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Problematic of Pension Administration in the Delta State Civil Service

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Abstract: *This investigation focused on the challenges related to pension administration within the civil service of Delta State. The study employed the social contract theory and utilized a cross-sectional design. Data collection involved a questionnaire distributed to a sample of 232 participants selected through simple random sampling. Analysis of the gathered data employed simple percentage, mean, and frequency. The findings indicated the existence of certain measures that could alleviate the difficulties associated with pension administration in the Delta State civil service. The study suggested addressing issues in the retirement scheme, such as enhancing transparency in retiree benefit calculations, ensuring timely pension remittances, prosecuting and removing dishonest pension officers, and addressing logistical and training needs.*

Keywords: *Challenges, Pension, Administration, Civil service, Delta State*

Introduction

To evaluate the achievements and limitations of the country's ongoing Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) after 17 years, stakeholders in the pension industry recently conducted a thorough assessment of the program. The third annual retreat for lawmakers, organized by PenOp in Lagos, brought together participants such as members of the National Assembly Joint Committees for Establishment and Public Service of the Senate, the House of Representatives Committee on Pension, members of the Pension Fund Operators Association of Nigeria (PenOp), representatives from the National Pension Commission (PenCom), and delegates from various labor unions in both the public and private sectors (Nwoji, 2023). Following discussions on the performance of the CPS over the 17-year period since the enactment of the Pension Reform Act of 2004 (amended in 2014), they concluded that despite significant progress—such as the increase in pension assets to N12.4 trillion from a N2.56 trillion pension deficit before the reform and a rise in contributors to 9.4 million as of April 2021—various challenges still persisted (Nwoji, 2023).

It is important to highlight that retirees in Nigeria hold expectations from the government, primarily centered around the effective implementation of existing pension laws in the country. These expectations center on ensuring a sustainable quality of life during retirement and timely disbursement of benefits and entitlements. Regardless, Nigeria has introduced various pension schemes, such as the recently adopted Defined Benefit and Contributory Pension Schemes. Each of these initiatives has presented specific challenges, compromising the capacity of key stakeholders in the pension sector to meet the requirements of Nigerian retirees.

As outlined in Nwoji's (2023) report, stakeholders raised several concerns during the 2021 meeting. These included insufficient benefit coverage and compliance, limited scheme coverage, and a lack of awareness about pension schemes. Scheme operators themselves identified additional challenges during the discussion, such as the unfavorable exchange rate between the Naira and the dollar, the difficulty of increasing impactful investments, and insufficient outreach to Nigerian employees. They also highlighted a significant hindrance to the continued development of the CPS scheme: non-compliance by various state governments, with the majority still operating the "pay as you go" system (THISDAY, 2023).

Retirement has acquired a negative connotation among numerous Nigerian workers, as retirees in the country are undergoing significant hardships. According to Agulanna (2013), many employees regret their decision to join the public sector due to retirement plans that negatively impact their colleagues. Okorodudu (1998) asserts that the process of transitioning from an active work-life is far from straightforward. A multitude of individuals has experienced considerable psychosomatic issues stemming from inadequate preparation and the prevalent psychophobic reactions exhibited by some Nigerian workers (The Guardian, 2010, p. 19). The struggles faced by seniors in Nigeria are often overlooked or misunderstood by the public (Agulanna, 2013, p. 19). Some retirees would rather face an early demise than endure the agony of obtaining their retirement benefits, given the harsh treatment they endure, making a peaceful and straightforward retired life in Nigeria almost unimaginable. The treatment is perceived as severe, brutal, and imposes unnecessary challenges on retired individuals. This situation has influenced the perception of laborers in Nigeria, particularly those employed in universities. While numerous studies have addressed pension analysis in Nigeria, many of them have failed to comprehensively tackle the issues surrounding pension administration in Delta State (Nwoji, 2023).

Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the problematic of pension administration in the Delta State, while the specific objective is to:

1. Examine the strategies in addressing pension administration issues facing the Delta State civil service.

Research Question

1. What are the strategies to tackle the problems of pension administration the Delta State civil service?

Review of Related Literature Concept of Pension

The amount set aside by an employer, employee, or both to ensure that workers have a financial resource upon retirement is referred to as a pension. Traditionally, pensions were viewed as regular payments made by an employer to a retired employee, extending to the worker's death; in some cases, these payments could continue to the pensioner's next of kin for a specified period (Ogwumike, 2008). A pension is officially defined as "money paid regularly by the government or any organization to an individual who has retired from active service after a specified period," typically ranging from a minimum of 10 years to a maximum of thirty-five years (Chizueze, Nwosu, & Agba, 2011). In essence, it represents the sum set aside by an employer, employee, or both to ensure that the latter has a financial source after retiring. Pension plans serve as a means for employees to secure their social security once they exit the workforce and enter retirement (Ilesami, 2006).

