

Age Falsification And Its Impact on Continuity And Service Delivery in the Delta State Civil Service

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Abstract: *Over the years, there have arisen organization linkage between age falsification and the quality of performance of officers in the Nigerian civil service. The study posit that that age falsification in the Delta state civil service is caused by numerous factors that includes: fear of uncertainties surrounding retirement; consideration for family pressure and needs; apprehension over lack of alternative means of livelihood; absence of effective social policy and the failure to effectively keep employees records by the directorate in charge. Through secondary method of data collection employed in this work, it has become established that age falsification negatively gave rise to redundancy, ethical problem, lack of initiative due to ageing workforce. Age falsification also undermines recruitment process in the civil service, by limiting opportunities for young graduates and job seekers. The lack of creative minds as a result of ageing is again identified to be one of the major factors that is undermining efforts at making the civil service result oriented. Flowing from the above, the following recommendation is outlined: an automation system of record keeping to forestall any attempt to alter existing records in the civil service should be maintained. Also, government also needs to put in place a viable social policy for public servants; investment training needs to be conducted for workers nearing retirement so that they could better invest their retirement benefits; government also needs to diversify the economy in other to create wealth and employment opportunity for the teeming population. With adequate employment, the predisposition to falsify age as a result of family pressure from dependant will be reduced. Finally, the pension and gratuity of retirees needs to be promptly paid to reduce the apprehension often associated with the collection of retirement benefits.*

Keywords: *Age Falsification, Civil Service, Service delivery, Continuity,*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Today, the civil service has come to be regarded as modern institution bequeathed to mankind in the process of revolutionizing an efficient way of organizing any large human organization It is in this respect that the civil service has become characterized by the complexities of bureaucracy (Ipinlaiye, 2001). The civil service can also be seen as a complex organization composed of permanent officials employed in a capacity to assist the political executives in the formulation, execution and implementation of government policies. The main feature of the civil service include anonymity, neutrality and security of tenure. In Nigeria, as in other developing countries, governments bears the bulk of the burden of creating the enabling environment for business to thrive as well initiating and implementing policies targeted at economic development. Due to the fact that the private sector is not yet well developed to a thriving level where it could provide employment for the teeming population, the state being the largest employer of labour has become an instrument for stemming unemployment and other negative socio-economic development. As it were, developing countries depend on big government for their development because of their peculiar circumstances (Ola,1990). With a heterogeneous social environment characterized by powerful contenders for state authority, Nigeria, perhaps more than any other country in Africa, faces greater challenges of development and rational allocation of societal resources (Nwosu, 1997).

In Nigeria, the wider society looks up to the civil service not only to implement development goals and administer government policies on a day-to-day basis, but also to play significant roles in formulating development strategies, policies and programmes in such a way that will stimulate accelerated social and economic changes. Such desired changes are naturally expected to include reduced unemployment, increased social products and a more equitable redistribution of income. Yet these desires remain unfulfilled in the face of festering unemployment and poverty. In contemporary times, ageing and unproductive workforce has become the characteristics of the civil service. Inherent in this problem is the issue of falsification of age and date of first appointment with a view to staying longer than necessary (beyond the 35 years or 60 years of age whatever

comes first).

This situation is an infraction on the extant rules and regulation as well as the pension Act which recognizes that civil servants are expected to retire at the attainment of 35 years of service or 60 years of age whichever ever comes first. However, there has been an increasing reported case of age falsification and date of first appointment by civil servants since the enthronement of democratic government in 1999. Different state government have reported cases of age falsification, certificate forgery or incident of ghost workers in their civil service. States like Rivers, Delta, Kogi, Oyo, Ekiti, Edo, Akwa Ibom amongst other have raised alarm about the preponderance of age falsification in the civil service system. According to Adegboyega (2006) there are many reasons why workers in Nigeria prefer to remain in service even when their retirement, either by age or years of service, is due. This fact can be seen from the increasing number of retirees who still apply for scarce jobs, further crowding the over-saturated labour market that is brimming with fresh graduates. The trend is such that workers approaching retirement fraudulently tamper with their official files, reduce their age and thus put off the date at which they ought to be due for retirement. Jaja (2012) added that the syndrome of age falsification in the Nigerian civil service is largely attributable to the fear of retirement. He noted that Retirement or termination of work signifies a period of major change in the life of public servants. Such changes are usually devastating and traumatic in the life of the retiree, especially when the person concerned did not prepare for this phase of life. The adverse psychological and socio-economic disposition identified to characterize retired civil servants due to functional discontinuation of their regular financial source of livelihood and its corresponding decline in social status cannot be overstated. Such challenges include financial insufficiency, poor feeding, dysfunctional family matters as well as psychological or behaviour disorders like depression, hypertension, identity crisis, alcoholism, loneliness, fast ageing and ill health occasioned at times by lost of good accommodation among others. Some also experience loss of self-esteem due to lower status in which they find themselves on retirement from a highly exalted position they had occupied as public servants. This paper will examine the conditions that gave rise to age falsification and the effect of age falsification on continuity and service delivery in the Delta State civil service.

