

FEDERAL CHARACTER AND THE ETHICS OF ETHNIC BALANCING IN NIGERIAN UNIVERISTIES

<https://doi.org/10.47743/jopaf-2022-23-03>

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Abstract: *The discourse of the paper focuses on Federal Character and the Ethics of Ethnic Balancing in Nigeria using the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro as a study. Among the problems identified facing Nigeria is the high rate of marginalisation and inequality within tribes in Nigeria. The Federal Character was however established to manage this situation by ensuring adequate representation of all ethnic groups across all government establishments. Data for this study was derived from both primary and secondary sources. Respondents for the study were staff of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro. The study revealed that the federal character principle has not been able to address the obvious imbalances in the various segments of the nation owing to its method of application. Also, it was discovered that the preference given to the Northern regions in employment of staff has not improved the status of the Northern region, the reason is because the Northern elites probably have not put in their best to change the attitudinal disposition of their youths towards Western education. Hence, the paper in its recommendation, recommends that The principle should not be applied only when it is in the interest of a particular section of the country. Rather it should be applied in such a way that every section of the country will be carried along.*

Keywords: *Marginalisation, Ethnicity, Federal Character, Inequality*

Introduction

Nigeria a federation of many different nations is the most populous country in Africa with about 160 million people. The country is divided into 36 states and 748 local government areas. The religious, ethnic, and cultural diversities of the federating units no doubt make it a unique one. Otite (1990) in Mustapha (2007), identifies 374 ethnicities which are broadly divided into ethnic 'majorities' and ethnic 'minorities'. The majority ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani of the north, the Yoruba of the southwest, and the Igbos of the southeast. However, the relationship between these groups is characterized by fear and suspicion of domination of one state or ethnic group by another. Meanwhile, this suspicion and fear between groups is historical. However, it became pronounced when Sir Fredrick Lord Lugard began the process of subjecting ethnic groups with a history of mutual distrust and hatred together as one Nigeria. Remarkably, these ethnic groups are not of equal population and hence some tend to dominate others thus exploiting them. Also, political and economic imbalances exist among these various states or ethnic groups that make up Nigeria. These imbalances arose from the nature and character of the post colonial Nigerian state. In almost all the sectors, state, ethnic or regions, people feel marginalized.

These have brought about a choking socio-economic competition among the various ethnic groups which have resulted into ethno-regional conflict and tension that characterize Nigeria since 1960. The emergence of various militia groups in the Niger Delta, OPC in the South-West, MASSOB in the South East and of recent Boko Haram in the North, are all indications of the existence of rivalries between and among the various groups over the sharing of national cake. These ethnic, regional, and religious divides in the country have become so problematic with resultant patterns of inequalities. These inequalities are caused by a complex range of factors, including history, geography, cultural orientation, religious affiliation, natural resource endowments, current government policies, and past colonial policies. Akinola and Adesopo (2011) in Aderonke (2013) support this argument when they posit that, the problem of ethnic minority has been receiving attention of scholars and practitioners of governance and development. This is because ethnic minority is usually sidelined and ignored by the majority in decision making and resources distribution.

The consequence of such politics of exclusion has been agitation and demand for social inclusion, which at times results to violent actions. Society is a system of human cooperation, the question of how society can mainstream the minority groups in decision making on welfare matters, requires adequate policy consideration. Lack of adequate representation by the ethnic groups constitutes a great threat to national integration. In realization of some inherent cleavages of inequalities, the federal character principle was introduced. The effectiveness of this policy measure in fostering national integration as well as promoting national development in Nigeria has been one of the most controversial and problematic issues in any political, social and economic discourse. The problem is that despite the adoption of the federal character principles since 1979, achieving national integration has been very difficult. It was in view of correcting this abnormality that the Federal Character Commission was set up and inaugurated on July 2002 as an executive agency charged with the responsibility of implementing Federal Character provisions and to uphold its principles. The essence is to ensure that government decisions on citing industries, building roads, awarding scholarships, appointment of public office holders, admission, employment and revenue allocations etc reflect federal character. But the problem is that, there is still a high rate of lopsidedness in the above mention areas of government decisions. The high rate of social segregation inherent in the political and social reams of the country, ethnic and religion divides, agitations, and crises brought to the front burner the basis for the adoption of the federal character principle in Nigeria. The question is, why has the Federal character principle failed in bringing about the desired ethnic balancing in Nigeria? It is against this background that this paper examines federal character and the ethics of ethnic balancing in Nigeria using the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro as a study.

