.	South West (SW)	Oyo State		Lagos	30
		(Zonal and State office)	11		
		Ogun State	7		
		Osun State	6		
		Lagos (Zonal office)	30		
		Ekiti State	4		
		Ondo State	3		
		Total	61	Total	30
5.	South-South (SS)	Akwalbom State		Akwalbom State	11
		(Zonal and State office)	11	Bayelsa State	3
		Cross River State	5	Cross Rivers	5
		Rivers State	6		
		Bayelsa State	3		
		Delta State	6		
		Edo State	7		
		Total	38	Total	19
6.	South-East (SE)	Enugu State		Enugu State	8
		(Zonal and State office)	8	Anambra State	10
		Anambra State	10		
		Imo State	6		
		Abia State	6		
		Ebonyi State	5		
		Total	36	Total	18
7.	Head Office	FCT		Zonal and Head office	77
		(Zonal and State office)	157	Total	
		Total	157		77
	TOTAL		358		191

Appendix 3:

Staff Recruitment Ratio in Pharmacy Council of Nigeria Based on States of Origin

S/N	STATE OF ORIGIN	NO. OF STAFF	PERCENTAGE %
1.	Abia	10	2.6
2.	Adamawa	5	1.3
3.	Akwalbom	16	4.1
4.	Anambra	24	6.2
5.	Bauchi	10	2.6
6.	Bayelsa	1	0.3
7.	Benue	19	4.9
8.	Borno	11	2.8
9.	Cross River	11	2.8
10.	Delta	10	2.6
11.	Ebonyi	9	2.3
12.	Edo	23	5.9
13.	Ekiti	8	2.1
14.	Enugu	20	5.2
15.	Gombe	5	1.3
16.	Imo	15	3.9
17.	Jigawa	2	0.5
18.	Kaduna	15	3.9
19.	Kano	12	3.1
20.	Katsina	13	3.4
21.	Kebbi	6	1.5
22.	Kogi	25	6.4
23.	Kwara	9	2.3
24.	Lagos	4	1.1
25.	Nasarawa	6	1.5
26.	Niger	17	4.4
27.	Ogun	15	3.9
28.	Ondo	12	3.1
29.	Osun	14	3.6
30.	Oyo	17	4.4
31.	Plateau	10	2.6
32.	Rivers	5	1.3
33.	Sokoto	1	0.3
34.	Taraba	1	0.3
35.	Yobe	3	0.8
36.	Zamfara	2	0.5
37.	FCT	2	0.5
	Total	388	100%

Source: 2023 Staff Nominal Roll of Pharmacy Council of Nigeria