

**FEDERAL CHARACTER PRINCIPLE AND NATIONAL INTERGRATION IN
EDO STATE: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned certify that this project carried out by **Onyemachi Vivian Chinasa** with matriculation number **SSC2105867** is adequate in scope and quality in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Sciences degree in Public Administration.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty, whose guidance and grace have been my strength throughout this journey. The work is also dedicated to the loving memory of my late father, Mr Onyemachi Okereke.

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All glory to God Almighty for making this work a reality. I am profoundly grateful for His grace, guidance, and strength throughout this journey.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page									
Certification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	i
Dedication	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ii
Acknowledgements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iii
Abstract	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iv
Table of contents	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	v
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION									
1.1	Background to the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1.2	Statement of the Problem	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
1.3	Research Question	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
1.4	Objective of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
1.5	Significance of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
1.6	Scope of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
1.7	Limitation of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
1.8	Definition of Terms	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK									
2.1.0	Conceptual Frame Work	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
2.1.2	The Evolution of the Concept of Federal Character Principle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
2.1.3	The Concept of National Integration	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23
2.1.4	Federal Character Principle and National Integration	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26
2.2	Theoretical Framework	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY									
3.1	Research Design	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35
3.2	Population of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35
3.3	Sample Size and Sample Technique	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36
3.4	Source Data	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37
3.5	Validity of the Instrument	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38
3.6	Instrument of Data Collection	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38
3.7	Technique of Data Analysis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	39

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1	Presentation and Data Analysis	-	-	-	38
4.2	Discussion of Findings	-	-	-	48

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1	Summary	-	-	-	-	-	-	51
5.2	Conclusion	-	-	-	-	-	-	52
5.3	Recommendations	-	-	-	-	-	-	51
	Bibliography	-	-	-	-	-	-	55
	Appendix	-	-	-	-	-	-	

ABSTRACT

This study is to investigate the issues and prospect in federal character principle and national integration. The study objectives includes federal character principle impacted the different aspects of the Nigeria polity, the issues with the federal character principle in University of Benin, the challenges of the federal character principle in University of Benin, and the prospects of the federal character principle in University of Benin. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design, which is a non-experimental method. This study used stratified sampling technique to select 13 respondents from the fifteen (15) faculties in the University of Benin resulting in a total sample size of 195 respondents. The study find out that Nigeria is a plural society with different cleavages; ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, as well as geo-political, social and economic challenges. Ethnic heterogeneity is inarguably, the most pervasive of them all. The study find out that there is mutual suspicion existing among the various social groups. The finding from the study indicated that the method of application of federal character principle is very doubtful. The study finds out that the application of the federal character principle in Nigeria has encountered several difficulties. The finding showed that the University of Benin has a mechanism put in place for promoting ethnic balancing. However, the mechanism put in place by the University of Benin for promoting ethnic balancing is not working. Finding showed that the lack of application of federal character principles is one of the challenges of the principle. 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. A constitutional amendment is recommended to establish true federalism, allowing Universities to control 50% of their resources.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Nigeria is a plural society with different cleavages ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, as well as geo-political, social and economic challenges - but ethnic heterogeneity is inarguably, the most pervasive of them all. The problem ethnicity poses is that political competition and access to power is overtly drawn along ethnic lines. Since Nigerian federalism is based on ethnic and not geographical diversities, it has tended to exacerbate centrifugal forces in the country. Therefore, the struggle for acquisition and access to power in Nigeria has been patterned largely along ethnic lines (Vande, 2022). This becomes more problematic because the State is not a neutral force in mediating political conflict as it can be captured and used to further the interests of the leadership of an ethnic group or a combination of such groups.

The problem of acrimonious existence among the diverse groups and interests in the federation of Nigeria leading to mutual distrust and inter-community conflicts has become perennial and endemic in the nation's body politics and has militated against the political stability of the country since independence (Agbodike, 2024). The fear of domination of one ethnic group or section of the country by another and the national question of who gets what and how the national cake should be shared constitute a major factor of this problem. According to Offiong (1998), the National Question has to do with multitude of questions relating to a common denomination, political and social- economic wellbeing of a people, the National Question is pregnant with so many answers. According to Nwankwo (1999) the National Question of federal Principle application seeks the most fundamental suspicious and ideal manner or way to resolve the issue of

the various nationalities, or ethnic group lives and fulfilment, the principle grips with contemporary Nigeria politics because of its focus on the process of democratization and national restructuring. Therefore, the national question seeks to solve constitutionally the problem of marginalization of some groups by others. In his contribution Nwabueze (2019) said that Nigeria is not a nation but an amalgam of nation, a conglomeration of numerous antagonistic, incompatible nationalities and individuals living together in a defined geographical location as members of one country. Nwabueze contends that the issue underlying the National Question (an assessment of the federal character principle) lies in inequalities existing in different sectors of the state.

Federal character principle connotes the principle of equity in representation of all sectors of the country in governmental bureaucracy. According to Alhaji Abdulahi Magajin Masuwa, a honorable pre-independence era of Nigeria, said "I am appealing to the rest honorable members, that we in Nigeria should be united in diversity, I think it would be a good idea if we equalize our army officers" (Ebohon, 2020). As a result of mutual suspicion existing among the various social groups, whatever the issue at hand in Nigeria, the patterns of reaction to it will be determined by geo-political as well as religious considerations. This situation seriously hampers efforts at national unity as it applies to the building of a united Nigeria out of the disparate ethnic geographic, social, economic and religious elements or groups in the country (Gamberi, 1994; Kurfi 1998).

The problem of national integration in Nigeria is not remarkably different from that of most of nations that were colonized in Africa. As a result, the Nigerian state, like

many other African States, has often been compelled to deal with the issue of national integration. Efforts at achieving national integration in Nigeria therefore have remained largely unrealized. The integration crisis facing the country is manifested in the minority question, Religious conflicts, ethnic politics, resource control, youth restiveness and call for a Sovereign national conference. As a result, achieving a united and stable political system is still a serious challenge to the Nigerian state. As a divided society with multi-ethnicity and Multiculturalism, the task of nation-building and forging of a system perceived by the varied nationalities as justice-able has been difficult (Ifenacho and Nwagwu, 2019).

The principle of federal character was formulated and put into use by the government to address and hopefully mitigate this problem so as to ensure a peaceful, stable and integrated Nigeria. This research is set out to examine critically the expediency of the federal character principle as an integrative mechanism with a view to pointing out whether or not it is succeeding in integrating Nigeria or widening the dichotomy among Nigerians, the federal project or experiment needs to be seen not merely as formal set of institutions and processes, but could also be viewed as a strategy for political management. The implication therefore, is that, there is no ideal federal model for nations to adopt and emulate. Thus, the federal arrangement that a given nation or any political system adopts must be tailored or designed to suit its own distinct social economic, cultural and political realities, and not necessarily fit an ideal federal design. It is in this

context, that this study examines the issues and prospect in federal character principle and national integration in Nigeria using the University of Benin, Benin City as case study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic state, like many sub- Sahara African States. The Northern part of the country is populated by the Hausa's, the Fulani's, Kanuri's, Igala's, Igbira's and many others. The Southern part of the country on the other hand is occupied by the Yoruba's, the Ibo's or Igbo, the Ijaws, the Edos, the Ibibio's, the Urhobo's and many other small ethnic groupings. Now each of these groups not only inhabits a particular territory or area, but also has a distinct language indigenous to them. It was against this background that, when the colonialists came into the country, they met and saw that there was no common language, particularly between and amongst the major ethnic groups and groupings. Another truism about Nigeria is the fact that, she is also a multi - religious state with a substantial population being adherents of Islam (Muslims) Christianity (Christians) and a host of indigenous religions.

