

## **RETIREEES' LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF CONTRIBUTORY PENSION POLICY IN DELTA STATE OF NIGERIA: ISSUES AND PROSPECTS.**

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### **Abstract**

The implementation of contributory pension policy in Nigeria, though, well-intended is ineffective, leading to delay in payment of retirees' entitlements as and when due. It is in this context that this study investigates retirees' level of awareness of contributory pension policy in Delta State of Nigeria: Issues and prospects, using the cross-sectional research design. The population and sample sizes of the study were 16,273, and 1,200, respectively, and an in-depth interview was granted to 30 respondents. The simple percentages, Chi-square techniques, and Pearson's Contingency Coefficient were used in data analysis. Findings from the study show that there is lack of awareness of the contributory pension policy of Delta State of Nigeria among the Local Government retirees in the state, hence, their inability to seek redress for the delay in payment of their pension entitlements as and when due. Several recommendations were highlighted in the study, such as a call on the policy makers in the pension industry to regularly organize seminars and workshop on the principles and implementation processes of the contributory pension policy for employees and retirees of the public service, in order to create in them an awareness of the new pension law. In addition, the retirees should embark on the formation of effective trade unions, and use such platforms to organize and mobilize their members for series of sensitization workshops aimed at creating the proper awareness of the contributory pension policy. Also, the various civil society groups, and other social associations in Delta State should extend their advocacy activities to address the challenges of retirees' lack of awareness of the new pension law, among others.

Keywords: Pension, contributory pension policy, awareness, retirees, pension scheme, public service, Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

Pension scheme in Nigeria emerged from the industrial conflicts between colonial employers and their Nigerian employees which eventually culminated in the enactment of the 1951 pension ordinance by the colonial government (Onukwu, 2022; Ayegba, Isaiah & Odoh, 2013), which was in the form of a Defined Benefit Scheme (DBS). Shortly after Nigeria's independence, several pension schemes were established, such as, the National Provident Fund (NPF) of 1961, which was designed for the private sector; the pension act of 1979; and Armed Forces Pension Act, No. 103 of 1979, which had a retroactive effect from 1974 (Onukwu, 2022; Ayegba, et al., 2013). The Pension Act No. 102 was established in 1979, while the police and government agencies pension schemes was established through the Pension Act no. 75 of 1987 (Ahmad, 2006).

Furthermore, the local government staff pension board was instituted in 1987 to address the pension needs of the local government employees (Ayegba, et al., 2013). The National Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) was created out of the NPF in 1993 (Onukwu, 2022; Ayegba, et al., 2013). These pension systems soon became unfunded by the government coupled with corruption and poor management by public officials, a situation that led to the adoption of contributory pension policy (CPP) through the enactment of Pension Reform Act (PRA) 2004. Dostal and Cassey (2007) observed

that the CPP of Nigeria was copied from Chile. The old DBS was originally established in 1946 (Amiens & Abusomwan, 2019), and was fraught with abysmal performance (Admad, 2008). The 1951 Ordinance that established the DBS was later changed to 1958 Pension Act” (Balogun, 2006; Barrow, 2008; Odia & Okoye, 2012; Ngu, 2014) cited in (Odeh & Ihensekhien, 2022, p. 55). The PRA 2004, was amended in 2014. The CPP is jointly funded by both the employers who contribute total employee’s emoluments of 10 per cent, while employees are made to contribute 8 per cent of their monthly emoluments to constitute a total monthly pension contribution of 18 per cent.

Upon retirement or the attainment of age 50, an employee is entitled to his or her pension benefits, such that 50 per cent of the total savings will be paid to him or her as gratuity, while the balance 50 per cent would be set aside for monthly or quarterly withdrawal, in such a way that such payment is not less than half of the employee’s last payment prior to retirement, and the regular pension payment under the programmed withdrawal will be extended to a projected life expectancy of the employee, or on the alternative, it could be used to procure an annuity from an insurance company where the employee would receive his pension benefits for life.

