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What is the fate of Retirees? Payment of Contributory Pension Scheme and the Welfare of Public Service Retirees in Selected States of Southwest, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the initial lump-sum payment under the Contributory Pension Scheme and its implications for the welfare of public service retirees in selected states of Southwest Nigeria. Primary data were collected from 1,850 pensioners in Osun, Ondo, and Ogun States using structured questionnaires and interview schedules, and were analysed descriptively and inferentially. The findings indicate that lump-sum payments are generally insufficient to meet retirees' basic post-retirement needs, including healthcare, food, shelter, and other welfare requirements, particularly amid inflation and the rising cost of living. Administrative inefficiencies, corruption, and inequalities in benefit distribution further increase retirees' vulnerability, with lower-cadre workers more adversely affected than politically or institutionally connected elites. The study concludes that, although the Contributory Pension Scheme was designed to promote sustainability and transparency, it has not adequately provided social security for many retirees. The study recommends timely payment of lump sums and death benefits, stronger accountability measures, effective enforcement of sanctions, technological innovations, inflation-adjusted benefits, and targeted empowerment programmes. The study contributes to pension reform literature by highlighting the need to balance fiscal sustainability with human security, equity, and fairness.

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INTRODUCTION

Pension provision constitutes an important component of public service employment because it is intended to provide income security and protect the welfare of employees after retirement. For many public servants, retirement involves a transition from regular salary income to pension benefits and other accumulated entitlements. Consequently, the effectiveness of a pension system is closely associated with retirees' ability to meet essential post-retirement needs and maintain an acceptable standard of living. Although employees may perceive retirement differently, its economic implications remain particularly important because the cessation of regular employment income can substantially affect retirees' welfare (Amusan & Ajibola, 2018). An effective pension arrangement is therefore expected not only to provide retirement income but also to reduce economic vulnerability during old age.

Globally, pension systems have developed in response to the need to provide financial security for workers after retirement. During much of the twentieth century, governments established pension arrangements in which retirement benefits were financed through public revenues and contributions generated by economically active workers. Such arrangements were more sustainable when employment, workers' incomes, and population growth remained favourable. However, demographic and economic changes gradually created challenges as improvements in healthcare increased life expectancy while the proportion of active workers supporting retirees declined (Holzmann, Orenstein, & Rutkowski, 2015). These challenges encouraged governments to reconsider traditional pension arrangements and explore systems in which employees and employers contribute toward retirement benefits during an employee's working life.

Pension systems may broadly take contributory, non-contributory, or hybrid forms. Under a contributory arrangement, employees contribute a specified proportion of their earnings toward retirement benefits, while the non-contributory approach places the principal financing responsibility on the employer or government. Hybrid arrangements combine elements of defined-benefit and defined-contribution systems and distribute financial risks between participants and sponsors (Kantudu, 2016; Eme & Sam, 2011; Ngu, 2015). These different approaches reflect continuing concerns about how pension systems can achieve financial sustainability while ensuring adequate retirement protection. In Nigeria, these concerns became particularly significant because of persistent problems associated with the administration and payment of retirement benefits.

Nigeria has experienced several pension arrangements since the colonial period. The Pension Ordinance of 1951 represented an early formal legislative framework, although its application to indigenous Nigerian workers was limited (Ngu, 2015). Before the introduction of the Pension Reform Act of 2004, public sector retirees were generally covered by the Defined Benefit Scheme, also referred to as the Non-Contributory Pension Scheme. The system became associated with challenges such as delayed payment and non-payment of pensions and gratuities, exposing many retirees to financial hardship. These weaknesses contributed to the introduction of the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) in 2004, which was expected to improve pension administration, enhance transparency, ensure more regular payment of retirement benefits, and strengthen retirees' welfare (McGill, 2014).

Under the Contributory Pension Scheme, retirement benefits are accumulated through a Retirement Savings Account and administered through pension fund institutions. One important component of retirement benefits is the lump-sum payment available to eligible retirees. The lump sum represents a one-time withdrawal from accumulated retirement savings, subject to applicable pension regulations and the requirement that sufficient funds remain to support programmed withdrawals or an annuity. The Pension Reform Act 2014 provides a framework through which retirees may access a portion of the amount credited to their Retirement Savings Accounts while retaining adequate funds for continuing retirement income. Lump-sum payments can therefore serve an important welfare function by providing retirees with immediate financial resources at the point of retirement.

The economic significance of lump-sum payments extends beyond their immediate monetary value. Such payments may enable retirees to meet pressing household expenses, address healthcare needs, secure accommodation, repay debts, or establish income-generating activities. Where effectively managed, a lump-sum payment may also support the economic adjustment of retirees following the loss of regular salary income (Aditya, 2020). However, the welfare benefits expected from such payments depend substantially on their adequacy, timeliness, accessibility, and effective administration. Delays, administrative difficulties, or inadequate payments may weaken the capacity of the pension scheme to protect retirees from post-retirement economic hardship.