Statement of the Problem

A major cog to effective performance and productivity in the civil service is the issue of age falsification. This seemingly anomaly have become entrenched because a good proportion of career officers are culpable. Either overtly or covertly, age falsification has become a problem in the management of personnel matters in the government business. In addition to the myriad of other problems confronting the civil service, age falsification has become a misfortune that further drag down the operations of the civil service. Due to falsification of records, most workers who are due for retirement are still in service. Osagie (2007) has noted that age falsification is detrimental to the development of the civil service and it's capacity to ensure service delivery. In his words, when senior workers who are due for retirement remains in the service, it blocks continuity and initiative needed to make public service development oriented. Beside the fact that the senior workers are already mentally saturated, their ability to respond physically, psychologically and technologically to changing trends in public administration will hamper growth and prompt service delivery unlike a situation where new talent and ideas are recruited into the service. Olagunju (2011) added that age falsification by staff sometimes induces corruption in the system, because of the tendency to have understood the various loop holes in the system. In this respect, we may want to find out why there is a persistence of this trends, how negatively this phenomenon has affected the civil service and what can be done to mitigate its further damage to the civil service.

Conceptual Definition

Age Falsification: Age falsification occurs when an individual deliberately misrepresents his or her true age. This is usually done with the intent to garner privileges or status that would not otherwise be available to the individual. It may be done through the use of oral or written statements or through the altering, doctoring or forging of vital records. On some occasions, age is increased so as to make cut-offs for minimum legal or employable age in show business or professional sports. Sometimes it is not the people themselves who lower their public age, but others around them such as publicists, parents, and other handlers. Most cases involve taking or adding one or two years to their age. However, in more extreme cases, a decade can be added or subtracted. Official state documents (such as birth, marriage and death certificates, the census, and other identity documents) typically provide the correct date. Although uncommon in modern Western society, it is still possible for an individual not to know his or her exact date of birth. Such an individual may arbitrarily choose a date of birth which after later research is found to be false. This situation should not be considered age fabrication as there is no obvious intent to deceive on the part of the individual. Subtracting time from one's age is often known in English as "shaving", while adding time to one's age may be referred to as "padding" (Evita,2011).

Theoretical Framework

In the analysis of the political economy of Nigeria, there exists an incentive for citizens to capture the government and use its redistributive powers to enrich themselves. Each political choice has a distributional effect, and participants in political markets have preferences about these effects and about public policy outcomes. Consequently, these individuals are willing to expend resources to influence these outcomes. In Nigeria, Politicians, interested in maximizing votes and thus, re-election, seek contributions from interest groups to finance their campaigns for public office. Interest groups, eager to influence policy outcomes, willingly provide the campaign contributions with the hope that, once elected, the law-maker will support special-interest legislation to create rents and to improve the ability of the interest group to extract those rents from the economy. Rent-seeking can thus result in the adoption of perverse economic policies that impose significant costs on a large and poorly organized population while at the same time effecting a significant transfer of wealth from the economy to a few well-organized groups through various means that include the subversion of rules that guide how individuals and organization should conduct themselves.

The rentier theory was developed by Tullock, (1967). In his opinion, after constitutional rules have been adopted and the apparatus of state established in most developing countries, there exists an incentive for citizens to capture the government and use its redistributive powers. However, each of the political choice generates a distributional effect, and participants in political markets (political and bureaucratic elites) have preferences about these effects and about public policy outcomes. Consequently, these individuals (political and bureaucratic elites) were willing to expend resources to influence these outcomes. Quite often, they often organize themselves into special-interest groups in order to improve their ability to affect distributional outcomes. These process of expending resources in an attempt to influence public policy outcomes became the defining features of most developing countries political economy and it is pejoratively known as *rent-seeking*.