In the case of an employee who is less than 50 years, and who has voluntarily retired from his/her job, the act permits the payment of 25 per cent to him/her as gratuity, and this amount can be paid when there is evidence that four months after resigning from his previous employment, he/she has not been able to secure another employment. So, the remaining fraction of the money would be spread in either programmed withdrawal offered by pension fund administrators (PFAs), and which is based on an expected life span, or used to procure annuity for life payment, depending on the choice of the employee (PRA, 2014).

The pre-retirement orientation and sensitization workshops organized for retirees in order to acquaint them with the details of the pension policy is not adequate as many retirees, including retired university lecturers are not fully aware of the mode of operation of the scheme (Onukwu, 2022). Boyo (2014) noted that the pension challenges in the country which led to the enactment of CPP has not abated even with the new contributory pension scheme (CPS). Many retirees and prospective pensioners are bereft of the adequate awareness and orientation of the new CPS that was established in 2004 (Omoni, 2013). Many retirees lack the awareness of the existence of the new pension scheme (Omoni, 2013). The acceptance of the new CPS of Nigeria by pensioners and workers was done without proper understanding of the nature and mode of operation of the scheme (Akinade, 2006). The contributors to the scheme are not well informed on the working process. (Omoni, 2013, cited in Anazodo, Ezenwile, Chidolue, & Chidinma, 2014). In the light of the above, the major problem highlighted below was addressed in this research work: The lack of awareness and proper orientation of the CPP among the retirees of the Local Government Service of Delta State has led to their inability to seek redress legally for default in payment of pension entitlements.

The main objective of the study is to examine retirees’ level of awareness of CPP in Delta state of Nigeria: Issues and prospects. The specific objective of the study is to ascertain the relationship between lack of awareness of the CPP of Delta State among the retirees of the LGS of Delta State and their inability to seek redress legally for default in payment of their pension entitlements. The study seeks to ask to what extent does the lack of awareness of the CPP of Delta State by retirees of Local Government Service (LGS) of Delta State affect their inability to seek redress legally for the default in payment of their pension entitlements? The study will be of tremendous importance to policy makers in Delta State in particular, and Nigeria in general, as well as other Third World countries facing similar challenges in administration of their CPS. The study will be relevant to both academics and practitioners in the field of public administration and other related social science disciplines due to its addition and contributions to existing literature on pension matters. The study therefore examines retirees’ level of awareness of CPP in Delta state of Nigeria: Issues and prospects, using the Unified LGS of Delta State, Nigeria, as a case study. The periodic scope of the study is from 2011 to 2019.

## Literature Review

Ahmed, Adeoye and Alaka (2016) investigated the effects of CPS on employees' productivity: Evidence from Lagos State Government, and observed a correlation between employees' productivity in the workplace and retirement scheme. Another study conducted by Savella (2017, p. 372) showed that "the educational attainment of the respondents is significantly related to their level of awareness" of pension Act. This means that well educated workforce is more informed of pension processes than poorly educated employees. Omoni (2013) assessed an overview of the new pension scheme and teachers' level of awareness in Delta State of Nigeria, and observed that "the respondents had little or no knowledge of who saves their pension contributions, nor any knowledge about how much they have in their retirement savings accounts (RSAs)". Odin (2015) conducted an empirical study and found that the teachers in Edo and Delta States lack the awareness of the management of their contributed pension funds by their Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs). A similar empirical study conducted by Ehalaiye (2009), found that majority of workers do not have the knowledge and awareness of the CPP. The above studies indicate a high level of lack of awareness of CPP by the beneficiaries.

