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EMPIRICAL STUDY OF FEDERALISM AND POLITICAL STABILITY IN NIGERIA

STUDIUM EMPIRYCZNE FEDERALIZMU I STABILNOŚCI POLITYCZNEJ W NIGERII

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Abstract:

Federalism and Political stability are two concepts that are of significance to all modern societies. Federalism promotes pluralism and dispersal of power which is good for a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria. But in Nigeria, the practice has generated unending tensions among the individuals, communities and ethnic groups within it. However, this study argues that healthy federalism is a political panacea for ethnic violence, governance crisis and political instability in Nigeria. This study empirically examined the relationship between federalism and political stability in Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive and casual research design as well as the survey method. In the investigation, a total of 428 respondents were sampled using a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation and linear regression analysis. Findings revealed that federalism has a positive and significant relationship with political stability in Nigeria at ($R = .732$, $R^2 = .614$ at $p = 0.000$). The statistical result shows that there is a strong relationship between federalism and political stability in Nigeria and that federalism accounts for 61.4% of variations in political stability in Nigeria. Requisite conclusions and recommendations were provided in the light of empirical and theoretical findings.

Keywords: Federalism, Political Stability, Democracy, Nigeria

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Streszczenie:

Federalizm i stabilność polityczna to dwie koncepcje, które mają znaczenie dla wszystkich współczesnych społeczeństw. Federalizm promuje pluralizm i rozproszenie władzy, co jest korzystne dla wieloetnicznego społeczeństwa. Jednakże, w Nigerii praktykowanie federalizmu wywołało niekończące się napięcia wśród osób, społeczności i grup etnicznych. Niemniej jednak badanie ujęte w niniejszym artykule dowodzi, że zdrowy federalizm jest politycznym panaceum na przemoc na tle etnicznym, kryzys rządów i niestabilność polityczną w Nigerii. W artykule empirycznie zbadano związek między federalizmem a stabilnością polityczną w Nigerii. W artykule przyjęto opisowy i przypadkowy schemat badań, a także metodę ankiety. W badaniu wzięło udział łącznie 428 respondentów, zbadanych przy użyciu ustrukturyzowanego kwestionariusza. Dane analizowano przy użyciu korelacji iloczynu Pearsona i analizy regresji liniowej. Ustalenia ujawniły, że federalizm ma pozytywny i znaczący związek ze stabilnością polityczną w Nigerii przy $R = .732$, $R^2 = 614$ przy $p = 0,000$. Wynik statystyczny pokazuje, że istnieje silny związek między federalizmem a stabilnością polityczną w Nigerii oraz, że federalizm stanowi 61,4% zmian stabilności politycznej w Nigerii. Wymagane wnioski i zalecenia zostały przedstawione w świetle ustaleń empirycznych i teoretycznych.

Słowa kluczowe: federalizm, stabilność polityczna, demokracja, Nigeria

Statement of problem in general outlook and its connection with important scientific and practical tasks

In a federal polity, there is an irrevocable division of power between the central and component units. It is pertinent to note that in Nigeria's federal experience, the principle of federalism can no longer hold. This is because the central government has usurped the powers, which were formally exercised by the regional governments. Power distribution is a volatile issue which if not properly handled could lead to various forms of crises that are bound to crop up. Nigeria has not been forthright applying this principle to the letter and the result of this has been the heightening of ethnic tension, mutual mistrust among ethnic groups, minority problem, clamor for an answer to the national question (Uhunmwuango & Ekpu, 2011). Several nationality groups and notable Nigerians, including those that took part in the 2014 Confab, are calling for 'true federation' as the only solution to the political problems in Nigerian. Elaigwu (2002) explains that these calls are linked to the post-military rule situation that has led to the emergence of a very strong central government. In fact, it is becoming near impossible for any federalism scholar, or even commentators and religious leaders in Nigeria to conclude any given piece of research or talk, without making reference to true federalism. There is no significant feature in Nigeria that shows the dual sovereignty principle of two coordinate levels of government according to Kenneth C. Where's a