In contemporary times, it is impossible to discuss the developmental issues in Nigeria without considering the relationship between politics and the economy. It is against this backdrop, that the present study will adopt the theoretical paradigm of “rentier space”. According to Omeje (2007), rentier space is a term encompassing the acquisition, control and disposition of wealth, resource allocation and all related authoritative allocation of values, including the financial benefits devised from such a systems, they are key factors in understanding why all public office holders including the civil servant are bent on holding on to political office in order to keep enjoying the values of the system and the values such position brings. According to Omeje (2007), the combination of the rent seeking features of the Nigerian economy with the neo-patrimonial traditions of governance, produces a convoluted political culture marked by clientelistic desperation. The key stakeholders, clients and partisans of the political economy seek to pursue, fast-trade, secure, protect, and defend resource and wealth-related accumulation by desperate measures that may include the use and threat of violence, extortion and outright plunder of resources (and in the case of the present study age falsification, certificate forgery) all in an attempt to keep extracting values from the system.

The “acme of the above dialectics”, according to Ekeh (2005:110) is the manipulation of public service rules for personal gains which takes two dimensions- the embezzlement of public fund from the civic public and the solicitation of bribe, acceptance of bribes from individuals seeking services provided by the civic public by those who administer these services. Ironically, the primordial public provides a safe haven for the *bureaucratic* and political elite who are obsessed to stealing public funds. Thus, these *bureaucratic* and political elite now constitute a socio-political cult, gang or group with distinct character in Nigeria. The politico-bureaucratic public has elitist character which have “unlimited” access to the state wealth. They are found in every sector and among all the ethnic groups constituting the Nigerian state and are monolithic in outlook. The ideology and philosophy of these political gangsters can be simply stated thus- wherever you see the state wealth, steal it. They are bonded and cemented by common atrocities and fierce contest in the bid to outsmart one another in the pilfering business, generate conflicts and instability in the society. As powerful as they are, they constitute a fragment of the society with both local and international connections. Right from independence, political power has been oscillating among these group and their cronies. This they strive to protect and further consolidate by politicizing ethnicity and religious identity. The fact that they constitute a cult in Nigerian politics is incontestable(Ekeh,2005:109).

For obvious reasons, the elites have occupied the strategic sphere of the rentier space- the hub of its largesse. It is in the interest of the dominant rentier elites and to a lesser extent, other stakeholders, to maintain a fundamentally compromised and dysfunctional state (and public service system) conducive to high stakes accumulation. Thus, understanding these accumulations politics is essential to understanding the dynamics of reasons behind why despite various civil service reforms, the civil service has continued to demonstrate a dysfunctional tendencies that has consistently undermined efficient and effective service delivery. It also underscores the reason why there has been lack of investment in human and capacity development within the public service. Leftwich, (2000) adds that the rent seeking behavior of the Nigerian political economy has made effective application of rules to be difficult in both the political, economic and bureaucratic system. He noted

that ideally in stable polities, policy making and implementation processes are governed by one set of rules or institutions, or by complementary sets. The Nigerian political, economic and bureaucratic system, however, not only lack a common set of consistent rules, but also formal and informal rules are often contradictory, creating disputable picture about the legitimate rules to follow (Leftwich,2006). This produces unpredictable state behaviour that often manifest by the desire to exploit the system for personal gains. In such environments, it has become rational for all actors (political office holders, civil/public servants, security institutions, sports personality, business owners and corporate organization) to utilize both formal and informal means in an attempt to overcome their insecurity, despite the fact that this reproduces uncertainty which has consequences on development.

This affects the public sector in two ways. Firstly, ambiguity in the application of rules profoundly influences leadership style and this sets the tone for the entire state apparatus (including the civil service). Chabal and Daloz (2006) contend that the rent seeking features of the Nigerian political economy system has made the civil service to be characterized by what they termed 'instrumentalisation of disorder'. Making all within the system to be concern with 'survival', arguing that this produces a particular 'calculus of weakness. This calculus of weakness results in weak incentives for the public service/civil service to implement formal rules that would have ensured efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery and in the absence of bureaucratic probity leading to widespread use of political (non-meritorious) appointments. Secondly, the public sector itself becomes a microcosm of hybridity. Officially, civil servants may recognize being bound by bureaucratic rules, procedures and codes of practice. However, informal pressures especially from the political system has necessitate them to act in ways that violate these rules and ethics. Anders (2005) describes the gap that exists in the Nigerian public service and service delivery as a parallel disorder that has generated a dysfunctional application and respect for extant rules that militates against effective service delivery and creates a culture of indebtedness that implicates all and therefore protects all.