Similarly, Anazodo, Ezenwile, Chidolue & Umetiti (2014) conducted a study on the awareness of the processes of CPP, and found that 72.4 percent of the 76-respondent interviewed agreed that they have no awareness of CPP. Another study conducted by Kalu and Attamah (2015) on the awareness of CPP found that most employees are not aware of CPP. In a related development, Ovbiagele (2015) embarked on a study of management of pension schemes in Africa: Nigeria's experience, challenges, and the way forward, and found that the lack of awareness of CPP by employees were the major challenges of the effective implementation of the policy in Nigeria. In a similar vein, Ibiwoye (2008) observed a lack of awareness of CPP by employees. A survey conducted by Kalu and Attamah (2015) on the awareness of CPP by employees show that 54.26 per cent said they were not aware of CPP. So, the above findings implies that employees lack the awareness of CPP. Correspondingly, Anazodo, et al. (2014, p. 186) conducted an empirical study on the effects of the new pension scheme on retirees in Nigeria (2004-2014), and found that "most retirees are not fully aware of the operations of the new pension scheme"

Several empirical studies conducted on the awareness of CPP showed that majority of employees lack the basic awareness of the policy (Bernheim, 1994; Gustman, & Steinmeier, 2001). A similar empirical study conducted by Babatunde (2012, p. 469) found "that there is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of respondents and their pension savings."

## Empirical Review

Omoni, (2013) embarked on an evaluation study of the implementation of the contributory pension policy, using primary and secondary school teachers in Delta State. Although, the study and this present study were both conducted in Delta State, several differences have been identified between them. Firstly, while, the study used only one local government in Delta State as a case study, this present study used 12 local governments in Delta State. Secondly, the study used teachers as respondents, while this present study used LG employees and retirees, officials of PFAs and officials of Delta State Bureau of LG Pensions as respondents. Thirdly, the study shows a relationship between variables such as the lack of awareness of the CPP and knowledge of the worth of their pension funds. On the other hand, the other variable associated with lack of awareness of the CPP in this present study is the inability of retirees to seek redress. So, it is evident that a gap thus exists in the above stated literature.

Furthermore, Babatunde (2012) examined the relationship between the level of workers awareness of the CPP and their saving capacity. The study is different from this present study which examines the relationship between awareness and inability to seek redress. This, also, is an indication of the existence of a gap in empirical literature. In addition, the previous study mentioned above was embarked upon among employees, while this present study was conducted among both employees and retirees, and with special emphasis on retirees. Therefore, the above identified differences between this present study and the above stated previous empirical studies show the existence of a gap in the above review of empirical literature.

## Theoretical Framework

### Theory of Utility and Preference

This theory was formulated by Samuelson (1950). The theory argues that certain decision-making processes are based on subjective analysis. It states further that any decision no matter its presumed sophistication in its implementation, and which does not enjoy the support of clients or beneficiaries is bound to fail, and so should be jettisoned. Preferences should only be given to decisions with an assured utility (Kotun, Adeoye & Alaka, 2016). The theory is based on political rationality as against many organizational decisions that are based on economic rationality. It is participatory and consultative in nature, since it puts the clients' views and perception into consideration. The democratic approach adopted in this theory will go a long way in facilitating compliance and cooperation to the various guidelines and regulations inherent in the implementation of policies. This is due to the wide acceptability of such a policy.

As applied to this study, the contributory pension policy evaluated in this work has received popular support from the nook and crannies of Nigeria, because its formulation was based on a high level of representativeness, participation and consensus. In other words, the policy received tremendous input from stakeholders and representatives of various segments of the country, and it received wide applause from retirees and would-be retirees who are its beneficiary. Also, the policy has been adjudged by stakeholders to be of a guaranteed utility, hence, its implementation at all levels of governments, and across the various segments of the private sector in the country. We therefore propose this hypothesis:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Delta State LG retirees' lack of awareness of the CPP of Delta State and their inability to seek redress legally for default in payment of their pension entitlements.

