

The New Minimum Wage Policy and Civil Service Delivery in Nigeria: The case of Enugu State

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Abstract: *The paper evaluates the influence of 2024 New Minimum Wage Act on service delivery in Enugu state – Nigeria using descriptive survey design. A researchers' constructed questionnaire was used to generated data from 363 participants selected from a population of 3876 using Guilford and Flruchter (1973). Tables, percentage formula, and SPSS version 22.0 tools were used to analyze the data. Results of analysis reveal that the 2024 New Minimum Wage Act exerted no influence on public service delivery due to exorbitant utility, goods, and services prices increase; and government introduction of multiple and increased taxation system. The paper, therefore, recommends further investigation on how to manage prices of goods and services to deter its erosion of new minimum wage. It further recommends new taxation and prices harmonization and control policy together with the establishment of a Board to administer the policy.*

Keywords: new minimum wage, service delivery, service ethics and rules, taxation, Enugu state

INTRODUCTION

The act of modernizing, reforming, altering, and/or changing the nature, rate and system of salaries and allowances of public office holders is historical and continual across sovereign countries and states. It is primarily propelled by the drive to improve service delivery, enhance the outcome of public governance, enhance competitive advantage, attract quality labour, retain best performers and labour union pressure. Other factors that can orchestrate the action include degenerating economic crisis, competing political priorities etc. Of these reasons or factors, this paper focuses on service delivery, which is seen as manifest social contract between states and citizens or the

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creation of value through citizens and government interaction (Onyekwelu, 2021) and/or process of meeting the needs of citizens through prompt and efficient government procedures (Oronsaye, 2010).

Service delivery is made up of four key components, namely: service culture, service quality (i.e. the difference between customer's expectations and the perceived service received, Munusamy, 2010); employee engagement (i.e. employee commitment to issues and the duration of employee's stay as a result of the commitment); and customer experience (ISS, 2015). The existence and quality of these key components of service delivery define the state of development in any country or sovereign entity. In Nigeria, the existence and quality of these key components of service delivery have been ineffective and inefficient (Akinsanmi, Adedokun, Nweze & Aniobi, 2022). This led to abysmal failure and poor quality of public service delivery, low generation of returns on investment, and led to state's inability to provide reliable services to the citizens (Nwekeaku & Obiorah, 2019; Smalyskys & Yubalovic, 2017). The public service is characterized by different acts of indiscipline, institutionalized corruption, politicization of the top hierarchy of the civil service, lack of financial accountability and probity, use of wrong criteria in appraise staff performance, poor recruitment procedures, inadequate training and ineffective supervision, and violation of public service rules and ethics that further aggravate poor productivity (El - Rufai, 2012; Adegoroye, 2005).

Literature attributed the scenario to gross inequity in the public service system and institutional incompetence, and the prevalence of inadequate/unjust wages and salaries package (Ejere & Utok, 2023; Akinsanmi, Adedokun, Nweze & Aniobi, 2022; Awotunde & Ojo, 2022; Babatola, Oluwasanmi & Rotkangi, 2020; Nwakeaku & Obiorah, 2019). Consequently, dominant opinion holds that periodic upward review and adjustment of the wages and salaries package of public servants serves as the fundamental panacea to the problem (see Ejere & Utok, 2023; Onyekwelu, 2021). In his study of South East states, Onyekwelu (2021) observed that although the minimum wage review policies of various regimes in Nigeria are not strictly implemented as specified by their Acts, their implementation tend to improve the quality of public service delivery. Similarly, Ehindero (2023) observed that wages review encourages workers' punctuality and dedication to services within the working hours, and further observed that it enhances collaboration among working colleagues. Nwoye & Nwoye (2023) investigation of the impact of new minimum wage on teachers' performance in Awka South local government of Anambra state revealed the same positive impact.

However, many studies such as Bruttel (2019) and Bossler & Broszeit (2016) observed slight or no change in workers' out-put due to the implementation of new minimum wage. This is because the management increases the requirements and workload of the groups benefiting from the minimum wage increase at the same time. This results to little or no increase in employee in-put

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in service delivery as customers may not notice change in the systemic output (Bossler & Broszeit 2016; Gürtzgen et al. 2016). Further, companies and establishments equally increase the costs of their products and services (Bossler et al., 2018). The minimum wage hikes normally generate “pass-through” effect on out-put prices (MacDonald & Nilsson, 2016). Lemos, (2004, p. 1) summarized it thus, “higher prices is an obvious response to a minimum wage increase”. The studies by Card & Krueger (1995), Aaronson (2001), MacDonald & Aaronson (2006), Yerima (2016), and Aaronson, French, & MacDonald (2008) among others, affirmed this observation. Consequently, the struggle by Labour Unions for new increase in minimum wage becomes a cyclical phenomenon due to these outcomes.