The consequences of all within the context of the present study is not difficult to see. The unmediated contradictions within the rent seeking political economy environment in Nigeria has meant an intense struggle between and among all stakeholders (political leaders, security agencies, public/civil servants, sports men, business owners etc) to accumulate from the system with whatever means possible including the violation of extant rules in the case of the public servants that has resulted in the growing cases of age falsification, certificate forgery, alteration of the letter of first appointment in order to remain in service. What is now evident is that whether in government or out of government everyone is so preoccupied with survival by any means, that the mobilization of the society for development becomes devalued (in the case of the civil service rendering effective and efficient service delivery becomes devalued). Also, the near absence of an effective mechanism to ensure strict adherence to rules and regulation has meant that nobody is really servicing social capital, that is, no one is really ensuring that essential conditions for the realization of the law of value exist. The point here is that the self-interested nature of the public/civil servant (that has resulted in age falsification), negates the conditions for ensuring effective and efficient service and since the civil service is inextricably linked with the development of the society. It is not difficult to conclude that within the context of the rentier space theoretical framework age falsification along with order dysfunctional features of the civil service in Nigeria will continue to undermine effective service delivery and ultimately development in the country.

History of Age Falsification in the Nigerian Civil Service

According to Bennis (2008) it is practically impossible to establish the specific period that age falsification began in the Nigerian civil service. However, it is not all difficult to note that age falsification and every other anomalies within the Nigerian public service are products of specific settings from the sociopolitical and economic environment. It is therefore interesting to note that the civil service functions within a given socio- cultural, political and economic environment. This has been aptly demonstrated in Crozier's (1964) study of the French bureaucracy. In Crozier's research, it was established that the defining features of the French administrative system is largely influenced by the socio-political and economic settings of the country. These settings give the particular country distinctive characteristics and an insight of how the civil has grown over the years. In essence therefore, we can talk of British, American, Japanese or Nigerian civil service.

In this regards, it is pertinent to ask the following questions-What does the Nigerian civil service look like?; Is there any distinctive features peculiar to the Nigerian Civil Service?; Does these distinctive features of the Nigerian civil service have any effect on the phenomenon of age falsification? Ekpo (1979) responded to the first and second question by noting that the Nigerian civil service is without doubt characterized and besetted by numerous problems and impediments. Ekpo (1979:61) noted that that Nigerian civil service is corrupt, inefficient and over staffed. Complementing this is the Udoji Report of 1974 which charged the Nigerian Civil Service with nepotism, ethnic loyalty, corruption, elitism, inability of superiors to delegate responsibilities, unreliability of junior staff in executing delegated tasks. Failure of all to apply specialized knowledge and training skills in the management of public service and failure to appreciate the importance of timeliness or

efficiency in the performance of tasks. The report concluded by saying that the entire Nigerian civil service was not result - oriented.

In some other instances, Amuchaeze, (2010) Anise (2006), noted that the dysfunctional characteristics and features of the Nigerian civil service signals the beginning of other ethical problems such as certificate forgery, age falsification, record falsification among others. Amuchaeze, (2010) made a follow up comment by noting that age falsification enters the annals of the Nigerian civil service the moment the civil service became politicized. In his words, the whole public service structure which ought to be non-partisan and neutral body with no permanent loyalties to any group has had to take side in many instances as a result of the introduction of ethnic sentiment. This was aptly reflected in the western Region crises between 1962 and 1963 when the government bureaucracy became partisan.

Olughile (2007) added that with ethnic sentiment dominating the political calculus, it became expedient for politicians and the civil servants to form alliances in order to extract values from the system. In doing this, the politicians uses their position to influence the appointment and promotion of certain individuals pivotal to their course even while such individuals have no prerequisite paper qualification. This scenario gave rise first to certificate forgery in the civil service and later on age falsification in order to prolonge the position and stay in office of such individuals. On his part however, Ajagun (2009) noted that age falsification began when it was discovered that the civil service is inundated with poor filing and record keeping process. In his words, age falsification became notorious in the Nigerian civil service due to poor record keeping processes, making it difficult to trace the accurate data initially provided by most civil servants. The situation he noted was further aggravated when the swearing of affidavit was officially accepted as an authoritative means of giving legal and official back up to what he refers to as 'official lies'.