In spite of these glaring and obvious differences, the British government unified the various people under a common administration in 1914, one hundred and one years ago. This so called union has been described by a very prominent Nigerian Political Scientist as a "forced brotherhood and sisterhood" Ayoade, (1998) thus, the country has since been confronted with the challenges of accommodating diversities, fostering inclusiveness and promoting national unity amongst its diverse ethnic groups that make up the Nigeria's nation - state.

A fundamental and striking feature of Nigeria politics is the intense elites struggle for power among the different ethnic groups in the country. These struggles have been between the elites from the North and other Southern counterpart. Often, the reasons advanced behind the tension are the fears in the North that the more educated South would pre-dominate state institutions as well as the concerns in the southern part of the country that the contentious more populated North would have an edge in the electoral contests. The zero - sum nature of political competition amongst the elites precipitated a very bloody civil war between 1967 and 1970 Adeosun, (2021); Okolo, (2020). For Orji (2018) the soul - searching that followed the civil war reflected in the quest for elite's consensus on how Nigeria should be governed to ensure political stability and fairness' in the distribution of resources among the various ethnic groups that inhabit, or makes up the country (Adeosun, 2021). It is against this background that this research examines the issues and prospect in federal character principle and national integration.

1.3 Research Question

1. Has the federal character principle impacted the different aspects of the Nigeria polity?
2. What are the issues with the federal character principle in University of Benin?
3. What are the challenges of the federal character principle in University of Benin?
4. What are the prospects of the federal character principle in University of Benin?

1.4 Research Objectives

The objective of the study is to investigate the issues and prospect in federal character principle and national integration. However, the specific objectives of the study are;

1. to examine how federal character principle impacted the different aspects of the Nigeria polity,
2. examine the issues with the federal character principle in University of Benin,
3. To examine are the challenges of the federal character principle in University of Benin, and
4. to investigate the prospects of the federal character principle in University of Benin.

1.5 Significance of the study

Nation building in a vast country like Nigeria with a diversity of ethnic groups, different cultures, traditions and religions entails the promotion of political stability, ethnic harmony and religious tolerance through the network of federal character principle. It is our belief that any policy that does not involve full representation of component units of the country, and which gives room for inter-ethnic rivalry to secure domination of government by one, ethnic or a combination of ethnic groups against others would lead to structural imbalance among component units in the federation, disharmony in the political system and weakness of the government institutions and the fact that it encourages mediocrity and inefficiency in the civil service. To this end, the significance of this research includes;

To bring to bear the need for change of attitude by the leaders to rise above ethnic interest and see the country as belonging to every Nigerian irrespective of the ethnic nationality. The leaders should spearhead the campaign for unity and be seen to preach and practice it. This will contribute significantly in promoting and sustaining the principle of federal character in Nigeria. The constitution should reflect the will of the masses rather than the few elites (Sanusi 2012).

To bring to focus the need to replace quasi or centripetal federation with true federation, federation purports that everybody can be satisfied (or nobody permanently disadvantaged) by transparently combining natural and regional/ territorial interests within a complex web of checks and balances between a general, or federal government on the one hand, and a multiplicity of regional government, on the other (McClean and McMillan, 2023). True federalism suggests that individual states within a country should have control over their own affairs, but are controlled by a central government for national decisions (Kobojunkie 2012).

To contribute to the scholarly searched for ways to foster a fair and equitable practice of the federal character principle, a recipe for national integration in Nigeria and to demystify its relatively evasive nature and effects.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Scope is defined in terms of space (place of research) and time i.e. when research is conducted. Against this background, the researcher was restricted with issues that border on Federal Character Principle with a specific interest in national integration within the different ethnic groups in Nigeria over the period of 1960 to date. It focuses on University of Benin, Benin City, Edo state of Nigeria.

Limitations:

On the other hand, the limitations of this study are;

- Sentiment and bias on the part of the researcher will surely be an obstacle in any valuable research
- The cost of sourcing for published books, newspapers, journals and unpublished articles
- Combining this research with my already enormous academic load was also a potential limitation to this research endeavor
- The limited time frame is also a limitation to this research endeavor

1.7 Definition of Terms

Interestingly, federal character and national integration are related. The former is applied to achieve the latter. The application of federal character in revenue sharing, education, employment and location of industries and other development programmes will guarantee national integration, stability and development. Then what is federal character?

- **Federal Character (PC):** a deliberate design to accommodate less dominant but often forcibly expressed interest. A deliberate plan to construct means of ensuring the proper distribution of amenities and government projects in a country.
- **Nation Building (NB):** The process of creating unity and sense of belonging among heterogeneous groups in the state. It refers to the process of constructing a national identity using the power of the state. It further stated that it involves the process aimed at unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run.
- **National Integration (NI):** This refers to the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. It means that though we belong to different castes, religions and regions and speak different language, we recognize the fact that we are all one.
- **Ethnicity:** The Fact of belonging to a particular ethnic group
- **Ethnocentrism:** Based on the ideas and beliefs of one particular culture and using these to judge other cultures.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Conceptual Frame Work

Before one can attempt to take a concise look at the origin and operation of Federal Character Principle in Nigeria, one must not fail to look at the system of governance in Nigeria which is federalism. The concept of federalism has received broad scholarly attention; however, there is no universally accepted definition of the word 'federalism'. Consequently, scholars define federalism according to their perception. Odion (2011), observes that early writers on the concept of federalism such as Jean Bodin, Olto, Cosmanus among others, viewed federalism as a voluntary form of political union of independent authorities. The union either temporary or permanent, was based on the need for special common purposes like defence, trade, communications and other reasons that would benefit the parties involved. However, contemporary writers on the concept of federalism such as Livingstone, McMahan, and Rikers amongst others viewed federalism as mutual interaction between, and direct contact with, at least two levels of government. These scholars take their root from the 1787 American Constitution.

The definition of federalism by these scholars rest on the fundamental principle; federalism is a form of governmental institutional structure, deliberately designed by political architects', to cope with the twin but difficult task of maintaining unity while also preserving diversity (Odion, 2011). Thus, federalism is believed by these writers, to

be capable of mediating the potential and actual conflicts arising from the heterogeneity within a nation-state (Akpata, 2000). For Elaigwu (2000:33), federalism is a compromise solution in a multinational state between two types of self-determination the determination to maintain a supranational framework of government which guarantees security for all in the nation-state on the one hand, and protects the self-determination of component groups which seek to retain their individual identities on the other hand.