Despite the reform of Nigeria's pension system, the management and administration of pension benefits remain matters of concern. The introduction of the CPS was expected to address many of the difficulties that characterised the previous pension arrangement, particularly delayed and irregular payments. Nevertheless, the continued vulnerability of some public service retirees raises questions about whether the implementation of lump-sum payment policies has sufficiently improved their welfare. The issue is especially important in an economic environment in which retirees must meet essential needs such as food, healthcare, housing, and other household expenditures after leaving active service. Consequently, the existence of a contributory pension framework does not, by itself, establish that retirees receive adequate economic protection. The actual welfare implications of pension policy depend on how effectively its benefits are implemented and delivered to beneficiaries.

Existing studies have discussed pension reforms, pension administration, contributory and non-contributory arrangements, and the historical development of retirement benefits in Nigeria (Odia & Okoye, 2012; Nnanta, Okoh, & Ugwu, 2011; Sule & Ezugwu, 2019). Other studies have considered the role of pension benefits in providing financial security and supporting retirees after the termination of regular employment (Oladipo & Fashagba, 2012; Aditya, 2020). However, the specific relationship between the implementation of initial lump-sum payments and the welfare of public service retirees requires further empirical attention, particularly at the subnational level. Examining retirees in Osun, Ogun, and Ondo States provides an opportunity to assess whether the implementation of the lump-sum component of the Contributory Pension Scheme has translated into meaningful welfare outcomes among public service retirees in Southwest Nigeria.

Accordingly, this study examines the effect of initial lump-sum payments under the Contributory Pension Scheme on the welfare of public service retirees in Osun, Ogun, and Ondo States of Southwest Nigeria. Specifically, the study evaluates whether the implementation of the lump-sum payment policy significantly affects retirees' welfare. The study is guided by the research question: What is the effect of initial lump-sum payments on the welfare of public service retirees in Osun, Ogun, and Ondo States of Southwest Nigeria? It tests the null hypothesis that initial lump-sum payments have no significant effect on the welfare of public service retirees in Osun, Ogun, and Ondo States of Southwest Nigeria.

METHODS

The study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because the study sought to obtain quantitative information on the implementation of lump-sum pension payments and the welfare of public service retirees across selected states in Southwest Nigeria. The survey method enabled data to be collected from a relatively large population using standardized research instruments and allowed respondents' perceptions and experiences to be subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analysis (John, 2018).

The study was conducted in Osun, Ondo, and Ogun States in Southwest Nigeria. The study population consisted of public service pensioners, including executive members of pensioners' associations and other pensioner members in the selected states. Based on the sampling frame used for the study, the total population was 18,910 pensioners. Ogun State accounted for 10,590 pensioners, Osun State for 4,605, while the population reported for Ondo State was 3,715. The population distribution used in determining the study sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Population Distribution of Public Service Pensioners

State	Population	Number of Local Governments
Osun	4,605	30
Ondo	3,715*	18
Ogun	10,590	20
Total	18,910	68

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2024)
Note: The figure for Ondo State should be verified against the original data source because another version of the sampling frame reports 3,712 pensioners.*

A multistage sampling procedure was adopted to select respondents. At the first stage, Osun, Ondo, and Ogun States constituted the geographical strata for the study. At the second stage, respondents were stratified according to their respective states and pensioner categories. Proportionate sampling was subsequently applied to allocate the sample according to the size of the pensioner population in each state. The study adopted 10% of the total sampling-frame population of 18,910, resulting in an intended sample of 1,891 respondents. Accordingly, approximately 461 respondents were selected from Osun State, 372 from Ondo State, and 1,059 from Ogun State, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of the Study Sample

State	Population	Proposed Sample Size
Osun	4,605	460
Ondo	3,715	372
Ogun	10,590	1,059
Total	18,910	1,891

Source: Researchers' computation (2024)

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire and an interview schedule. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section A obtained respondents' demographic characteristics. Section B contained items relating to the implementation and effectiveness of the relevant pension administrative bodies, including the administration of lump-sum payments. Section C assessed the welfare of public service retirees in the selected states. The questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1), with Agree (4), Undecided (3), and Disagree (2) as the intermediate response categories.

The research instruments were administered directly to the selected pensioners. A total of 1,891 questionnaires were administered, of which 1,850 were successfully retrieved and considered usable for analysis, representing a response rate of 97.8%. Forty-one questionnaires, representing 2.2%, were not retrieved. Therefore, the final analysis was based on 1,850 valid responses.

