

Promoting Disabled Persons' Belongingness in Elite Circles of Nigerian Public Administration Setups: Diagnosis and Treatment

Ikemefuna Taire Paul Okudolo* and Victor Ojakorotu

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Northwest University, Mahikeng, South Africa

Abstract: This study analyzes the intrinsic causes of disabled persons' marginalization from elite circles in Nigerian public administration organizations. Its foci among other things are to proffer measures for Nigeria's context of disabled persons' advancement into public bureaucracies' assembly of decision-makers, promote their topmost belongingness in public policy governance, offer ways to sustain disability-friendly public personnel promotion stratagem, propose means to realize public sector-friendly disability inclusivity. Political culture theory is espoused as the theoretical framework. The study parallels the qualitative methodology of a phenomenological inclination. Perceptions, views, and notions on how to promote disability-friendly policies, across all Nigerian public ministries, departments, and agencies (MDGs), toward facilitating upward mobility of disabled public administrators into directorate positions in the public services, derived from questionnaires, interviews, and correlated document analysis constituted data for the study. Content analysis approach guided by heuristic re-constructionism epistemology was adopted for analyzing data. Data from questionnaires were presented in quantitative content analysis. The study finds that there persist low political will towards domestication and implementation of globally agreed affirmative statutes for sustainable advancement of the education, talents, employment, promotion, and generally inclusion of disabled persons, particularly into the elite circle of Nigerian public bureaucracies. The finding mentioned above highlights the immanent variables that constitute major obstacles to the disabled public personnel belongingness as elite public administrators in determining the outputs and outcomes of public administration in Nigeria. It recommends, amongst others, prioritization of disabled persons' inclusion into the top staff echelon of public administration's MDGs across all the Nigerian tiers.

Keywords: Public administration, elitist circle, political culture model, disability inclusivity, disabled persons.

INTRODUCTION

Institutions are manned by individuals and individual attitudes shape the environment and institutions. So, when the attitudes of a community are negative towards a particular, vulnerable group, they will struggle much more to realize their potential [1: no page].

The notion of disability inclusivity in all walks of life has a substantial correlation with the modernization of any nation-state. Added to the agenda of grounding a modern developmental state should be an avid consideration to overcome the marginalization of those considered the special members of the society. What this presumes is that every nation-state ought to intentionally sustain the institutional, policy, and legalistic governance regimes that should not mar inclusivity in social organizations like the public administration sphere [2]. The gross absence of disabled persons as top public bureaucrats in a socio-political state like Nigeria is somewhat a summation of the nation's political culture and value system towards disability inclusivity. Likewise, the inconsiderable or total absence of disabled persons as top public

administrators in a country's governance setups is indicative of the nation's phenomenological consciousness and sentiment towards social inclusion of the disabled.

The above point underscores a poignant fact. The experience of an average disabled public sector worker correlates with the prevalent political culture, of which pervasive systemic disability exclusion in public sector organizations becomes the overall phenomenological understanding of the public and the lived reality of disabled members of such society. By deductive reasoning, therefore, it is implied that disabled persons too possess the potential to advance public affairs when society supports such ability improvements and ascendancy and the implementation of deliberate institutional inclusionary precepts. That is, a nation's political culture overtly or covertly sustains a kind of systemic confirmation to undermine or otherwise special persons' abilities to attain elite status within public services. As such, meaningful contribution by disabled members of society in public policy governance as an emblem of a grounded inclusive society takes its character from the prevailing political culture and values towards disability inclusivity. The present study is a diagnosis of systemic faultiness resultant from a political culture that destabilizes disabled Nigerians from attaining elitist permanent - not politically elected/appointed - positions in the various public administration settings to showcase their

*Address correspondence to this author at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Northwest University, Mahikeng, South Africa; Tel: + 27719343158; E-mail: ikemefunapaul@yahoo.com, 34323503@nwu.ac.za

aptitudes to advance public administration and inclusive society in general.

Statistically, according to Ajuwon, Ogbonna, and Umolu [3], Nigeria's National Assembly in 2013 estimated that the country has more than 20 million persons living with disabilities. Given the demographic ratio of disabled Nigerians, [4] and [5], for instance, views exclusion of this population of special persons from optimally influencing the nation's public sector performances as elites to progress public policy success and generally inclusivity as reproachful. Buttressing this idea further, exclusionary tendencies of disabled persons in Nigeria, according to the Center for Disability and Development Innovation (CeDDI) [cited from 5], is debilitating to nation-building since the CeDDI estimates that Nigerians with disabilities have surpassed over 25 million. Even more astonishing is the United Nations (UN) population forecast that one out of every ten Nigerian suffers from one type of disability [5]. In the light of the above, the negligible presence of disabled persons in the higher echelon of the various federal-state-local public services in Nigeria no doubt amounts to gross exclusion. Such an outcome foreshadows a bleak prospect of actualizing maximum social inclusion in the country.

A United Nations (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs report shows that alleviating disability exclusion in social organizations is a complex multidimensional process [6]. In truth, disability issues have universal elements. However, each society also portrays some unique politico-ecological variables that impact disabled persons differently. Nonetheless, according to Lambo [7] and a World Health Organization (WHO) report [8], disability has to do with the limitation of the physical human body to perform certain typical tasks or functions normally. Dell Orto and Power [9] stress a medical perspective to disability. Shakespeare [10] and Leonardi Leonardi, Bickenbach, Ustun, Kostanisek, Chatterji, and MHADIE Consortium [11] propose a more balanced perspective termed the bio-psycho-social model. In all, disability discourses cover topics revolving around personalities with developmental, intellectual, and sensory dysfunctionalities.