Research questions were formed to provide answers to issues identified. The following are the questions;

- i. *How has the federal character principle impeded ethnic balancing in Nigeria using the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro as a study?*
- ii. *How has the federal character principle promoted the growth of ethics of ethnic balancing in Nigeria a study of Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro?*
- iii. *What mechanism can be devised to promote the ethics of ethnic balancing in Nigeria a study of Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro?*

Research Hypothesis

- i. *Federal Character Principles has not significantly impeded the ethics of ethnic balancing in Nigeria using Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro as a study.*
- ii. *There are no possible mechanisms for the promotion of ethnic balancing in Nigeria a study of Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro.*

The Origin and Concept of Federal Character in Nigeria

The account of scholars like Afigbo (1989), Ekeh (1989), Gboyega (1989) and Uroh (2000) on the origin of federal character principle in Nigeria seem to be similar. Afigbo (1989) was however more specific, when he posits that “the term federal character is one of the inventions of the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC) inaugurated by the late General Murtala Mohamed on 18th October, 1975.” Other scholars merely traced the origin of federal character to the 1979 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Afigbo (1989) corroborated the view, when he argues that “it was in the course of the debate on that section of the report of the sub-committee on the executive and the legislature which dealt with how to promote national loyalty in a multi-ethnic society that the phrase – federal character was coined.” The CDC (1977) conceptualized federal character as:

refers to the distinctive desire of the peoples of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging to the nation notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, culture, language or religion which may exist and which it is their desire to nourish, harness to the environment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The above definition of federal character by the CDC appears very inadequate and suffers on many counts. As documented by Afigbo (1989), federal character cannot be a desire. In addition “the desire to nourish” in the definition appear very ambiguous. What is the desire? If the desire is known, then what is the desire attempting to nourish? It seems logical to say that the CDC only tried to highlight some issues agitating the mind of Nigerians on how to make every segment of the society to be represented in the formulation and implementation of government policies known in Nigeria as “the National Question.” While canvassing for support of the adoption of the federal character principle in the 1979 Nigerian Constitution as strategy for peace, equity and stability, the CDC (1977) argued thus:

There had in the past been inter-ethnic rivalry to secure the domination of government by one ethnic group or combination of ethnic groups to the exclusion of others. It is therefore essential to have some provisions to ensure that the predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups is avoided in the composition of government or the appointment or election of persons to high offices in the state.

The phrase “desire of the peoples of Nigeria to promote national unity” in the earlier definition by the CDC (1977) is an indication that there is the need to reappraise the Nigerian federal system, in order to achieve enduring unity and sustainable development. In this regard, Afigbo (1989) submitted that “federal character of Nigeria must be taken to mean...the character of the Nigerian federation.” According to him, to understand and define the character of the Nigerian federation, the following factors must be noted: the innate or primordial characteristics of Nigeria’s federal society going back to the days of

yore; the quality and performance of the statesmanship which has sought to harness the inborn characteristics of Nigeria's federal society to a federal constitution; the degree of harmony existing between the primordial features and usages of Nigerian society; the structure and usages of the constitution; and the fact that the character of the Nigerian federation has been rather dynamic in response to the changing perceptions of statesmanship and other relevant forces.

The import of the above exposition is that the term federal character becomes lucid mainly in the light of history, because the problems which federal character encapsulates has existed in Nigeria in different forms and with varying degree since the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates in 1914. Ekeh (1989) however argues, "the problems that the doctrine of Nigerian federal character deals with are...partially federal in nature. The issues associated with federal character relate as much to unitary systems of government" As documented in the 1979 constitution, federal character purports to deal with distribution of privileges and benefits among the primordial components of any state organization. It is this preoccupation with sharing privileges and benefits that come with participation in government (and not in resource generation or "cake-baking") that is the major albatross of the implementation or application of the federal character principle in Nigeria. The need therefore to tinker with this practice with a view to ensuring administrative effectiveness for sustainable development in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Gboyega (1989) posits that the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy in the 1979 constitution explains federal character to mean that: The composition of the Federal Government or any of its agencies and the conduct of their affairs shall be carried out in such manner as to recognize the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and to command national loyalty. Accordingly, the predominance in that government or its agencies of persons from a few ethnic or other sectional groups shall be avoided.