Thus, the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and its 36 states components have under different regimes initiated and implemented upward review of workers’ minimum wage structure. This act dates back to 1934 when the then Colonial administration set up the Hunts Commission to review the wages and salaries of public workers (Nwude, 2013; Jude & Ernest 2015). Thereafter, the Wage Board and Industrial Council Act of 1974; the first national minimum wage law of September of 1981; National Minimum Wage Decree No. 43 of 1988; National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission Decree No. 99 of 1993; National Salaries, incomes and Wages Commission (Amendment) Decree No. 17 of 1999; National Minimum Wage (Amendment) Act of 2000; and the National Minimum Wage (Amendment) Act of 2003 followed (Fawehinmi, 2024; Igbadumhe, Adeniji et al., 2020). The later was replaced in 2011 by another wage Act.

Ipsso facto, these national minimum wage Acts increased the monthly take home packages of workers but ipso dixit, they impoverished them in the face of prevailing economic crises, depreciation of Nigerian currency in the dollar system, and increasing hardship. For instance, the 1981 wage law set N125.00 per month as the minimum wage. At the official exchange rate of US\$1 for 0.61 naira then, the N125.00 wage was about US\$204. In the 2011 wage Act that increased the minimum wage to N18,000.00, the official exchange rate of US\$1 was 867.00 (Arizona-Ogwu, 2007). Consequently, the minimum monthly take home of public servant stood at about US\$21. This erosion of workers’ purchasing power and increased hardship propelled unending labour union pressure and strikes for further review of wages/salaries (Igbadumhe, Adeniji, et al., 2020). Thus, in 2019, another national minimum wage Act that reviewed it upward to N30,000.00 monthly was signed and further reviewed upward to N70,000.00 on July 18th 2024 by another national minimum wage Act after intense labour – government bargain.

In the face of depreciating Nigerian currency, uncontrolled food prices increase, transportation costs, and utility bills among others that soared higher than the new wage, it seems impossible for public servants to meet their household needs (Nnaji, 2025). The impact of the new minimum wage structure on the cost of living remains severe, families are reducing the number of meals they eat each day, skipping medical check-ups, and postponing purchases of household items (Oyinade &

Wahab, 2024). The N70,000.00 new minimum wage cannot buy a bag of rice while the price of a good tuber of yam costs between N5,000.00 and N12,000.00. The prices of house rent, water, electricity, and transportation among others are on the increase. It becomes a puzzle whether the new minimum wage of N70,000.00 exerts any positive influence on public service delivery in the face of all these developments. With a focus on Enugu state, this paper therefore explored the impact of the latest minimum wage Act of 2024 on service delivery, and the factors that facilitated the phenomenon.

METHODS

The paper adopted descriptive survey design wherein a researchers' constructed questionnaire that was subjected to content validation by two professionals and Test re-test reliability assessment was used to generate information from Enugu State civil servants, which form the population of the study. The population was stratified into two categories of staff: scheduled staff i.e. those working in core ministries, and unscheduled staff i.e. those working in non-time bound operations such as Enugu State Printing Press, Enugu State Transport Corporation, Water Corporation, etc. Records at the personnel department in the headquarters of Enugu State Civil Service Commission reveals that the state has a total workforce of 3876 (i.e. three thousand eight hundred and seventy-six). This consists of 2920 scheduled staff and 956 unscheduled staff.

Guilford and Fluchter (1973) formula for determining sample size was used for the study as follows:

$$\frac{N}{1 + \mu^2 N}$$

Where: N is the size of the population, μ is alpha = 0.05, 1 is a constant.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Therefore, Sample} &= \frac{3876}{1 + 0.05^2 \times 3876} = \frac{3876}{1 + 0.0025 \times 3876} \\ \text{Sample} &= \frac{3876}{10.69} = 362.5, \text{ which is equivalent to } 363. \end{aligned}$$

A total 363 respondents served as the study sample

The ratio of scheduled staff in the total population (i.e. 75.3%) and unscheduled staff (i.e. 24.7%) was adopted in the distribution of the sample. Thus, 273 respondents were drawn from scheduled staff while 90 respondents were drawn from the unscheduled staff. 240 respondents from the scheduled staff were drawn from 8 ministries equally (i.e. 30 each), and 33 respondents drawn from the Civil Service Commission, while 90 respondents from the unscheduled staff were drawn

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from Enugu State Printing Press, Enugu State Transport Corporation, and Water Corporation respectively on equal par of 30 each. Random sampling was used to select specific participants as they come to sign-in for daily activities using the ministries' Desk Officers. Prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, approval was obtained from the Head of the Civil Service Commission and consequent circular was issued to Permanent Secretaries of the various ministries to grant the researchers access to their workers.