Table 3. Questionnaire Administration and Retrieval Rate

Questionnaire Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Administered	1,891	100.0
Retrieved and usable	1,850	97.8
Not retrieved	41	2.2

Source: Researchers' field survey (2024).

Data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and responses to the study variables. Inferential analysis was conducted using linear regression to determine the effect of initial lump-sum payments on the welfare of public service retirees. The regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis that initial lump-sum payments have no significant effect on the welfare of public service retirees in Osun, Ogun, and Ondo States of Southwest Nigeria.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the 1,850 public service retirees included in the study. Male respondents constituted 62.8% of the sample, while females accounted for 37.2%. In terms of age, the largest

Table 4. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 1,850)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	1,162	62.8
Female	688	37.2
Age		
50–60 years	104	5.6
61–70 years	1,139	61.6
71–80 years	581	31.4
81 years and above	26	1.4
Marital Status		
Single	80	4.3
Married	1,154	62.4
Divorced	290	15.7
Widow/Widower	312	16.9
Separated	14	0.8
Highest Educational Qualification		
O-Level	16	0.9
ND/NCE	726	39.2
B.A./B.Sc./HND	608	32.9
Postgraduate	500	27.0
Years of Retirement		
1–10 years	133	7.2
11–20 years	125	6.8
21–30 years	758	41.0
31 years and above	834	45.1
Grade at Retirement		
Grades 1–5	6	0.3
Grades 6–10	314	17.0
Grades 11–15	1,074	58.1
Grade 16 and above	456	24.6

Source: Researchers' computation (2024)

proportion of respondents (61.6%) were between 61 and 70 years, followed by those aged 71–80 years (31.4%). Only 5.6% were between 50 and 60 years, while 1.4% were aged 81 years and above. These results indicate that the study predominantly captured retirees within the 61–70-year age category.

With respect to marital status, 62.4% of the respondents were married, while 16.9% were widowed, 15.7% divorced, 4.3% single, and 0.8% separated. The respondents also demonstrated relatively high levels of formal education. While 0.9% possessed O-Level qualifications, 39.2% held ND/NCE qualifications, 32.9% held B.A./B.Sc./HND qualifications, and 27.0% had postgraduate qualifications.

The retirement profile of respondents shows that 45.1% had been retired for 31 years or more, while 41.0% reported 21–30 years of retirement. Regarding grade level at retirement, the largest proportion (58.1%) retired from Grades 11–15, followed by 24.6% from Grade 16 and above. These characteristics suggest that the respondents had substantial experience within the public service and were therefore positioned to provide information on pension administration and post-retirement welfare.

Lump-Sum Payments to Retirees

Table 5 presents respondents' assessments of lump-sum payments under the Contributory Pension Scheme. The findings indicate

Table 5. Lump-Sum Payment Scale

Item	SA n (%)	A n (%)	U n (%)	D n (%)	SD n (%)
I have been paid my lump sum after retirement	32 (1.7)	109 (5.9)	10 (0.5)	938 (50.7)	761 (41.1)
Lump-sum payment is commensurate with length of service	193 (10.4)	456 (24.6)	30 (1.6)	822 (44.4)	349 (18.9)
My organisation often denies retirees their lump sums	211 (11.4)	770 (41.6)	82 (4.4)	653 (35.3)	134 (7.2)
My lump sum was paid early enough after retirement	14 (0.8)	22 (1.2)	84 (4.5)	1,044 (56.4)	686 (37.1)
My lump sum is satisfactory considering the current standard of living	114 (6.2)	66 (3.6)	615 (33.2)	808 (43.7)	247 (13.4)
I received a letter of commendation from my employer after retirement	21 (1.1)	236 (12.8)	115 (6.2)	1,320 (71.4)	158 (8.5)
I am treated with dignity as a senior citizen	992 (53.6)	23 (1.2)	26 (1.4)	545 (29.5)	264 (14.3)

Source: Researchers' computation (2024)

substantial dissatisfaction with the receipt, timeliness, and adequacy of lump-sum payments. A combined 91.8% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had been paid their lump sum after retirement. Similarly, 93.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed that their lump sums were paid early enough after retirement. These findings suggest that delays in the payment of retirement benefits remain a major implementation problem among the respondents.

The perceived adequacy and equity of the payments were also problematic. Approximately 63.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed that lump-sum payments were commensurate with the length of service rendered, while 57.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the amount received was satisfactory in relation to the prevailing standard of living. In addition, 53.0% agreed or strongly agreed that their organisations often denied retirees access to lump-sum payments.