The above constitutional mandate was made with a view to enhance participation of people from different segments of the Nigerian society in the process of governance. However, Onyeoziri (2002) observes that "the implementation of the federal character has caused a lot of tension among the different federating units in the country." The reasons for the tension are as follow: the fuzziness that pervades its application in certain areas; the arbitrariness that seems to accompany its application even in areas where the application seems straight, especially during the military regimes; lack of political will from the leading elite to employ sanctions when the rules are breached; and lack of definite guideline in achieving balance between equity and efficiency in the application of the principle. These factors tend to highlight the liabilities to the judicious practice of the principle and poses serious encumbrances to the realization of sustainable development in Nigeria (Onyeoziri, 2002).

Concept of Ethnic Balancing

Constitutional-Integrative School anchored their thesis on the CDC document, 1979, 1989 and 1999 Constitutions (See Section 14 (3 to 4) of the 1999 Constitution. This view posits that these documents made provisions where no dominant entity should dominate of any state, ethnic group, religion or section in term of appointments recruitment and promotion. Discrimination school on the other hand argued that this policy is a design

anchored on ideology to perpetuate the dominance of the minority elites and their exploitation, exclusion and oppression of the majority. As defined by the Constitution Drafting Committee (1976:22), the federal character principle is:

The distinctive desire of the people of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging to the nation (notwithstanding the diversities of the ethnic origin, which may exist and which it is their desire to nourish and harness to the enrichment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The 1979 Constitution amended the 1976 definition by dropping the passage in brackets and substituted a reference to “a sense of belonging to the nation as expressed in Section 14 (3) and (4) of the 1979 Constitution” Section 14 (3) clearly spelt out the *modus operandi* of the Federal Character principles as follows:

The composition of the government of the Federation or any of its agencies be carried out in such manner as to reflect the Federal Character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and also to command loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or any of its agencies (The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979).

Bello (2012) adds that in pursuant to this provision, various other provisions were made in the Constitution to guarantee that the federal character principle is operative. This various provisions enjoins that the conduct of the affairs of central, state and local government bodies shall be carried out in such manner as to recognize the diversity of the people within its areas of authority and the need to promote a sense of belonging and loyalty among all peoples of the federation. The implication of this provision, the 1979, 1989 and 1999 Constitutions for federal bureaucracy in Nigeria is interesting. Following composition of the federal public services for instance and the conduct of its affairs must reflect the federal character of Nigeria. And this can only be seen to have been done if it does not contain a predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups. In practice this means that in the appointment, promotion and postings of the federal public servants, every state, ethnic group religions or any other sectional group should be represented. Thus, the criterion of membership of the federal bureaucracy is heavily skewed in favor of representation.

Representation of states, ethnic or any other sectional group especially religious groups in the composition of federal bureaucracy has, thus, superseded recruitment on the basis of knowledge and technical qualification as determined through a competitive examination. The situation is not different when it comes to promotion and postings. 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. Under such situations, one's erstwhile subordinates usually become one's superiors overnight. Postings of federal civil servants in some cases 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 (Okoli, 1990).

Paradoxically, the federal character principle has succeeded in institutionalizing North-South dichotomy rather than integrating it. To those from the Northern parts of the

country federal character is synonymous with quota system and means therefore a proportional absorption into federal institutions. To those from the Southern parts of the country, it means an attempt by the “North” to infiltrate into areas which they hitherto regarded as “theirs” by right (Suberu, 2001 & Dagaci, 2009). The federal character principle carried an inherent tug-of-war between the claims of belonging to the nation and the claims of locally recognized diversity. It is the insisting on equal representation and individual rights that will rock the boat of national integration. If we are to accept the intent of the concept that it carries an unambiguous and unchallengeable mandate for national integration, then the present provision has to be completely reexamined. (Okoli, 1990). The Federal Government (1986) tried to resolve the problems created by the constitutional provision of federal character in the polity. The Report of the Political Bureau had argued thus, the constitutional definition of Nigerian citizenship should, as a matter of urgency, be studied with a view to removing the difficulties and anomaly arising from the interpretation of the relevant Sections of the 1979