Similarly, it refers to the sum of money provided by the government or employer to an employee who has completed their full term of employment, is considered too old or unwell to continue working, or has reached the official retirement age (Adam, 2005). In a systematic arrangement, a pension denotes the regular payment made by an employer upon the agreed-upon termination of employment to an employee for services rendered, in accordance with a legally binding contract (Iwu, 2007). As explained by Thomas & Lemke (2010), a pension is a fund accumulated during an employee's years of service, from which the employee receives periodic payments to support their retirement from the workforce. Pensions can manifest as "defined benefit plans," where individuals receive predetermined regular payments, or "defined contribution plans," where individuals invest a fixed amount that becomes available upon retirement. According to Uzoma (2013), the rationale behind pension plans is twofold: firstly, a company has a moral obligation to provide its employees, especially those with extended service, with an acceptable level of social security. Secondly, the company uses pension plans to demonstrate its commitment to the well-being of its workforce. It is customary to calculate an employee's pension payment based on a percentage of their earnings, averaged over multiple years and multiplied by the number of years of service to the company.

Overview of Pension Scheme

In simple terms, a pension program serves as a savings plan designed to accumulate funds for retirement, offering tax benefits compared to other savings methods (Onuoha & Iwunze, 2009). This type of long-term savings plan is tax-efficient, providing a sensible approach to save money during one's employment. The idea is to set aside a portion of income regularly so that, upon retirement and as the individual ages, the accumulated funds can be used to maintain their well-being. Pension plans serve as a financial resource during retirement or reduced working hours. The primary objective of pensions is to provide financial security in later years. Various types of pension plans exist; some may be initiated by employers, as seen in pension plans in Nigeria, while others can be established independently.

As of July 1, 2014, under the Pension Act, employers with a workforce of 15 or more employees are mandated to provide a contributory pension plan for their staff. The Act stipulates a minimum contribution of 18% of the employee's monthly remuneration, with the employer contributing

10% and the employee contributing 8%. If the employer opts to cover the entire cost, the minimum contribution becomes 20% of the monthly salary. Tax deductions are applicable for both employers' and employees' mandatory and/or voluntary contributions to pension plans approved by the Pension Act. Additionally, the Act mandates every employer to procure life insurance for their employees.

Concept of Contributory Pension Scheme

A contributory pension system (EPS) is a fully funded pension plan designed to accumulate sufficient funds through regular savings. The aim of this program is to assist individuals who may lack the means to save adequately, ultimately fulfilling the retirement needs of both employees and stakeholders while contributing significantly to economic growth. The Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) is identified as an institutional investor that provides long-term contractual savings, thereby fostering the expansion of the securities market (Mesike & Ibiwoye, 2012).

As explained by Madukwe (2015), a defined contribution scheme is a type of retirement plan where the annual employer contribution is predetermined. Each participant is allocated their individual account, and benefits are determined by combining investment gains with the funds credited to these accounts from both employer and, if applicable, employee contributions. At the inception of the CPS, workers were required to contribute a minimum of 7.5% of their base pay, along with housing and transportation allowances, and 2.5% for military personnel. Public sector employers were mandated to contribute 7.5%, while military employers were required to contribute 12.5%.

In the private sector, the combined contributions from both employers and employees must be at least 7.5%. Alternatively, a company has the option to make a contribution on behalf of its employees, as long as the total amount remains above 15% of the employees' basic pay, housing allowance, and transportation expenses. Following the recent amendments to the pension law, specifically the Pension Reform Act of 2015, it is now a requirement for the employee to establish a Retirement Savings Account (RSA) in their name, complete with a personal identification number, through a Pension Fund Administrator of their choice. This account serves as the repository for all their contributions and investment returns. According to the stipulations of the Act, each employee is obligated to contribute eight percent (8%) of their current basic salary, housing allowance, and transportation costs. These contributions are directed to the Pension Fund Custodians (PFCs), responsible for safeguarding the assets of the pension fund. Simultaneously, the employer is mandated to contribute ten percent (10%) of the total amount, as per the provisions of the Pension Reform Act of 2014.