Ede (2006) on his part argues that age falsification in the Nigerian civil service can be traced to the period preceding the civil service purge of 1976. In his words, the civil service purge carried out by the murtala/obasanjo regime of 1976 gave most civil servants the jeers about the need to ensure job security by all means. To prevent a re-occurrence, most surviving civil servants began to monitor their official files and where necessary began updating them. Yet, on his part, Adeleke (2012) noted that age falsification among civil servants became intense as from 1981 when the salaries and wages of the civil servants were review upwards by the Shagari administration in 1981. He noted that when most civil servants got prior information about the impending wage review, those closest to retirement took various steps including age falsification to ensure their stay in the service. Anise (2006) however argued that age falsification was most notorious during the military era where most senior civil servants became pivotal in influencing and giving policy direction to the naive military rulers. He noted that apart from this, the military rulers at that particular time compel some senior civil servants to remain in the service for personal reasons. This was usually done through the swearing of affidavits in order to give such decision legal backings. This situation it was noted further gave birth to the development of institutional elite class interest, preserved and nourished through an interconnected chain of internal bureaucratic network of influence and shared self - protectionism. This system further gave birth to the situation where routine bureaucratic services was slowly converted into an intricate network of favours provided only in exchange for some other kinds of favour given or expected which now characterized the Nigerian civil service and bureaucracies at large.

Aluko (2012) however notes that while age falsification has no definite date in the Nigerian civil service, the syndrome became prominent as from 1999 when the democratic government took over from the military administration of General Abdulsalam Abubakar's, who initiated the first quantum salary increment in Nigeria's history from 500- 3,500/ for state civil servants and 500-7,500 for federal civil servants. The quantum increase in salary of civil servants since 1999 has inadvertently increased the incidence of age and record falsification among civil servants in Nigeria. Civil servants are now more eager to extend their stay in the service in order to ensure regular income for a more longer period. Aluko (2012:7) notes that across the country, various state government have come to condemn the rising cases of age falsification among civil servants. The various biometrics exercise carried out by most state government and even the federal government reveal a high rate of cases of age falsification among civil servants in Nigeria.

Conditions that Gave Rise to Age Falsification in the Delta State Civil Service

Without doubt, the conditions of the Delta state workers despite all efforts devoted to uplifting it has not improved remarkably. The situation is such that an average civil servants even with the guarantee of regular salaries and the hope of gratuities and pension after retirement is still apprehensive of what the future holds for him. The privilege of receiving gratuity and pension appears the greatest manifestation of the victory of labour in his fight with the employer over his exploitation. For stability of the employment contract, labour had to look forward to the enjoyment of a favourable welfare package when he leaves employment due to old age or disability. In Delta state however, the reverse has been the case, this is because pension administration has been inundated with plethora of problems that has consequently heightened the fears of the civil servants to

prolonging their stay in the service through age falsification. Indeed, one of the major factors giving rise to age falsification in the Delta state civil service is the non-payment or delay in the payment of pension and gratuity by the Federal and State governments. For instance, the pension backlog was put at about N2.56 trillion as at December, 2005. In fact, pension fund administration became a thorny issue with millions of retired Nigerian workers living in abject poverty and they were often neglected and not properly catered for after retirement (Orifowomo, 2006). Usually, but sadly retirees go through tough times and rigorous processes before they are eventually paid their pensions, gratuity and other retirement benefits. At some time the money to pay their benefits is not available; and at another time, retirees are made to go through rigorous process of verification running to days and even month, while in the process some retirees die before collecting their entitlements.

These problems coupled with the administrative bottlenecks, bureaucracies, corrupt tendencies and inefficiencies of the civil service, and the economic downturn have resulted in erratic and the non-payment of terminal benefits as at when due (Orifowomo, 2006; Ezeala, 2007, Abade, 2004). Other problems are: gross abuse of pensioners and pension fund benefits which were politically motivated in some cases. Another condition that give rise to age falsification among civil servants is the absent of effective social security to cater for the needs of civil servants after retirement. In Delta state and perhaps in the whole of Nigeria, the apprehension of losing a regular source of income and the absent of alternative or palliative measures in form of social policy often make civil servants to want to prolong their years in the civil service through age falsification (Akhiojemi, 2009).

Ikotun (2011) added that most civil servants decides to stay in the service because the economic condition of the country offers them little alternative after retirement. In his words, even after struggling to receive his retirement entitlement, most retired civil servants could not invest their gratuities due the cost of doing best environment in Nigeria. Besides, an average civil servant are not adequately prepared for life after retirement as such, they look on with apprehension to the day of retirement or better still falsified their document in order to remain in service. Oladunmoye (2012) however contended that age falsification among civil servants is only but the aftermaths of the socio-economic conditions of most Nigerians. He noted that the pressure to falsify ones age could be traced to the dire economic situation in the country. In his words, a situation where only one person among a family of say 10 is gainfully employed in the civil service, such an individual is usually compelled to stay in the service at all cost in order to sustain the family. He noted further that this condition is also responsible for corrupt practices among civil servants in Delta state.