Generally, a disabled person commonly experiences impairment, participation restriction, and activity limitation [12]. Thus, disabled persons have difficulties in the functioning of the human body. That is, persons who are disabled have variations in a bodily configuration such as being blind or having paralysis of

the legs (i.e., activity impairment). Or have difficulty in carrying out normal human activities such as seeing, grabbing objects, and constrained mobility (i.e., activity limitations). And otherwise struggle with easily fitting into normal human activities such as boarding a bus or partaking in normal sports, among other normal functioning of the human body [13]. Also, some disabilities are inclined to have difficulty with socializing and communicating (i.e., activity difficulty) [8]. The common disabilities are mental health disorders, visualization diminishment, deafness or difficulty of hearing, acquired brain damage, intellectual debility, autism spectrum disorder, and physical malady. In layman parlance, some of these conditions are referred to as deafness, dumbness, blindness, being crippled, paralysis, and madness.

Disability inclusion discourses aim to diagnose how special people can optimally enjoy living life to the fullest as the other able members of society do. Hence, a Singapore Management University Centre for Management Practices Report [14, 15] note that disability inclusivity is rooted in the governance process for optimization of disabled persons' corporeal existence. This implies that incapacitating defilers, contradictions, and restrictions could prevent the disabled person from living life to the fullest in certain political states. In the Nigerian context, for instance, the reality of the disabled reinforces the notion of political culture-manufactured exclusion of this category of Nigerians to attain admittance into the top circles of administrators in the permanent public bureaucracies. The above-said view represents the intellectual supposition the study addresses. Therefore, one can attribute with certainty the exclusion of disabled Nigerians as top public officials in the various ministries, departments, and agencies (MDGs) of governments – exclusion at the vertical and lateral governmental layers in the three tiers - to a political culture not far removed from a disinterested consciousness to promote disability inclusion.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The underlying logic of the study, taking into consideration the Nigerian context, is that elements of relegation are being experienced by disabled persons in Nigeria borne of immanent factors that do not support their emergence into the top decision-making domains in the MDGs. A popular impression abounds that, unlike in most Western advanced democracies, the culture of disability inclusion and considerations have not penetrated well enough the operations of

Nigerian MDGs, especially about being conscious of disabled person ascendancy to directorate cadres. The roles that Nigerian disabled public administrators are expected to play to realize developmental inclusiveness, good governance, and socio-economic advancement of all members of the country are still very minimal. Such an outcome is perhaps a function of a political culture that does not espouse a consciousness for disability inclusion.

Although Nigeria, like the advanced Western democracies, acceded to both international, regional and sub-regional conventions on disability inclusion, the Nigerian political culture has been much more inclined to disregard these resolutions. This reality is due to the absence of political culture and will to entrench disability inclusivity in the country. The absence of the commanding force of political culture founded on the overall inclusivity of Nigerians living with disabilities has a connection to why this category of persons is relegated in the top public administration spheres of her MDAs. Generally, political culture, values, and will in Nigeria have instead ignored the significance of disabled persons as top staffers in the MDAs to establish an inclusive Nigerian society. As it stands, the salience of disability inclusion in the top official cadres in Nigeria's MDAs across all the tiers is a major contending variable against entrenching an inclusive public administration operation. It is this standpoint mentioned above that chiefly instigated this study. Consequently, the study's all-encompassing objective is to examine the immanent variables that derive therefrom the propensities of political culture that does not promote ascendancy of disabled public administrators into the top positions in their MDAs and thereby proffer ways to mitigate this negative outcome.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the World Bank [16], public administration is a mechanism involved in the actual processing of peoples' values, tendencies, characters, and attitudes into concretely visible and utilitarian substance, inferring that it is the channel of shaping political culture and vice versa. Works of literature acknowledge that public administration is concerned with the politics of delivering political values through public bureaucracies, hence focusing on the politics-administration dichotomy discourse [17, 18]. In the study, we adopt the view that public administration refers to the public or civil personnel or servant or human material make-up of MDAs whose efforts help to concretize political values established for society

from political culture. Consequently, the responsibility for concretizing the values set by political actors for society falls to the top public administrators who are considered "elite" administrators herein. Francis Rouke [19: vii] holds the belief that it is more in the crucible of administrative politics cum interactions by top permanent public servants that policy values are shaped, sharpened, and concretized. Rouke believes that policies that are eventually implemented by public administrators are more the products of bureaucrats' influence than those of elected officials. The circle of officials referred to as "elites" herein Merton [20] indicates as possessing the power of "bureaucratic virtuoso". Varma's interpretation of "bureaucratic virtuoso" is a unique group of public administrators "whose job is not merely to set up efficient organization but to coordinate the activities of the 'diseconomies' and the 'economies' of administration" [21: 161].