Federal Character and Ethnic Balancing in Nigeria

The assertion that Nigeria is a creation of British colonialism is no longer irrefutable. Driven by economic considerations, the colonialists annulled the sovereignty and independence of the hitherto disparate autonomous socio-political entities which had inhabited Nigeria. The consequence of this resort is that the various nationalities inhabiting Nigeria have not been welded into a nation in which all of them would have a stake rather it provided a favorable environment for mutual suspicion and distrust among the disparate groups in Nigeria (Bello, 2012 in Adetiba, 2013). This situation no doubt impedes efforts at national integration in terms of building a united Nigeria out of the incongruent ethnic, geographic, social, economic and religious differences in the country. Equally, are the characters of Leaders in Nigeria? As most of them are Nationalists in the day and ethicists by night, as they only advocate Federalism in name, but actually worked towards the accrue of advantage to their ethnic units. Pye cited in Sharma (2012) had earlier observed that in societies or countries where there is high rate of social dissension, loyalty to family, language, religion, caste, or ethnic groups diminish individual commitment to national political system with great potential for political unrest and instability. Nigerians have come to agree that the greatest danger facing the development of this great country is not necessarily only corruption, but also lack of national identity and sense of belonging among majority of its citizens. Most Nigerians owe their loyalty to either the north or south or their ethnic nationalities. Politicians, who want to get undue advantage usually, fan the embers of North/South dichotomy or ethnic or religion differentiations to achieve their selfish aim or desire. Instead of achieving unity through balancing of interest, the country is further divided and polarized. The danger inherent is that consolidating nationalism disguise of federal character principle threatens the appropriateness of the federal system in Nigeria.

The federal character principle has been manipulated and channeled to serve the overall interest of the petty bourgeois ruling class. The members of this class formulate and operate the principle to achieve their selfish desires under the guise of the federal character principle. They get themselves entrenched in power and exercise control over the machinery of state through the application of this principle. They strive to reconcile their

class differences through the operation of acceptable formula for the allocation, distribution and sharing of national resources and benefits among themselves. While they do this, they capitalize on and fan the ethnic differences among the various Nigerian peoples to win the support of the masses in their areas. And in the course of this elite game, members of this class climb to positions, amass wealth and enrich themselves illegally. Thus, the federal character principle is merely an elite ploy, which would not materially improve the lot of the downtrodden in whose name it is raised (Awa 1972, Agbaje 1989, Gboyega, 1989 in Aderonke, 2013). The federal character principles satisfied the quest for representativeness and appointment among various groups. However in the application of the formula as noted by Bodunrin (1989) in *Students' Diary* (2013) choices are often made on the basis of other criteria other than merit. For example, the federal character as applied in educational sector leads to lowering of standard against national interest. In the army, it leads to the production of sub grade soldiers and officers. In the civil and public services of the federation, standards and professionalism are compromise by eschewing meritocracy without recourse to standards. The federal character becomes morally reprehensible and an act of injustice. Viewed from this perspective, the quota factor in the federal character principle becomes counterproductive to peaceful and orderly progress, and the development of Nigeria.

In recent times, one of the major and most problematic outcomes of the federal character principle is the complexity of the interest and agitations by some states and local government as well as some ethnic and religious groups in the country. For example, the recent agitation for more states and the proposal for the creation of additional twelve states by the Committee on National Conference are indications of the unending agitations for more representation by the various ethnic groups in the country with great implication for national stability if implemented. Also, the establishment of federal educational institutions in every state was to enhance greater representativeness and distribution of government facilities and other opportunities. However, this has led to the multiplication of governmental and administrative units and facilities which has become very expensive and another drain pipe to the nation. Also, the recent Privatization of Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) has put the wealth of this country in the hands of a few Nigerians at the expense of majority of the people. The masses need to be given equal opportunities for employment, equitable share in the distribution of resources and benefits of the state in terms of provision of social amenities such as education, access to good roads, portable water, housing; etc, which will bring about improvement in their standard of living. To this end, the political system, should arrest the exploitation of the less privileged in the society and redress their feeling of insecurity. It is only when this welfare issue is address that the great majority of the people can “develop a sense of national identify transcending parochial loyalties of ethnicity, religion, language and region” (Agbodike, 1998 in Adeosun, 2011).