The data generated with the questionnaire was thereafter analysed using tables, percentage formula, and SPSS version 22.0 software to determine the central tendencies and deviations of their responses to research questions for purposes of inference.

Theoretical Framework

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory of 1943 was adopted to structure this inquiry, analysis, and inferences herein. The primary propositions of the theory are:

- a. Human beings have many needs that are different in nature, which ranges from biological needs at the lower level to psychological needs at the apex.
- b. Humans exhibit constant state of motivation without actualizing a state of satisfaction except for a very short time.
- c. Human needs are arranged in a Hierarchical order wherein the needs that occupy the lowest level must be satisfied before higher level needs arise.

When the Physiological, Safety and Security, Social, Esteem, Self-Actualization needs of the employee are not satisfied, the employee behaviour becomes influenced against the corporate objective of the organization and/or environment such a person finds himself. Thus, actualization of organizational goals depends largely on the level of satisfying employees' needs, which defines the efficiency and effectiveness of the employees. Needs satisfaction is a propelling instrument that drives workers' productivity.

Although Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory has been criticized by scholars such as Alderfer (1972), Bass (1981), and Drucker (1974), this paper finds it relevant and appropriate for analyzing the relationship between minimum wage and service delivery in Enugu state. As the ultimate source of resources, the ability of civil servants' wages/salaries to satisfy their needs is expected to influence their service delivery or productivity. The theory is therefore very suitable for the current inquiry.

RESULT

Respondents' Demographic information

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Table 1: Socio-demographic data of respondents' Gender, Age, and education

s/ n	Cadres	Total	Gender		Age in years				Education		
			Male	Female	18-27	28-37	38-47	48 & above	WAEC /ND	BSc/HND	Higher degrees
1	Administrative	97	57	40	12	26	32	27	-	61	36
2	Executive	142	65	77	40	44	34	24	66	70	6
3	Secretarial	124	52	72	26	50	35	13	95	39	-
Total		363	174	189	78	120	101	64	161	170	42

Source: Field Work, 2025

Notes: WAEC = West African School certificate

ND = National Diploma

BSc = Bachelor of Science Degree

HND = Higher National Diploma

Table 1 reveals that 174 male respondents (47.9%), 189 females (52.1%), age bracket of 18-27(21.5%), 28-37(33.1%), 38-47(27.8%), and 48 and above (17.8%) participated in the inquiry. Their levels of certificate possession show that respondents with WAEC and/or ND is 44.4%, BSc/HND degrees (46.8%), higher degrees (11.8%). Therefore, while the gender ratio reflects the growing presence of the female population in the civil service, majority of the respondents are both literate, and matured in mind to answer the research questions objectively.

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Table 2: Results of SPSS Analyses of responses to questions

S/n	Sub-Research questions	Grand Mean	Stand. Deviat.	Standard Error	Tests of Between-Subjects Effects	Sig.	Pairwise Comparisons
1	The new minimum wage added substantial amount of money to your monthly salary and allowances	4.21	.511	.102	234.106	.001	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
2	With the new minimum wage, truancy and late coming have drastically reduced in your office	2.21	.204	.712	545.161	.000	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
3	Cases of corrupt practices and misappropriation of public fund has decreased since the introduction of the new minimum wage in 2024	2.01	.132	.106	434.008	.000 & .002	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
4	You complete your daily assignments according to specifications successfully before leaving office	2.01	.132	.106	434.008	.000 & .002	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments

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5	The number of public complaints and petitions at the customers' service unit in the SERVICOM Department has reduced drastically after the new minimum wage Act of 2024 came into effect	1.34	1.002	.776	103.008	.002	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
6	The provision of public utilities in Enugu state has improved since 2024 due to workers' motivation	2.21	.204	.712	545.161	.000	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments

Source: SPSS analysis of responses to research questions

Results of analysis of responses to questions 1 in table 2 shows that majority of the respondents agreed (considering their responses grand mean of 4.21) that the new minimum wage Act of 2024 added substantial amount of money to their monthly salaries and allowances. The grand mean of their responses reveals sig. differences of .001 whereas the difference is significant @ .005, and the pairwise comparism of the differences reveals no modification. Therefore, the majority opinion holds and is hereby generalized.