Wheare (1963), believed to be an articulate writer on federalism, conceived of it as an association of states formed for certain common purpose but in which the member states retain a large measure of their original independence. Thus, Wheare's proposition posits that the federal principle essentially entails a legal division of powers and functions among levels of government within a written constitution guaranteeing and reflecting the division. Though subsequent scholars have criticized him for being too legalistic in his formulation and so came up with postulations that seem somewhat a departure from his, all still revolve around a legal or constitutional framework. Models such as co-operative federalism, interdependent, and in the case of Awa (1976), mature and emergent federalism have been suggested to characterize the system, essence of which is to gain insight into its nature. It is instructive to note that rather than characterization, political realities which often impinge upon the distribution of powers between the various levels of government in a federation are what determine the nature and character of federalism. However, since other formulation of federalism from other scholars are variations of Wheare's work, the basic tenets or elements of federalism according to Wheare will be

used as template to determine Nigerian federalism and the extent to which Nigeria has fulfilled the basic tenets of federalism. The basic tenets according to him are:

- a) There must be at least two levels of government and there must be constitutional division of powers among the levels of governments.
- b) Each level of government must be co-ordinate and independent.
- c) Each level of government must be financially independent. He argued that this will afford each level of government the opportunity of performing their functions without depending or appealing to others for financial assistance.
- d) There must be Supreme Court of the independent judiciary. He argued that in terms of power sharing, there is likely to be conflict hence, there must be independent judiciary to resolve the case.
- e) In terms of the amendment of the constitution, no level of government should have undue power over the amendment process.

2.2 The Evolution of the Concept of Federal Character Principle

In the Nigeria political scene one may like to understand the phrase federal character principle (FCP) as applied to Nigerians. It means the numbers of its constituent members, their inter - relationship, the allocation of powers and functions amongst them and such other tangible matters which are usually carefully spelt out in legal terms in a constitution and on which designated courts of the land can pronounce binding opinions. However, a visitor requires to spend only about a week in the country, if he/she reads in the public opinion columns of our national dailies to realise that he/she has to work hard

to understand the language of Nigeria politics for the phrases means no such thing as he would have thought of at first instance, he will find out that it is used to refer to something not always tangible, not always so legal and not always so constitutional but all the same dear to hearts of Nigerians and therefore very sensitive, highly charged emotionally and indeed, as politically explosive as gun - cotton.

The term FCP is one of the phrases invented by the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) inaugurated by the late General Murtala Mohammed on 18th October 1975. It was in the course of the debate on that section of the report of the sub - committee on the Executive and the Legislative, which dealt with how to promote "national loyalty is a multi - ethnic society" that the phrase was coined. In the course of that debate the CDC has split into two broad groups the ostrich postures and the brutal realists or pessimists.

The realists or pessimists insisted that: there had in the past been inter-ethnic rivalry to ensure 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 ostrich-postures accepted that inter-ethnic and sectional rivalry was one of the fatal afflictions of the first republic, but felt it would be indecorous and inadvisable to entrench the principle of "ethnic balancing" in the constitution. The creation of states as

well as other provisions of the constitution is sufficient to ensure protection of the rights of the various communities (including minorities). It is therefore unnecessary to insist on the participation of all communities in the government and in any case such participation may be impracticable or unlikely. They further went on to argue that: "the evolution of national loyalty can only be retarded by playing up the role of sectional representatives in the conduct of the affairs of the state".

It was in the course of the heated dialogue between these two groups that the term FCP emerged as a term of compromise accepted by most members. Says the CDC Report: the phrase "Federal Character Principle of Nigeria" (FCPN) becomes widely acceptable among various speakers and it seems to embody the ideas, which had motivated the arguments of those who have expressed views on the subject. Thus it became widely acceptable to most members that important bodies like the commission should reflect FCPN.

It is evident from the report of the CDC that the acceptance of the phrase - FCP by most members lay partly in its novelty, partly in its cosmetic character, partly in its rhetorical appeal, but above all in its vagueness. In fact it was so vague in the minds of the CDC members that the committee ended up displaying almost total ignorance of what it had accepted.

Conscious of the major contribution to our national political vocabulary, which it was making through the introduction of this term, the committee, thought it necessary to give a definition of "FCP"; thus: Refers to 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 national notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, culture, language or religion which may exist and which it is their desire to nourish, harness to the enrichment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. One cannot regard the above quotation as an apt definition of "FCP". First, FCP cannot be a desire. If it is anything, it is a description of a feature or features which characterised the Nigeria Federation.

Second, it is not quite clear, what, according to the passage, the peoples of Nigeria "desire to nourish etc." In drawing up the passage under discussion, the CDC may have been casting about for some. "Formula to quietness its own troubled waters, rather than defining FCP, in so far as it then attained a measure of consensus, which enabled it to carry on with its assignment, it would appear to have succeeded. But in digging the issue of an apt definition of its newly invented phrase, and in failing to allow the broad implication of that phrase to guide its recommendations on the constitution it merely swept the real political problem of defining the term invented by CDC, under the carpet.

It is the axiom of students of politics that federation's sub-generics have a certain characteristic in common, or rather that federations are meant, for societies, which share a certain basic feature in common. On this William Livingstone, for instance, insists that: The essence of federalism lies not in the constitutional or institutional structures but in the society itself Federal Government is a device by which the federal qualities of the society are articulated and protected.

Beyond this, each federation must have its own character or characteristics of the nature, which depends largely on how successful the founding fathers were in allowing the character of the federal society to determine the structure and character of the federal constitution. In other words the distinctive character of each federation, and by extension its stability, would appear to depend on the degree of harmony or congruence, which exists between the structure and usages of the constitution, the narrower the gap between the two, the greater the stability, while the wider the gap, the higher the incidence of instability.

The phrase "Federal Character of Nigeria" must be taken to mean simply the character of the Nigerian federation. To understand, and therefore to define that character one must take many factors into consideration.

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 Niger: an society and the structure and usages of the constitution, 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.

It is therefore, perhaps only in the light of history that the meaning of the concept can fully be grasped. In order words, even though it came to be christened only in 1977 by the CDC, the problem now known as federal character has been with us in different

forms, and with varying urgency from about 1898 when British made the administrative amalgamation of what later came to be known as Nigeria one of their distant goals. The only difference is that today it wears an uglier and more menacing visage than it had done hitherto.

The history of Nigeria's "federal character" is one of growing complexity and virulence. For reason of simplicity three main epochs will be distinguished here. These are:

- The period of informal Federalism: 1900 - 1960
- The period of Formal Federalism: 1960 - 1966
- The period of Formal Federalism: 1966 - 1979

Each of these periods had its distinctive character, and it is these characters, which today make up the dynamic cosmetic named "FCP" (see Okolo, 2011:96 - 143}. The idea of Federal Character Principle is not new. It was known by different nomenclatures such as zoning or quota system. Its informal origins date back to the pre-independence era of nationalist struggle for participation in the administration of colonial Nigeria and especially after Nigeria became a Federation in 1954.

Originally, during its informal application, it was concerned with legislative representation and equalization of inter-regional opportunities in education and appointments at the Federal level. Now, in its present formalised and institutionalized form, as enshrined in the 1979, 1989 and 1999 Constitutions, virtually every sphere of

federal, state and local governments operation is involved and consequently politicised Agbodike, (1989:182).

It is however instructive to note that the concept of federal character was first popularized under the Murtala/Obasanjo's regime (1975-1979). It became a constitutional matter in the Constitution Drafting Committee and the Constituent Assembly, the bodies which produced the 1979 Constitution. It finally found its way into the constitution as a directive principle of state policy Osaghae, (1988:4-5).It is imperative at this point to define what the principle is. As defined by the 1979 Constitution, section 14(3), it means that: The composition of the Government of the federation or any of its agencies, shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or any of its agencies Nnoli, (1996).

In the pursuant of the above provision, section 135(3) states that in the appointment of Ministers, the president shall reflect the federal character of Nigeria" provided that in giving effects to the provision aforesaid, the president shall appoint at least one Minister from each state who shall be an indigene of such state Nnoli (1996). Again, Section 157 provides that appointment by the president into the offices of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Head of Service of the Federation, Ambassadors, or the principal representatives abroad, Permanent Secretary or other Chief Executive in any Ministry or Department of the federal Government, or any office on the

personal staff of the president shall have regard to the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity.