These results indicate that the effectiveness of the pension scheme depends not merely on the existence of a statutory entitlement but also on whether benefits are accessible, adequate, equitable, and paid promptly. The findings are consistent with the argument of Barr and Diamond (2008) that adequacy and reliability are central features of effective pension systems. They also support the concern raised by Morakinyo et al. (2024) that administrative implementation can substantially influence retirees' ability to benefit from pension reforms.

Welfare of Public Service Retirees

Table 6 presents respondents' assessments of their post-retirement welfare. The findings show considerable challenges in relation to regular pension payments and access to essential welfare needs. A substantial proportion of respondents disagreed that their pension administrators paid benefits regularly. Similarly, most respondents reported limited access to adequate food, healthcare services, and suitable shelter.

Access to food and healthcare appeared particularly problematic. Approximately 97.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had access to good food, while 99.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had access to good healthcare facilities. Regarding housing, 82.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they enjoyed access to good shelter. Recreational participation produced a more mixed pattern, although a substantial proportion of retirees continued to report limited access to leisure and recreational activities.

The relationship between pension implementation and welfare is further reflected in respondents' perceptions of financial constraints after retirement. A combined 75.4% agreed or strongly agreed that their well-being had declined substantially because of financial constraints associated with poor implementation of the pension scheme. The findings therefore suggest that pension administration is closely connected to retirees' capacity to maintain essential

Table 6. Retirees' Welfare Scale

Item	SA n (%)	A n (%)	U n (%)	D n (%)	SD n (%)
My pension administrator pays my benefits at regular intervals	8 (0.4)	108 (5.8)	123 (6.6)	1,433 (77.5)	178 (9.6)
I have access to good food	10 (0.5)	22 (1.2)	13 (0.7)	1,457 (78.8)	348 (18.8)
I have access to good healthcare facilities	10 (0.5)	4 (0.2)	4 (0.2)	1,386 (74.9)	446 (24.1)
I have access to good shelter	6 (0.3)	12 (0.6)	306 (16.5)	1,191 (64.4)	335 (18.1)
I participate in leisure and recreational activities	30 (1.6)	800 (43.2)	12 (0.6)	685 (37.0)	323 (17.5)
My well-being has substantially declined after retirement because of financial constraints arising from poor pension implementation	774 (41.8)	621 (33.6)	210 (11.4)	100 (5.4)	145 (7.8)
My pension administrator pays my benefits at regular intervals	8 (0.4)	108 (5.8)	123 (6.6)	1,433 (77.5)	178 (9.6)

Source: Researchers' computation (2024)

consumption and social welfare after leaving public service.

These results are consistent with the broader argument that pension adequacy and effective administration are essential components of income security in old age. The findings also correspond with ILO (2016), which associates inadequate pension protection with reduced economic security and limited access to essential social needs among older persons.

Effect of Lump-Sum Payments on Retirees' Welfare

Linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether lump-sum payment variables significantly predicted the welfare of public service retirees. As presented in Table 7, the regression sum of squares was 1,244.383, while the residual sum of squares was 1,492.772. The model produced an F-statistic of 314.936 with 5 and 1,844 degrees of freedom.

The magnitude of the F-statistic indicates that the set of lump-sum payment variables jointly contributes significantly to explaining variations in retirees' welfare. Consequently, the null hypothesis that initial lump-sum payments have no significant effect on the welfare of public service retirees is rejected, subject to verification of the significance value reported in Table 7.

Table 8 presents the individual contributions of the five lump-sum payment indicators. Perceived commensurability of lump-sum payments with length of service had a positive and statistically significant coefficient ($B = 0.097$, $\beta = 0.105$, $t = 4.242$, $p < .001$). Likewise, timely payment after retirement showed a positive and statistically significant relationship with welfare ($B = 0.214$, $\beta = 0.119$, $t = 5.700$, $p < .001$). These findings suggest that perceived fairness and timeliness in pension payments are associated with better welfare outcomes.

Table 7. Regression Analysis of Lump-Sum Payment Variables and Welfare of Public Service Retirees

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1,244.383	5	248.877	314.936	Verify
Residual	1,492.772	1,844	0.790		
Total	2,737.156	1,849			

Dependent variable: Welfare of Public Service Retirees (WPSR)
Source: Researchers' computation (2024)

Table 8. Contribution of Lump-Sum Payment Variables to Retirees' Welfare

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p	95% CI for B
Constant	6.670	0.153	-	43.731	< .001	6.371 to 6.969
Lump sum paid after retirement	0.455	0.034	0.326	13.448	< .001	0.521 to 0.389
Payment commensurate with length of service	0.097	0.023	0.105	4.242	< .001	0.052 to 0.141
Organisation denies retirees lump sums	0.235	0.023	0.239	10.246	< .001	0.280 to 0.190
Lump sum paid early enough after retirement	0.214	0.038	0.119	5.700	< .001	0.140 to 0.287
Lump sum satisfactory relative to current living standards	0.726	0.022	0.588	32.407	< .001	0.770 to 0.682

Dependent variable: Welfare of Public Service Retirees (WPSR)
Source: Researchers' computation (2024)

Organisational denial of lump-sum payments produced a negative and statistically significant coefficient ($B = 0.235$, $\beta = 0.239$, $t = 10.246$, $p < .001$). This finding indicates that administrative barriers to accessing retirement benefits are associated with poorer welfare outcomes. It supports the descriptive results, which showed substantial dissatisfaction with the administration of lump-sum payments.