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theory of federalism. This lack of sovereignty of the state governments has limited them from taking the initiative that will sustain and advance their economics and the welfare of the people. The problem this paper intends to study therefore includes the concept of federalism, the nature of Nigeria's federalism and to examine the relationship between federalism and political stability in Nigeria. Federalism and political stability are two concepts that are of significance to all modern societies. Federalism, both as a principle and form of governance, provides an ideal platform for countries divided by race, ethnicity, and region. However, the impending challenge for political and national stability is the dynamics of the global economy and democratization. Essentially, nations experiencing ethnoreligious violence and cultural cleavages do have the option and choice of federalism (Hamza & Umar, 2017). True federalism protects the fundamental rights of both the individual and the federating states. It affords states the benefit of deploying their resources for their own development. Majekodunmi (2015) noted that federalism offers an ideal model of government for a plural society. And Nigeria, with at least 374 ethnic groups certainly qualifies for federalism should we find the political will to embrace the philosophy. Nigeria is currently operating defective and fallible federalism because the Nigerian federal system has consistently undermined one of the most cardinal philosophical principles of federalism as noted by Davidson, 1992 cited in (Majekodunmi, 2015). He posits that the relative autonomy, independence and self-determination of these units must be appreciated and guaranteed in clear terms. Nonetheless, Nigeria's variant of federalism remains confusing, even mystifying. Our federalism is one of the concentrations of absolute powers at the center. It is one that is particularly lacking in mutual respect, making it look like a master-servant relationship (Adagbabiri & Okolie, 2018). This asymmetrical relationship explained why many of our governors are gadflies, running regularly to Abuja for 'federal grants' in the face of dwindling internally generated revenues. The federal government has become leviathan, gaining more power almost in the same proportion that states are losing (Udombana, 2017).

Today, Nigeria federalism is very epileptic with socio-economic, political, military and communal convulsions because of the weak foundation laid in 1914. As Ojo (2009) argued, the historical origin of our federalism has shown that the amalgamation rather than lead Nigeria to integration led to disintegration. From the first to the third republic, federalism and the military federalism in-between have reeled continuously from this weak foundation to date. Consequently, as Adeyeri (2010) has pointed out, Nigeria's Federal system has oscillated between the excessive regionalism that marked the first republic (1960-1966) and the excessive centralization of the military, and relatively

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the post-military era. Contradictions in Nigeria's federal system such as the colonial factor, military rule, structural imbalance, over-centralization of power in the central government, among others, have overtime perpetuated various perplexing issues and challenges within Nigeria federation. The contending issues include but not limited to resource control, revenue allocation, State creation, federal character question and leadership crises (Adegbabiri & Okolie, 2018). The resultant effect of all these issues and challenges is political instability in Nigeria.

Analysis of latest research where the solution of the problem was initiated

The issue of political instability has been a major challenge rocking the country with violence over the decade of Nigeria's independence as a nation and the era after the country's Civil War between 1967 and 1970. There had been a series of sporadic violence and counter-attacks by different regions due to suspicion and mistrust in Nigeria's geopolitical landscape (Raji & Wahab, 2016). In fact, this mutual suspicion and lack of cordiality among various ethnic components explain why ethnoreligious violence has become a permanent feature of Nigeria as a nation as far back as 1967 to date. Thus, for federalism to be more effective in Nigeria there must be a commitment to the ideals and values of the principles of federalism. Ani (2015) noted that the survival of federalism is a function of how it is adopted and modified to deal with contemporary problems and requires "What is it we want from federalism and what federation by nature can supply". However what the principle of federalism cannot supply are such human values as fairness, justice, tolerance and accommodation, this is a function of leadership political will. The federal structure of Nigeria according to Ogbe, Max, Shija and Zever (2011), is believed to be a bad marriage that all dislike but dare not leave, and that there are possibilities that could disrupt the precarious equilibrium in Abuja. The dominant conceptual and legal foundation for Nigerian internal political geography is federalism. A federal arrangement was expected to be instrumental for forgoing national unity out of the plural society and the same time in preserving the separate social identities cherishes by its component parts. Adoption of federalism notwithstanding, Nigeria's political system has continued to operate with minimum cohesion (Ola, 1995; Thom-Otuya, 2013). There is no doubt that the increasing political instability and tension in the Nigerian federation has cast doubt over its adaptability to solving Nigeria's plurality problems. Therefore, where the operation is not leading to the expected results that occasioned the federal bargain, there are clamors for a re-examination of the federal system in order to enthrone real, genuine, proper or true federalism. This is exactly true especially in Nigeria, the longest surviving federation

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in Africa. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the relationship between federalism and political stability in Nigeria and highlight what is required to be done, policy-wise, by both the government and all the other stakeholders to strengthen the practice of federalism in Nigeria to have a positive impact on our national development and political stability.