By all indications, attention to issues of disability had long gained currency as a developmental topic under the purview of public affairs globally and hence a subject of public administration. The focus on disability inclusivity has also been reflected in the dealings of worldwide sub-regional, and continental, international and supranational organizations and thereby a topic diagnosed by international public administration scholarships [22]. For instance, many scholarships note that it is on the auspices of the United Nations (UN) Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992) that global disability inclusivity was given a boost to be professed and encouraged to be attained. Every international organization generally encourages their members to be domestic and avidly implement programs to stimulate the World Programme of Action Concerning People with Disabilities in line with promoting disability inclusion. These internationally formulated programs were expected to be domesticated nationally, thus giving public administration a pride of place in the implementation process to eradicate disability exclusion and advance equality of treatment of all peoples cum national development in general [23]. Even the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provided for policy frameworks on best practices in public administration to eradicate poverty, marginalization, and deprivation of persons with disabilities. All these well-thought-out international organizations' agreements were intended for thorough implementation using the mechanics of public administration [24-26].

At the African continental level and through the African Union (AU) mechanism, a Plan of Action (POA)

emerged from the African Decade of Plan of Action for Persons with Disability to address disability exclusionary concerns. The POA policy dictum was intended to cover between 2007 and 2017 [27]. According to [23: 315-316], the objectives of the POA to advance the course of disabled persons in Africa can be summarized thus:

- (A) Formulating and implementing policies, legislation, and programs on disabilities;
- (B) Promoting the participation of people with disabilities in economic activities;
- (C) Promoting the involvement of people with disabilities in the political process;
- (D) Enhancing support services for people with disabilities;
- (E) Caring for children, young people, women, and the elderly with disabilities;
- (F) Improving access to rehabilitation, education, employment, and leisure opportunities for people with disabilities;
- (G) Preventing the causes of disabilities;
- (H) Protecting the rights of people with disabilities;
- (I) Supporting and strengthening organizations of people with disabilities;
- (J) Mobilizing resources to enhance services for people with disabilities;
- (K) Establishing mechanisms for coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating programs; and
- (L) Promoting advocacy and awareness of disability issues in the communities

Also, the promulgated Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018, which was ratified in 2019, portended to be a significant move towards advancing disabled persons' inclusion under Nigeria's federal public administration regime. Despite its ratification, the promised establishment of the National Commission for Persons with Special Needs by the federal government of Nigeria under the collaboration of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs is yet to materialize [23].

Generally, with high certainty, the overwhelming opinion of Nigerians from their observation of what

disabled members of the country still face is one of dismay and disappointment with the public administration processes for implementing domesticated international and nationally formulated accords. For instance, [1] notes that a policy measure assessment framework put together by a collaboration of civil society and governments to assess the implementation of the Nigeria Rapid Assessment on Disability Inclusion shows that disabled persons' lives were still abysmal in the country. Also, states in the Nigerian federation have enacted various laws aimed at improving the lives of people with disabilities for their public administration structures to translate to concrete utilitarian values. Even the local governments in Nigeria all have in place decisively enunciated programs that their public administration systems would utilize to address disability inclusivity within their jurisdictions.

Despite all the measures articulated with regards to the domestication of international treaties to optimize the living of disabled-bodied persons that fall within the jurisdiction of each of the governments, disabled Nigerians still suffer exclusion. The various federal-state-local government authorized programs in Nigeria to mitigate the plight of the nation's disabled people and eliminate the barriers to them living life to the fullest like their able-bodied counterparts have not neutralized their existence from being terrifying. There is a truth that instead of advancing disability inclusion in all walks of life, Nigerian special persons continue to experience stigmatization, discrimination, marginalization; and exclusion in almost every arena of socialization, including in the public administration operations and public personnel advancement aspect.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We hold that societal negations brought upon Nigeria's disabled persons are not unconnected to the prevailing political culture. Thus, the study is premised on the political culture theory as its theoretical framework of analysis.

Proponents of political culture theory include Almond and Coleman [28], Spinrad [29], and Gabriel Almond [30]. The theory explains how widespread attitudes, behavioral propensities, characteristic orientations, and belief manifestations mirror the overall outlook of society's ideology, morality, values, and culture [29]. Political culture underscores the epistemic norm of society, referring to perceived and acceptable, and understandable beliefs, standards, and consensus of how things happen or what is right or wrong. In the

view of [28], political culture theory diagnoses how the orientation of people comes about and ends up constituting an ideology, philosophy, and culture. Gabriel Almond [30] notes that the theory is indicative of a "return to culture" in propositioning models to explain tendencies of social organizations such as MDAs. This means that the political culture theory has to do with understanding group behavior and the widespread interpretation given to such behavior. This is, recurring habits, attitudes, actions, and decisions in politics, policy implementation, and politicking (i.e., behaviouralism) towards particular end-goals (i.e., interpretivism) produce outcomes that constitute the culture of doing things.

According to Chilton [31: 421], political culture theory underlines one truth: peoples' behaviors, actions, attitudes, and tendencies shape political culture and, in turn, are affected by the same culture. Meaning that every person is socialized into a culture, and these persons successively produce and reproduce culture. Accordingly, Ekeh [32: 1] posits that political culture "attempts to capture the enduring political elements of society – including its values, norms, and institutions – as they emerge from one generation to another". Given the historical undercurrent of disability exclusion in Nigeria, it may not be somewhat difficult to isolate elementary values that continue to sustain the exclusion of the disabled members of that society. Given this supposition of political culture, Nigeria, like every other nation, produces outcomes based on entrenched behavioral characteristics and *modus operandi* in their politics and governance cum public administration routines. Meaning that the political culture theory clarifies the existence of dominant, unique attitudes, behavioral inclinations, distinguishing orientations, governing expressions, and social manifestations in doing and getting things done via politics and governance [28-30]. That is, as [31] illustrates, political culture symbolizes a shared philosophy of a typical, common, and acceptable epistemic norm and standard that has generally become perceived, understood, accepted, and tolerable as culture.

