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Casualization in Occupational Settings: An Investigative Study

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This research explored the Effects of Casualization on the Welfare of Workers using a de-identified multinational oil company in Nigeria as a representative case.

Objectives: The objectives of the study were to examine the effects of casualization of workers, associated irregularity of work, and deprivation of workers' right.

Methodology: A close-ended questionnaire was used to collect primary data. Out of 150 copies of the questionnaire administered, 122 were fully filled, returned and analysed using descriptive statistics.

Results & Discussion: Three hypotheses were proposed and analysed using multiple regression of ordinary least square (OLS) statistical method and tested at 0.05 level of significance for the hypotheses. The result showed that there were significant negative effects of casualization of workers for a short-term contract work, irregularity of casualization of work, and deprivation of workers right to negotiate.

Conclusion: Hallmarks of casualization of labour include short term contract work; irregularity of work; and deprivation of workers' right to negotiate adversely affects the welfare packages of workers. These practices have inherent occupational health implication on workers.

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Recommendations: Casualization of labour as seen in this study is a despicable model that should be discontinued. However, if it must be practiced, the human resources, industrial relations, labour union and occupational health experts in such organizations should repackage such contracts to include allowances, job security, negotiation rights, dignity, benefits and welfare clauses as in permanent full time employment.

Keywords: Casualization; workers; welfare; compensation; oil and gas industry.

1. INTRODUCTION

Workers who have explicit or implicit contract of employment which is not expected to continue for more than a short period or whose duration is to be determined by national circumstances are referred to as casual worker [1-4]. This ambiguous definition has led to varying definitions of casual, contract workers and their rights in different jurisdictions. Casualization is referred to in Europe and the United States as Non-Standard Work Arrangements (NSWAs). In several climes, it is the corporate trend to hire and keep workers on temporary employment rather than permanent employment as a cost reduction measure [5]. Casualization is a term used in corporate circles to describe work arrangements that are characterized by low wages and lack of employment benefits that accrue to regular employees as well as the right to organize and collectively bargain. In addition, workers in this form of work arrangement can be dismissed at any time without notice and are not entitled to redundancy pay [5]. It is an unprotected form of employment because it does not enjoy the statutory protection available to permanent employees. Basso observes that casualization may be linked to under-employment; however, Basso did not present the effects of casualization hence this study will attempt to close this gap [5]. It is often used loosely in international literature to refer to the spread of bad conditions of work such as employment insecurity, irregular work hours,

intermittent employment, low wages and absence of standard employment benefits.

The term casual is however, becoming a more usual and constant language in employment relations. The meanings may vary, but there exists a common overlap in the meanings as may be used in different occasions. Bodibe affirms that traditionally, casual labour refers to work conducted for defined periods and during peak business periods when individuals are called to supplement full time workers in times of high business activity, particularly in retail, but the situation is different now [6-8]. However, the quest for profit maximization has buoyed the practice of casualization globally. It is assumed that a lot of benefits accrued to permanent employees are saved by the employer when workers are engaged on contract terms. It has resulted in a situation where casual workers continue to groan under this unhealthy strategy of cutting cost by employers of labour. Some sectors with thousands of casual labourers include telecommunication, banking and insurance. Most of these industries have resorted to workers' casualization and outsourcing as a cheap means of labour at the expense of the workers, thus over exploiting workers through unfavorable employment terms and conditions of which the workers have no choice [7-9]. The oil and gas industry of Nigeria is worst hit in this practice as statistics from the NUPENG show that many workers in the oil and gas sectors are casual labourers [10-12].

Table 1. Type of employment contract in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria in 2010

S/no.	Name of Company	No. of permanent employees	Percentage	No. of contract/casual employees	Percentage	Total
1.	Shell (SPDC)	3,625	17.58%	17,000	82.42%	20,625
2.	Chevron	2,000	45.45%	2,400	54.55%	4,400
3.	ExxonMobil	2,118	36%	3,835	64%	5,953
Total		7,743		23,235	30,978	

Source: NUPENG [10]