The Challenges of the Old Pension Scheme

Iwunze (2006) contends that several issues within the public sector's Defined Benefit (DB) system, commonly known as pay-as-you-go (PAYG), as well as other pension systems like occupational schemes in the private sector, necessitated pension reform. According to Orok (2005), a significant challenge with the public sector's DB program was its reliance on financial support from various government branches for funding. The inadequate and delayed fiscal allocations rendered the system fundamentally unsustainable. This led to a substantial gap between pension fund liabilities and revenues, posing a threat not only to economic stability but also escalating the costs of essential investments in infrastructure, healthcare, and education. The situation was exacerbated by various salary increases, intensifying pension costs and placing undue pressure on the government's ability to fulfill its fiscal responsibilities.

The previous pension system's inadequacies in terms of manpower and equipment also contributed to its weak, inefficient, and cumbersome administration (Duze, 2005). This inefficiency was often exacerbated by the nationwide pension offices' insufficient record-keeping practices, leading to prolonged waits for retirement benefits among many retirees. The payout process during the withdrawal phase was frequently burdensome, with pensioners sometimes experiencing delays lasting days or even years before receiving their benefits.

Similarly, the reimbursement process for the division of pension and gratuity payments among federal, state, and other entities was highly disorganized and occasionally marked by corruption and bribery. There are instances, though undocumented, where the reimbursement organization demanded ransom from the beneficiary. On the other hand, due to inadequate regulation and oversight of the system, private sector programs exhibited extremely poor compliance rates. A significant portion of these programs operated under provident fund systems, which did not provide benefits on a regular basis (Ghilarducci, 1992).

The New Contributory Pension Scheme

The latest federal legislation aimed at addressing challenges associated with the obsolete pension system is the Pension Reform Act (PRA) of 2004. This act introduced the integrated pension system known as the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS), applicable to both the public and private sectors. Additionally, for the first time in Nigeria's history, a national pension commission was established to supervise and regulate all pension-related activities nationwide. As indicated by Adeleke (2015), licensed pension fund custodians (PFCs) are entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding the pension fund assets, while authorized pension administrators (PFAs) are tasked with overseeing the plan.

The success of the 1981 Chilean pension reform has spurred a global trend towards transitioning from defined benefit plans to contributory schemes. Numerous factors, including the increasing strain on central budgets to cover deficits, challenges in long-term sustainability due to internal demographic shifts, and the failure to deliver promised benefits, among others, have been cited as reasons for the shift in pension paradigms in both developed and developing nations—from Direct Benefit Schemes to funded schemes (Onuoha, 2016). As explained by Mohammed (2013), developed countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as emerging market economies such as Chile, Mexico, and Nigeria, adopted the pension scheme to encourage long-term national saving and capital accumulation. This strategic approach, when invested prudently, has the potential to generate resources for both domestic and foreign investments.

New Challenges in Nigeria's New Contributory Pension Scheme

Despite its seemingly commendable framework, the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) has encountered several challenges. Initially, there was reluctance and skepticism among employees to register with Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs). Even after nearly a decade of implementation, the program still grapples with widespread misconceptions and a knowledge gap, although this has diminished, and coverage has expanded, especially within informal companies in the private sector (Nwoji, 2023).

The emerging pension fund industry faces a significant lack of appropriate capacity building, a problem exacerbated by the substantial overlap between individuals involved in this sector and other corporate interests. Insurance companies have also received criticism for their performance in managing pension plans (National Pension Commission, 2017). Another issue is the transfer of risk to employees, who bear full responsibility for associated risks as they choose the entity to manage their pension contributions.

Moreover, although there are substantial differences between the two nations, the new pension plan drew inspiration from Chile. Notably, Nigeria has an average life expectancy of around 43 years, in contrast to Chile's 76 years (Orok, 2015). Consequently, many people in Nigeria require access to their pensions earlier in life to fulfill basic financial needs and access critical social services, which were previously provided by the government.

Moreover, employees lack confidence due to past unsuccessful government initiatives. There is also concern about sustainability and continuity given the frequent changes in administrations, as these changes often lead to the abandonment of incomplete initiatives. The first group of retirees under the new program began receiving benefits in 2007, and by May 2012, the pensioners had received a total of $183 billion in payments (National Pension Commission Statistics, 2012).