Section 197(2) provides that the composition of the officer corps and other ranks of the Armed Forces of the Federation shall reflect the federal character of Nigeria. Various other provisions were made in the constitution to ensure that the federal character principle was operative in the political process Nnoli, (1996). These constitutional provisions were respectively repeated in the 1989 and 1999 Constitutions. How has the operation of this principle been in practice? Put differently, has the government abided by these provisions by ensuring that no one group dominates the machinery of government? Among comity of nations, a country is distinguished not only by its geographical location but of certain peculiarities which may either be natural or have evolved over a period of time. Nigeria's peculiarities include; ethnic diversity, religious and cultural differences particularly the feeling of superiority by an ethnic group over the other. It is remarkably relevant to note that ethno-cultural and religious superiority have contributed significantly to most of the problems in the country Kukah, (2003).

Over the years, several regimes have designed and constitutionalized some principles, provisions, policies and programmes aimed at promoting peaceful co-existence among the diverse ethnic nationalities. Specifically and currently too, section 14, subsection 3 of the 1999 constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) as amended 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 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 other sectional groups in that government or in any of its agencies.

It is widely believed by advocates of the principle that federal character would deeply promote nation building and national integration both of which are sized as the panacea for peaceful co-existence. It is rightly understandable that Nigeria's history towards federalist status was inadvertent in nature and chequered in composition. There were notable stages and activities during colonial period and in recent time. It is argued and rightly too that Nigeria is a mere geographical expression Awolowo, (1947). This responded directly to why federal character principle was strongly proposed by the 1976 Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) and upheld in the 1999 constitution. The extent to which the provision/principle (federal character) and advocacy have achieved its aim remains imaginary.

For Afigbo, (1987) in Ezeibe, (2012) identified some stages in the evolution of federal character which is originally a colonial heritage. The stages include: the period of informal federation 1900-1946; the period of formal federation, first phase, 1946-1966, and the period of formal federation second phase: 1967- present. He further noted that the principle arose out of a compromise among the protagonists of the 1976 CDC. In another

perspective, "Amalgamation" theories of the 1898-1914 type were not necessarily the first to hit the political horizon in the territories that later became Nigeria".

Tamuno (2003) further noted that federalism developed and grew from 1954. The political exercises by the colonialists (then) signaled a marriage of about 250 ethnic nationalities. In order to keep and sustain the marriage, 1979 and 1999 constitutions respectively introduced federal character, while nation building and national integration were propagated by its pundits as the blending cream. On the contrary, the provision and affiliate concepts paradoxically nurtured ethnic and primordial nationalists. Were as Tamuno, (2003:16) noted that the growth, development and practice of federalism, from 1954, allowed both elite and the masses to encounter severe crises, Shiwi (2009) aptly states that nationalism became cultural relativism at best or fundamentalism at worst. As it were, these constitutions (1979 and 1999) are products of the military juntas, designed for democratic practice. The beauty of democracy globally lay in equity. Its applicability in Nigeria infers equitable representation of the ethnic nationalities in political appointments, career positions and such other positions of national representation or significance.

The beauty and strength in the merger is probably preferred on democratic principles, such as good moral value and ethics, patriotism and nationalism which stand to promote and sustain synergy among the ethnic nationalities. The question is, do Nigeria's elite and the masses possess the courage and will to uphold and apply

those values and tenets that promote peace rather than crises, democracy rather than sentimentalism?

Accordingly, Mohiddin, (2009), posits that there is no universally acceptable model of democracy. Implicit in the idea is that a country is at will to develop democratic principles that promote good understanding, unity and development. This is likely the task which federal character is set to achieve. The principle is home grown in nature and practice. Practice of federal character principle in Nigeria so far raises curiosity and doubts. The Research Work is therefore anchored on identifying issues in the application of federal character as well as options that would promote peaceful co-existence if possible.

2.3 The Concept of National Integration

For the Purpose of this Research work, it would be incomplete for us, after dealing with the concepts of Federalism and Federal Character Principle, and not discuss the concept of National Integration (NI). Integration is the process of unifying a society which tends to make it a harmonious city, based upon an order its members regard as equitably harmonious. From this presupposition, the success of integration depends on the perception by the federating; units of how equitably cordial the binding order is, at least, in terms of harmonious federal-state relations and interethnic relations (Ojo, 2002). Akinbade (2004) views integration as the process of maintaining the territorial integrity of a state. What this means is that, in a deeply divided society with varies voices like

Nigeria, integration becomes a necessary task that must be implemented for the purpose of securing stability and adaptability within the state.

National integration is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept. This thinking according to Fatile and Adejuwon (2012) arises from the plurality that seems to attend attempts at conceptual explication of the term. From the conception of national integration, two things stand out. The first has to do with the geographical or territorial mass of a country. In the light of this thinking, national integration could be achieved if the different parts that make a country are lumped together as a mutual and regional territorial political community (Bamiseye, 2003).

National integration can also be seen as the process whereby several desperate groups within a given territorial are united together or cooperate under conditions which do not appear to permit satisfaction of their system needs in any other way (Fatile and Adejuwon, 2012). According to Elaigwi; (1987), national integration is determined by the degree to which members and groups in a plural society adapt to the demands of national existence while co-existing harmoniously. On the practical note, national integration is a process, not an end in itself and it is usually affected by contending social forces. National integration is a process leading to political cohesion and sentiments of loyalty toward a central political authority and institutions by individuals belonging to different social groups or political units.

National integration is a process whereby political actors in distinct national setting are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a

new centre, whose institution possess or demand jurisdiction over pre-existing nation-state (Ojpanojemite, 1987; Oyeleye, 1987).

As noted by Mazrui (1972), the five major aspects of national integration includes; the fusion of norms and culture; the promotion of social interdependence; the narrowing of the gap between the elites and the masses, the urban and the rural areas, rich or poor etc; the resolution of emergent conflicts; and the sharing of mutual experiences so that people can discover that they had undergone some important experiences together. For there to be national integration, Ibogje and Dode (2007) stated that there must be a central authority to serve as a common central authority to serve as a rallying point. In the quest for national integration, citizens are expected to respect the overriding supremacy of the national government. This entails subordination of institutions and cultural values to the demands of the central authority. Often, intra- and inter-ethnic crisis result in tasking the state's security apparatus. The ability of the state to resolve or regulate the recurring crises and to create an enabling environment where the people's respect and love for their nation is enhanced would definitely affect the tempo of the nation's integration positively. National integration, thus, covers a vast range of human relationships and attitudes, the integration of diverse and discrete cultural loyalties and the development of a sense of nationality; the integration of the rulers and the ruled and the integration of the citizens into a common political process. As diverse as these definitions are, they have a common link in that they all point to the fact that integration is what holds a society and a political system together.

2.4 Federal Character Principle and National Integration

Here, we shall attempt to fuse the concepts of Federal Character Principle and National Integration to further a comprehensive understanding and realisation of the purpose of this Research work. Since the 1970s, Nigeria's constitution-making experiences have taken special interest in developing the consociation model for plural societies. The result is the adoption of the 'federal character' principle in the constitution, and agreements by the political class on zoning and rotation of offices among ethnic groups (Ebojowah 2000; Nmoma 1995; Osaghae 2001).