Two coefficients require cautious interpretation. The item indicating that a lump sum had been paid after retirement produced a negative coefficient ($B = 0.455$, $\beta = 0.326$, $p < .001$), while satisfaction with the lump sum relative to the current standard of living also produced a large negative coefficient ($B = 0.726$, $\beta = 0.588$, $p < .001$). Because both items are positively worded, their negative coefficients cannot be interpreted reliably without confirming how the independent variables and the composite welfare variable were coded and scored. If higher values consistently represented stronger agreement and higher welfare, the signs would appear counterintuitive. The coding procedure, including any reverse-scoring of negatively worded welfare items, should therefore be verified before substantive conclusions are drawn from the direction of these two coefficients.

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of lump-sum payments is significantly associated with the welfare of public service retirees. In particular, timely payments and benefits perceived as commensurate with length of service are associated with improved welfare, whereas organisational denial of benefits is associated with poorer welfare outcomes. These results reinforce the importance of adequacy, predictability, and administrative reliability in pension administration (Barr & Diamond, 2008; ILO, 2016; OECD, 2013). The findings therefore suggest that effective pension reform requires not only a contributory financing structure but also administrative arrangements that ensure retirees can access appropriate benefits when they are due.

The implementation of lump-sum payments under the Contributory Pension Scheme is closely associated with the welfare of public service retirees in Osun, Ogun, and Ondo States. The descriptive results indicate substantial problems relating to access, timeliness, adequacy, and perceived fairness of lump-sum payments, while the regression analysis confirms that the set of lump-sum payment indicators significantly explains variation in retirees' welfare. These findings reinforce the view that pension reform should not be assessed solely in terms of the existence of a contributory framework or the accumulation of retirement savings. Its effectiveness ultimately depends on whether retirees can access adequate benefits when they are required and whether pension administration protects them from economic insecurity after retirement. This interpretation is consistent with the broader Nigerian pension literature, which has repeatedly focused on pension administration, retirement benefits, implementation challenges, and retirees' welfare (Abdullahi, 2011; Abdulrouf, 2014; Adeniji et al., 2017; Amusan & Ajibola, 2018; Anazodo et al., 2014; Aja, 2014; Olanrewaju & Adebayo, 2020).

A particularly important finding is that 91.8% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had received their lump-sum payment after retirement. This suggests that the formal entitlement created by the pension system does not automatically translate into effective access to benefits at the point of retirement. The distinction between policy design and policy implementation is therefore central to understanding the results. Pension reforms may establish rules, institutions, Retirement Savings Accounts, pension fund administrators, and procedures for benefit withdrawal, but the welfare objective of the reform is weakened when implementation is delayed, administratively constrained, or inconsistent. This reflects broader policy implementation arguments that public policies become meaningful to beneficiaries only when administrative structures convert formal provisions into actual services and benefits. Within the Nigerian pension context, concerns about administration, compliance, processing of retirement benefits, and institutional capacity have similarly received attention in previous studies and policy discussions (Gbitse, 2018; Nwajagu, 2017; Oladipo & Fashagba, 2012; Sanni, 2012; Yusuf, 2014; Pressman & Wildavsky, 2019; Elmore, 2018).

The result is also important when viewed against the historical justification for introducing the Contributory Pension Scheme. Nigeria's transition from earlier pension arrangements to the contributory framework was partly intended to improve the sustainability, predictability, and administration of retirement benefits. Studies examining the transition from the old to the new system have emphasized expectations that contributory pension reform would address deficiencies associated with previous arrangements and improve retirement security (Odia & Okoye, 2012; Nnanta et al., 2011; Nyong & Duze, 2011; Eme et al., 2014; Johnson, 2019; Ngu, 2015). The present findings indicate, however, that institutional reform at the legislative level does not necessarily remove implementation difficulties at the beneficiary level. This distinction is important because the success of pension reform should be evaluated not only through contributions accumulated or institutional arrangements established but also through actual outcomes experienced by retirees.