Challenges of Federal Character Principle in Nigeria

Lack of adequate representation by the federating states in Nigeria constitutes the greatest threat to national integration and economic development. Remarkably the choking socio-economic competition among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria manifest in ethno-regional conflict and tension that characterize Nigeria since 1960. Thus the relationship between these groups is characterized by fear and suspicion of domination of one state or

ethnic group by another. This leads to national disintegration and consequent canonical underdevelopment. Meanwhile, this suspicion and fear between groups is historical. However, it became pronounced when Sir Fredrick Lord Lugard began the process of subjecting ethnic groups with a history of mutual distrust and hatred together as one Nigeria. Remarkably, these ethnic groups are not of equal population and hence some tend to dominate others thus exploit others. Today we talk about the Igbos , the Hausa/Fulani and the Yoruba as the major ethnic groups and the Urobo, Itshekiri, Ijaw, Igala, Kanuri, Nupe, Tiv and more than 200 others are referred to as the minority. These inherent competitions for control of the limited resources has the tendency to destabilize hence disintegrate the polity and stifle economic development. This explain, why Dudley (1973) argued that political stability is the inevitable consequence of the failure of constitutional and institutional rules to find firm roots in the society and in the wind of the political actors. This political instability is a consequence of the nature and character of the post colonial states. The Nigeria state could not perform the primary role of state, rather, it become part of the struggle which it ought to moderate. This tends to discourage ethnic balancing which is a prerequisite for economic development. Similarly, Ononogbu and Okoroiwu (2019) in their work also identified the challenges of federal character principle in Nigeria. The following are the identified challenges;

Marginalization/Disunity: Originally, the principle of federal character was provided in the constitution to foster unity in diversity and promote peaceful cooperation, but its application has caused envy and jealousy which has led to disunity. Imagine a situation where the posts of vice chancellor in Nigerian federal universities are exclusively reserved to indigenes of the state or region where the university is cited. Thereby, making it practically impossible to have a Yoruba man being a vice chancellor in a university that is in the South East viz a viz; regardless of being the most qualified in line to assume such post. Also, a situation whereby a citizen worked hard, met the necessary requirements for a position or an admission but was rewarded with denial to such while his or her fellow citizen was given such despite the fact that such individual did not attain the skillful requirement for such but because the individual originated from a state regarded as economic or education disadvantaged. The rightful individual for such opportunity will have no option than to hate the nation called Nigeria and the citizens of such economic and education disadvantaged states thereby leading to disunity (Tion, Aondoakaa and Orluchukwu, 2014).

Inequality: One of the major reasons for the introduction of the federal character principle was to solve the problem of inequality in Nigeria. But from the look of things it seems the principle is helping in effectuating what it is supposed to be fighting against. Many policy analysts have criticized the principle on the ground that the distributive justice which it aims to achieve is of two types; namely arithmetical and proportional equality. Simple arithmetical equality assumes the equality of all state. But states are not equal. They differ in size, population and size of the pool of eligible candidate for appointment. In the words of Ayoade (in Segun et al, 2014), “there is no greater inequality than the equal treatment of unequal”. Proportional equality would therefore be fairer and less discriminatory than arithmetical equality. But more appropriately, the appointment must reflect the size of eligible candidate per state so that excellence is rewarded. Competent people who are disqualified based on state of origin and such other spurious criteria cannot be a willing material on which to erect the unity of the country.

Corruption and Inefficiency: Many public officials hide under the federal character principle to promote corruption by willingly denying some individuals some positions and granting same to their favorites who lacked primary knowledge of the functions of such office. The people that gained from such immoral and unprofessional act will have no option than promoting incompetence that will end up increasing the rate of corruption in the polity.

Also, by encouraging the recruitment of services of unqualified personnel, the Federal Character Principle sustains inefficiency in service delivery which will in turn, force the government and populace to witness massive economic and financial loss thereby worsening the health of the nation’s economy.

Methodology

Considering the importance of federal character to ethnic balancing, the use of both primary and secondary sources of data becomes imperative. This study is a scientific research which has to be systematically analyzed subject to high reliability and verification. The population for this study is Four Hundred and Sixty Seven (467). In this study, a stratified random sampling technique was used to select the staff of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro. A purposive random sampling was then used to select respondents to be included in the study sample in each strata in the various units and departments. The use of this technique enabled the researcher to pick those who best met the purposes of this research. One hundred (100) respondents were chosen from the population to which questionnaires were distributed. Out of this number, 96 were returned. The questionnaires were distributed to people from various units. Responses were recorded by tick in the boxes/spaces provided.