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The rising level of casualization of workers has exerted adverse effects on the welfare package of the workers, particularly in the oil and gas industry (see Table 1). This problem has resulted in exploitation of workers, intimidation, health risk, poor financial and non-financial compensations, poor career development, increasing level of poverty, poor healthcare, susceptibility to the dangers of pandemic such as Covid-19 among others. This act of casualization has made casual workers not to have a voice in the negotiation of better and equilateral work conditions and terms, because any attempt to raise voice against the casualization could take away the only available work available to them. Also, it reduces the voice of the permanent employees as they are afraid to air their voices in other to avoid losing their jobs. Additionally, casual work which is supposed to be a temporary practice has now become a norm and a permanent mode of employment in oil companies without the statutory benefits associated with permanent employment status. Casual workers are subjected to lower pay, barred from their right to join a union, and denied medical and other benefits. Companies will often hire several part-time workers instead of one or two full-time workers to avoid their obligation to provide benefits, to divide the workforce, and to dissuade unionizing efforts. In addition, researches have not been concerted to this end to ensuring reduction of the increasing waves of casualization particularly in the oil and gas industry. The deficiencies on the side of the labour unions, government, civil societies, and the researchers in reducing casualization has created a vacuum to be filled, hence, this study is an attempt to explore and present the extent of its effects on the welfare of workers in the oil industry.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study is useful as a wake-up call to diverse labour stakeholders such as the government, unions, workers, students, apprentices, recruiters, industrial and human relation organizations, oil and gas companies, prospective labour force, researchers, families, causal workers in other impacted industrial sectors like banking, education, allied companies to oil and gas industry. More specifically, it is useful to oil companies as it presents the underpinning knowledge that casualization will not enhance the happiness or satisfaction of the

casual workers and as such may not increase their level of productivity which would have in turn increase the overall productivity and profitability of the organization. The study is further useful to the staff of the organization especially the workers' union of the organization as the study helps to encourage the union to continuously agitate for means of reducing casualization of work to keep them in employment and others to be employed. The study would enhance the need for permanent employment of casual workers as oil companies will understand from the knowledge of this study that casualization is not profitable, because it could cause uprising among the casual workers which could lead to work stoppages and other industrial actions that could disrupt the flow of production. The study provides useful empirical findings for literature review for other researchers who may be carrying related researches in future.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to explore the effects of casualization on workers welfare. The specific research objectives are to:

- i. examine the effect of short-term contract work on workers welfare in the oil industry,
- ii. determine the effect of irregularity of employment,
- iii. examine the effect of deprivation of workers' right to negotiate welfare benefits.

1.4 Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were stated in null form and tested at 5% level of significance:

- i. Casualization of workers for a short-term contract work has no significant effect on workers' welfare.
- ii. Irregularity of casualization of work has no significant effects on workers' welfare packages.
- iii. Casualization does not give workers' right for negotiation has no significant effects on worker's welfare.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Design

A cross sectional survey of permanent and casual employees in a multinational oil and gas company.

2.2 Study Population

The population of this study was made up of permanent and casual staff of a multinational oil company in Warri, Nigeria. It has over 2,123 of which 150 participants were selected using convenient sampling technique.

2.3 Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a closed-ended questionnaire titled "Casualization and Effect on Welfare Package of Workers in the Oil Industry of Nigeria -Questionnaire" with items structured on a five-point Likert's scale of Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Undecided (UK); Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with assigned weight of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher. Questionnaire was first subjected to face and content validity to ensure that the instrument was capable of measuring what it is expected to measure in this study. Also, reliability test was conducted using test-retest method to determine the coefficient of the reliability using Cronbach Alpha (α) statistical method. The instrument was accepted to be reliable since the calculated coefficient of reliability was 0.83 which is greater than 0.7. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to process the data collected, while the descriptive statistics was used to analyze the research questions. The multiple and simple regression of ordinary least square (OLS) statistical method were used for the analysis of the hypotheses. The result of the analysis of the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The underpinning theory for this study is the Einstein's Theory of Workers' Compensation

Outcomes'. Einstein's Theory of Workers' Compensation Outcomes - In 1905, Albert Einstein developed the theory of "Workers' Compensation" which is also known as the "Theory of Relativity", this Theory of Relativity has been acclaimed to be useful in the analysis of workers' compensation package for work done or performance. That is compensating workers to the tune of work done or productivity of the worker. This theory of workers' compensation is very useful to this study as it helps to explain that a worker should be paid or compensated or rewarded according to the productivity or the output made. However, the objective of this study is to explore the effects of casualization on workers welfare, explore and present the deficiencies in the compensation packages for casual workers.

3. RESULTS

Out of 150 copies of close-ended questionnaire administered, 122 duly filled with 28 voided for incompleteness.