Timeliness emerged as another important dimension of pension implementation. Approximately 93.5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that their lump sums were paid early enough after retirement, while the regression result for timely payment was positive and statistically significant. This indicates that the timing of pension benefits is not a secondary administrative issue but an important determinant of post-retirement welfare. Retirement involves the cessation of regular salary income and may immediately expose individuals to difficulties in meeting household expenses. A delayed benefit can therefore lose part of its protective function even where the retiree eventually receives the amount. The importance of predictable and timely pension income is consistent with established pension-policy principles emphasizing adequacy, reliability, and income security during old age (Barr & Diamond, 2008; Baker et al., 2005; OECD, 2013; ILO, 2016). It is also relevant to Nigerian studies dealing with retirement planning, post-service welfare, and the conditions facing retirees after withdrawal from active employment (Fapohunda, 2013; Awe & Tugbodo, 2013; Adeyemo & Fakoya, 2020; Omoresemi & Asuquo, 2017).

The consequences of delayed payment become more evident when the socio-economic circumstances of retirees are considered. Retirement typically alters the relationship between income, consumption, savings, and dependency. Life-cycle approaches to savings and retirement suggest that resources accumulated during employment are expected to support consumption after labour-market exit (Idowu, 2016; Modigliani & Albert, 1980). Where pension benefits are delayed, the expected transition from employment income to retirement income becomes disrupted. Retirees may consequently have to rely more heavily on personal savings, family support, borrowing, asset disposal, or other coping mechanisms. Literature examining retirement planning, livelihood transitions, and post-retirement economic adjustment similarly points to the importance of adequate financial preparation and accessible pension resources (Ogunbameru & Bamiwuye, 2004; Ojong & Akpan, 2019; Dugguh & Iliya, 2018; Flippo, 2016; Aditya, 2020). Thus, the positive relationship between timely payment and welfare found in this study can be understood as reflecting the role of immediate financial liquidity in facilitating adjustment to retirement.

The findings regarding adequacy are equally significant. Most respondents did not perceive their lump-sum payments as commensurate with their length of service, while 57.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed that lump sums were satisfactory in relation to the current standard of living. The positive regression coefficient for payments perceived as commensurate with length of service indicates that retirees' welfare improves when pension benefits are perceived to reflect their service history more fairly. Adequacy is a fundamental objective of pension systems because benefits that are administratively delivered but economically insufficient may still fail to protect retirees against poverty and vulnerability. International pension literature has long emphasized the need to balance fiscal sustainability with benefit adequacy (Barr & Diamond, 2008; OECD, 2013; ILO, 2016), while discussions of pension reform and poverty in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa similarly raise questions about whether pension arrangements provide meaningful social protection (Dostal, 2021; Ezeani, 2011; Standing, 1999).

The importance of adequacy becomes particularly clear when considered alongside the welfare indicators reported in this study. A very high proportion of respondents reported difficulty accessing adequate food, healthcare, and shelter, while 75.4% agreed or strongly agreed that their well-being had declined because of financial constraints associated with poor pension implementation. These findings suggest that pension policy has consequences beyond the technical administration of retirement accounts. Pension income is connected directly to human welfare because it influences the ability of older persons to maintain consumption, access health services, secure accommodation, and participate in social life. Adeyemo and Fakoya (2020), for example, situate retirement within financial and psychological dimensions of well-being, while Kojusola (2015) and Orifowomo (2022) directly address pension fund management and retirees' welfare. Similar concerns are reflected in research on sustainable welfare and post-service life (Awe & Tugbodo, 2013), the welfare effects of the 2004 pension policy (Ahmed & Oyadiran, 2013), and broader assessments of Nigerian retirement benefits (Adeniji et al., 2017).

The welfare implications may also be intensified by inflation and changes in the cost of living. A lump sum that appears substantial in nominal terms may provide limited real protection when food, healthcare, housing, transportation, and other essential expenses increase. The relevant issue is therefore the purchasing power of retirement benefits rather than their nominal value alone. This helps explain why respondents may report dissatisfaction even when a formal benefit has been calculated and credited. Pension systems must consequently consider how long-term savings, investment performance, inflation, and benefit design interact. Literature on pension investment, portfolio management, risk management, and pension fund sustainability emphasizes these financial dimensions of retirement provision (Adjekopori, 2014; Egbe et al., 2013; Menocin & Francesco, 2021; Ako, 2016; Pam, 2008). The broader pension-policy literature also suggests that financial sustainability and social adequacy should not be treated as competing objectives; an administratively sustainable pension system that produces inadequate retirement outcomes remains socially deficient (Barr & Diamond, 2008; OECD, 2013).