Residents are raising questions about the methodology used to calculate pension payouts and determine the interest rate in the new plan. Although Section 4(1) of the Pension Reform Act of 2004 specifies a 50% lump sum payment of the entire retirement benefits, the Pension Commission (PenCom) currently ensures a 25% payment of the remaining balance in the retiree's savings account.

Another issue of concern involves the misappropriation and mishandling of contributions. Recent revelations have exposed fraudulent activities involving multibillion-naira pension funds that have affected various sectors of Nigerian society, including the Nigeria Police Pensions and the Pensions Unit of the Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation (PENCOM). During a recent National Assembly public hearing on pensions, it was revealed that six civil workers had embezzled =N=24 billion from the Police Pension Funds. These same individuals were implicated in the unlawful diversion of an additional N=32.8 billion from the Nigeria Police Pension Funds. Additionally, following a Biometric Data Capture exercise on pensioners since 2010, =N=151 billion and an extra £6 million were recovered. It was also discovered that the actual amount allocated for pension payments was =N=l.9 billion, revealing a significant =N=3.1 billion discrepancy from the monthly payment of =N=5 billion to the Office of the Head of Service.

Strategies to Address the Pension Issue in Nigeria

According to Randle and Rudolph (2014), defined contribution pension plans have faced criticism for their inability to deliver adequate and sustained pension incomes to retirees, especially in the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis. The focus on short-term volatility rather than ensuring sufficient pension income over the long term has led to a misalignment between the goals of pension fund members and the objectives of pension fund management firms, contributing significantly to the problem. This becomes a risky situation when the plan encounters difficulties in meeting its financial pension obligations due to insufficiently allocated assets.

Scholars such as Moneim (2015), Shimko (2010), Hillson (2009), and Hillson & Simon (2012) have outlined a five-step process in risk management. These steps involve: identifying potential project risks; evaluating their impact on individuals and selecting risks with substantial consequences for further analysis; assessing the overall implications of these significant risks; determining strategies to minimize the likelihood or impact of these consequences; and developing and executing a plan to address and mitigate the risks, ensuring a positive reduction in overall risk. According to Morris (2015) and Hillson (2016), the most effective risk management techniques currently are as follows:

Antolin, Payet, and Yermo (2010) contend that there is an increasing global consensus that default options should incorporate a life-cycle plan characterized by reduced risk exposure as individuals age. The primary goal of any investment is to generate profits and secure a return. Across jurisdictions, a significant portion of individuals adheres to the default investment plan, although the percentage varies considerably. For instance, approximately 99% of recently enrolled members in the Premium Pension system in Sweden do not actively choose their investment strategy (Frankkila and Lantz, 2020). Similarly, in Peru, as reported by Superintendencia de Banca, Seguros y AFP (2019), 92% of pension savers opt for the default fund aligned with their age.

Equally important is the observation that the decisions made by the population and the average participant's pension benefits may impact the various investment approaches. There are two main investment techniques: dynamic risk budgeting and life-cycle investing. Life-cycle investment techniques encompass various methods, including average multi-shaped, dynamic multi-shaped, piece-wise linear, step-wise linear, and linear reduction. Life annuities are more advantageous for life-cycle strategies compared to benefits paid as scheduled withdrawals, as the latter diminishes their value. According to Antonio, Payet, and Yermo (2010), the dynamic risk budget investment strategy (DRB) allows for adjustments to the portfolio asset allocation based on the risk budget, with the level of aggressiveness in asset allocation (i.e., the proportion of risky assets) directly influencing the risk budget.

Dynamic methods seem to outperform with scheduled withdrawals. Strategies that involve combining deferred life annuities obtained at retirement with programmed withdrawals may require a blend of life-cycle and dynamic solutions for optimal performance. Another investment strategy associated with Defined Contribution plans (DCP) is the Optimal Investment Strategy, a target-driven approach where equity allocation increases if the accumulating fund falls below the target and decreases if it exceeds it (Blake, Wright, & Zhang, 2013). Deterministic investment strategies are rooted in the anticipated retirement date of a pension participant within an organization. Another strategy, Liability Driven Investment (LDI), focuses on acquiring assets to cover current and future liabilities such as loans, accounts payable, mortgages, deferred revenues, and accrued expenses. According to Forsyth and Vetzal (2018), the majority of financial products designed for retirement saving utilize deterministic strategies based on mean-variance criteria.