Specifically, a political culture theory-based analysis will be poignant to explain the continued discrimination, stigmatization, marginalization, and exclusion being experienced by disabled members of African societies cum Nigeria borne of the entrenched culture towards disability. From the theory's perspective, dominant, pervasive, and prevailing tendencies, attitudes, and characteristics are what determine and enable a

graphic contextualization and understanding of why disabled persons are absent in the elite circle of the various MDGs and the core public administration structures in Nigeria. To stress this theory's reliability cum validity to address the study's implied objective, it incorporates theories about mentality/mindset towards disability to explain how policymakers' behavior affects outcomes of disability inclusion policies. For example, the mentality/mindset to see disability as a curse and a stigma and something to be pitied and therefore justifiably marginalize such persons and ignore their needs have historical realities in African viz Nigeria's political culture. Regarding the above view [33, 34], supposes that in Africa- as is applicable in Nigeria's context - disability is believed to be a medical/health condition; a product of traditional animism/Spiritism like witchery or wizardry charm, juju, and black magic; or that disability is a form of chastisement from the Heavenly Hosts (Allah for Islam/Yahweh or God for Christians). In conceiving disabilities in either or all of the abovementioned ways, one can thus understand why the prevailing political culture in African countries (especially the understudied nation, Nigeria) towards disability inclusion can be one of marginalization, exclusion, pity, or total abdication of governance actions towards their inclusion.

In whatever way one decides to explain disability exclusion, the understanding of why disabled persons are excluded can be found by interrogating prevailing political culture. We believe that the prevailing political culture towards disabled Nigerian public personnel from observation continually reinforces their marginalization, discrimination, stigmatization, and exclusion, particularly from attaining directorate cadres in their MDGs where they are staff of. We hold that such an outcome is not disconnected from the political culture of the abled-bodied political and administrative officials who perceive disability as an aberration. Such thinking reinforces justification for exclusionary tendencies of the able-bodied actors against the disabled and enables the perception of the exclusion as normal, common, and not immoral.

The above viewpoint explains why Nigeria formulated national laws and acceded to regional, continental and international organizations' statutes for disabled persons' improvement cum inclusivity in society, the existence, opportunities, and actualities of Nigerian disabled persons remain within the realm of outright exclusion. The miserable implementation of domesticated and international statutes, ordinances, and accords and ineffective execution of national

programs for the realization of inclusivity in Nigeria is a consequence of prevailing political culture. One can therefore adduce that the absence of disabled Nigerians in the top elite circle of the various federal-state-local governments' MDGs to influence the country's public administration processes as well as Nigeria's disability inclusivity dynamics is due to prevailing negative political culture towards disability matters. Unfortunately, the negative political culture towards disability is what sustains the subaltern positions that disabled personnel is relegated to in Nigeria's public administration operations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data Collection

To enable proportionate coverage of the unit of analysis (i.e., disabled staff of civil/public services in the federal-state-local governments' MDGs) in Nigeria, data were collected from three sources: questionnaires, interviews, document analysis. It is noteworthy that data was gathered from the unit of analysis across the six geo-political regions of Nigeria. These are the South-South (SS), North Central (NC), North East (NE), North West (NW), South West (SW), and South East (SE) regions. To achieve optimum coverage of these geopolitical spaces that Nigeria's 36 states are sub-grouped under, six Research Assistants (RAs) - one each for the six geo-political regions and all field journalists with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) - were employed in the data collection, especially for the questionnaire and interview sources. It is noteworthy that the researchers adhered to necessary ethical compliances, including keeping the identity of the respondents and interviewees secret and ensuring that the data therefrom were used solely for the purpose they were collected.

Regarding the questionnaire source of data, a total of 30 questionnaires were eventually analyzed. Nine of them, constituting 30%, were between the ages of 25-35 years, 13 (i.e., 43%) were between the ages of 36-45, and the remaining eight respondents constituting 27%, were above 46 years. Of the 30 respondents, 19 (i.e., 63%) were male, while 27% (i.e., 8 respondents) are female. From the 6 geo-political zones of Nigeria, 5 respondents each completed the questionnaires. The religious demography of the respondents are 17 (i.e., 57%) are Christians, 33% (i.e., 10 respondents) are Muslims, while the remainder 3 (i.e., 10%) were traditionalist. In terms of duration in the civil/public service, emphasis was placed on respondents with

over eight years as public personnel. 12 respondents representing 40% were drawn from the local government MDAs, 11 (i.e., 37%) operate in the state government's MDAs, the remainder 23% (i.e., 7 respondents) work in one of the federal government's MDAs. Educational qualification-wise, 9 (i.e., 30%) possessed below-higher school qualifications, 18 (i.e., 60%) held the equivalent of 1st degree which is either Bachelors or Higher National Diploma degrees, the remainder 3 (i.e., 10%) possessed Master degree with none with Ph.D. It is important to note with regards to the educational qualification-wise of the respondents are an appreciable number held university degrees implying that the Nigerian public administration sphere had disabled public personnel with cognate educational attainment to hold directorate posts.