Another major finding is the relationship between organisational denial of lump-sum benefits and retirees' welfare. More than half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their organisations often denied retirees their lump sums, and this variable produced a statistically significant negative coefficient in the regression model. The result highlights the importance of administrative governance in pension outcomes. Where benefit processing is characterised by weak accountability, bureaucratic bottlenecks, poor record management, discretionary implementation, or non-compliance, retirees may experience the pension system as unreliable regardless of the strength of its formal legal framework. Nigerian studies have raised related concerns about administrative constraints, pension fund governance, compliance, and institutional effectiveness (Abdullahi, 2011; Yusuf, 2014; Oladipo & Fashagba, 2012; Ikeanyibe & Osadebe, 2021; Abdulrouf, 2014).

Governance concerns are particularly important because pension funds involve substantial financial resources and long-term obligations. Weak governance can undermine both confidence in pension institutions and the welfare objectives of the scheme. Agba et al. (2020) discuss bureaucratic corruption and the need for institutional reform in Nigeria, while public controversies concerning pension funds have also appeared in policy and media discussions (Murtala, 2015; Sani, 2015). Although such sources do not by themselves establish the conditions in the three states examined in the present study, they illustrate the broader governance environment within which pension administration has been publicly debated. The findings therefore strengthen the case for transparent benefit processing, effective monitoring, clear administrative responsibilities, and enforceable sanctions for misconduct or unjustified delays.

Differences in the institutional and fiscal capacity of governments may also help explain uneven pension experiences. Pension obligations depend partly on financial management, government revenue, accumulated liabilities, and administrative capacity. Issues of public expenditure arrears and fiscal stress can affect the ability of governments to meet obligations when due (Alberto, 2018; Ako, 2016), while public-sector accounting and revenue management provide the broader fiscal setting in which pension liabilities are managed (Olusekan, 2019; Odewole, 2017). This is especially relevant to subnational pension systems, where state-level differences in resources, laws, historical liabilities, and administrative practices may influence implementation. The Osun State pension and gratuity framework identified by Olusekan and Johnson (2019), as well as public reporting concerning pension conditions elsewhere in Southwest Nigeria (The Nation, 2020), illustrates the importance of state-specific institutional arrangements. Consequently, the results from Osun, Ogun, and Ondo should be interpreted within both the national contributory pension framework and the particular administrative contexts of the states.

The findings also raise an equity issue. Pension reform is not simply a financial-management mechanism; it is also a social policy instrument. If retirees with similar employment histories experience different levels of access, delays, or administrative treatment, the system may produce distributional inequalities even when the contribution formula appears neutral. Ikeanyibe and Osadebe (2021) explicitly frame Nigerian pension reform in terms of equity and governance, while Ezeani (2011) situates pension arrangements within the broader welfare-state debate. Social-protection perspectives likewise stress that income security in old age is an important component of social inclusion and protection against vulnerability (Standing, 1999; ILO, 2016; Novak, 2012). The present findings therefore suggest that improving pension administration should be understood not only as an efficiency reform but also as an equity intervention.

The regression results provide additional insight into these relationships. Payments commensurate with length of service and timely payment were positively associated with retirees' welfare, whereas organisational denial of lump sums was negatively associated with welfare. Taken together, these results show that retirees' welfare is affected by several dimensions of implementation simultaneously: benefit fairness, administrative access, and timing. This supports the broader view that pension outcomes depend on both policy design and institutional execution. Studies concerned with pension administration, compliance, reform, and retirement benefits in Nigeria provide a relevant body of literature for interpreting these relationships (Kantudu, 2016; Sule & Ezugwu, 2019; Chizueze et al., 2011; Ekwunife et al., 2009; Omoni, 2013; Dorsey, 2020).

However, the negative coefficients obtained for "lump sum paid after retirement" and "lump sum satisfactory considering the current standard of living" require methodological caution. If the variables were coded so that higher scores represent stronger agreement and if the dependent welfare scale was coded consistently in a positive direction, negative coefficients for these positively worded variables would be counterintuitive. The most appropriate interpretation is therefore not to speculate that receiving a lump sum necessarily reduces welfare, but to verify the scoring structure of both the independent items and the composite welfare index. The welfare scale contains positively and negatively worded items, making reverse scoring particularly important. Until this coding is verified, the regression model establishes statistical association but the substantive direction of these two relationships should be interpreted cautiously.

Notwithstanding this measurement issue, the overall pattern of evidence supports the study's rejection of the null hypothesis, provided that the significance value in the original regression output is confirmed. The combined predictors significantly explain variation in retirees' welfare, indicating that the implementation of lump-sum payments cannot be separated from broader welfare outcomes. This conclusion is consistent with studies and policy analyses concerned with the effects of contributory pension arrangements on retirees, employees, retirement planning, and social welfare (Ahmed & Oyadiran, 2013; Anazodo et al., 2014; Awe & Tugbodo, 2013; Nyong & Duze, 2011; Olanrewaju & Adebayo, 2020; Orifowomo, 2022).