Aims of paper. Methods.

The aimed of this study was to empirically examine the relationship between federalism and political stability in Nigeria. The descriptive and causal research design was adopted and data was collected via a survey of 600 respondents comprises of Traditional leaders, Christian Leaders, Muslim Leaders, Leader of Civil Society Groups and Youth Leaders randomly selected in each geopolitical zones as shown below.

Table 1: Population of the Study

Geopolitical Zones	Traditional Leaders	Christian Leaders	Muslim Leaders	Civil Society leaders	Youth Leaders	Total
North-West	Kaduna (20)	Sokoto (20)	Zamfara (20)	Kano (20)	Kebbi (20)	100
North-Central	Kogi (20)	Plateau (20)	Kwara (20)	FCT (20)	Niger (20)	100
North-East	Bauchi (20)	Taraba (20)	Adamawa (20)	Yobe (20)	Borno (20)	100
South-West	Lagos (20)	Oyo (20)	Osun (20)	Ogun (20)	Ekiti (20)	100
South-South	Bayelsa (20)	Delta (20)	Edo (20)	Rivers (20)	Akwa-Ibom (20)	100
South-East	Anambra(20)	Enugu (20)	Imo (20)	Ebonyi (20)	Abia (20)	100
Total	120	120	120	120	120	600

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork (2019)

Sampling Technique

The purposive, non-probabilistic method was adopted to target respondents with knowledge about the specific issues captured in the study; sampling was drawn from the six geopolitical zones to elicit views on the relationship between federalism and political stability in Nigeria.

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The reliability and validity of the instrument structures questionnaire were designed to elicit needed information. The reliability was established through a trial test conducted on 50 respondents in south-south who also took part in the study. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument as shown in the table below.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics of Variable

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Federalism	17	0.763
Political Stability	13	0.821

The result yielded a coefficient of 0.763 and 0.821, which satisfied the general recommended level of 0.70 for the research indicators (Cronbach, 1951). Experts also judged the face and content validity of the questionnaire as adequate. Hence, researchers satisfied both the reliability and validity of the scale.

Distribution of Questionnaire and Response Rate

This study examined the relationship between federalism and political stability in Nigeria. To achieve this, six hundred (600) questionnaires were administered across the six (6) geopolitical zones. Of the six hundred questionnaires distributed out of which four hundred and twenty-eight (428) questionnaires representing 71.3% were retrieved as shown in the table below.

Table 3: Distribution of Questionnaire and Response Rate

S/N	Geopolitical zones	Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Retrieved	Percentage (%)
1	North-West	100	63	10.5
2	North –Central	100	59	9.8
3	North-East	100	71	11.8
4	South-West	100	78	13.0
5	South-South	100	87	14.5
6	South-East	100	70	11.7
	Total	600	428	71.3

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2019)

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for testing:

H₁: There is no significant relationship between Federalism and Political Stability in Nigeria.

H₂: Federalism has no significant impact on political stability in Nigeria

Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation and simple linear regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.

Exposition of main material of research with complete substantiation of obtained scientific results. Discussion.

Federalism.

Federation is derived from the Latin word “foedus” meaning “covenant”. It is a political concept in which a group of members is bound together by covenant with a governing representative head (Majekodunmi, 2015). The word federalism comes from the word “federal”, which is derived from a Sanskrit word meaning “to unite”. A federal system of government according to Leeds (1981:14), often exists “where the people are not ready to surrender all powers to a central government. It is well adapted to states embracing wide areas, where there are sectional diversities of race, language, nationality, region and geography”. Federalism is a system in which the power to govern is shared between national and state governments, creating what is often called a federation (Akindele & Olaopa, 2002). Babalawe (1998) sees federalism as a doctrine that advocates and promotes the form of organization of a state in which power is dispersed or decentralized by contract as a means of safeguarding local identifies and individual liberties.