## Methodology

This study adopted the cross-sectional research design. The population of the study was 16,273, which comprised the total population of the employees from the 25 Unified Local Government (LG) Councils of Delta State (12,465), population of LG retirees in the state between 2011 to 2019 (1,111) and the total population of 10 out of 18 PFAs responsible for managing Delta State LG staff pensions (2,697). Sample Size for the study was 1,200 derived from Employees of the Unified LGS of Delta State (400), retirees of local government (400), and PFAs (400). The various sample sizes were obtained from their respective populations using the Taro Yamane statistical formula (Yamane, 1973). The sampling techniques used were simple random sampling. The basic primary data for the study was collected through the administration of questionnaires and in-depth interview (ID). The ID was granted to 30 respondents drawn from officials of PFAs, L.G. retirees, and officials of Delta State Bureau of LG Pensions. The secondary data collection sources were used to complement the primary methods. A questionnaire was constructed by the researcher to test the topic under investigation, and to collect data with respect to the topic.

The questionnaire was examined for its face validity by several scholars of social sciences. The opinions and views of the scholars were considered in reconstructing the research instrument. For the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest reliability technique was applied in which 60 respondents were used in the pilot study conducted in Ethiope West L.G. Council of Delta State. The scores of the test were correlated using the Pearson's-Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. An obtained correlation coefficient of 0.80 indicated that the measure was reliable. This criterion of statistical determination of reliability was buttressed by Uniamikogbo (1997, p. 19), who stated that: "... as a matter of convention, at least a correlation coefficient of 0.80 is normally necessary for a measure's reliability".

The administration of the research instruments was carried out with the assistance of five field assistants. Out of the total of one thousand two hundred (1,200) questionnaires administered to respondents, a total of one thousand and ninety-two (1092) questionnaires, representing 91 per cent were retrieved. The data collected for this study was presented with the simple Percentages, and the hypothesis was analyzed with the Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) techniques, using the statistical packages for social sciences, version 23. The Pearson's Contingency Coefficient was applied to measure the strength of association of the variables.

## Analysis and Discussion

### Data Presentation

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Distribution by Sex</b>		
Male	553	50.6 %
Female	539	49.4 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>1092</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Age Distribution</b>		
18-30 years	59	5.4 %
31-49 years	783	71.7 %
50 and above	250	22.9 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>1092</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	97	8.9 %
Married	966	88.5 %
Divorced	19	1.7 %
Widowed	10	0.9 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>1092</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
Primary School Certificate	15	1.4 %
Secondary School certificate	52	4.8 %
OND/NCE	250	22.9 %
HND/Bachelor's Degree	674	61.7 %
Master's Degree	84	7.7 %
Ph. D.	11	1.0 %
Others	6	0.5 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>1092</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Salary Grade Level</b>		
SGL 1 – 5	35	3.2 %
SGL 6 -10	475	43.5 %
SGL 12 and above	582	53.3 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>1092</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: From Field Survey.

**Table 2: The lack of awareness and orientation of the CPP by the retirees of the LGS of Delta State is responsible for their inability to seek redress legally for default in payment of their pension entitlements.**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Strongly Disagree	172	15.8 %
Disagree	113	10.3 %
Undecided	10	0.9 %
Agree	469	42.9 %
Strongly Agree	328	30.0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>1092</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: From Field Survey

**Analysis of in-depth interview of data as they relate to the question in table 2.**

The in-depth interviews granted to some Pension Managers reveal that both retirees and employees of LGS of Delta State are aware that there is no money in the state to pay their entitlements. Conversely, a retiree who was interviewed on the above subject was of the view that the lack of awareness and proper orientation of the new CPP is responsible for the inability of retirees to seek redress legally. She stated that: The pensioners do not know anything about the CPP because they did not educate us. They told us that at the point of retirement we will go to Asaba, the state government headquarters, where they will organize seminars and workshop on what the pension scheme is all about. So, the lack of awareness of the CPS is part of the problems of delay in payment of pension benefits. The lack of awareness of the new scheme has led to the absence of protest by pensioners for delay in payment of pension benefits. The pensioners are not expressing their grievances of delay in payment of their pension entitlements to the relevant authorities, they are just there waiting.