Federal character is one of the policies of gaining integration of diverse ethnic groups in the country. The introduction of federal character policies in Nigerian state is to foster unity, peace, equal ability to equal access to state resources and promote the integration of the less advantage states for better improvement and good conditions of living in the country (Bamidele and Ikulege, 2004 cited in Ugoh and Ukpere, 2012).

Afigbo (1989) observed that the principle of federal character touches on array of problems in the political process which includes ethnicity, the national question, minority problem, discrimination based on a indignity, resources allocation, power sharing employment and placement in institution, etcetera. It provides a formula for participation in the governance of the country in such a way that a single section of the country will not dominate another or a segment dominating the rest (Ojo, 1999).

The basic assumption as noted by Ojo (1999) is that, if every segment of the Federation participates in governance, there would be almost equality in the country in the scheme of things and expectedly, it will engender a sense of belonging and national integration. At the heart of federal character principle, is the attempt to eschew group imbalance in public institutions and affairs (Obijan and Akindele, 2002).

The federal character principle was adopted in the 1979 Nigerian Constitution as a directive principle of state policy. Accordingly, therefore, section 14(3) of the Constitution provided 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 manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and command national loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few state or from a few ethnic or sectional groups in that government or any of its agencies.

Section 153 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution established the Federal Character Commission, as a federal executive body, empowered in section 8(1) of the Third Schedule of the Constitution to oversee and monitor the implementation of the federal character clauses, as follows:

1. Work out an equitable formula subject to the approval of the National Assembly for the distribution of all cadres of posts in the public service of the Federation and of the States, the armed forces of the Federation, the Nigerian Police Force

and other security agencies, government-owned companies and parastatals of the States;

2. Promote, monitor and enforce compliance with the principle of proportional sharing of all bureaucratic, economic, media and political posts at all levels of government;
3. Take such legal measures, including prosecution of the head or staff of any ministry or government body or agency which fails to comply with any federal character principle or formula prescribed by the Commission, and as provided for in section 8(3) of the Schedule,
4. Notwithstanding any provisions in any other law or enactment, the Commission shall ensure that every public company or corporation reflects the federal character in the appointment of its directors and senior management staff.

Going by the wordings of the constitution, the expectation on the federal character principle was that it would pave way for a federal government that would be all-inclusive of all segments of the federation thereby assuring a stable federal polity. However, lofty as the federal character provision is, there was no executive agency charged with the responsibility of implementing it until July 2002 when the Federal Character Commission (FCC) was inaugurated. Thus, its implementation before this period by various government ministries and agencies was more or less haphazard with the consequence of a declining confidence of citizens in the principle as a means of achieving relative equity

in the federation. Even till date and with the establishment of a Commission to oversee its application, there seem not to be too much hope in the whole process (Muhammad, 2007).

The implication of the provisions of the 1979 and 1999 constitutions for federal bureaucracy in Nigeria are interesting. Following these provisions, the 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, religion or any other sectional group should be represented (Bello, 2012).

Federal character principle has spawned a vast repertoire of formal and informal consociation practices that seek to distribute, balance and rotate the federal presidency and other major public offices among the country's diverse ethnic, religious, regional and geo-political zones or constituencies. The most elaborate and formal power-sharing arrangement contained in the Nigerian Constitution is the federal character principle. The purpose of the federal character principle is laudable. According to Afigbo (1989), the federal character principle is anchored on 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 enrichment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The principle of federal character was formulated and put into use by successive governments in Nigeria to address and hopefully mitigate the problem of diversity so as to ensure a peaceful, stable and united Nigeria. Federal character principle as an integrative mechanism is defined as fair and effective representation of the various components of the Federation in the country's position of power, status and influence. As practiced during the tumultuous period of the second republic (1979-1983) under Shagari's leadership, Abacha's military junta and even under the present 'democratic dispensation', the principle essentially focused on enhancing the dominance of the ruling class through patronage.

The constitutional provision of federal character and zoning system within the political parties is for appointing trusted prebends, clients and hangers-on in strategic offices who in turn manipulated their powers by allocation of contracts, import licences, access to bank loans, fertilizers etc. Thus through the control of state power at the centre, the ruling class not only enhanced her leverage through patron-client alliances that cut across ethno-regional and religious cleavages, but also appropriated federal character principle to ensure its hegemony at all levels (Abubakar, 1998; Ogunojemite, 1987).

As a strategy for national cohesion, Ofigbo (1997) remarked that the federal character is expected to ensure fair play in the appointment of persons to high ranking government establishments and parastatals without discrimination of any kind. It is to

ensure a broad public participation in the country's affair as well as fostering even development. While the principle of federal character has been fully entrenched in the constitution, the application of the principle remained problematic because of the disparity in the standard of western education attained among the states in the federation (Mohammed, 1998).

Often a times, appointments are given to mediocre under the umbrella of belonging to less-privileged and educationally backward areas and this is the major drawback of the principle which does not help Nigeria to progress as a nation. As observed by Suberu (2001) and Dagaci (2009), to those from the Northern parts of the country federal character is synonymous with quote, 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.

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 re-examined (Okoli. 1990).

The most controversial contemporary political problem and contending issue in Nigeria's federal political structure is the asymmetric unequal power relationship as far as

the fundamental imbalance of the country's structure is concerned. As a matter of fact, this issue is one of the seemingly intractable and insurmountable perennial problems which have not only defiled all past solutions but also have a tendency to evoke high tensions and emotions on the part of all and sundry whenever it is raised. This is the contending issue of who becomes the president of Nigeria and for how long. Osondu (2010) reveals which zone(s) of the country has upper hand in terms of wielding executive powers

2.5 Theoretical Framework

For any research work to achieve its set purpose, there must be a well-defined Theoretical Framework. This study adopted the Marxist theory of the post-colonial state. The theory is important because of its relative proficiency in analysis of post-colonial political economy. The major proponent of this theory is Karl Marx though he never called it Marxist theory of neo-colonial states but he advanced the following attributes of the neo-colonial state:

The post-colonial state is purely an instrument of class domination. The primitive accumulation with state power is done by domestic dominant power and certain external forces. Post-colonial states are renter states parceled out to present the use of state power for selfish ends.

Marxist epigenists like Lenin, Ake, Ekekwe and Miliband have in their separate studies contributed to the development of the post-colonial theory of the state. Lenin (1984) noted that the state is a product of class struggle in society. The state emerged so

that antagonistic groups will not consume themselves in fruitless struggle over the ownership of means of production. Hence the state emerged to moderate class struggle in advanced bourgeoisie states unlike in neo-colonial states where state are parts and parcels of the class war it was supposed to moderate. Thus post-colonial states rather than maintain or moderate economic relations, became an instrument of domination, exploitation and intimidation of the subjects (Ekekwe, 1986). Similarly, Miliband (1977) insist that post-colonial states are dependent on the alien forces that colonized them and thus the state is both the source of economic power and an instrument of accumulation of economic power as the state is the major means of production.

This however, was a colonial heritage as colonial character has matured when independence was achieved in most post-colonial states who inherited these colonial traits with no or little modification. After independence in the periphery, we saw a mere change of leadership position from foreigners to natives while the policies remained the same (Ake 1981).

The Nigerian State as a post-colonial state or a periphery nation is characterized by these factors discussed above. Like other colonial states, Nigeria lacks the capacity to moderate the struggles which is pronounced between or among the various ethnic groups and states that make up Nigeria. Hence political and economic imbalances exist among and between the various states or ethnic groups that make up Nigeria. These imbalances exist in almost every sector of the economy hence most people feel marginalized.