The LDI strategy commonly centers on pension fund assets. As outlined by Bonizzi & Kaltenbrunner (2019), it serves as a comprehensive foundation for investment. The investment plan of a pension provider should be geared towards augmenting assets to generate income during retirement, often involving a considerably extended investment horizon. Strategies that capitalize on term and illiquidity premiums can result in enhanced returns by directing capital toward assets with prolonged average tenures. According to the OECD Pensions Outlook (2020), a well-calibrated long-term plan also serves as a safeguard against losses during market downturns by averting the need to sell assets when prices decline. This approach prevents lock-in and the realization of any short-term losses.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual foundation for this study is rooted in the Social Contract theory, which traces its origins to the Liberal State Philosophers Grotius (1625), Hobbes (1661), Locke (1689), and Rousseau (1762). These philosophers are acknowledged for formulating the concept of social contract theory, wherein the establishment of property rights and security is deemed essential to overcome the inherent state of anarchy. According to Amir Paz Fuchz (2011) as cited in Akhiojemi, Ifeanacho, and Abu (2018), this theory is divided into two categories: the early theory put forth by Locke, Hobbes, and other scholars, and the modern theory. Markus, Tina, and Annabelle (2020) define it as a set of legal and informal agreements among various societal groups and their government or other influential entities. As a result, some assert that the social compact comprises, in part, unofficial institutions designed to instill stability and predictability in society.

It is important to recognize that all employees engage in an employment contract with their respective employers, where both parties are expected to fulfill specific responsibilities under fair conditions. Applying this theory to our study and drawing on Akhiojemi, Ifeanacho, and Abu (2018), employees are obligated to provide the services requested by their employers. In return, the employer is bound to honor its part of the contract by remunerating the employee with salaries and other compensation proportional to the services rendered. In this context, pensions are considered legal rights; retirees possess the entitlement to utilize the most productive and impactful years of their lives to fulfill their contractual commitments to their employers, rather than viewing these commitments as mere playthings for employers. Recently, it has been observed that the government is falling short in meeting its contractual obligations to retirees in the nation, particularly concerning the timely payment of gratuity and pensions, forcing retirees to endure prolonged waits before receiving their rightful compensation. It has also been emphasized that the compensation provided is inadequate for ensuring a fulfilling retirement.

Research Methodology

To investigate the challenges associated with pension administration in Delta State, the study employed a descriptive research design. A survey methodology was utilized, involving a total population of 549 staff members from five civil service ministries—Education, Health, Finance, Work, and Agriculture. The sample, selected through a random process, comprised 248 individuals from the study population and included pension administrators and managers of Delta State. The sampling was conducted using a multi-stage approach. For this study, a purposive sample of 248 pension administrators was chosen, and data were collected using a questionnaire as the research tool. The questionnaire was meticulously designed to eliminate ambiguity in its questions. A Likert scale with four points—strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, and disagree—was employed for the study. The collected data were analyzed using statistical tables, frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. A benchmark mean score of 2.50 was set for the study, and any mean score below this criterion was considered for acceptance or rejection.

Results and Discussion

Table 4.1: Respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Items		Frequency	Percenta2e
Age	25-35	74	32.0
	36-45	102	44.0
	146 and above	56	24.0
	rrotal ':.i '.	232	100.0
Gender	Male	129 . ,	56
	Female	103	44
	Total	232	100.0
Marital status	Single	36	15.5
	Married	154	66.4
	Divorced	28	12.1
	Widow(er)	14	6
	Total	232	100.0
Staff Position	ki\ctive in service	139	60
	Retirees	93	40
	Total	232	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 4.1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the survey participants. According to the age distribution, 44% of them fall into the 36--45 age group, which comprises the bulk of them. 32% and 24%, respectively, of the other age groups were 25i to "35 and 46 and above. Male respondents made up 56% of the sample, while female respondents made up 44%, according to the sex distributions. The respondents' marital status showed that, at 66.4%, married people made lip the majority of the participants, followed by singles (15.5%), divorced people (12.1%), and widows (6%). According to the staff positions, 60% of the respondents were actively employed, and 40% were retirees.

Research Question: What are the strategies for addressing Delta State's Pension Administration Issues?