The RAs assisted in the distribution and retrieval of the questionnaires. 12 (i.e., 40%) were distributed and retrieved online, while 60% (i.e., 18 questionnaires) were physically or face-to-face handed over by the RAs.

The RAs were significantly involved in all the processes involved regarding the interviews. They assisted in conducting credible interviews such that the collected data were valid and reliable to address the purposes of the study. The interviews were done using an unstructured interview schedule. This implied that follow-up questions were mostly deduced from the responses and that the interviews did not follow a structured or similar pattern interview-qua-interview. Because the interview source of data is more complex and cumbersome than the questionnaire approach and usually involves fewer numbers of the unit of analysis than in quantitative studies, the authors enjoined the RAs to deploy convenience sampling to interview only two interviewees each in the six geo-political zones. The sampling of only two participants was necessary to ensure that the interviews were done in record time, the responses could be transcribed and processed on time, and that the authors could do due diligence on the responses to ensure that deductions made therefrom were valid and reliable in line with the study's objectives. In all, 5 females and 7 males served as interviewees distinct from those who responded to the questionnaires. Of the 12 interviewees, 4, 5, and 3 operate in the local, state, and federal government sectors, respectively.

Regarding the document analysis data source, data were obtained from related published articles and

online materials, government/NGO/international agencies published documents cum researched papers, and published documentary textual resources. It needs not to be stressed that the analyzed documents were found to be highly related to the subject matter under investigation and provided thoughtful insights on the stated objective of the study.

Data Analysis

The study's primary data were analyzed using the qualitative content analysis approach. Only the data collected from the questionnaires were presented using the quantitative content analysis format, which is a variant of the qualitative content analysis style. The qualitative content analysis approach was also used in the document analysis. It is to be noted that the authors deployed heuristic re-constructionism to reinterpret the gathered data to suit the purpose of middle-level theory building in line with the study's stated overarching objective. In this context, heuristic re-constructionism implies the subjective reinterpretation of the sourced data in the present study [35].

RESULTS

As earlier noted, the questionnaire data were presented in quantitative content analysis format (Table 1).

Some quotes from the data generated from the interviewees speak to the core theme of the study as reflected in its stated overarching objective. These quotes should be interpreted as generalizations derived from the application of heuristic re-constructionism on the interview data. The poignant quotes below denote the core theme under investigation and the generalization therefrom:

Participant A: "A foundational reason why we the few disabled public administrators can't rise high in our public agency has to do with our poor quality education that this country gives to its disabled people generally. Clearly, our education is not a priority for our governments from time".

Participant B: "Even our recruitment into government service is like we are being done a favor. Almost all the political leaders in Nigeria hardly

Table 1: The Quantitative Content Analysis of the Data Collected from the 30 Questionnaires Concerning the Stated Objective of the Study

s/n	Question	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Nigeria's public administration operations reflect disability inclusivity generally.	(0%)	4(13%)	2(7%)	11(37%)	13(43%)
2	Nigeria's political elites make disability inclusivity at the top decision-making cadre a conscious objective in structuring their public administration operations.	6(20%)	8(27%)	2(7%)	7(23%)	7(23%)
3	Disabled Nigerians are less interested in working in Nigeria's public administration's MDAs than in the private sector.	9(30%)	5(17%)	(0%)	7(23%)	9(30%)
4	Disabled public personnel are not disadvantaged in terms of numerical representation in Nigeria's MDAs at all levels of government.	2(7%)	4(13%)	1(3%)	11(37%)	12(40%)
5	Disabled Nigerians don't enjoy equity in recruitment into the public administration's MDAs and treatment across the three tiers of government.	12(40%)	11(37%)	(0%)	4 (13%)	3(10%)
6	Inclusive-friendly disability public personnel promotion policies obtain in Nigeria's public administration system.	(0%)	4(13%)	2(7%)	11(37%)	13(43%)
7	Disabled public personnel in Nigeria suffer marginalization in the promotion to top management positions in the various civil/public services.	13(43%)	11(37%)	(0%)	4(13%)	2(7%)
8	Disabled public personnel in Nigeria's MDAs suffer advancement drawbacks upward the promotion ladder generally.	13(43%)	11(37%)	2(7%)	4(13%)	(0%)
9	Disabled staff in the MDAs across the levels of government in Nigeria lack cognate skills, capacity, and intellectual acumen to hold top management positions in these services/sectors.	(0%)	4(13%)	(0%)	11(37%)	13(43%)
10	There exist insignificant programs in place to realize public administration-friendly disability inclusivity in Nigeria.	16(53%)	11(37%)	(0%)	3(10%)	(0%)

Note: SA= strongly agree; A= agree; N= neutral; D= disagree; SD= strongly disagree.

recognize the necessity for our equity treatment with the abled persons. We are always looked at as people with health problems, and even our healthcare is not given adequate public investment".

Participant C: "I am always subjected to a different promotion standard by the local government service commission out of pity to me. I feel this is because my abilities, worth, and competence are not really appreciated by my abled colleagues in the local government council".