Further, analysis of responses to questions 2 in table 2 shows that majority of the respondents disagreed (considering their responses grand mean of 2.21) that the introduction of the new minimum wage drastically reduced workers' truancy and lateness to office. The grand mean of their responses reveals sig. differences of .000 whereas the difference is significant @ .005, and the pairwise comparism of the differences carried out to determine adjustment to the mean reveals no modification. Therefore, the majority opinion equally holds and is hereby generalized.

Analysis of responses to question 3, table 2, reveals that majority of the respondents also disagreed (as expressed by grand mean of 2.01) that cases of corrupt practices and misappropriation of public fund decreased after the introduction of the latest minimum wage in 2024. The grand mean of their responses reveals sig. differences of .000 & .002 whereas the difference is significant @ .005. The pairwise comparism of the differences carried out to determine adjustment to the mean reveals no modification. Therefore, the majority opinion equally holds and is hereby generalized.

Responses to question 4, table 2, generated the same result as question 3. Majority of the respondents disagreed (as expressed by grand mean of 2.01) that they complete their daily assignments to according to specifications successfully before leaving office. The grand mean of their responses reveals sig. differences of .000 & .002 whereas the difference is significant @ .005, and the pairwise comparism carried out to determine the level of adjustment to the mean reveals no modification. Therefore, the new minimum wage failed to stimulate or increase greater workers' input.

Analysis of responses to question 5, table 2, reveals that majority of the respondents equally disagreed strongly (as expressed by grand mean of 1.34) that the number of public complaints and petitions at the customers' service unit in the SERVICOM Department reduced drastically after the new minimum wage Act of 2024 came into effect. The grand mean of their responses reveals sig. differences of .002 whereas the difference is significant @ .005. The pairwise comparism of the differences carried out to determine the level of adjustment to the mean reveals no modification. Thus customers' satisfaction did not improve even after the introduction of the new minimum wage in 2024.

Analysis of responses to question 6, table 2, reveals that majority of the respondents, with a grand mean of 2.21, disagreed that the provision of public utilities in Enugu state improved since 2024 due to workers' motivation. The grand mean of their responses reveals sig. differences of .000 whereas the difference is significant @ .005. The pairwise comparism of the differences carried out to determine the level of adjustment to the mean reveals no modification. Thus, the provision of public utilities in Enugu state did not improve since 2024 due to workers' motivation.

Factors Militating against the Impact of the New Minimum Wage on Service Delivery in Enugu state

Table 3: Results of SPSS Analyses of responses to questions

S/n	Sub-Research questions	Grand Mean	Stand. Deviat.	Standard Error	Tests of Between-Subjects Effects	Sig.	Pairwise Comparisons
7	The culture of truancy, lateness, corruption, and violation of rules in the Enugu state public service continued and rendered the new minimum wage ineffective in improving service delivery	4.21	.243	.124	118.102	.002	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
8	The increasing devaluation of the Naira to Dollar necessitated increasing costs of goods, utilities, and services that rendered the new minimum wage ineffective in improving service delivery	4.21	.243	.124	118.102	.002	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
9	The introduction of new and multiple taxation system by Enugu state government	4.01	.108	.451	667.103	.001	@ 95% confidence

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	generated hardship and high level increase in transportation, rent, and essential service, which rendered the new minimum wage ineffective in improving service delivery						Interval, no adjustments
10	Partial implementation of the 2024 New Minimum Wage Act rendered the new minimum wage ineffective in improving service delivery	2.44	.178	.636	184.520	.000	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments

Source: SPSS analysis of responses to research questions

In table 3, the SPSS analysis of responses to question 7 reveals that majority of the respondents (with grand means of 4.21) agreed that the culture of truancy, lateness, corruption, and violation of rules in the Enugu state public service continued and rendered the new minimum wage ineffective in improving service delivery. The grand means of these responses reveal non-sig. differences of .002 because the difference is significant @ .005, and the pairwise comparism of the differences reveals no modification. Thus, the majority response is hereby generalized.

SPSS analysis of responses to question 8 reveals that majority of the respondents (with grand means of 4.01) agreed that the increasing devaluation of the Naira to Dollar necessitated increasing costs of goods, utilities, and services that rendered the new minimum wage ineffective in improving service delivery. The grand means of these responses reveal non-sig. differences of .002 because the difference is significant @ .005, and the pairwise comparism of the differences reveals no modification. Thus, the majority response is hereby generalized.

SPSS analysis of responses to question 9 reveals that majority of the respondents (with grand means of 4.21) agreed that the introduction of new and multiple taxation system by Enugu state government generated hardship and high level increase in transportation, rent, and essential service, which rendered the new minimum wage ineffective in improving service delivery. The grand means of these responses reveal non-sig. differences of .001 because the difference is significant @ .005, and the pairwise comparism of the differences reveals no modification. Thus, the majority response is hereby generalized.