The emergence of various militia groups in the Niger Delta is an indication of the existence of rivalries between groups over share of national cake. States of the majority ethnic groups seem to be so strong that they can hold the minorities to a standstill. This therefore denies the minority groups of their constitutional right of self-development and actualization. It is in view of correcting this abnormality that the Federal Character Commission was established to uphold federal character principles. In Nigeria, today there is a tendency to overemphasize the federal character and deemphasizing merit and hard work and defend mediocre and parochialism in running of the various sectors of the economy.

This explains why the Nigerian state continue to depend on the West for economic and political guidance and the tendency for the political leadership to neglect the respect for human dignity, rule of law and due process in states creation exercise and other policy processes in virtually every sector of the economy. This character of the Nigerian state is informed by the liberal or neo-liberal ideology. Nigeria had to toll the line for fear of sanction or in expectation for favour. Since Nigeria lacks the technology and capital to sustain her economy, Nigerian leadership continues to seek economic and political advice and directives from their former colonial masters. Though most of the Western policies initiatives and directives to Nigeria are anti- people and have the tendency of introducing confusion among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria, these policies are religiously implemented in Nigeria even when a commensurate assistance from the West is guaranteed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology that was used in the study under the following sub-headings; research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, research instrument, validity of instrument, reliability of instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design, which is a non-experimental method. The purpose of descriptive research is to describe that which exists as accurately and clearly as possible. This design is appropriate as it allowed the researcher to thoroughly investigate the federal character principle in and its impact.

3.2 Population of the Study

Since there are several federal institutions in Edo State, the study focuses on the University of Benin staff. According to the University of Benin industrial relations office, the University has a total population of about 4,586 staff (Registry, Uniben, 2025). This staff population is broadly divided into two; the non-academic staff which is about 3,800 and that of the academic staffs of about 786. The study focuses on the non-academic staff. Therefore the population of this study is 3800.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

To ensure adequate and fair representation of all categories of staff across the various faculties, the study employed a combination of stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques.

Stratified Sampling Method

The stratified sampling method was first used to divide the entire population into different strata based on faculties and staff categories (academic and non-academic). The purpose of using this method was to make sure that each faculty and category of staff was represented in the sample according to its structure within the University. The University of Benin was divided into 15 strata according to faculties in University of Benin. Each faculty served as a stratum, and from these 15 strata (faculties), respondents were selected. Using stratification ensured that no faculty or staff category was left out, and it helped to capture the views of staff from all parts of the University.

Sample Size Determination

From each of the 15 faculties, 13 respondents were selected from each faculty, resulting in a total sample size of 195 respondents. The sample size was therefore determined as follows: $13 \times 15 = 195$. Thus, the total sample size for the study was 195 respondents, representing both academic and non-academic staff across the faculties of the University of Benin. This number was considered adequate and manageable for the purpose of this research.

Simple Random Sampling Technique

After stratifying the population by faculty, the simple random sampling technique was used to select the 13 respondents from each faculty. This was done by assigning numbers to all eligible staff in each faculty and randomly picking respondents, either by using a random number table or a lottery method.

This technique ensured that every staff member within each faculty had an equal and independent chance of being selected, thereby minimizing bias and enhancing the representativeness of the sample. To ensure equal representation, respondents were selected from fifteen (15) faculties, Arts, Agriculture, Basic Medical Sciences, Dentistry, Education, Physical Science, Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Law, Life Science, Management Science, Pharmacy, Social Science, School of Medical Sciences, and Veterinary Medicine.

3.4 Sources of Data

The data for this study was sourced from both primary and secondary sources. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was instrument was used to collect data for the study. It was largely made up of close-ended questions for understanding and subsequent analyses. Primary data is especially important and useful in all research because such data is not only reliable but is also valid since the researcher gets or elicits it directly from those who are affected or possess the information needed to test the hypotheses generated for study.

Secondary sources of data include all data obtained from such materials and sources like publications, books, journals, indices, news bulletins, pamphlets and such other sources which are not direct. It is true that no research can truly be based on a single source or type of data. Secondary data which usually involves recourse to earlier works or research conducted by other researchers or writers in the subject area of the present research is important as it provides the basis for comparison and situates the current research in earlier findings and conclusions.

3.5 Validity of the Instrument

To determine the validity of the instrument, copy of the drafted questionnaire was guided by the student supervisor for scrutiny in line with the face and content validity. The amendments and comments made on the draft specimen were corrected and then, the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents.

3.6 Instrument of Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was structure questionnaire. The questionnaire was personally distributed by the researcher to the individual respondent. Explanation was provided to them on how to indicate their views on each item. The questionnaire was read to those who are unable to read. The researcher there after collected the completed questionnaires.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts: section A, and section B with a total of twenty questions. The first part of the questionnaire surveyed the demographic variables that are the personal data of the respondent's sex, age, marital status, educational

qualification, position, job experience, and section B of the questionnaire was designed to elicit the required responses from the respondents with regard to the objective of the study and the topic under review

3.7 Technique of Data Analysis

The study used simple percentage for the data analyses. The method of data analysis employed here is the simple percentage.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Presentation of Data

Research generally is meant to generate data for analysis and this result in a large volume of statistical information, which is mostly in its raw state. In order to use data for the objective of a research, they have to be reduced to manageable dimensions. This, among others things is what this chapter seeks to achieve.

The major aim of this project is to examine “Federal Character Principle and National Integration in Edo State: Issues, Challenges and Prospects”. The study used the University of Benin as a case study. 200 questionnaires were administered to respondents randomly selected from the study area due to inability to meet with the entire population. A time period of one week was allowed the respondents for completion after which the researcher collected the administered questionnaires. In all, a total number of One hundred and ninety five (195) questionnaires were administered and one hundred and eighty (180) were retrieved. The responses are presented in tables and percentages which were used to illustrate the responses received.

4.2 Demographic Information of Respondents

The demographic variables of respondents that were of interest in this study were age, sex, marital status, highest educational qualification, religion, income level and length of service.

Table 4.1 shows the demographic distribution of both academic and non-academic staff

Table 4.1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Variable	Measurement	Staff	
		Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-25	5	19.3
	26-35 Years	55	36.8
	36-45 Years	60	22.8
	46-55 Years	42	14.7
	55 Years and above	13	4.6
	Total	180	100.00
Sex	Male	110	54.0
	Female	70	46.0
	Total	180	100.0
Marital status	Single	56	36.1
	Married	120	62.5
	Separated	4	1.4
	Total	180	100.0
Educational qualification	Diploma	6	21.4
	Bachelor's Degree	130	63.2
	Masters' Degree	44	15.4
	Doctorate	-	-
	Post doctorate degree	-	-
	Total	180	100.0
Religion	Christianity	141	83.9
	Islam	39	14.4
	African Traditional Religion	-	-
	Total	180	100.0
Length of service	0- 5 Years	71	25.4
	6-10 Years	80	38.6
	11 - 15 Years	23	33.9
	15-20 years		
	21 Years and above	6	2.1
	Total	180	100.0

Source: field work, 2025

In respect to staff, 15.8 % of the respondents (15) were less than 30 years, 36.8% of the respondents (35) were between the age of 26 –35 years, 36.8% of the respondents (18) were between the age of 46 – 50 years, 9.5% of the respondents were between the age of 50 – 60 years and 3.2% of the respondents were above the age 60 years. This showed that most of the respondents were between the ages of 30 – 40.