According to Fatile and Adejuwon (2009), federalism as a system of governance is pragmatic, dynamic, utilitarian, and evolving. It can only strive for consultation, negotiation, compromise, bargaining and agreement between the constituent governments. It grows under a system of mutuality and interdependence. Obidimma and Obidimma (2015:147) point out that federalism is “a system of government in which sovereignty is constitutionally divided between a central governing authority and constituent political units. Such power may be shared in various ways. Sometimes with a stronger center, or with a weaker center often referred to as confederation. Generally, a federation is born by the coming together of otherwise independent states to form a central government to whom certain powers are given, while the states retain most of their powers.

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The coming together could be as a result of the need for defense and desire for independence from foreign powers, hope for economic advantage, some measure of political association between the various federating units prior to the creation of the union, geographical neighborhood, and similarity of political institutions". Therefore, federalism is a system meant to integrate people in a society that is diverse ethnically, culturally, geographically and even religiously (Adagbabiri & Okolie, 2018). Similarly, Verny (1998) holds that true federalism has both distributions of political power specified in the constitution and a direct relationship between power and the individual citizenry.

Political Stability.

According to Sottiolotta (2013), the concept of political stability is a very controversial concept. He argued that; a first broad definition refers to the absence of domestic civil conflict and widespread violence. In this sense, a country can be considered rid of instability when no systematic attacks on persons or property take place within its boundaries. Secondly, classic interpretation equates stability with government longevity. Thirdly, political stability draws on the lack of structural change. That is the absence of internally or externally induces a change in the basic configuration of a polity. In the same vein, Paldam (2016) defines political stability to cover four dimensions; stable government, stable political system, internal and external law stability. Nomor and Iorember (2017) argued that these four dimensions are enough for the explanation of political stability. A stable political scene is one where the ruling government is favored by the population and does not experience strong indicators of social unrest. Political stability requires that the public interact freely and openly with legislators on a regular basis. Granting individuals a say in how a nation is run enhances the stability of the region (Yang, 2015). Political stability is also seen as the ability of a people's government to share, access, or competes for power through nonviolent political processes and to enjoy the collective benefits and services of the state. This rests on four necessary conditions to achieve: provision of essential service, stewardship of state resources, civic participation and empowerment, and political moderation and accountability (Sheehan, 2015).

In contrast, political instability "entails among others communal violence, rural or religious insurgency, urban riots, coup d'etat, and civil war as well as elites disagreement over the distribution of power resources" (Raji & Wahab, 2016:51). Political instability in Nigeria owes much of its cause to internal factors, however, the interpretation of internal and external factors especially geopolitical and economic interests of the in-

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ternational community constantly, play a significant role in undermining the very processes and institutions that are expected to nurture democracy and to instill a sense of stability for societal development in Nigeria. In combination with such factors as unequal development, poverty, disease, violence and the manipulative tendencies of the local elites, political and economic stability in Africa especially Nigeria is constantly under threat. This threat is however not emanating from within the continent but from external interests whose thirst for African resources, continue to shape the dynamics in areas related to governance (Antony, 2008).

Nigeria's political instability and other related problems are basically a consequence of its leadership problem. At the domestic level, African governments are run in ways that have been regarded as far from the modern western state systems upon which they are modeled (Tutu, 2004 cited in Adeyeri, 2013). In addition, yang (2015) holds that political instability is the biggest challenge to African governments and people. There are types of political instability in Africa: revolutionary movements to change the rules of the political game and redistribute power and property; political assassinations; extortion and violence; strikes, especially politically motivated strikes; demonstrations for regime change or specific issues; complete political breakdown and civil wars. The leading causes of such instability include ethnic fragmentation and/or historic friction, ethnic dominance, the strength of primordial loyalties (kinship and clan), secessionist impulses and conflict over resource control, ineffective or predatory government actions, political inexperience and worsening economic difficulties. African instability explains why Africa still lags far behind other parts of the world in terms of economic development.