Contrary to the above view, another pensioner interviewed by the researcher, and who spoke extensively on the above subject was of the view that the Delta State LG pensioners have no basis to protest the delay in payment of their pension entitlements because the delay is as a result of the non-availability of the accrued rights (that is, the pension benefits under the old pension scheme, and which need to be added to employees' contribution under the new scheme before payment of entitlements can commence). He argued that the state government is doing its part to ensure the payment of the total outstanding accrued rights through the remittances of 5 per cent of the total wage bill of the LG Employees in the state. He observed that the problem is that the statutory 5 per cent is insufficient to meet the demands of the retirees. He argued that the pensioners understood this fact, hence, the lack of protests and seeking of redress. His views are stated below: When you want to protest, you must have grounds for protest. The pension scheme is governed by laws. And as a pensioner, it is when the law is been flagrantly breached that you have case to protest. Although, sometimes they protest. But, the pensioners under the new pension scheme are aware of the reasons for delay in payment of their entitlements, if any pensioner is not aware, it means he has not tried to ask the relevant authorities. It is not that they are not aware, they are aware. It is like a child who has been sent to an expensive school that is beyond the financial capacity of his parents. He knows very well that the salary of his parents can hardly meet up with his school expenses. So such child is likely to show understanding when there are lapses in satisfying his school requirements. So, in the light of that analogy, I think the pensioners are showing understanding, hence, the absence of much protests and agitation for default in payment of their entitlements as and when due. If they come out now to protest, it is just because of the pressure they are facing. You see, when you have no food, your children are in school. So, if they come out to protest, it is because of all these things. What they need to do is to appeal to the government to look into the new pension scheme, because some things in it need to be reviewed. The laws need to be reviewed to make it soft. So, if you say 5 per cent of total workers' wage bill is what the Local Government Councils will remit to augment these accrued rights. Experience has shown that the five (5) per cent of the total wage bill is not enough to service the accrued right. So, there is no basis for protest since the 5 per cent is been paid as and when due, but only it is not enough.

Another in-depth interview with a different retiree corroborated the above views, but with slight differences with the views earlier stated. He stated that: pensioners are aware of the new pension policy, but they are not united to fight a common course. Also, a pensioner hinted that the lack of awareness is only partial, pensioners, he stated, have no money to approach dispute resolution agencies, like the National Industrial Court. He added that the pensioners are helpless in the face of the challenges.

A respondent who spoke with the researcher agreed with the fact that the lack of awareness of the new pension scheme by pensioners is responsible for their inability to seek redress legally. He stated that: One, there is lack of awareness on the part of the pensioners to seek redress legally for default in payment of their pension entitlements. Two, they have no money to challenge the issue in the National Industrial Court. So, since they lack the ability to take up such issues legally, the matter will

just die (will be a forgotten issue). Three, who will bear the cart to be at the fore front. In my opinion nobody will like to spear head such a protest move.

**Test of Hypothesis**

**H<sub>0</sub>** - There is no significant relationship between the lack of awareness of the CPP among the retirees of LGS of Delta State and seeking redress legally for default in payment of their pension entitlements;

**H<sub>R</sub>** - There is a relationship between lack of awareness of the CPP among retirees of LGS of Delta State and seeking redress legally for default in payment of their pension entitlements.

**ITEM 1**

**The lack of awareness and orientation of the CPP among retirees of the LGS of Delta State is responsible for their inability to seek redress legally for default in payment of their pension entitlements.**

**Table 3:**

**Table of Data Analysis**

Responses	Observed N
SD	172
D	113
U	10
A	469
SA	328
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1092</b>

From SPSS, Version 23.

**Table 4:**

**Test Statistics**

Hypothesis
The lack of awareness and orientation of the CPP by retirees of Delta State LGS is responsible for their inability to seek redress legally for the default in payment of their pension entitlements.
<b>Chi-Square</b>
<b>602.130<sup>a</sup></b>
<b>Df</b>
<b>4</b>

From SPSS, Version 23.

Table 3 shows the total sample size (n) for the study to be 1092. From table 4, the calculated Chi-square (X<sup>2</sup>) value is 602.130, approximately, 602.1, and the degree of freedom (df) is 4.