With respect sex 55.8% (53) it was evident in the sex category that 54.0% (154) respondents were male while 46.0% (131) were female. Obviously the males dominated in the sample

The percentages of highest education level of respondents were as follows: none of the respondent had diploma degree, bachelor's degree 11.6% (11), masters' degree 45.3% (43) while doctorate 27.4% (26) and post doctorate degree 15.8% (15). From the result in the Table 4.1 above, it is clear that most respondents were at the tertiary level.

The percentages of highest education level of respondents for staff were as follows: diploma 63.2% (180), bachelor's degree 21.4% (61) while master's 15.4% (44). From the result in the Table 4.1 above, it is clear that most respondents had diploma

Table 4.1 indicates that 85.4% of the respondents (139) were Christians, 14.6% (41) were Muslims and none of the respondents were African tradition religion. Christians therefore dominated in the sample with large difference in the two groups.

With respect to length of service, 25.4% (71) had worked for less than 5 years, 38.6% (108) had worked for 5 – 10 years, 33.9% had worked between 11 – 20 years and 2.1% (6) had worked for more than 20 years. According to result obtained from the

frequency table, it showed that for the two (2) groups, most of them (respondents) had for 5 – 10 years.

Table 4.2. Has the federal character principle impacted the different aspects of the Nigeria polity?

Variable Statement	Staff							Index
	N	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5		
Federal character principle constitute one of the features of federalism in Nigeria	180	3 1.1%	10 3.6%	15 5.4%	31 46.8%	120 42.9%		4.27
Federal Character Principle help in nurturing ideals of federalism in Nigeria	180	7 2.5%	5 1.8%	20 7.1%	25 44.6%	122 43.6%		4.25
Federal character principle achieved its objective	180	9 3.2%	16 5.7%	23 8.2%	60 57.1%	72 25.7%		3.96
The application of Federal Character principles helps in ethnic balancing	180	10 3.6%	16 5.7%	20 7.1%	61 57.5%	73 26.1%		3.97

Source: Field Work. 2025

The table above shows that the federal character principle has impacted the different aspects of the Nigeria polity. It indicates that majority of the respondents believed that the federal character principle impacted the different aspects of the Nigeria polity as revealed by the index of 4.27.

Table 4.3. What are the issues with the federal character principle in University of Benin?

		N	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5	Index
	The University of Benin has a mechanism put in place for promoting ethnic balancing	180	11 3.9%	30 10.7%	39 13.9%	51 53.9%	48 17.1%	3.70
	Mechanism put in place by the University of Benin for promoting ethnic balancing is not working	180	13 4.6%	36 12.9%	23 8.2%	97 34.6%	10 39.3%	3.91
	The University of Benin, has applied the federal character principles in the employment of workers	180	26 9.3%	32 11.4%	32 11.4%	17 41.8%	72 25.7%	3.63
	Federal character principles have affected the employment of qualified manpower in University of Benin	180	17 6.1%	16 5.7%	34 12.1%	24 44.3%	89 31.8%	3.90

Source: field work, 2025

The table above reveals that the issues with the federal character principle in University of Benin as reflected by the index of 3.70, as regard to whether the University of Benin has a mechanism put in place for promoting ethnic balancing, the respondents index of 3.90 showed that federal character principles have affected the employment of qualified manpower in University of Benin. It can also be seen in the index of 3.91 which showed mechanism put in place by the University of Benin for promoting ethnic balancing is not working.

Table 4.4. What are the challenges of the federal character principle in University of Benin?

		N	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5	Perception Index
	Lack of the application of federal character principles is one of the challenges of the principle	180	15 5.4%	20 7.1%	34 12.1%	28 45.7%	83 29.6%	3.87
	The mechanism put in place by the management of University of Benin for promoting ethnic balancing respects the application of federal character principles	180	25 8.9%	23 8.2%	24 8.6%	59 56.8%	48 17.1%	3.65
	The lack is one challenges to federal character	180	10 3.6%	25 8.9%	27 9.6%	77 63.2%	41 14.6%	3.76

	principles							
	The absent of a commission in charge of federal character principles is challenges	180	27 8.9%	21 8.2%	24 8.6%	55 55.4%	51 17.1%	3.75
	Federal character principle has promoted the growth of ethnic balancing in University of Benin	180	16 5.7%	27 9.6%	26 9.3%	55 55.4%	55 19.6%	3.74
	The absent of a commission in charge of federal character principles is challenges	180	5 1.8%	17 6.1%	34 12.1%	53 54.6%	71 25.4%	3.96

Source: field work

The above table present the respondents on the challenges of the federal character principle in University of Benin. The table shows that majority of the respondents believed that lack of the application of federal character principles is one of the challenges of the principle as show with the index of 3.89, they also believed that the absent of a commission in charge of federal character principles is challenges as showed in index of 3.96.

Table 4.5. What are the prospects of the federal character principle in University of Benin?

	N	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5	Perception Index
federal character principle can still be use to promoting ethnic balancing in University of Benin	180	33 11.8%	27 9.6%	35 12.5%	17 41.8%	68 24.3%	3.57
federal character principle is still viable for national integration	180	18 6.4%	23 8.2%	42 15.0%	39 49.6%	58 20.7%	3.70
Without the application of federal character principles in government organisations the ethnic balancing cannot be achieved in Nigeria	180	18 6.4%	20 7.1%	59 21.1%	40 50.0%	43 15.4%	3.61

Source: Field Work

The tables above present the respondent opinion on the prospects of the federal character principle in University of Benin. The table indicates that majority of the respondent agree that federal character principle is still viable for national integration, with index of 3.70. Others believed that without the application of federal character

principles in government organisations the ethnic balancing cannot be achieved as show in index of 3.61

4.6 Discussion of Findings

Has the federal character principle impacted the different aspects of the Nigeria polity?

From the data presented, all mean index values (ranging between 3.96 and 4.27) are above the midpoint of 3.0, indicating that respondents generally agreed that the Federal Character Principle (FCP) has had a significant impact on different aspects of the Nigerian polity.

The results indicate that most respondents recognize the Federal Character Principle as a core element of Nigerian federalism, designed to promote inclusiveness, equitable representation, and national unity. The highest mean score (4.27) suggests a strong belief that the principle is an essential feature of Nigeria's federal system.

This finding agrees with Suberu (2001) and Elaigwu (2012) who argue that the Federal Character Principle is one of the defining features of Nigerian federalism, introduced to mitigate domination by any one ethnic group and promote a sense of belonging among diverse groups. The principle is therefore viewed as a mechanism for political integration and fairness. The finding therefore agrees with these scholars, confirming that the principle plays a central role in sustaining Nigeria's federal system.

What are the issues with the federal character principle in University of Benin?

The responses from staff of the University of Benin show mixed but generally positive perceptions about the presence of mechanisms promoting ethnic balance and the application of the Federal Character Principle (FCP). However, there is moderate skepticism about the effectiveness of these mechanisms. With a mean score of 3.70, respondents agree that the University of Benin has mechanisms in place for promoting ethnic balancing. This suggests that the institution tries to align its employment and administrative policies with the Federal Character Commission's directives.