Table 2 above shows that an average of 55 participants, which represents 45% of the total participants strongly agreed, 39 participants which represent 32% agreed, 3 participants representing 2% were undecided, 16 participants representing 13% disagreed while 9 representing 8% of the total participants strongly disagreed that casualization by engaging workers for a short term contract work has adverse effect on workers' welfare in the multinational company. Since 77% representing those who are supporting (SA = 45% + A= 32%) is more than those who are against representing 21% (D=13% + SD = 8%), it implies that casualization by engaging workers for a short term contract work has adverse effect on workers' welfare in this organization.

Table 2. Dimensions of casualization of workers (Independent variable)

S/N	Variables	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total
1	Casualization by engaging workers for a short-term contract work has significant effect on workers' welfare.	59	43	2	11	7	122
2	Irregularity of casual work has effects on workers' welfare packages.	43	32	4	28	15	122
3	Casualization which does not give workers' right for negotiation has effects on worker's welfare.	62	42	2	12	4	122
	Mean (\bar{X})	55	39	3	16	9	122
		(45%)	(32%)	(2%)	(13%)	(8%)	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 3. Dimensions of Workers' welfare packages (Dependent variable)

S/N	Variables	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total
1	Casual workers are not given Medical care allowances	83	31	1	18	8	122
2	Casual workers are not given leave allowance	81	26	0	10	5	122
3	Casual workers are not given Travelling/transport allowance	62	42	1	13	4	122
4	Casual workers are not given Life insurance benefits or accident insurance	77	36	0	7	2	122
5	Casual workers are not given Profit sharing benefit	87	25	0	6	4	122
6.	Casual workers are not given 13 th Month allowance	83	27	1	5	6	122
7	Casual workers are not given Housing allowance	75	36	1	9	1	122
	SUM	544	223	4	68	30	548
	Mean (\bar{X})	75 (62%)	32 (26%)	1 (1%)	10 (8%)	4 (3%)	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 3 above shows an average of 75 participants, which represents 62% of the total participants strongly agreed, 32 participants which represent 26% agreed, 1 participants representing 1% were undecided, 10 participants representing 8% disagreed while 4 representing 3% of the total participants strongly disagreed that dimensions of Workers' welfare packages such as: Medical care allowances; Leave allowance; Travelling/transport allowance; Life insurance benefits or accident insurance at work; Profit sharing benefit; 13th Month allowance; Housing allowance (Dependent variable) are not fulfilled since 88% (SA = 62% + A= 26%) of the participants supported the statement.

Test of Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3

1. Ho: Casualization and engaging workers for a short-term contract work has no significant effect on workers' welfare.
2. Ho: Irregularity of casualization of work has no significant effects on workers' welfare packages.
3. Ho: Casualization which does not give workers' right for negotiation has no significant effects on worker's welfare.

The measuring variables for the Independent variable (X)

x_1 = Effect of Casualization of engaging workers for a short-term contract work on workers' welfare.

X_2 = Irregularity of casualization of work effects on workers' welfare packages.

X_3 = The extent casualization which does not give workers' right for negotiation affects worker's welfare.

The measuring variables for the Dependent variable (Y)

- y_1 = Medical care allowances;
 - y_2 = Leave allowance;
 - y_3 = Travelling/transport allowance;
 - y_4 = Life insurance benefits or accident insurance at work;
 - y_5 = Profit sharing benefit;
 - y_6 = 13th Month allowance;
 - y_7 = Housing allowance.
- $Y_1 = a_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + \mu_i \dots\dots\dots 1.$

Where:

- a_0 = Part of workers' welfare in SPDC which does not due to casuality.
- b_1 to b_3 = The rate of change of "workers' welfare with respect to a unit change in any of the independent variables $X_1, X_2,$ and $X_3.$
- μ = The stochastic variable or error term.

$Y = 3.464 - 0.568X_1 - 0.456 X_2 - 0.436 X_3 \dots 2$

Above equation revealed a constant value of 3.464 which showed the level of the workers' welfare if all the explanatory variables (casualization) (x_1 to x_3) are held constant. The

model also shows that the b_1 to b_3 for $X_1 - X_3$ are all negative, that is the variables of Casualization of workers such as: engaging workers for a short term contract work; Irregularity of casualization of work; and Casualization which does not give workers' right for negotiation all have significant negative influence on workers' welfare packages since each of the p -value is less than the corresponding t -value at 0.05 level of significance.

3.1 For Hypothesis One

It shows that the regression coefficient (b_1) is = -0.456. This implies that engaging workers for a short-term contract work has significant negative effect on workers' welfare such that increase in casualization will reduce workers' welfare packages.