Olaoluwa, (2012) however noted that the preponderance of age falsification in the Delta state public service is largely attributable to the poor record keeping system in Delta state. He noted that age falsification unlike the developed countries is rampant in developing countries because birth registration is often taken for granted in these countries. Under such, situation it will be practically impossible to monitor the official age of most citizens. This trends has also been adduced for the preponderance of age cheat among under-age sports men and women in Nigeria and Africa in general. Osigwe, (2011) on his part aver that age falsification is only a symptomatic of the quota system adopted in the recruitment process in Delta state. He noted that apart from the fact that the quota system has enthroned the mediocre culture into the Delta state civil service, it has also inadvertently promote age cheat in recruitment process. In his opinion, age falsification do not only occur during years of service, it usually start even before recruitment into the service. Most often to meet the quota system arrangement, prospective employees swear fictitious affidavits declaring age that is usually below or above their date of birth. In some other cases due to the desire to ensure so called equity in the civil service, individuals have been encouraged to swear an affidavit in order to meet the requirement for employment.

This situation is also on the increase in the private sector, most especially in the banking sector. Most banks this days peg employment age that is far below the age of would be applicant. This situation often forced applicant to reduce their age by swearing affidavits in order to meet requirement for employment. The sum of the above is that age falsification is not only limited to the civil service in Delta state, but rather cut across but public and private sector. However, the review noted that age falsification in the civil service was brought about by factors that include: fear of retirement brought about by delay in the payment of workers pension and poor management of pension fund; poor social policy to cater for retirees after retirement, family pressure, unemployment, lack of a conducive investment atmosphere among others.

Effect of Age Falsification on Continuity and Service Delivery in the Delta state Civil Service

Since earliest times, strong recognition has been accorded a permanent body of officials for the sole purpose of implementing governmental decisions. Aside from the primary functions of the civil service, which include, advising political office holders on policy formulation on all aspects of governmental activities to ensure formulation of policies that are in line with the objectives of the incumbent government and that are relevant to peoples' needs, implementation of governmental policy decision, sustenance of continuity of the state, regulation of business activities and provision of social services, the civil service also plays a dominant role in socio-economic development of any country, especially in Nigeria where the public sector plays a direct

role in national development (Ajayi, 1997).

Civil Service in Delta state and Nigeria at large occupies a unique position in the formulation and implementation of national development plans. The Public Service Review Commission main report of (2004) is concerned primarily with development and the use of the public service for this purpose. The report argued that we must consciously understand and articulate our objectives and define appropriate means to achieve them. The commission affirmed that a trend in social change in Nigeria is the increasing role of government in sustainable development. This requires that public services, especially the civil service increasingly adopts management methods, development requisite managerial skills and acquires a new approach that include project management that will ensure and assure sustainable development. The implication of the above is that the civil service is an indispensable institution of the state to which the development of the society can be ensured only if they are effective and efficient in the discharge of their duties. Unfortunately however, the Civil service today is a battered institution, which has virtually lost its attributes of anonymity, neutrality and security in tenure. Abuse of due process and interminable delays have become the hallmarks. The institution is seemingly resistant to dynamic change, and has become the object of constant public criticism (FRN, 1988). These defining features of the civil service, made it a subject of public inquiry and target of mass purges by successive governments, all in an attempt to tailor it towards the accomplishment of societal goals. Example of such inquiries in postindependence Nigeria include the 1971 Adebo Commission, 1974 Udoji Commission, 1985 Philips and the Ayida Commission of 1997 (Mimiko, 1999). Besides the aforementioned inquiries, in 1975, the Murtala/Obasanjo regime purged the Nigeria civil service of some 11,000 staff and also in 1984, Buhari/Idiagbon administration further relieved about 3,000 federal civil servants of their posts.

Despite incisive recommendations of the above-named panels as well as retrenchment exercise, the problems of the civil service continued unabated. This has also limited the capacity of the civil service to actually play a meaningful role in the development process. This situation is unfortunately been accentuated by the rising cases of age falsification among civil servants in the country. Without mincing words, the effect of age falsification on service delivery in the Nigerian civil service cannot be quantified. This is especially true going by the fact that the civil service is already inundated with countless problems that has undermined effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery. As should be noted, in Nigeria the wider society looks up to the civil service not only to implement development goals and administer government policies on a day-to-day basis, but also to play significant roles in formulating development strategies, policies and programmes in such a way that will stimulate accelerated social and economic changes. Such desired changes are naturally expected to include reduced unemployment, increased social products and a more equitable redistribution of income. Yet these desires remain unfulfilled in the face of festering cases of age falsification among others. As an institution, the civil service has also become described as a community in which service ethics has reached its nadir, in which excessive caution, undue bureaucratic practice and in terminable delays have become the hallmarks. That the Nigerian civil service is seemingly resistant to dynamic change, makes the present rising cases of age falsification even more troubling. It must be noted that the civil service as an agent of development is generally expected to ensure that the policies and programmes of the government are efficiently and effectively implemented. This cardinal responsibility as noted by Aremu (2012) have come to be under threat as a result of the syndrome of age falsification. In his words, when civil servants falsified their age, they have not only succeeded in undermining continuity and change in the society, but has inadvertently lost the moral gab to act as an agent and engine of growth and development in the society. Aremu (2012:5) contends that with age falsification, existing civil servants has made it difficult for fresh ideas to be introduced into the service. The absence of progressive ideas will not only undermine change, but will equally retard growths in the society.