Nigerian Federalism: An Overview

The colonial background to Nigerian federalism has revealed a history of British exploitative interest, greed and mercantile motives in uniting a people with diverse socio-cultural, political, economic and military levels of development. According to Awolowo (1947), such an imposed and artificial unity was officially brought about by Lord Lugard in 1914 when he amalgamated the North and the South without seeking neither the peoples' consent to their choice of mode of the union. The only obvious motive and factor was the furtherance of British administrative control of Nigeria. The historical origin of Nigerian federalism has shown that the amalgamation rather than lead Nigeria to integration led to disintegration. According to Majekodunmi (2015), in Nigeria, the adoption of this governmental arrangement dated back to 1954 when it emerged a federation of three regions defined by the three major ethnic groups. However, in theory, Nigeria is said to be practicing federalism since 1954. The idea of

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Nigerian federal structure and its fiscal federalism has been enmeshed in contradictions, controversies and crises. The issue has become a national question as a socio-cultural group; with varying ideology learning severally demonstrate interest and concern especially on the issue of resource control. As a national question, the seriousness of Nigerian federalism has translated into the question of national unity, local government autonomy, self-determination and equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, rewards and powers (Anifowose, 2004). Meanwhile, given the rising concern endangering the peaceful co-existence of the multi-ethnic nationalities that confederated, engendering the palpable need for Nigerian nation, some Marxist Scholars, see the Nigerian federalism as presently unworkable, given the collaborative politics of emergence socio-cultural group, thus the situation itself canvases for the dissolution of the federal union (Adeyeri, 2013) and (Adagbariri & Okolie, 2018).

However, according to Anam-Ndu (2003), Nigeria had laid a solid geopolitical structure for operating a federal system. However, appropriate institutional practices critical to national developments were not reflective of our plural social setting and political experiences. The federal practices designed by our founding fathers were destroyed by military rule and the evolving trends and circumstances of democratization (after prolong military rule) opened the flood gate of widespread demands and agitations by ethnic minority and majority groups. The outbursts are sufficient to liquidate the Nigeria federation and undermined the democratic governance, unless and until there is congruence between political practice and popular expectations. The various forms of distortions imposed on the practice of federalism appear to be a key issue in Nigeria. The consensus among the civil societies, political class and even the military itself is that the Nigerian military poses a fundamental challenge to the survival of constitutional democracy. Beyond staying in power in most part of post-independent Nigeria years, the pervasive impact of its rule is manifested in the militarization of society and civic consciousness, the centralization of power and resources, and the erosion of the constitutional basis of Nigeria's federalism which historically evolved from a unitary structure (Alli, 2003; Hamza & Umar, 2017).

The structure of Nigerian federalism under the current democratic dispensation as determined by the 1999 constitution, therefore, supports the continued over-centralization of power and subordination of the states to the federal government. Thus, the federal government has continued to control inter-governmental fiscal relations at all levels through its agencies such as Revenue Mobilization and Fiscal Commission. Hence, the federal government under the Olusegun Obasanjo administration was able to unilaterally determine the allocation formula and even went ahead at various times to

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withhold the allocation to some states (e.g. Lagos, Edo and Anambra) without good reason. Beyond controlling inter-government fiscal relations, the federal government was also able to sack state governors through manipulation of its anti-graft agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the justice system (as was the case of Bayelsa, Delta and Plateau States) and declare state of emergency in some states without good reason or following due process (as was as the case of Plateau, Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States) (Abah, 2016; Adagbariri & Okolie, 2018). In practice, Nigeria's federalism is a mere gimmick as it ends at the pronouncement of the world federation. In fact, evidence on the ground points in the opposite direction. That is, the government is trending progressively toward a unitary state. This is especially so in the area of sharing of functions and resources available in the country between the central government and the component units on one hand and between the government and citizens on the other (Ajagun, 2006), this argument is still the reality today. In its structural and political context, Nigeria's federalism may be linked to a biological cell capable of dividing and reproducing itself (Dent, 1995). This is because it has continued to witness the continuous splitting of units. 1954, it began as a federation of three regions but by 1964, it became four with the creation of the mid-western region from the then western region. By 1967, the federal structure became subdivided into 12 states while by 1976; it was further split into 19 states. By 1989, it became a federation of 21 states, increasing to 30 by 1991 and by 1996 it had subdivided to become a federation of 36 states. In addition, the creation of more states has always been accompanied by the creation of additional Local Governments Areas. Thus from 301 in 1976, the country currently boasts of about 774 Local Government Areas Councils. However, the continued structural divisions have not produced a satisfactory outcome for the component units. This is evidently so because every attempt at states and local government creation is usually followed by increased agitations for more (Muhammad, 2007; Adetoye, 2016).