3.2 For Hypothesis Two

The regression coefficient (b_2) is = -0.568. This implies that Irregularity of casualization of work has significant negative effects on workers' welfare packages, such that increase in casualization will reduce workers' welfare packages by 56.8%.

3.3 For Hypothesis Three

The regression coefficient (b_3) is = +0.436. This implies that Casualization which does not give workers' right for negotiation has significant negative effects on worker's welfare, such that increase in casualization will reduce workers' welfare packages by 43.6%.

4. DISCUSSION

The result of the analysis and tests showed that there are significant negative effects of casualization of workers on workers' welfare. This means that casualization of labour adversely affects workers' packages. Practices of

casualization include short term contracts, irregularity work; deprivation of workers' right to negotiate; deprivation of benefits. Further implication includes deprivation of Medicare allowances; Leave allowance; Travelling/transport allowance; Life insurance benefits or accident insurance at work; Profit sharing benefit; 13th Month allowance; and Housing allowance. The result further showed the directional relationship between the independent variable (casualization of workers) and dependent variable (Workers' welfare package) as presented in Fig. 1. It also shows that the results on the effect of casualization of workers on workers' welfare will send back signal (feedback) on adjustments that should be made on the independent variable in order to improve its impact on welfare of workers; hence it shows a circular relationship.

The model as shown in Fig. 1 above indicates that changes in any of the dimensions of casualization of workers (Engaging workers for a short term contract; Irregularity of casualization of work; and Casualization which does not give workers' right for negotiation) will through the process of activities lead to changes in any of the components of workers' welfare packages.

There are several types of workers packages such as housing (employer-provided or employer-paid, insurance; disability income protection; retirement benefits; daycare; tuition reimbursement; sick leave; vacation; social security; profit sharing; maternity, loss of love ones, among others. The purpose of employee benefits is to increase the economic security of workers and in doing so, improve worker retention across the organization [12-16]. This is seen as a component of reward management. It is painful that most of these welfare packages which are in permanent regular work system are scarcely or not included in the casual workers' arrangement which makes the casual workers worse-off.

Table 4. Multiple regression of "welfare of workers" on "casualization of workers"

Independent Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	T-statistic	P-value
(Constant)	3.464	0.345	10.053	0.000**
X_1	-0.568	0.067	2.507	0.006**
X_2	-0.456	0.052	4.895	0.000**
X_3	-0.436	0.057	0.626	0.013*

$R - Squared = 0.82$; $Adjusted R-Squared = 0.81$; $Prob (F - statistic) = 0.000$

Source: Author's Computation

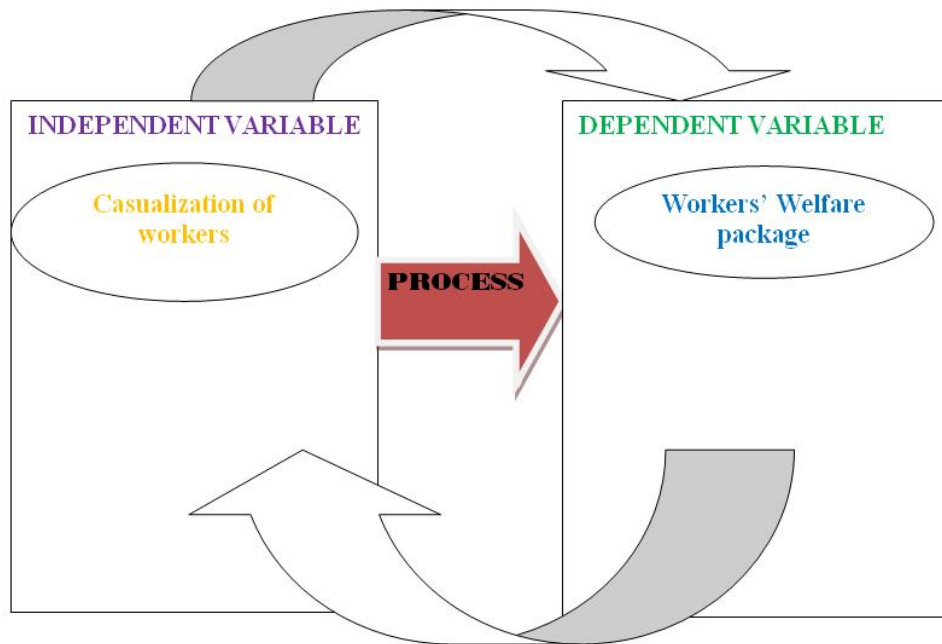


Fig. 1. Relationship model

Source: Author generated.