A corollary to the above view was enunciated by Omotosho (2012). He noted that with age falsification, what will be left of the civil service is an ageing work force that is intellectually weak, slow to respond to demands and weak in the discharge of administrative function. When such situation arises, he noted, what will be left is a civil service that act as a cog in the dispensation of policies and programmes of the state. Agbagbara, (2009) also adds that one other major effect of age falsification is inhibition of creativity and innovation. He noted that in a changing world economy, the role of creativity and innovation in the workplace is becoming ever more prominent. Without creativity and innovation, introduction of new ideas that could result to improving organizational performance cannot be possible let alone repositioning of the organization . In an attempt to gain a competitive advantage, therefore, organizations are now focusing on enhancing their employees' creativity and innovative capacity and not merely developing their technical competencies and skills. Agbagbara (2009) notes further that modern day civil servants needs to develop their creative thoughts.

This creative thought can be divided into two types of reasoning:

- Divergent thinking: the intellectual ability to think of many original, diverse, and elaborate ideas.
- Convergent thinking: the intellectual ability to logically evaluate, critique and choose the best idea from a selection of ideas.

Both abilities are required for creative output. Divergent thinking is essential to the novelty of creative products whereas convergent thinking is fundamental to the appropriateness. Innovation, therefore, is only a product of creativity. This explains why it is impossible to talk of creativity without innovation neither can someone talk of innovation without creativity. As such, psychological and social changes due to ageing, creates short term memory, slow response to stimuli and learning as well as difficulty in handling intellectually tasking and difficult jobs. Thus the aged civil servant tend to be more cautious and conservative, believing that it is very hard to change the world and that in many cases change occurs on its own in due season. As a result, they jettison creative thoughts capable of bringing about innovation. Agbagbara, (2009) further contends that a lot of older people do not even understand how the world works today. They can neither make use of many of its tools nor comprehend or share the morals of the younger ones who form the majority of the society. The rate of change in the 20th and 21st century is bewildering to the elderly (aged) as knowledge has more than doubled and continues to grow. This situation creates problems for an aged workforce that often manifest in: lack of creative and innovative ideas, resistance to necessary changes as well as ineffective and inefficient service delivery.

Also, Age Falsification Has Contributed Immensely To The Development Of Underdevelopment. Vincent Harding Et Al In The Introduction To The Book, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa Summarized The Views Of The Author Of The Book, Walter Rodney, As Follows:

The question as to who, and what is responsible for African underdevelopment can be answered at two levels. Firstly, the answer is that the operation of the imperialist system bears major responsibility for African economic retardation by draining African wealth and by making it impossible to develop more rapidly the resources of the continent. Secondly one has to deal with those who manipulated the system and those who are either agents or unwilling accomplices of the said system. The capitalists of the Western Europe were the one who actively extended their exploitation from inside Europe to cover the whole of Africa. In recent times, they were joined by the capitalist from the United States; and for many years now even the workers of those metropolitan countries have benefitted from the exploitation of Africa.

For A Better Appreciation Of This View, It Is Important To Take A Look At Walter Rodney's Conception Of Development As Captured Hereunder:

Development in human society is a many-sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill, and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Some of these are virtually moral categories and are difficult to evaluate - depending as they do on the age in which one lives, one's class origin, and one's personal code of what is right and what is wrong. However, what is indisputable is that the achievement of any of those aspects of personal development is very much tied in with the state of the society as a whole.