**Research Decision**

Degree of freedom (df) = 4.

Calculated X<sup>2</sup> = 602.1

Critical X<sup>2</sup> = 13.28 (from Chi-square (X<sup>2</sup>) table).

α = .01

**Research Result**

Calculated X<sup>2</sup> > Critical X<sup>2</sup> @ .01. Data are statistically significant. An association exist between the variables. Reject H<sub>0</sub> and accept H<sub>R</sub>.

There exists a significant relationship between the lack of awareness of the CPP by retirees of the LGS of Delta State and their inability to seek redress legally for default in payment of their pension entitlements.

$C = 0.59615$ , Approximately **0.596**

### **Research Result**

There is a moderate positive association between the lack of awareness of the CPP by LG retirees of Delta State and their inability to seek redress legally for default in payment of their pension entitlements.

### **Summary of Findings**

The lack of awareness of the LGS among the retirees of LGS of Delta State is responsible for their inability to seek redress legally for default in payment of their pension entitlements, as and when due.

**Impact Statement:** This present study indicates that the lack of adequate awareness and orientation of newly formulated public policies, programmes, and reforms by the targets population and beneficiaries of such policies and programmes tend to hinder their effective participation in the policy process, and such occurrence will eventually truncate the effective implementation of such policies.

### **Discussion of Major Findings**

In the study, there is a moderate positive association between the lack of awareness of the CPP by LG retirees of Delta State and their inability to seek redress legally for default in payment of their pension entitlements, as and when due; a situation that eventually translates to a state of chronic poverty and frustration. This means that the lack of awareness of the CPP among the retirees of the LGS of Delta State is responsible for their inability to seek redress legally for default in payment of their pension entitlements. This view is supported by the findings of Omoni (2013), which states that “the respondents had little or no knowledge of who saves their contribution, nor any knowledge about how much they have in their retirement savings accounts”. A similar view was expressed by the findings of Odin (2015) who found that the teachers in Edo State and Delta States lack the awareness of the management of their contributed pension funds by their PFAs, and also have no knowledge of the amount of money that is in their RSAs. Other numerous findings support the views of this present study that pensioners lack awareness of their pension schemes (Bernheim, 1994; Gustman & Steinmeier, 2001; Ibiwoye, 2008; Ehalaiye, 2009; Babatunde, 2012; Anazodo, Ezenwile, Chidolue & Umetiti, 2014; Kalu & Attamah, 2015; Ovbiagele, 2015). For example, Anazodo, et al. (2014, p. 186), in an empirical study conducted found that “most retirees are not fully aware of the operations of the new pension scheme”.

## **Conclusion**

The study examined the contributory pension policy and retirees’ level of awareness in Delta State of Nigeria: Issues and prospects. The historical overview of pension policies in Nigeria was highlighted chronologically in the study. Also, the article presented several elements of the CPP of Nigeria established through the PRA 2004, and its revised version, which was enacted as the PRA 2014. The study adopted both the primary and secondary method of data collection. The theory of utility and preference was adopted as its theoretical framework. The theory is centered on the decision-making processes that are based on consensus, coalition, and subjective consideration of policy issues. Findings from the study showed that the lack of awareness of the CPP among the retirees of the LGS of Delta State is the cause of their inability to seek redress legally for default in payment of their pension entitlements.

## **Recommendations**

The National Pension Commission (PenCom), and other stakeholders in the pension industry should endeavour to organize frequent seminars and workshops on CPP for awareness creation; the pensioners should constitute themselves into trade unions, in order to mobilize their members for series of sensitization workshops aimed at awareness of CPP; the civil society groups in the country should as a matter of utmost importance extend their advocacy and monitoring role to the payment of pensioners’ entitlements in order to ensure justice and effectiveness in the process; the mass media operators should collaborate with retirees and expose any identified illicit and corrupt actions in the



pension industry; the PenCom should be repositioned and strategized in order to be more effective in its oversight functions of the pension industry. And its operations should also be decentralized across the 744 LGs in the Country.

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