Participant D: "From the time, Nigerian governments and political elites have not made disabled persons' living life to the fullest like the abled ones their policy thrust. They only mention it for selfish political campaigns and gains. So, if the entire society is like this, we should not expect the treatment of disabled public sector workers to be different from what happens in the larger society".

Participant E: "I work in the legal division of a state government's ministry as a lawyer, and yet my abled colleagues often muse at my knowledge of the law and my intellect rather than just relate with me as another human being. But, most times, the annoying part is being relegated more to do paperwork instead and not the other legal duties requiring proper litigation".

Participant F: "Obviously, we are disadvantaged in our office environment. Almost all government office complexes don't have friendly staircases, toilets, and even furniture suited for us disabled persons. And these lack ultimately affects our productivity".

Participant G: "I want to believe that we disabled persons prefer public service because we think the government will be more concerned for our wellbeing. With the mentality of a private businessman in Nigeria with their over-exploitation of staff and the view that a disabled person has weaknesses already to them, then no sane disabled person should desire the private sector to government job".

Participant H: "To me, it is by political appointment before you see a disabled person at the top class to contribute concretely to public policy formulation. It is rare or almost none to find a disabled public servant directing the aspect of policy implementation which is for the core civil/public servant because it is highly difficult for them to reach that point".

Participant I: "The ratio of us against the abled staff is to our disadvantage. Most times, during recruitments,

disabled persons are given very insignificant slots. Although, there is some truth that many disabled persons don't apply because they lack the necessary educational qualification and experience. But this is not really their fault as the country did not provide them with the necessary manpower development skills".

Participant J: "Our political leaders use disability concerns to score cheap political points. They usually mention disability issues when seeking to be voted for. But immediately, they take office, and disability programs are either put aside or mentioned as a means to steal public funds further. Even the few programs they formulate are imposed by the abled persons and do not really have equity and inclusion as a foundation stone of such programs".

Participant K: "I am blind and work in a federal government's news medium. You will not believe that the computer I use to do my duties was bought by me because my agency said no budgetary vote for that. Remember that a blind person's computer is not the common one, but a specially designed one. Because my disabled friends say I am lucky to have the job, I am compelled to keep it by going out of my way to be productive".

Participant L: "Promotion to the position of a director in a public agency is only imaginable for me and am sure my disabled colleagues. The difficult workplace created for us alone is frustrating. That I am a public servant today is by the grace of God in this country that sees disabled persons as a burden and not just another human being with rights and privileges".

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The quote of Participant B and the quantitative content ratios of the questionnaire question 1 and 5 reflect the abysmal tendencies, character, and attitudes of Nigeria's political elites towards domestication of international treaties for disability advancement and generally their optimal inclusion in all aspects of society's socialization to modernity. The outcome of this abysmal character, tendency, and attitudes of policymakers in Nigeria describes the country's dominant and prevailing political culture towards disability inclusivity. A major drawback to the upward mobility of disabled Nigerians in any sector, including the public services, has to do with the unenforceability of the constitutional provision for disability equity

treatment and rights protection in the country's fundamental laws. Disinterested attitude and tendency towards constitutional amendments to benefit disability inclusion is one of the political culture characters of abled-bodied policymakers in Nigeria. Section 17 of the 1999 Constitution states: The State's social order is founded on ideals of freedom, equality, and justice. Section 17(3)(a) says that: all citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity to secure adequate means of livelihood and adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment. While Section 17(3)(g) says that "provision is made for public assistance in deserving cases or other conditions of need". These constitutional provisos speak to the goal of catering for disability inclusivity in Nigeria, but in real terms, they are couched in language and letters that judicial remedy cannot be sought in light of the governments' default or failure to realize the provisions.

Thus, Akhiero [36] argues that these constitutional provisions are mere theories that cannot be enforceable or for Nigerian courts to find government(s) guilty of not providing for them. And so, [5, 36] believe that the 1999 Constitution merely included cosmetic provisos meant to spice the 1999 Constitution as a law that provides for special people's equity treatment but not to truly secure the rights of the disabled.

Martinez and Vemuru [1: no page] describes the aforesaid view succinctly:

Persons with disabilities are more likely to experience extreme poverty in Nigeria than those without a disability. While there is not a clear estimation of the number of people with disabilities in Nigeria, data from the 2018 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey revealed that an estimated 7% of household members above the age of five (as well as 9% of those 60 or older) experience some level of difficulty in at least one functional domain—seeing, hearing, communication, cognition, walking, or self-care. Similarly, 1% either have a lot of difficulties or cannot function at all in at least one domain.

The above quote provides a graphic indication of the harm to society given the purported ratio of disabled persons from the quote of an outcome of disability exclusion because of a prevailing political culture in Nigeria that does not take matters of disability

inclusion seriously. The quote explains why attempts at domesticating international treaties on disability advancement in Nigeria have not produced positive outcomes. It also elucidates Participants' D, H, and J views and highlights percentage ratios under questionnaire questions 2, 6, 10. The negative outcomes from the purported implementation and execution of disability inclusion programs and policy regulations in Nigeria have not recorded appreciable numbers of court/legal challenges of the Nigerian state's seeming failures in this regard. It is plausible that this is one of the reasons why public services do not take the provision of equitable proportional quota seriously to disabled Nigerians in terms of recruitment into the services, as underscored by Participant B and I and reflected in questions 4 and 5 in the questionnaire. According to [23], the unemployment rate among disabled Nigerians is far higher than that of the abled Nigerians. This is simply because the tendencies of those meant to set political values to be concretized do not take employment parity between the able and disabled members of the Nigerian society seriously since political culture seems to justify such inconsideration.