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the federal government exercise most of the governmental powers in Nigeria to the detriment of the constituent states. According to Ojo (1989) and Obidimma and Obidimma (2015), by this unequal sharing of power, Nigeria is transformed from a political community to an administered state. They further argued that a political community is one characterized by or is based on consociation values, while an administered state is a state where there is absolutely a subjugation to an absolute centralized authority where there is a complete disregard for consociation political relationship. However, despite the Nigeria challenges, federalism has avoided fragmentation and total state collapse as experienced in other parts of the

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world (except of course the continuous state and local government creation, in the spirit of development). This makes the federal option as an effective instrument of national stability in developing countries simply by recognizing the rights and autonomy of the various ethnic nationalities that constitute the nation-state as well as addressing the undermining factor of underdevelopment. The federal arrangement is a mechanism designed to reduce the effects of division and inequality without of course sacrificing strong attachments to ethnic groups and identities (Hamza & Umar, 2017).

The Nexus of Federalism and Political Stability

Federalism represents a unique form of governmental agreement. This is because; it involves the organization of the state in such a manner as to promote unity while at the same time preserving existing diversities within an overarching national entity. As a device for the containment of Intra societal pluralism, federalism offers a good prospect for achieving political stability of especially heterogeneous societies (Muhammad, 2007). Federalism is a system that mediates the potential and actual conflict that often arises from the heterogeneity within a political entity. To this extent, the relationship between federalism and political stability is axiomatic. Perhaps this informed why long (1991:192) holds that “federalism is an institutional solution to the destructive tendencies of Intra societal ethnic pluralism, the relevance of the federal system encapsulates all forms of societal diversities be it ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religion”. However, there are some faulty lines in its practice, much of the diatribe on Nigeria’s federalism stems not from the insolvency of the system in engendering political stability but rather from a wrong appreciation of the values inherent it. The bottom line is that attitude and excesses of political actors lie central to the crises and contradictions of Nigeria’s federalism (Muhammad, 2007). According to Jinadu (1994), the federal construction, if it must meet the challenges of governance and management of pluralism, must understand and appreciate a federal culture built on a spirit of dialogue, trade-off, negotiation and consensus-building. Where these are lacking, the survival of the nation-state through the federal construct becomes an impossible enterprise. Despite the fundamental differences in social, religious and cultural groupings, the Indian federation has weathered the storm through the enthronement of federal discourse which has become the basis of the country’s dialogic democracy. Thus, for federalism to be more effective in Nigeria there must be a commitment to ideals and values of the principle.

Muhammad (2007) argued that factors engendering stability and/or instability in societies include several cleavage issues that often arise from time to time. Indeed, if we conceive of stability or better still, political stability as a condition of steadiness and

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firmness of political institutions and processes within the political system as well as absence of threat to an existing pattern of authority and behavior, then it could be reasoned that political stability, especially in plural society, is a function of several societal factors within the entity. These include the extent of polarization opposing tendencies within the entity and extent of adaptability of the governmental system to the management of these divisions. It needs to be stressed that, the prevailing democratization process and the evolving characters, especially the civil society groups, are redefining and redesigning the federal principles within the context of constitutionalism and fundamental human rights than ethnicism. The civil society groups are initiating a process and people-oriented socio-political agenda by pushing for democratic and constitutional reforms to promoting diversity, all-inclusive governance and legitimacy as a basis for addressing and redressing ethnic and regional grievances (Hamza & Umar, 2017). Therefore, the federal system of government has unarguably recommended itself as an ideal option for national development and political stability since it is an effective structural device that is suited to integrating the various groups in a society that is dominantly pluralistic.