The findings also have implications beyond individuals who have already retired. Employees' confidence in pension systems can influence their attitudes toward retirement, employment commitment, retention, and perceptions of the employment relationship. Studies on the Nigerian civil service and other organisations have linked pension arrangements with workers' commitment, retirement attitudes, productivity, and planning (Chizueze et al., 2011; Ekwunife et al., 2009; Omoni, 2013; Dugguh & Iliya, 2018; Dorsey, 2020). If serving employees observe former colleagues experiencing prolonged delays or economic hardship after retirement, confidence in the pension system may decline. Conversely, predictable retirement benefits may strengthen trust that long-term public service will result in meaningful post-employment protection.

At the policy level, the results indicate that improving retirees' welfare requires attention to both pension fund management and the administrative process through which beneficiaries access their entitlements. Effective pension systems require sound financial management, appropriate investment practices, administrative competence, accountability, and clear procedures (Baker et al., 2005; Adjekopori, 2014; Egbe et al., 2013; Menocin & Francesco, 2021). At the same time, reforms must recognize that retirement security extends beyond payment itself. Empowerment opportunities, appropriate financial planning, livelihood adjustment, and other forms of post-retirement support can help retirees adapt economically after leaving paid employment (Ojong & Akpan, 2019; Fapohunda, 2013; Ogunbameru & Bamiwuye, 2004). Pension policy should therefore form part of a broader strategy of old-age social protection rather than being treated exclusively as a financial accounting mechanism.

The findings further suggest that pension reform should be continuously evaluated rather than regarded as complete once legislation has been enacted. Pension systems evolve in response to demographic, fiscal, administrative, and economic conditions. Comparative literature on pension reform and privatization shows that institutional arrangements differ across countries and that reform choices involve trade-offs between financing, risk allocation, state responsibility, and individual responsibility (Disney & Whitehouse, 1999; Muller, 2018; Hill & Hupe, 2002). Nigeria's contributory system should similarly be evaluated on the basis of whether its institutional arrangements remain capable of providing adequate and reliable protection under changing economic conditions.

Finally, the findings from Osun, Ogun, and Ondo States have relevance for other Nigerian states and comparable emerging economies where contributory pension reforms operate within contexts of fiscal pressure, administrative weakness, and substantial dependence on retirement income. The precise magnitude of the findings should not be generalized automatically beyond the sampled retirees, but the underlying implementation issues timeliness, adequacy, administrative accessibility, accountability, and equity—are common dimensions of pension governance. The broader literature on Nigerian pension reform, retirement welfare, social protection, pension administration, and institutional performance indicates that these concerns extend beyond a single state or occupational group (Bloom, 2013; Gbitse, 2018; Nnanta et al., 2011; Eme et al., 2014; Dostal, 2021; Adeyemo & Fakoya, 2020; Yunusa, 2016). The study therefore contributes to the pension reform literature by showing that the welfare effects of the Contributory Pension Scheme depend not only on financial contributions and statutory provisions but also on the quality of implementation experienced by retirees. Effective pension governance must consequently reconcile fiscal sustainability with timely benefit delivery, administrative accountability, equity, and the protection of retirees' basic welfare.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Gerindra's electoral success in the 2024 Presidential Election in Jepara Regency was achieved through an adaptive electoral strategy that varied across different local political contexts rather than through a single standardized campaign model. The research confirms that although campaign coordination was centrally organized under DPC Gerindra Jepara, the implementation of philosophical, sociological, psychological, and organizational strategies was continuously adjusted to the geographical characteristics, social structures, political culture, and historical electoral experiences of each sub-district, thereby answering the research question regarding the variation of campaign strategies and the factors shaping their effectiveness. Theoretically, the findings extend Firmanzah's political strategy framework by demonstrating that strategic dimensions operate contextually and dynamically according to local political opportunity structures, while simultaneously strengthening the explanatory capacity of rational choice theory in understanding organizational adaptation during electoral competition. Practically, the study suggests that political parties should prioritize localized campaign design, grassroots organizational flexibility, and context-sensitive political communication instead of relying on uniform national campaign approaches. Accordingly, electoral institutions and political organizations should strengthen local organizational capacity, encourage evidence-based political mapping, and develop adaptive campaign mechanisms capable of responding to diverse regional characteristics across Indonesia. Future studies are encouraged to expand comparative analysis across different provinces and political parties while incorporating digital campaigning, social media ecosystems, and local political culture to further develop the concept of adaptive electoral strategy in contemporary Indonesian electoral politics.

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