Empirically, Nigerian policymakers are known to hardly make optimal provision for programs against the eradication of stigmatization of disability, as well as the education, healthcare, and employment of disabled Nigerians. The national dominant political culture does not condemn such lacuna. This perspective is captured in Participant B, D, and L quotes and the percentage ratios in questionnaire questions 6 and 8. One visible fallout of the usual political-cultural attitude of elected policymakers towards disability inclusivity which produces a certain social negation that impacts disability inclusion in Nigeria's federal-state-local government civil/public services negatively is with regards to their paltry employment (i.e., questionnaire questions 4 and 5, and quotes of Participant B, G, and I) that is not considered an important achievement after public office. Citing from [1: no page], "as one woman with a physical disability in Jos puts it – Some people say the reason why I am visually impaired is because I committed a sin", adding that such thinking produces "these negative attitudes manifest in rejection, neglect, loss of respect, denial of identity or self-worth, and often result in low self-esteem, depression, and isolation". And these negative thinking about disability propels the disabled-bodied Nigerians (i.e., emphasis on civil society advocacy groups/NGOs) not to willingly pursue judicial remedies or seek avenues of socio-

cultural remediation over poor allocation of recruitment/employment slots and other rights issues enjoyable in the public services to the disabled Nigerians.

Ajuwon, Ogbonna, and Umolu [3] have condemned the belief among Nigerians, especially recruiters (i.e., the MDGs) into the various public sector organizations, that the experiences of disabled Nigerians regarding their disabilities would not enable them to easily fit into exiting work environment and restructure of the public services. The aforesaid view is underscored by the quotes of Participant C, E, and F and the percentage ratios reflected in questionnaire questions 1 and 8. This is indicative of why insignificant disabled Nigerians get employed in the Nigerian public services and are therefore unable to ascend to top cadres in these services (i.e., quote of Participant L, I, B, and G, and percentage ratios reflected in questions 2 and 3 in the questionnaire). Whereas, [6, 8] have noted that descent work and employment to disabled persons is one of the Sustainable Development Goals' 2030 Agenda for sustainable development to be actualized. Regarding formal employment matters, [12: 6] is quoted as saying: "Unemployment rates of youths were 77.3 percent for persons with disability compared to 49.2 percent for persons without a disability. Unemployment rates of adults were 62.5 percent for persons with disabilities compared to 21.5 percent for persons without disabilities."

The above-mentioned quoted statistics imply that disabled Nigerians from the outset are not bound to have cognate representation as elite officials in the civil/public sectors and MDGs in Nigeria. This outcome is due mainly to the initial cognitive disablement bestowed on disabled persons by society's social, economic, and political governance of the abled persons, which constitutes another aspect of the prevailing political culture. Also, deprivation thrust upon the special people due to the poor governance of international and the national statutes/laws/ordinances/programs, particularly in their education and healthcare, is another major factor why disabled Nigerians are not enjoying proportional representation in the public administration infrastructure of the country (refer to Participant A and K quotes and questions 10, 5 and 8 percentage ratios in the questionnaire).

Equally true and noticeable is that the dominant mindset towards disabled people in Nigeria by the abled ones is still very much tilted towards pity, stigma, marginalization, and inconsideration. In many

instances, ill-treatment is meted out to disabled persons with no iota of remedy to be gained by the victim. Empirically, over the last two decades of Nigeria's return to civilian-democratic rule tagged the Fourth Republic, which commenced in 1999, political campaign manifestoes usually reflect disability concerns. But, in the realpolitik at the federal-state-local government governance levels, nothing concrete has been done by elected policymakers since 1999 in Nigeria to equalize the living and existence of both the able and disabled citizens. The achievements like giving employment or business start-up financial assistance to insignificant numbers of disabled persons were done out of pity and a mindset that they are not able to be productive like the able-bodied persons.

Yet, the quote of Participant E and the percentage ratio reflected in question 9 of the questionnaire contradicts the notion that disabled public administrators are less skilled, not capable, and have ability deficits to perform their duties. The likely reason why disabled public administrators under-perform and hardly get placement into top cadres in the MDAs they are staff of in Nigeria has been captured in the percentage ratios of questions 4, 6, 7, and 8 of the questionnaire and the quotes of Participant C, D, F, L, and J. Participant F's quote underscores the above point: "Obviously, we are disadvantaged in our office environment. Almost all government office complexes don't have friendly staircases, toilets, and even furniture suited for us disabled persons. And these lack ultimately affects our productivity".

Although the percentage ratios reflected in question 2 of the questionnaire about whether Nigeria's elected leaders pursue a conscious policy to include disabled persons in directorate position is evenly split between the, agree and disagree responses, the quotes of Participant J, H, D, and B give credence to the reason for that outcome. What is shown from the said quotes above is that Nigerian politicians are not truly committed to disability issues except when it enables their political popularity and helps them to win votes. This explains why the domestication of international treaties on disability inclusivity continues to suffer jeopardy in Nigeria despite being a manifesto content/messaging. National programs for disabled persons' ascendancy in the MDAs to directorate levels in Nigeria are actually non-existent.