Data Presentation and Analyses

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

Questionnaire Retrieved	Frequency	Percentage (f)
Un-retrieved	4	4
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey (December, 2021)

Table 1 shows that 100 questionnaires were administered to the respondents, out of which 96 representing 96% were correctly filled and returned, 4 questionnaires representing 04% were not returned.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 – 25years	-	-
26 – 30years	-	-
31 – 35years	21	21
36& Above	75	79

Total	96	100
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Source: Field survey (December, 2021)

Table 4.2 shows the age distribution of the respondents. From the responses none of the respondents is between 20-25years of age. Similarly, none of the respondents belong to age group 26-30years while 21% are between 31-35years and 79% between 36 and above.

Table 3: Academic Qualification of Respondents

Departments	Frequency	Percentage (%)
MSC/MBA	39	41
HND/BSC	35	37
OND	10	10
Other Qualifications	12	12
Total	96	100

Source: Field survey (December, 2021)

Table 3 shows the academic qualification of respondents. It showed that 41% of them have MSC/MBA, 37% with HND/BSC while 10% are with HND and 12% belongs to the others category.

Question 1: The application of Federal Character principles helps in ethnic balancing?

Table 4: Application of Federal Character

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	50	53
Agree	25	26
Undecided	5	05
Disagree	6	06
Strongly Disagree	10	10
Total	96	100

Source: Field survey (December, 2021)

As shown in table 4, out of 96 respondents sampled, 53% of the respondents strongly agreed that the application of Federal Character principles helps in ethnic balancing, 26% of the respondents agree while 05% were undecided, 06% of them disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed. With this analysis, it shows that the respondents believe in the application of federal character.

Question 2: The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro has applied the federal character principles in the employment of workers?

Table 5: Federal Character Principles on Workers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	60	62
Agree	30	29
Undecided	03	03
Disagree	03	03

Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	96	100

Source: Field survey (December, 2021)

Table 5 shows that 62% of the respondents strongly agreed that the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro has applied the federal character principles in the employment of workers, 29% of them agree. Also 03% were undecided; and another 03% disagree to the statement that the principle of federal character is applied at the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro.

Question 3: Federal character principles have facilitated ethnic balancing at Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro?

Table 6: Federal Character Principles and Ethnic Balancing at Federal Polytechnic

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	71	74
Agree	20	21
Undecided	05	05
Disagree	00	00
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	96	100

Source: Field survey (December, 2021)

Table 6 indicates that 74% of the respondents strongly agreed that federal character principles have facilitated ethnic balancing at Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, 21% of them agreed. 05% were undecided, 00% of them disagreed and 00% strongly disagreed. The analysis implies that the Polytechnic, as facilitated federal character.

Question 4: Federal character principles have affected the employment of qualified manpower?

Table 7: Federal Character and Employment

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	24	25
Agree	58	60
Undecided	12	13
Disagree	02	02
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	96	100

Source: Field survey (December, 2021)

From Table 7, 25% of the respondents strongly agreed that federal character principles have affected the employment of qualified manpower, 60% of the respondents agreed, while 13% of the respondents were undecided and 02% disagree to the statement. The implication of this is that with federal character, employment of unqualified is certain.

Question 5: Federal character principle has promoted the growth of ethics of ethnic balancing in Nigeria?

Table 8: Federal Character and Ethnic Balancing

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree 06	06	
Agree	05	05
Undecided	00	00
Disagree	30	31
Strongly Disagree	55	58
Total	96	100

Source: Field survey (December, 2021)

Table 8 shows that, 06% of the respondents strongly agreed that federal character principle has promoted the growth of ethics of ethnic balancing in Nigeria; 05% of the respondents agree, while 00% of the respondents were undecided, 31% of them disagreed and 58% strongly disagreed.

Question 6: Lack of the application of federal character principles is an impediment to ethnic balancing at Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro?