The dominant viewpoint, therefore, tends to equate federalism with political stability. True federalism, according to Wheare (1964), can exist only where there are political stability and democracy. The absence of political stability and democracy is, ipso facto, the absence of federalism even if we can observe the constitution and operation of a political system as being federal, for the regional governments must be able to affect the policymaking activity of the central government. It needs to be stressed that, while a situation of absolute stability may not be attainable in any society, the relative stability of all organs, as well as general acquiescence to rules, is quite essential for the nation to achieve its desired end. The essentials of the federal system in this regard can, therefore, not be overlooked. This informs why various conceptions of federalism have revolved around the management of actual and potential conflicts within a nation-state (Muhammad, 2007). Like all federal systems, Nigeria's federalism since its adoption in 1954 has been operating in both fiscal and political contexts that have been enmeshed in contradictions, controversies and crises. In spite of this, it is maintained that there is yet no alternative to the true federal system in Nigeria if the country is to remain a strong, united and politically stable entity.

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Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 4: Impact of Federalism on Political Stability in Nigeria.

Category	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	84
Agreed	11
Neither agreed nor disagreed	5
Total	100

Source: fieldwork (2019).

Table 4 revealed that federalism impacts positively on political stability in Nigeria. Out of the total respondents, it was observed that 84% strongly agreed and 11% agreed while only 5% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. This informed why Muhammad (2007:203) asserted that “there is no doubt that the increasing instability and tension in the Nigerian federation has cast doubt over its adaptability to solving Nigeria’s plurality problems. But as have been noted in the last two decades, moving beyond conventional argument can help reveal the underlying basis of tension. In this light, it is argued that variables such as the absence of astute political leadership, unnecessary skepticisms constitute the main culprits in the travails of federalism in Nigeria.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix

Variables		Federalism	Political Stability
Federalism	Pearson Correlation	1	.847**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	428	428
Political stability	Pearson Correlation	.847**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	428	428

** Correlation is significant at all 0.01 levels (2-tailed)

Source: Authors’ computation (2019)

Table 5 shows the correlation between federalism and political stability in Nigeria. There exists a significant positive high correlation between federalism and political

stability ($r = .847$, $n = 428$ and $p < 0.01$). This implies that the federation has a strong and positive relationship with political stability in Nigeria. This is widely supported by the views of Muhammad (2007); Ani (2015); Hamza and Umar (2017) and Adagbabiri and Okolie (2018). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Regression Analysis:

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.732	.614	.608	1.533

- a. Predictors: (constant), federalism
- b. Dependent variable: Political stability

Source: Authors' computation (2019)

Table: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Square	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.938	1	59.647	65.970	.000 ^b
	Residual	3.851	324	0.809		
	Total	9.789	325			

- a. Dependent variable: Political stability
- b. Predictors: (constant), federalism

Source: Authors' computation (2019)

The simple linear regression shows (R^2) value of 0.614 which reveals that federalism independently accounts for 61.4% of the variation in political stability in Nigeria. The study revealed that federalism exerts a positive and statistically significant impact on political stability in Nigeria. The F. statistics of 65.970 reveals that the model is statistically significant at 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can thus be concluded that there is a significant effect of federalism on political stability in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The general purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the federation and political stability in Nigeria. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between federalism and political stability in Nigeria. The finding consistent with the view of Muhammad (2007) that the relationship between federalism and political stability is axiomatic. Therefore, as a device for the containment of Intra societal pluralism, federalism offers a good prospect for achieving political stability of especially heterogeneous societies. Elaigwu (2000); Ojo (2005) Muhammad (2007) and Hamza and Umar (2017) hold that there may be some difficulties with the operation of the principle of federalism, but such problems are not directly created by the operation of federalism. There is no doubt that the practice of federalism in Nigeria has been punctured by political instability manifesting in the various and actual threats to its existence. These include the increasing wave of ethnic nationalism and ethnic militia groups (OPC, Egbesu boys, MASOB, MEND, Niger Delta Militant, Boko Haram and a host of others); the Sharia law debacle; increasing struggle for control of the center, deafening agitations for resource control especially in the minority Niger Delta; kidnapping; Military coup d'état; electoral crises; brazen corruption; bombing; murdering of innocent people and destabilization of the existing vulnerable regions into political uncertainty. Yet, this trend has shown no sign of abating thereby casting a shadow of doubt over the adaptive capability of federalism in guaranteeing political stability in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