Thus, it is indisputable as Haruna [5] supposes that special individuals in the Nigerian environment continue to agonize under exclusionary tendencies.

The aforesaid point offers a reason why these categories of persons are highly insignificant in ratio as elite personnel in the public services. It also provides credence to why the disability inclusivity process of Nigeria is abysmal. The appalling ratio of disabled persons as directors in Nigeria's MDAs implies that the representation of disabled Nigerians is not good at all in the elite circle of decision-making. It also indicates that their inputs to promote optimal inclusivity and suggestions to provide for disabled persons' equitable existence in private and public spaces are most likely diminished. More so, there are not many advocacy activities by civil society/non-governmental organizations to promote equitable recruitment/employment and promotion of disabled persons into the MDGs and core services of governments at all levels. Civil society/NGO advocacy is especially lacking in the local governments wherein much of this category of person domicile mostly. By proximity, local governments are mostly within the vicinity of disabled persons more than the federal and state governments. Hence, one expects the local councils to give more preference to disability inclusion in their personnel ratio and promotion by way of setting the example for the higher tiers and thereby emphasizing the poignancy of disability inclusivity of the Nigerian society.

CONCLUSION

By extrapolation, the analyzed data theorizes that there are immanent variables that derive from Nigeria's political culture, which diminishes the prospects of disability inclusivity generally, and their ascendancy as directors in the nation's MDAs. These immanent variables include poor attitude towards domestication of international disability advancement statutes, insensitivity towards optimal implementation of national disability inclusion programs, and indifference towards disability recruitment/promotion in public administration structures. Hence, the necessity of Nigeria's political culture to actualize the inclusion of disabled Nigerians in the top echelons of decision-making in the diverse public administration MDAs of the country should be taken as a fundamental change agency via a mentality/mindset change. The prevalent political culture towards disability inclusion in Nigeria – particularly in the civil/public services – produces the kind of outcome that sustains marginalization, discrimination, stigmatization, and exclusion of this group of persons.

Therefore, to transform the prevailing political culture of Nigerians towards disability concerns, a vivid political will amongst particularly top permanent,

Table 2: Action Plans

Goal	Illustrative Activities	Expected Impact/Outcome
Address transformative political culture towards equitable disability inclusion cum governance	Ensure to elected persons that have disability inclusion in their manifestoes. Take notice of political parties that make disability inclusivity a prime program of the party. Critical examination of the politics, governance, and administration of disability inclusion programs [13], particularly employment/recruitment of these persons in public administration institutions of Nigeria. Encourage more civil society/NGO activism in disability issues.	Make disability inclusion a point of national concern. Ensure disability concerns can win electoral votes. Increase ratio of disabled persons' employment into public/civil services of Nigeria. Eradicate stigmatization, marginalization, and discrimination of special persons from the country.
Address domestication of international treaties on disability inclusion and strengthen the implementation of nationally authorized laws/programs on this subject.	Institution of Special Federal/State/Local Commissions on Disability Services [23]. Critically assess the formulation and implementation of fresh/existing legislation on disability concerns. Regular publication of indices of success or otherwise on disability inclusion by both public and private sector-driven organizations like Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics [1].	Strengthen public sector staff awareness on disabled persons' inclusion in the services [2]. Improvements in public awareness of disability inclusivity pursuits of Nigeria [3, 5]. Familiarize/strengthen a proportional ratio scheme to recruit persons into all public organizations, especially at top levels.
Address professional codes and standards in dealing with disabled persons, especially in both public realms [8, 22].	Systematization of codes and standards of improving the living of disabled persons in all walks of life such as through the public sector code of conduct, construction/engineering affairs, and in their education and healthcare [6, 7]. Increased investments by public and private sectors in disability concerns. Promotion of blueprint on an affirmative action plan for disabled people.	Establish service monitoring commissions on implementation of domesticated/authorized laws on disability inclusivity [25-27]. Strengthening of policy review/evaluation of the implementation of programs/laws/ordinances to advance inclusivity of disabled persons in society [15, 16]. Promotion of strategic plans for future improvements of disability inclusion [14, 36, 37].

appointed, and elected public officials, as well as vibrant civil society advocacy actions towards promoting a national orientation to inspire the general public to cultivate a disability inclusivity-centered mentality/mindset, is imperative. To actualize this goal in Nigeria, the aspiration to ensure that disabled Nigerians actively partake in the decision-making of various policies/programs as elite administrators are necessary. Without the above reality in place, disability inclusion cannot be realizable in Nigeria. Also, disabled persons' insignificant numerical strength in the nation's MDAs at all levels of government and their conscious promotion need to be addressed. Suppose by affirmative policy, employment opportunities are not earmarked proportional to the demographic percentage of disabled Nigerians in public services and their deliberate promotion sustained. In that case, ascendancy atop these organizations will amount to wishful thinking. The only way to avoid such exclusionary outcomes is when public organizations and every Nigerian take disability inclusivity as a conviction and mentality.

To address the challenge of disabled Nigerians not actively participating in framing the disability inclusivity process through the public administration settings, the study suggests these "action plans" in Table 2:

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