However, despite the awareness of the government and the continuous struggle of the labour unions to stop casualization of workers especially in the oil and gas sector, the level of casualization till remains high in Nigeria in the oil and gas industry. In Nigeria, continued engagement of casual labourers is at variance with provisions of section 17 (a) of the Constitution, which guarantees “equal pay for equal work” [15]. The section frowns at discrimination on account of sex, or any other ground whatsoever and so the discrimination in pay between permanent and casual employees should not exist. Legally, labour unions are of the view that contract staffing, and casualization contravene Section 7 (1) of the Labour Act, Cap 198, Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1990. The Act states that, “Not later than three months after the beginning of a worker’s period of employment with an employer, the employer shall issue the worker a written statement which will specify the terms and conditions of the employment, including the nature of employment and if the contract is for a fixed term, the date when the contract expires [15]. There has not been adequate research addressing this lingering problem of casualization of workers as most of the researches done were mainly in developed countries. This creates a research gap, which this study focused on by carrying a study on casualization and effect on workers’

welfare packages in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria.

The increased in capital mobility and the deregulation of the labour market are some of the major causes of Casualization [17,11-13]. Trade liberalization made way for competing imports into the economy; this consequently resulted to lots of instability in the product market. In response to this challenge, employers hence became tempted to adopt cost-cutting measures, including downsizing/cutting back on employment and use of permanent employees; the offshoot being the current predominance of casual workers. Similarly, Okafor also agreed that continuous trade and capital liberalization led to growth of informal sector, which engage workers under unfair labour practices like casual/contract employment and deplorable working conditions and environment [18,19]. He further added that the inability of labour to flow or migrate to another work organization or part of the world for improved standard of living as part of globalization also worsened the labour situation. Furthermore, the increasing absence of substantial infrastructure and enabling environment for businesses to successfully operate cannot also be distanced from the cause, as organizations are forced to fend for such needed infrastructures as power and lityny of others which ordinarily shouldn’t be the case.

All these have an overbearing effect on organizations overhead cost, thus leading to harsh cost reduction approaches of which the welfare status of the workforce becomes unfortunately a prey.

Other root causes of Casualization are globalization, technological change and abundance of labour supply. Globalization on its part came with the deregulation of not only the product markets but also the labour market [19]. It promoted outsourcing, which today is highlighted as one of the major causes of casualization. With globalization in place, outsourcing provided an easier way to cut costs and run off competition. This practice has become a gold rush for many organizations in recent times. Today, if an employer was to outsource either labour or production components, such employer no longer needed as much permanent employees as before. Rather, the popular practice is to cut the number of permanent employees and replace them with casuals. The abundance or excess supply of labour also played a major role in fueling casualization.

According to Nwachukwu, part of the initial challenges faced by human resource managers in Nigeria from the onset was to fill a single position after an advertisement in the major advertising media has not produced a single application [20,21]. But in recent times, the situation is no longer the same; the challenge for HR managers presently is how to select few individuals from the numerous applications that a single advertisement has generated. This situation in the ultimate analysis resulted partly to the present irresponsible treatment meted on employees, as employers always believe that they will always have people willing to work for them irrespective of the conditions, including the desperate attitude of potential or existing employees in getting or retaining jobs at any condition or cost. Strength and Weaknesses – The strength of this studies lies in the rigorous literature inclusion, involvement of significant number of respondent and theoretical framework. The limitation however lies in the paucity of literatures dealing on casualization in the oil and gas industry. Further work would be required to explore the impact of permanent employment on workers welfare.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that engaging workers for a short-term contract work has significant

negative effect on workers' welfare such that increase in casualization will reduce workers' welfare packages. It further revealed that irregularity of work, is a hallmark of casualization which has significant negative effects on workers' welfare packages as evidenced by reduction of packages by 56.8%. Casualization of labour as shown in this study is in a despicable mode. Permanent employment slots should not be casualised in disguise but awarded its full complements. Industrial relations, occupational health, labour union and human resources experts should repackage casual contracts to include the allowances, rights, security, human dignity and welfare packages as in full time permanent employment's.

DISCLAIMER

The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company rather it was funded by personal efforts of the authors.

CONSENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

This study was approved by the research advisory Committee of the Department of Sociology at the Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. Participant information was provided to the respondents with informed and signed consent obtained.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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