For proper functioning of the Nigerian federalism, there is a need for proper restructuring of the federal structure in Nigeria starting from a constitutional amendment that will inculcate the basic requirements of true federalism. The abandonment of true federalism in Nigeria has led to the neglect and marginalization of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, where the bulk of the country's wealth is produced through the exploration and exploitation of crude oil which is the colossus of Nigeria's economic base. The people of this region have been agitating for the fair share of the country's wealth, the bulk of which comes from their region. This quasi model of federalism has not been able to address the socio-economic and developmental needs of these people in spite of their unquantifiable contribution towards the development of the entire nation. The situation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria does not place Nigeria among nations operating a federal system of government. In an ideal federation, as we have in the

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United States of America, Canada and Switzerland, the federating states are semi-autonomous, virtually independent of the center. Thus, by virtue of its inherent value of reconciling opposing tendencies, the federal system holds a better prospect in helping to stem a major source of political instability. As a device for the containment of intra societal pluralism, federalism offers a good prospect for achieving political stability in Nigeria.

In this study, we have tried to examine the relationship between federalism and political stability in Nigeria. There is no doubt that a healthy federation is a political panacea for ethnic violence, governance crises and political instability. For our federal ideal to be realistic and true to the yearnings of Nigerians, the following recommendations were made:

1. All traces of the unitary system of government should be removed from Nigeria's form of federalism and allow the states the degree of freedom and autonomy consistent with federalism.
2. We submit that, in spite of structural deficits and other problems, federalism still holds the better prospect for political stability in Nigeria if the factors that accentuate instability can be attenuated. It is therefore suggested that attention and more efforts should be directed on how to have a national political leadership that would be able to inspire citizens to think and act federal.
3. The principle of true federalism should be fully applied. Federalism as being practiced in developed countries such as the United States, Australia, Canada, and Switzerland will enhance unified, peaceful co-existence, political stability, political and economic development. It will encourage the states to look inward and develop economic independence. The issue of resource control and dependence on revenue allocation from the federation account and other federal sources of revenue, such as revenues from excess crude oil, income from excise duties, etc., would be de-emphasized.
4. Political education and enlightenment of the citizens and, the need to propagate the positive virtues of federalism are essential. This would help erase negative thoughts and skepticism about the federal system.
5. Nigeria's constitution should be amended to ensure that all levels of government should be coordinated and independent. Also, this study supports the creation of state police to contrive the internal security of the states.

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6. A review of the percentage of revenue allocation to oil-bearing states as well as other resources and the setting up of a technical committee to work out the appropriate percentage is essential. Communities that produced the national wealth are considered in the derivation percentages not just to the state government.
7. It is our submission that group accommodation rather than oppression, inclusion rather than exclusion, acceptance rather than alienation, understanding, and tolerance rather than denial and frustrating demands and aspirations are critical to effective federalism. Also, the creative deployment of federal principles is an inevitable instrument for managing the challenges of ethnoreligious and cultural cleavages that characterized the Nigeria nation-state.
8. To ensure political stability, Nigerians should not see politics as a business but as a calling to help distribute fairly the resources that are given by God. The country's political leaders should adhere to the basic tenets of democracy and constitutionalism. They should focus their attention on those things that promote peaceful co-existence and unity among the citizenry.
9. The federal government of Nigeria should as a matter of necessity uphold the cardinal principles of federalism to avert crises associated with unequal distribution of power and resources.
10. The civil society groups should be more vigilant and more proactive in challenging the obnoxious policies of the government. This could help to enthrone genuine democracy based on the people's cultural values which contain what has described as the universal ideals of democracy.

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