This finding is consistent with Ekeh (1989) and Suberu (2001) who noted that most federal institutions, including universities, have adopted the Federal Character Principle to ensure equitable representation of Nigeria's ethnic groups. My finding agrees with these scholars, as respondents confirm that such mechanisms are indeed in place.

What are the challenges of the federal character principle in University of Benin?

All mean scores are above 3.5, which indicates that most respondents agree that the major challenges revolve around poor application, weak enforcement, and the absence of a dedicated body to oversee the proper implementation of the Federal Character Principle in the university. The data (mean = 3.87) shows that respondents believe poor or inconsistent application of the Federal Character Principle remains one of its key challenges. This aligns with Osaghae (1998) and Suberu (2001), who assert that

though the principle was well-intentioned, it has been undermined by lack of political will and bureaucratic inefficiency.

Similarly, Arowolo (2011) emphasizes that failure to fully apply the principle has made it ineffective in achieving fairness and equity. My finding therefore agrees with these scholars, confirming that implementation gaps, rather than the policy itself, are the major obstacle.

What are the prospects of the federal character principle in University of Benin?

Table 4.5 presents responses on the future prospects of the Federal Character Principle (FCP) in the University of Benin. The mean scores for all the items are above 3.50, indicating general agreement among respondents that the Federal Character Principle still holds potential for promoting ethnic balance and national integration if properly implemented. The mean score of 3.57 indicates that respondents believe the Federal Character Principle can still be effectively used to promote ethnic balancing within the University of Benin.

This finding supports Elaigwu (2012), who argued that the principle remains a key mechanism for ensuring inclusive participation and equal representation in Nigeria's public institutions. Similarly, Suberu (2001) emphasized that the principle, though imperfect, is essential for stabilizing a multi-ethnic federation like Nigeria. My finding therefore agrees with these scholars, showing that the policy still has strong prospects if there is renewed commitment to its proper enforcement and transparency.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of findings; conclusion of all works performed in this study report and recommendation for others who will be concerned in undertaking a similar research title and the society in general.

5.2 Summary

The crises of national integration in Nigeria raises serious concerned. There is lack of effective unification of various units or component of the federation, rather, disintegrate forces such as elitism, ethnocentrism, mediocrity, suspicion, tribal loyalty, class struggle, ethnicity, etc. constitute severe problem being mounted on the political system to separate the country. In view of this, it is obvious that the system cannot effectively adapt to its environment such that, its survival is difficult.

In an attempt to investigate the foregoing problems, the study employed primary and secondary research methods for gathering and analysing data. So textbooks, journals, periodical publications by related government agencies formed necessary source of our date. Again we used Marxist Theory of Post-Colonial State as our analytic framework. Consequently, following were the major findings.

This study examines the between federal character and ethnic balancing in University of Benin. In achieving the objectives of the study, some questions were asked. Questions were asked and formed from this. The finding showed that federal character

Principles has significantly impacted the national integration in Nigeria. This was further supported with the responses from the respondents. 57.5% showed that the federal character principle has impacted the different aspects of the Nigeria polity. It indicates that majority of the respondents believed that the federal character principle impacted the different aspects of the Nigeria polity. Also 57.5% the application of Federal Character principles helps in ethnic balancing.

53.9% agreed that the University of Benin has a mechanism put in place for promoting ethnic balancing, 31.8% agreed that federal character principles have affected the employment of qualified manpower in University of Benin. It can also be seen that 34.6% showed that the mechanism put in place by the University of Benin for promoting ethnic balancing is not working. Thus like the Federal principle characters, the mechanism put in place by the University of Benin to promote national integration is not working. That showed that while federal character principles seemed to be working at the highest governmental level, it is yet to been manifest at institutional level such as the Universities levels.

5.3 Conclusion

This study explored the federal character principle, its applicability and challenges in Nigeria. Notably, political and economic imbalances exist among and between the various states or ethnic groups that make up Nigeria. These imbalances arose from the nature and character of the post-colonial Nigerian state. These imbalances exist also in the Nigerian universities and the University of Benin. It is in view of correcting

this abnormality that the Federal Character Commission was set up to uphold Federal Character Principles. The Commission was set up to ensure that government decisions reflect Federal Character on sitting industries, building roads, awarding scholarships, appointment of public office holders, admission, employment and revenue allocation.

From the available data and cases reviewed in this work, the study discovered that the federal character principle has not been 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.

5.4 Recommendation

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.

A constitutional amendment is recommended to establish true federalism, allowing Universities to control 50% of their resources.

A revised federal principle character is advocated, giving Universities greater autonomy while maintaining consistency with national laws. Revisions to this principle are necessary, emphasizing appointments based on merit, state equality, and ecological factors. Promoting justice, equity, and unity is essential for national reconciliation, while balancing merit in appointments and admissions is vital for integration and development.

The marginalization of minorities in employment should be addressed to empower them against the majority.

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10th August, 2025.

Dear Sir/Madam,

QUESTIONNAIRE ON:

**FEDERAL CHARACTER PRINCIPLE AND NATIONAL INTERGRATION IN
EDO STATE: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS**

The undersigned is a B.Sc student in the Department of Public Administration, University of Benin, conducting a research on the “Federal Character Principle and national integration in Edo State: issues, challenges and prospects”, in partial fulfillment for the award of the Bachelor of Science in Public Administration.

The questionnaire was developed to identify issues, challenges and prospects of Federal Character Principle and National Integration in Edo State.

Please know that your answers to the below questions will make this research a very successful one. Also knows that all information provided will be treated with confidentiality.

Thank you for cooperation.

Onyemachi Vivian Chinasa
Researcher

SECTION A

Bio-Data

Sex: Male (), Female ()

Age: 25-30, () 31-35, () 36-40, () 41 and Above ().

Marital status: Single (), Married (), widow (), Widower ()

Job Status: Academic (), Non-academic ()

Academic attainment: O’LEVEL (), NCE/OND (), HND/BSC (), Others ().

SECTION B

Key: SA-Strongly Agree, A =Agree, U= Undecided D= Disagree, SD Strongly Disagree.

✓ Kindly tick

S/N	Questions	SA	A	U	D	SD
	Has the federal character principle impacted the different aspects of the Nigeria polity?					
1.	Federal character principle constitute one of the features of federalism in Nigeria					
2.	Federal Character Principle help in nurturing ideals of federalism in Nigeria					
3.	Federal character principle achieved its objective					
4.	The application of Federal Character principles helps in ethnic balancing					
5	Without the application of federal character principles in government organisations the ethnic balancing cannot be achieved in Nigeria					
	What are the issues with the federal character principle in Edo state?					
6	The University of Benin has a mechanism put in place for promoting ethnic balancing					
7.	Mechanism put in place by the University of Benin for promoting ethnic balancing is not working					
8.	The University of Benin, has applied the federal character principles in the employment of workers					
9.	Federal character principles have facilitated ethnic balancing at University of Benin					
10.	Federal character principles have affected the employment of qualified manpower in University of Benin					
11	Federal character principle has promoted the growth of ethnic balancing in University of Benin					

	What are the challenges of the federal character principle in Edo state?					
12.	Lack of the application of federal character principles is one of the challenges of the principle					
13.	The mechanism put in place by the management of University of Benin for promoting ethnic balancing respects the application of federal character principles					
14	The lack is one challenges to federal character principles					
15	The absent of a commission in charge of federal character principles is challenges					
	What are the prospects of the federal character principle in University of Benin					
16	federal character principle can still be use to promoting ethnic balancing in University of Benin					
17	federal character principle is still viable for national integration					