Table 9: Impediments of Ethnic Balancing

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree 41	43	
Agree	36	37
Undecided	05	05
Disagree	08	08
Strongly Disagree	06	07
Total	96	100

Source: Field survey (December, 2021)

Table 9 shows that, 43% of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of the application of federal character principles is an impediment to ethnic balancing at Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, 37% of the respondents agree, while 05% of the respondents were undecided, 08% of them disagreed and 07% strongly disagreed to the statement.

Question 7: Without the application of federal character principles in government organisations the ethics of ethnic balancing cannot be achieved at Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro

Table 10: Federal Character in Government Organisations

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree 35	37	
Agree	20	21
Undecided	00	00
Disagree	20	21
Strongly Disagree	21	22
Total	96	100

Source: Field survey (December, 2021)

Table 10 reveals that 37% of the respondents strongly agreed that without the application of federal character principles in government organisation the ethics of ethnic balancing cannot be achieved at Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro 21% of the respondents agreed while, 00% was undecided, 21% of the respondents disagreed and 22% strongly disagreed.
Question 8: The Federal Polytechnic has facilitated the growth of ethnic balancing through federal character?

Table 11: Growth of Ethnic Balancing at Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	58	60
Agree	35	37
Undecided	03	03
Disagree	00	00
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	96	100

Source: Field survey (December, 2021)

Table 11 shows that, 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that the Federal Polytechnic has facilitated the growth of ethnic balancing through federal character, 37% of the respondents agreed. While 03% of the respondents were undecided, 00% of them disagreed and 00% strongly disagreed.

Question 9: The Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, has a mechanism put in place for promoting ethnic balancing?

Table 12: Mechanism for Promoting Ethnic Balancing

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	46	48
Agree	30	31
Undecided	00	00
Disagree	11	12
Strongly Disagree	09	09
Total	96	100

Source: Field survey (December, 2021)

From Table 12, 48% of the respondents strongly agreed that the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro has a mechanism put in place for promoting ethnic balancing, 31% of the respondents agreed while 00% of the respondents were undecided, 12% of them disagreed and 09% strongly agreed. Majority of the respondents agreed that to the statement.

Question 10: The mechanism put in place by the management of Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro for promoting ethnic balancing respects the application of federal character principles?

Table 13: Mechanism for Promoting Ethnic Balancing

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	42	44
Agree	36	37
Undecided	05	05
Disagree	08	09

Strongly Disagree	05	05
Total	96	100

Source: Field survey (December, 2021)

Table 13 shows that, 44% of the respondents strongly agreed that The mechanism put in place by the management of Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro for promoting ethnic balancing respects the application of federal character principles, 37% of them agreed while 05% of the respondents were undecided, 09% of the respondents disagreed and 05% strongly disagreed.

Discussion of Findings

This study examines the link between federal character and ethnic balancing in Nigeria. In achieving the objectives of the study, some questions were asked. Questions were asked and formed from this.

The result of the first test showed that federal character Principles has not significantly impeded the ethics of ethnic balancing in Nigeria. This was further supported with the responses from the respondents. 53% of the respondents strongly agreed that the application of Federal Character principles helps in ethnic balancing. Similarly, 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that the Federal Polytechnic has facilitated the growth of ethnic balancing through federal character.

The second test showed that there are no possible mechanisms for the promotion of ethnic balancing in Nigeria a study of Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro. The response from the respondents negates this when 48% of the respondents strongly agreed that the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro has a mechanism put in place for promoting ethnic balancing. Also, 44% of the respondents strongly agreed that The mechanism put in place by the management of Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro for promoting ethnic balancing respects the application of federal character principles.

Conclusion

The paper explored the federal character principle, its applicability and challenges in Nigeria. From the available data and cases reviewed in this work, we discovered that the federal character principle has not being able to address the obvious imbalances in the various segments of the country owing to its method of application. Also, it was discovered that the preference given to the Northern regions in employment of staff has not improved the status of the Northern region, the reason is because the Northern elites probably have not put in their best to change the attitudinal disposition of their youths towards Western education. The principle on its part is not a total failure, but there is need for urgent adjustment in the application of the principle in such a way that it will not be targeted in favoring a particular sect of the country at the expense of other sections.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following for the successful application of the federal character principle:

- The principle should not be applied only when it is in the interest of a particular section of the country. Rather it should be applied in such a way that every section of the country will be carried along.
- The study recommends that the federal character principle should not be applied in employment processes into government established institutions. Everything regarding employment should be on merit and not sentiment.

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