Going by this conception of development, it is most agreeable that increased skill and creativity, among others, are necessary for development to occur. However, as earlier stated, the problems of an aged workforce include, lack of creative and innovative ideas, resistance to necessary changes as well as ineffective and inefficient service delivery. When answering the question, therefore, as to who and what is responsible for the underdevelopment of Africa, with special reference to Nigeria in our present time, we must necessarily look at age falsification which had earlier been linked to the pursuit of material well-being or better life after retirement. Although, it is indisputable that, the introduction of African economies into the international capitalist economy has thrown up money as a symbol of status, thereby creating a situation where self - discipline and responsibility which Rodney sees as part of development at the individual level, have been jettisoned for indiscipline and irresponsibility as expressed in age falsification. What workers now seek to achieve is just an aspect of individual development which is material well-being, to the exclusion of increased skill, and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline and responsibility. It follows, therefore, that age falsification, having entrenched mediocrity, lack of necessary skill and innovation, lack of creativity, indiscipline and irresponsibility, has contributed immensely to the underdevelopment of the Nigerian economy.

Adewale (2012) on his part noted that the effect of age falsification is largely the intensification of corrupt practices in the civil service. In his words when civil servants attempts to falsify their age, they will definitely pass through some channels before doing so. And in passing through the channels, some form of gratification must have occurred. Apart from this a civil servant that is hell bent in remaining in the civil would have built a network of cover up that must continually be oiled to remain intact. Under this circumstances, corruption is further strengthened in the civil service and this affects their contribution to development and made development difficult via the civil service. Another major effect of age falsification is that it makes promotion very difficult in the civil service. As should be noted promotion comes mostly when positions at different level are vacated either through retirement or transfer process. However, with age falsification it will become practically impossible to promote staff above their current level. This situation as (Omotosoh, 2012) notes is largely responsible for the hue and cry among civil servants of lack of promotion in the service. Age

falsification also has a negative effect on the wage bill of the government Adekanbi (2012) notes for instance that since in Nigeria, the government recruitment into public service has been seen as means of promoting government responsiveness to the people, most state government in Nigeria in order to remain relevant recruit without paying considerable attention to the implication of such exercise. And when capital bill is less than recurrent expenditure. It is no longer news that recurrent expenditure in most states of the federation is usually higher than the capital expenditure. Under this condition, it is often difficult to carry out infrastructure development. Again, age falsification affect training and manpower development in the civil service. With an over bloated civil service, government are usually apprehensive in training their workforce due to the cost involve. Yet, when training is carried out at all, it is usually done on an ad hoc basis. And in a situation where workers are not well trained, their capacity to deliver effectively is greatly hampered.

II. CONCLUSION

In Delta state, as in other states of the Federation, governments carry the bulk of the burden of economic development. The state, being the biggest employer of labour as a result of lack of a well-developed private sector, has thus become one huge instrument for stemming unemployment and other socio-economic miseries. Citizens depend on the governments for their development because of their peculiar circumstance. With a heterogeneous social environment characterized by powerful contenders for state authority, Delta state, perhaps more than any other state in Nigeria, faces greater challenges of ensuring continuity in the administration of development. In Delta and Nigeria in general, the wider society looks up to the civil service not only to implement development goals and administer government policies on a day-to-day basis, but also to play significant roles in formulating development strategies, policies and programmes in such a way that will stimulate accelerated social and economic changes. Such desired changes are naturally expected to include reducing unemployment, increased social products and a more equitable redistribution of income. Yet these desires remain unfulfilled in the face of festering unemployment and poverty. This situation is perhaps even more compounded by the rising incidence of age falsification. The crux of the matter is that with age falsification is on the increase in the civil service, the needed continuity and development will be hampered. This is because the situation will increasingly make it difficult for government to inject fresh ideas and creativity into the service. Already, the Civil service is today seen as a battered institution, which has virtually lost its attributes of anonymity, neutrality and security in tenure. It is also seen as an institution in which moral decadence has reached its nadir, in which excessive caution, undue bureaucratic practice and in terminable delays have become the hallmarks. If this existing features is further complimented by the growing syndrome of age falsification, it is no doubt that service delivery will further nose dive in the Delta state civil service.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn thereof, the following recommendations are outlined:

- i. There is need for proper record keeping. Perhaps an automation system of record keeping will forestall in any attempt to alter existing records or falsify age in the civil service.
- ii. Government needs to put in place a viable social policy for public servants. This will help to allays fears often associated with retirement.
- iii. As a corollary to the above, investment training needs to be conducted for workers nearing retirement so that they could better invest their retirement benefits.
- iv. Government also needs to diversify the economy in other to create wealth and employment opportunity for the teeming population. With adequate employment, the predisposition to falsify age as a result of family pressure from dependant will be reduced.
- v. Above all, the pension and gratuity of retirees needs to be promptly paid. The failure to pay retirees as promptly as possible in the past is one of the reason why some workers falsify their age to stay longer in the service.

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