Further, SPSS analysis of responses to question 10 reveals that majority of the respondents (with grand means of 2.44) disagreed that the partial implementation of the 2024 New Minimum Wage Act rendered the new minimum wage ineffective in improving service delivery. The grand means of these responses reveal non-sig. differences of .000 because the difference is significant @ .005,

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and the pairwise comparison of the differences reveals no modification. Thus, the majority response is hereby generalized.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the analysis of data, one of the major findings of this paper holds that introduction of the new minimum wage failed to drastically reduce workers' truancy and lateness to office. Earlier studies conducted by El - Rufai (2012) and Adegoroye (2005) identified this as a perennial problem molesting the Nigeria public service and service delivery particularly. Consequently, it is one of the problems the various public service reforms and Minimum Wage Acts particularly that of 2024 intended to solve. From the observation of this study, it remains intractable. Further and similar to this, the introduction of the latest minimum wage Act in 2024 failed to curb the prevalence of corrupt practices and misappropriation of public fund in the state public service, which earlier studies by Oluwasanmi & Rotkangi (2020) and Nwakeaku & Obiorah (2019) suggested as panacea to. It is either that the new minimum wage Act failed to address issues that generate lateness, truancy, prevalence of corrupt practices and misappropriation of public fund or there are some intervening factors/forces that cause the scenario.

Thirdly, the new minimum wage failed to motivate and actually make workers to complete their daily assignments according to specifications successfully before leaving office. This finding is at variance with earlier finding made by Bossler & Broszeit (2016), Ehindero (2023), and Onyekwelu (2021) to the effect that new minimum wage engineers new commitment of employees to their responsibilities and strengthen collaboration among themselves towards effective actualization of corporate goals/objectives. It is imperative that there are some intervening factors/forces that renders the new wage ineffective in actualizing this. Fourth, the new minimum wage failed to address due process, transparency, and accountability issues that generate public complaints as the number of such complaint failed reduce since the introduction of the wage Act. The present research is limited from investigating the nature and causes of the prevalence of increasing complaint from service consumers.

Finally, the paper found also that the culture of truancy, lateness, corruption, and violation of rules in the Enugu state public service; increasing devaluation of the Naira to Dollar; and hardship and high level increase in transportation, rent, and essential service fundamentally eroded the power of the new minimum wage Act of 2024 to improve public service delivery in Enugu state. Specifically, the finding of increases in costs products and service, and its consequence is in-line with earlier findings made by Bossler et al. (2018), MacDonald & Nilsson (2016), Lemos, (2004), Card & Krueger (1995), and many others. This finding tends to demonstrate that the consequential rise in costs is not limited by geographically, culturally, and level of development. Thus, there is

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need for further research on the appropriate policy that is required to curtail such rise in cost when new wage structure is introduced.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction of new minimum wage is widely perceived as an instrument for resolving government – labour frictions, and for resolving ethical issues, and rules/norms violations that undermine public service delivery. From Colonial period up till date – in the independent Nigeria, many new minimum wage Acts have been introduced with this in view. However, they tend to exacerbate the issues rather than resolve them. The experience of Enugu state – one of the 36 states in Nigeria – after the introduction of the latest 2024 Minimum wage Act explicates this position.

As a result of the 2024 Minimum wage Act, the prices of public utilities, services, and essential goods have continued to rise uncontrolled. Government has equally diversified its taxation channel and increased their values to the extent that rent, transportation, drinking water, and food are highly inaccessible to the mass due to rising costs. All the ethical issues of truancy, lateness, corruption, and misappropriation of funds have continued unabated. Public service rules and norms including transparency, accountability, and due process principles are seriously violated across ministries, departments, and parastatals in the state civil service. All these crippled the ability of the new minimum wage act to improve public service delivery in the state.

This paper, therefore, recommends further inquiry on how to deter and/or manage price increases or costs of goods and services prior to the introduction of new minimum wage Act. Prices of products and services increase seems to be the fundamental force driving other factors associated with service delivery in the state. Secondly, the paper recommends the introduction of government policy for harmonization and moderation of taxation and price administration in the productive and service sector. A special Board should be established to oversee the implementation of the policy.

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Declarations

Availability of data and materials:

The data and materials use for this work are not products or obtained from any data base

Data deposition:

Data used in this work was not generated from any data base but from field work as contained already in the paper.

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Informed Consent:

All procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation (institutional and national) and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2000. Informed consent was obtained from all the respondents before questionnaires were distributed to them. No private information about the individual respondents was included in the article.

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