Table 4.2: Reactions from Respondents on Strategies for adressing Delta State's Pension Administration issues

SIN	ITEMS	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1	Transparency in the calculation of retirees' benefits	2.70	.76	Agree
2	Timely remittance of pension	2.67	.71	Agree
3	Prosecution of corrupt pension officers	2.54	.69	Agree
4	The provision of logistics and training to equip pension staff to function	2.82	.79	Agree
5	Strict compliance by government to enforce Pension Acts provision to benefit pensioners	2.89	.83	Agree
6	Recruitment of qualified and adequate human resources to make the system functional and effective	2.74	.80	Agree
7	Responding to and tackling complaints raised by pensioners to made the system effective	2.59	.77	Agree
8	Timely and adequate budgetary provision for pension funds by government	2.69	.84	Agree

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The standard deviation analysis and mean scores for various approaches to addressing Delta State's pension administration issues were d played in Table 4.2. Accord ng to the analysis's findings, respondents disagreed on some issues and agreed on others. The respondents specifically agreed that there should be openness in the computation of retiree benefits, prompt pension remittance, prosecution and removal of dishonest pension officers, provision of logistics and training to enable pension staff to function, stringent government enforcement of the provisions of the Pension Acts to benefit pensioners, recruitment of qualified and sufficient human resources to ensure the system is functional and effective, timely resolution of pensioner complaints to enhance system effectiveness, and sufficient budgetary provision for pension funds by the government. The corresponding mean scores are 2.70, 2.64, 2.54, 2.82, 2.89, 2.74, 2.59, and 2.69.

In order to address the issues faced by pensioners in Delta State, it is implied that the respondents stated that the following should be in place: transparency in the calculation of retirees' benefits;

prompt pension remittance; prosecution and removal of corrupt pension officers; provision of logistics and training to equip pension staff to function; strict compliance by the government to enforce Pension Acts provision to benefit pensioners; recruitment of qualified and adequate human resources to make the system fun9tional and effective; and timely and adequate budgetary provision for pension funds by the government.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings of the research, addressing pension issues can be achieved through the implementation of the following strategies: recruiting qualified and sufficient human resources to ensure the functionality and effectiveness of the system; addressing and resolving pensioners' complaints promptly to ensure efficiency; prosecuting corrupt pension officers; providing logistics and training to equip pension staff for their roles; and strictly adhering to the government's requirements for following pension acts.

In the context of risk management, scholars such as Moneim (2015), Hillson & Simon (2012), Shimko (2010), and Hillson (2009) have identified five key steps: identifying potential risks for the project; evaluating the impact of risks on individuals and selecting those with the greatest potential for further analysis; assessing the overall consequences of significant risks; determining strategies to reduce the likelihood or impact of these consequences; and developing and implementing a plan to mitigate the risks. According to Morris (2015) and Hillson (2016), the most effective risk management techniques currently are as follows:

The initial phase, known as the definition or initiation stage, requires consensus among all stakeholders regarding the objectives and a comprehensive understanding of them. The scope and level of detail in the risk process are determined based on the strategic significance and the level of riskiness associated with the project or situation at hand. Subsequent to the definition phase is the risk identification stage, involving proactive risk management initiatives that foster a robust risk culture characterized by ingrained personal values, attitudes, and beliefs. This stage entails recognizing risks that necessitate evaluation and prioritizing them based on their significance for further consideration and action. The subsequent step involves response planning, wherein methods and measures are selected to address hazards in a manner that is suitable, feasible, and cost-effective. Following this, the planned actions are executed, their effectiveness is monitored, and stakeholders are kept informed of the outcomes.

Conclusion

The study findings indicate that addressing challenges in pension administration within the Delta State civil service can be accomplished through several measures. These include ensuring transparency in the calculation of retiree benefits, timely remittance of pensions, taking legal action against and removing dishonest pension officers, providing logistics and training for pension staff to enhance their performance, strict adherence by the government to the stipulations of the Pension Acts for the benefit of pensioners, recruiting qualified and adequate human resources to ensure the smooth operation of the system, promptly resolving pensioner complaints, and allocating sufficient budgetary provisions for pension funds by the government.

Recommendation

To tackle the identified issues, it is essential to ensure adequate funding for the retirement program. Proper funding would contribute to resolving challenges such as transparency in retiree benefits computation, timely remittance of pensions, legal action against and removal of dishonest pension officers, provision of logistics and training for effective performance of pension staff, strict government enforcement of the provisions of the Pension Act for the welfare of pensioners, recruitment of qualified and ample human resources to ensure the seamless operation of the system, prompt resolution of pensioner complaints, and adequate budgetary allocation for pension funds by the government.

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